



SUSTAINING PROVIDER WELL-BEING DURING COVID-19

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Reasons

- The extreme stress, uncertainty, instability, and difficult medical nature of global infectious disease outbreaks, such as Coronavirus (Covid-19), require special attention to the needs of healthcare personnel.
- Taking care of yourself and encouraging others to practice self-care sustains the ability to care for those in need.

Challenges

- Surge in care demands
- Changes in schedules, usual routines and ways you practice
- Ongoing risk of infection to yourself and loved ones
- Equipment challenges-shortages, uncomfortable, limit mobility and communication
- Providing support as well as medical care
- Psychological stress in the outbreak settings-while helping those in need can be rewarding- but also difficulty as workers may experience fear, grief, frustration, guilt, insomnia, and exhaustion.

Meet Basic Needs

- Be sure to:
 - Eat and drink- at regular times, stay hydrated
 - Sleep-bank for sleep when sleep routines are irregular, create a routine before bed to signal your body and mind ready for sleep, optimize your sleep environment, limits exposure to screens at least 20 mins before bed
- Becoming biologically deprived puts you at risk and may also compromise your ability to care for you patients.

Take Breaks

- Give yourself time for quality breaks
- Whenever possible, allow yourself to do something unrelated to work that you find comforting, fun or relaxing
- Often healthcare providers feel guilty when they are not at work-Recognize that taking appropriate rest leads to proper care of patients after your break
- Take a walk, exercise, listen to music, read a book, do those activities you find soothing and comforting.
- Try to practice mindfulness skills to manage intrusive stressful/anxious thinking
- **Validate any emotions you might be feeling.** There is no right or wrong way to process the COVID-19 experience. It is normal to feel a range of emotions including being overwhelmed, frustrated or angry, worried, anxious, restless, agitated, sad or fatigued.

Connect with Colleagues

- Talk to your colleagues and receive support from one another
- Infectious outbreaks can isolate people in fear and anxiety. Tell your story and listen to others'
- Do your best to express gratitude and work as part of a team

Communicate Constructively

- Communicate with colleagues clearly and in an optimistic manner
 - Try to express frustrations or need correction constructively
 - Compliments can be powerful motivators and stress moderators
 - Share your frustrations but make sure to include solutions.
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- A supportive work culture is vital to maintaining the resilience of clinicians during a crisis such as COVID-19

Contact Friends and Family

- Contact your loved ones
- They are an anchor of support outside the healthcare system.
- Sharing and staying connected may help them better support you.

Stay Updated while Limiting Media Exposure

- Rely on trusted sources of information
- Participate in meetings to stay informed of the situation, plans and events
- Graphic imagery and worrisome messages will increase your stress and may reduce your effectiveness and general well-being. Limit media exposure to a time of day and length of time that you find you can manage effectively.

Self Check-Ins

- Monitor yourself over time for any symptoms of depression or stress disorder:
 - Prolonged sadness
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Intrusive memories
 - Hopelessness or Helplessness
- Talk to a peer, supervisor, or seek professional help if needed.
- **Practice self-compassion.** There is no road map. You are doing the best you can in a difficult situation. Take your situation day by day or hour by hour, if needed. Take breaks from work when you can.

Self Check-Ins

- When you notice stress and anxiety: pounding heart, racing thoughts, feelings of overwhelm
 - Pause to do deep breathing
 - Notice your thoughts, without judgement, allow the pause
 - Reflect on what you might need and how to get that need met
- Realize as you experience more stress your emotions are in an adjustment phase
 - Take time everyday to pause and be present with your thoughts

Honor Your Service

- Remind yourself that despite obstacles and frustrations, you are fulfilling a noble calling-taking care of others
- Recognize your colleagues-either formally or informally-for their service.
- **Recognize the valuable role you and your colleagues play on the front lines of COVID-19**, you are making a difference and taking care of those most in need.

- Contact me:
- snthomas@atsu.edu

Sessions available to Residents

<https://snthomas.youcanbook.me/>

Some free helpful resources available:

Calm

Headspace

Sovello

MyStrength



- **Find ways to see the positive.** It can be easy to get overwhelmed hearing about the growing number of confirmed cases, shortage of resources and loss of life.
- Try to find the hopeful stories about communities coming together to support local businesses, feed hungry children and families, donate money and critical supplies, and recognize front-line workers, like you, for their sacrifice.

