



## FINANCIAL WELLNESS PLANNING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Perhaps at no point in US history has the connection between physical health and financial wellness been made so starkly clear

3.18.2020 Chris Heye

The outbreak of COVID-19 has financially affected virtually every person and every organization in this country – students, workers, retirees, companies, governments, and the economy as a whole.

The spread of the corona virus is putting intense pressure on employees in multiple industries, including financial advisors. Wealth managers are now faced with three major challenges:

- How to replace revenue lost from declining AUM fees
- How to allay client concerns about their investment portfolios
- How to have quality interactions with clients without being able to meet face to face

Let's look at these challenges one at a time. First, the decline in assets under management. Most advisors expected that the bull run would end, though perhaps not so soon or so fast. How can

an advisor replace the lost revenue? In short, by providing more services that clients value. Since most clients are over the age of 50, and all are impacted by the corona virus, the obvious place to look is in the area of health and longevity planning. Now is the perfect time to talk to clients about preparing for the inevitable health events that they or a close family member will face in the years ahead. Clients should need little convincing of the importance of establishing plans for ensuring the safe hand over of financial decision-making authority to trusted contacts or the successful transfer of wealth to the next generation. Health, death, and diminished capacity can be difficult subjects to discuss with clients, but since staying healthy is top of mind for virtually everyone right now, I have no doubt that these discussions will be welcomed by the vast majority of your clients.

Second, how do you most effectively address your clients fears about the status of their investment portfolio? Now is the time for you to demonstrate that you have your client's back, to show empathy. You want to prove to clients that you are on the same team, that your interests are aligned. And how to best do that? Again, it comes back to health and wellness. We know from numerous investor surveys that older clients' top financial fears are always around health. What better way to connect with clients and establish trust than to help them with health-related issues within a family? This might include creating plans for managing the loss of income due to a major health event, devising strategies for caring for aging parents, preparing for dementia or Alzheimer's, helping to manage living transitions, or figuring out how not to be a burden on the children as we age.

Which brings us to our third challenge. How do you deliver important health and longevity focused planning services and have sensitive discussions when you are practicing social distancing? It's hard to increase the quality and frequency of client engagements when you can't meet face to face. But there are ways around this.

Just as physicians are embracing telemedicine, including texting, video conferencing, and facetimeing with their patients, advisors can take advantage of newer technologies to connect with clients in meaningful ways. Find out if your client is comfortable conducting a video chat. Set up a webconference where you can walk them through your plans. Create a short, personalized video and send it to them via email.

At Whealthcare Planning we offer numerous short client assessments that help advisors plan for the type of health-related events that we are confronting now. These short assessments, which clients can complete at home on their own, are a great way to connect with clients and show them that you are looking out for the things that matter most to them. It's an easy way to engage digitally while maintaining a very personal connection. We also have a large library of educational materials that you can share with clients, including short videos, that address issues such as preparing for a health event, controlling health care costs, helping older family members manage finances, identifying and managing diminished capacity, and much more. Check us out at [Whealthcareplan.com](http://Whealthcareplan.com).

