

# LEAVING COVID-19 AT WORK

## Mental Health for Healthcare Workers



The coronavirus pandemic has created unique challenges and stressors. These stressors may affect our mental and emotional health. As healthcare workers, you are doing all that you can to take care of your patients in difficult circumstances. This document provides information on the importance of self-care and taking time for personal wellness.



### YOU ARE ALLOWED TO FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

These are challenging times for healthcare workers. It is okay to be feeling stressed, anxious, and upset in reaction to the pressures you are facing. Having these feelings does not mean that there is anything wrong with you or that you are a bad provider. It is normal to be concerned about the health of your community, family, and fellow co-workers.



### IT'S IMPORTANT TO CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

Take some time to notice how you are feeling. You may realize that certain things make you feel worse, and you can be proactive in caring for yourself in those situations. If you are noticing that you're feeling more stressed, anxious, or sad than usual, you may want to talk to someone you trust or try self-care strategies. Consider reaching out to your primary care provider or to a mental health professional to talk about these feelings if they continue.



### MAKE TIME FOR THE THINGS THAT BRING YOU JOY

If there are things that you like to do and that make you feel good - such as talking to loved ones, gardening, or playing games - protect time during your day to do them.



### CONNECT WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS

It's important to feel connected during this time. There are a lot of ways that you can connect with friends and family virtually. Consider sending a letter, calling, or trying video chats via Facetime, Zoom, or Skype.



### TAKE A TECHNOLOGY BREAK

Consider limiting how much time you spend watching the news or going on social media, especially when you're at home, since these things may increase stress.



### YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH CAN IMPACT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

It's also important to care for your physical health by getting at least eight hours of sleep, exercising regularly, eating healthy meals, staying hydrated, and avoiding drugs and alcohol.



### HELP IS HERE IF YOU NEED IT

There is nothing wrong with asking for help if you are concerned that your mental health is impacting your ability to care for yourself or others. Burnout and secondary traumatic stress are real things that providers may experience during this pandemic. Poor sleep, poor appetite, excessive worry, loss of interest in activities that you enjoy, and feeling hopeless that are causing you distress may be signs of a stress or mood disorder. There are people who can help.

### Q&A

#### I need help now. What do I do?

- If you are feeling overwhelmed or are concerned that you may harm yourself or others, here are things you can do right now:
  - Call 911
  - Call the 24/7 [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255
  - Call the 24/7 [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) at 1-800-985-5990, or text [TalkWithUs](#) to 66746
  - Text HOME to the 24/7 [Crisis Text Line](#) at 741741

#### What other resources can I access from my phone?

- [Hope4Healers](#) is a free service staffed by licensed mental health professionals who provide brief, confidential counseling 24/7 to NC [healthcare workers](#) and their families who are experiencing stress due to working the front-line of the COVID-19 response. Call 919-226-2002.
- Apps: Some popular options include [Headspace](#), [Calm](#), [Woebot](#), and [MoodMission](#).

#### How can I see a professional?

- Many mental health providers are offering telehealth services during COVID-19. Insurance coverage may vary, so check with your primary care provider or insurance provider for more information.
- Apps: [Talkspace](#) and [BetterHelp](#) can help you connect to a therapist virtually.

#### Where can I learn about other resources?

- If you work for an institution, ask what resources are available for healthcare providers there.
- Learn more about stress and coping during COVID-19 [here](#).
- Learn more about what emergency responders can do to take care of themselves [here](#).

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