

HELPING HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS COPE WITH COVID-19

To take care of others during a health situation, first responders must be feeling well and thinking clearly. Stress prevention and management are critical for responders to continue helping in the situation.

IMPORTANT:

UNDERSTAND AND IDENTIFY BURNOUT AND SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS DURING A RESPONSE.

SIGNS OF BURNOUT YOU MIGHT BE:

- Sad, depressed, or apathetic
- Easily frustrated
- Blaming of others, irritable
- Lacking feelings, indifferent
- Isolated or disconnected from others
- Showing poor self-care (hygiene)
- Tired, exhausted or overwhelmed
- Feeling like:
 - A failure
 - Nothing you can do will help
 - You are not doing your job well
 - You need alcohol / other drugs to cope.

SIGNS OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS YOU MIGHT BE:

- Excessively worried or fearful about something bad happening.
- Easily startled, or "on guard" all the time.
- Experiencing physical signs of stress (e.g. racing heart).
- Having nightmares or recurrent thoughts about the traumatic situation.
- Having the feeling that others' trauma is yours.

REDUCE STRESS IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS: DURING A RESPONSE

- Sharing the facts about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful.
- Take care of your emotional response and health.
- Limit your time working alone by trying to work in teams.

STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING YOUR WELL-BEING

- Meet Basic Needs
- Connect with Colleagues
- Take Breaks
- Communicate Constructively
- Contact Family
- Respect Differences
- Stay Updated
- Self Check-Ins
- Honor Your Service

PROMOTING PATIENTS' MENTAL WELL-BEING DURING EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS, SUCH AS COVID-19

- Stay informed
- Educate
- Correct misinformation
- Limit media exposure
- Anticipate and counsel about stress reactions.
 - Discuss strategies to reduce distress, which can include:
 - Being prepared with a personal/ family plan.
 - Taking everyday preventive measures (e.g., frequent handwashing).
 - Maintaining a healthy diet and exercise regimen.
 - Talking to loved ones about worries and concerns.
 - Engaging in hobbies and activities you enjoy improving your mood.
 - If a patient is experiencing severe emotional distress or has a diagnosable mental illness, refer for specialized mental health care.

Responding to outbreaks and/or disasters can be both rewarding and stressful. Knowing that you have stress and coping with it as you respond will help you stay well, and this will allow you to keep helping those who are affected.

For more details and take-out tips, please access:

www.innovamd.com

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018) Emergency Preparedness and Response. Recovered from: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Stress & Coping. Recovered from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.cstsonline.org/resources/resource-master-list/coronavirusand-emerging-infectious-disease-outbreaks-response>