



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF SO YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF OTHERS



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR INTEGRATED CARE

Our country, and especially our healthcare system, may be experiencing a great deal of trauma related to both the fear and grief associated with COVID-19. Please know that the pain, hurt, anguish – and all of those feelings that are even difficult to simply name – are real and valid. Although there is no current cure for COVID-19, we do have best practices for helping ourselves and others with the emotional and psychological aftermath of enduring a traumatic time period. We hope you find the information below – shared within a whole-person framework – helpful in learning to cope with the events of this pandemic.



BIOLOGICAL

Taking good care of your physical needs is critical and can be extra difficult under times of stress. Fueling your body with healthy input helps maintain both your emotional and physical energy.

Hydrate – Do the best you can to get plenty of water.

Nourish – Eat foods that will sustain you, make you feel good, and give you energy.

Rest – If possible, take a seat or lay down for a few moments. Practice good sleep hygiene so that when you sleep, you maximize the quality of that time.

Stretch – We can hold a lot of tension mentally and physically. Do a quick lap around the office or some slow stretches at your workstation to release muscular tension and relax.

PSYCHOLOGICAL


The stress of uncertainty coupled with the ongoing threat of a pandemic can make for an insidious creep of anxious and depressive thoughts. It will be critical for all providers to practice what we tell our patients about healthy coping with stress.

Diaphragmatic breathing – Even if done in short bursts of 3-5 minutes, this type of breathing can re-set the autonomic nervous system.

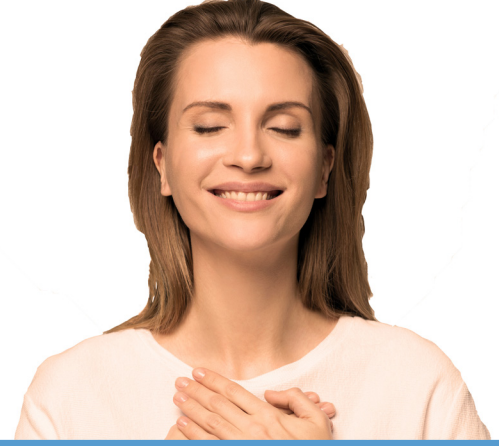
Grounding practices – Examples include locating a spot in your clinic and/or at home to repeat a breath prayer, comforting phrase, words of assurance to yourself, or examining what you're experiencing with each of your five senses.

Gratitude – Finding things to be grateful can help shift your perspective. No matter how simple or how seemingly mundane, looking through a gratitude lens can be helpful. With the frequent washing of hands, use that as an opportunity to think of 3-5 things you are grateful for in that moment.

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SOCIAL

While social distancing makes physical contact through hugs and handshakes impossible, technology can be maximized to seek and feel relational connection.

Visual contact – Texting is helpful and efficient, however, the visual cue of seeing someone’s face can provide much more relief and comfort. When possible make a practice of utilizing video capabilities to reach out and talk to loved ones.

Healthy boundaries – It’s okay to say no to taking on extra things. Set a limit with yourself about looking at news and social media, a time of day or time limit. Spend more time with things that make you feel good: TV shows, podcasts, books, and people who make you laugh.

SPIRITUAL

If spirituality is a part of your life, mindfulness, prayer, and daily readings are all ways to nurture a connection to a belief in something greater than ourselves. Times like these can feel isolating even when surrounded by a busy clinic, and result in bigger questioning.

Reach out to people in your faith/spirituality community online, or on the phone and talk those questions out loud. It might take more effort at first, but developing or renewing habits around your faith practice will eventually become more natural and serve as an additional source of support.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief](#)

[Managing Healthcare Workers’ Stress Associated with COVID-19](#)

[Clinician Well-Being Resources During COVID-19](#)