

Share Coping Strategies With Distressed Colleagues

COVID-19 may fuel a "parallel pandemic" of mental health concerns...anxiety, depression, substance use disorder, etc.

It's especially a concern for healthcare workers and trainees...due to rapidly shifting guidance, shortages, and fears of infecting themselves or others.

Ask colleagues how they're coping...and share tactics to help.

Emphasize that this situation is a marathon...not a sprint. Promote self-care to boost resilience and limit burnout.

For instance, suggest 1 min of deep breathing or a 3-min "body scan"...focusing and releasing tension from one body part at a time. Consider apps that may help...*Headspace, Mindfulness Coach, etc.*

Recommend exercise that complies with physical distancing, such as a walk outside...or an online fitness or yoga class.

And encourage gratitude. For example, pause to celebrate as a group when a COVID-19 patient is extubated or discharged home.

Look for other ways to adapt to a shifting "normal."

For instance, attach a photo of yourself to your gown so others can see your face despite "universal masking."

Provide clear, up-front communication about changes. For example, develop a process to update nurses and prescribers daily about shortages, med policy changes, etc.

Keep in mind, some anxiety or sleep difficulty is normal...but recommend help if it affects function for several days in a row.

For example, suggest contacting the Disaster Distress Helpline by calling 800-985-5990 or texting "TalkWithUs" to 66746...or scheduling a telemedicine visit with their prescriber or therapist.

Stay alert for people at risk of harming themselves or others, and recommend contacting the Crisis Text Line at 741741...or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255).

Find resources and apps in our chart, *Dealing With Stress*.

Key References:

- N Engl J Med Published online Apr 13, 2020; doi:10.1056/NEJMp2008017
 - JAMA Psychiatry Published online Apr 10, 2020; doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.1060
 - Lancet Psychiatry 2020;7(4):e21
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- Hospital Pharmacist's Letter. May 2020, No. 360503

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