

Healthcare Personnel Coping with Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic -Compassion Fatigue

Providing care to others during the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to stress, anxiety, fear, and other strong emotions. How you and your team cope with these emotions can affect your well-being, the care you give to others while doing your job, and the well-being of the people you care about outside of work.

In a Pandemic the Issue is Duration: Experiencing or witnessing life threatening events impacts everyone differently. People may experience clinically significant distress or impairment, such as acute stress disorder, PTSD, or secondary traumatic stress (also known as vicarious traumatization). Compassion fatigue may also result from chronic workplace stress and exposure to traumatic events during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html> July 1 2020

What You Can Do - First Identify It: Recognize the symptoms of stress

- Feeling irritation, anger, or denial
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Feeling helpless or powerless
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Learning to Manage Your Reactions:

Focus on 4 Core Components for Self-Management:

- 1) adequate sleep and rest
- 2) good nutrition, eat healthy meals,
- 3) regular physical activity and
- 4) active relaxation, spend time outdoors relaxing when you can.

Talk to Yourself!

- Remind yourself that you are not the only one in an unusual situation with limited resources
- Identify and accept those things which you do not have control over.
- Recognize that you are performing a crucial role in fighting this pandemic and that you are doing the best you can with the resources available. you share a sisterhood and brotherhood with caregivers like yourself across the world.

Take Control of Aspects of Your Daily Life:

- Keep a consistent daily routine when possible.
- Take breaks during your day to rest, stretch, or check in with *supportive* coworkers, friends and family.
- Do things you enjoy during non-work hours – the importance of taking time away from work.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting, especially since you work.
- Practice good daily hygiene-how like or unlike your daily routine are you now? Hair, shave, dress?
- ‘Wash Up’ at the end of the day, to ‘put away’ your work.
- Create individual ceremonies or rituals that allow you to focus your thoughts on letting go of stress or honoring a memory of something positive; seek moments of ‘joy’.
- Practice your spiritual beliefs, anyone can pray
- Engage in mindfulness techniques, such as meditation. (there are apps for this!)

Employers, Supervisors: Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress.

- Talk openly about how the pandemic is affecting your work.
- Identify factors that cause stress and work together to identify solutions. get a workgroup not only can address a problem and establish connections with coworkers.
- Recognize that your work crucial in fighting this pandemic. Celebrate success – how many COVID 19 patients you have cared for at home, call the local paper about a story about home care and hospice nurses supporting COVID 19 patients at home - when people come out of the hospital or quarantine- it’s home and you are there.
- Mourn sorrows with co-workers.
- Present how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- If you feel you or someone you know may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescriptions), ask for help or offer help.

If concerned about you or someone in your household or you work - -here are additional resources. If you share them you never know when someone may use them.

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
 - Toll-free number 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
 - The [online Lifeline Crisis Chat](#) is free and confidential. You’ll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area.
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
 - Call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224
- Disaster Distress Hotline (SAMSHA) (Created for those working during disasters).
 - Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 6674

Other sources American Institute of Stress <https://www.stress.org> has additional resources.