



Health Care Provider Well-Being During Covid-19

Health care providers and other hospital and clinic staff are on the frontlines of the pandemic.

Many of us have competing demands caring for our patients and our families. Here are concrete strategies to help manage stress during this challenging time.

Feeling worried or anxious?

Increased anxiety is common as we navigate Covid-19 and its broad consequences. Patient care and uncertainty about health outcomes, finances, childcare, travel and scheduled events are highly stressful. Action is one of the best treatments for anxiety. Share your concerns and problem solve with colleagues, family and friends to plan coping steps.

Pace Yourself

Our work is a marathon not a race. Monitor yourself for excessive fatigue irritability, poor focus or marked anxiety. If we run on empty, we can't care for our patients, families or communities.

Breathe

Try mindful breathing several times a day. Take a moment for low and slow breaths before getting out of the car, when you enter your work area, prior to entering a patient room or a procedure. Breathing is calming and helps concentration.

Maintain Good Health Habits

As stress and demands increase, our health habits often take a hit. Bring your meals to work to maximize healthy eating, limit alcohol and THC use, prioritize exercise and get some sunlight!

Keep Moving

Aerobic exercise is vital for stress reduction. Consider walking, biking, running and hiking, throwing a frisbee or ball as well as exercise and yoga videos if gyms and other exercise facilities close. For home exercise and Yoga videos see: fitnessblender.com and yogawithadriene.com. A short aerobic walk or workout is better than nothing!

Stay Connected

Reach out to family, friends, colleagues and your favorite community groups for social contact. Call, Facetime, Zoom, Skype, or try Google Hangouts to reduce your isolation. Meaningful and fun connection, emotional support and healthy problem solving are vital to your health and well-being. Consider joining another family or friend for a meal by social media to reduce isolation for everyone.

Take Breaks at Home and Work

Work with your team to take mini breaks. Even a 10-minute walk during your shift is calming and improves vital energy and focus. Plan down time at home. Exercise, distraction with a good book, movie, podcast, games with your family, and mindfulness techniques help us refuel physically and emotionally.

Maintain Structure at Home

If you or your children are working from home, establish a consistent workspace to help with focus and productivity. Plan breaks as well.

Promote Team-Work

If you have children or relatives who need care, let your team, friends and neighbors know asap. They may be in the same situation and relieved to develop a shared plan to help with family responsibilities.

Flexibility is Key

Increased demand for care, social distancing and other unique stressors will test our flexibility and adaptability. We will all have to practice outside of the box – especially when things go wrong and are chaotic. It's ok – ask for support, evaluate, modify and move forward.

