Why COVID 19 Is the Biggest Unregistered Unofficial Event of our Lifetime
Dr. Lori Hart | Catalyst Agency

*If prevention efforts work, it will look like it wasn’t needed. You’ll have the luxury of thinking that because it worked.* -Dr. Jodi Guest

Let’s put a twist on COVID-19 and play it out if it were only happening in your community. Something is happening that is dangerous, could harm others, could harm you, or perhaps it has already killed someone in your community. What do we do in a crisis? We have to do something … that’s what we all do in a crisis … something. The problem is we often don’t know what to do, so we figure it out as we go along. More memos. More Zoom meetings. More. More. More.

We plea with our community to be safer. We ask them to stop gathering. It is causing problems. Students don’t listen. It’s not a rule. It’s not a law. We call the police. They make a note because they can’t enforce guidelines. We might put a heavier hand down and mandate they can’t gather. They still gather … unofficially. People continue to get hurt. The students don’t see that their actions matter for the chapter, for the community, or for the world.

This COVID-19 just feels like one big unofficial unregistered party of human beings and the CDC is the fraternity/sorority life advisor providing harm reduction tips to reduce risk. These guidelines save lives, but some humans — based on the headlines, many college students — are acting like our FSL community at an unregistered event.

Governors and mayors step in. The guidelines now become more like policy. Police can now enforce. People start paying attention because of enforcement. Evidenced based approaches tell us people change behavior when there is enforcement. And if we don’t listen at this stage, what is next?

This is not an event we planned for. It just happened, like one big unregistered party. What will you learn from this as an advisor? Watch this play out, study the communication styles, listen to the words, figure out who you respect, and who is pissing you off. There is something to be learned. Guidelines are not policy. Guidelines are good ideas, things to keep you safe, and prevention at its best. Policy is mandates, the must, and the things you enforce. How can you take this time to evaluate your documents and connect the dots on human behavior within your community?
And don’t forget to breathe. I know many of you live far away from family. You might be alone, or you might be juggling a remote position with kids in the house. We are all experiencing this differently right now. Give grace. Find grace. And let’s figure out what we can learn from all of this.

And wherever you find yourself vulnerable, know there are resources. If you are hungry, reach out and let me get you some help. Mental health vulnerable? There are some great resources. Find yourself drinking too much? There are some great resources. The good news is in this crisis, there are actual resources. You might be sitting alone, but you are NOT alone! If you don’t know where to find solutions, please let me connect you.

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Dr. Lori Hart is a perfect blend of research, simplicity, humor, and getting to the heart of the matter. For decades, she has been traveling the country creating conversations around healthy relationships, brotherhood and sisterhood, and safety. To reach Dr. Hart, feel free to email her at lori@thecatalystagency.us.