

CARING FOR THE HEALTHCARE WORKER DURING COVID-19

Hospital and clinic staff are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some concrete strategies for managing stress.

Build in self-care

- Schedule and take brief relaxation breaks at work. A few minutes of a break during a shift can be calming.
- Take time each day to do something that brings you joy, even if just for a brief moment.
- Move - Even a 5-minute walk can improve energy and focus.
- Maintain good health habits – regular sleep, get sunlight, eat nutritious foods.
- Take a couple slow, deep breaths before entering a work area, entering a patient room, or clocking out. Breathing is calming and helps your body cope with physical symptoms of stress.
- Avoid or limit use of alcohol and caffeine.

Make meaningful social connections

- Share your concerns and problem solve with colleagues, family, and friends to plan steps to manage practical problems.
- Lean on each other. You will be there when your co-workers need help, so count on them to be there for you.
- Find ways to connect virtually with friends and family like social media, phone, or facetime.

Recognize anxiety

- Anxiety is common with the unknown.
- It's normal to experience feelings of fear, anger, confusion, sadness, and disappointment right now.
- Things are changing quickly. This is difficult.

Prevent information overload

- Limiting the intake of news can be helpful in managing difficult or upsetting feelings.
- Connect to reliable sources of information such as CDC.gov and BJC Covid-19 resources.
- Consider checking in only once or twice a day for 20 minutes.

Maintain control

- Focus on what is within your power. While we cannot control the virus we can reduce our risk of infection.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Maintain 6 feet away from others when possible.
- Do not touch your face.