

<https://www.medicaleconomics.com/news/mental-health-survival-guide-physicians-during-covid-19>

Mental health is one of the most important healthcare topics. Since individuals in the healthcare industry are the first line of defense against infection, especially today's coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, they must keep themselves healthy physically as well as mentally.

Here are 7 ways for physicians and other providers to cope during this difficult time.

Mental health survival guide during COVID-19



Manage your stress

- You and many of your health worker colleagues are likely stressed; in fact, it is quite normal to be feeling this way in the current situation.
- Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak.
- Managing your stress and psychosocial wellbeing during this time is as important as managing your physical health.



Take care of basic needs

- Employ helpful coping strategies:
 - ensure rest and respite during work or between shifts
 - eat sufficient and healthy food,
 - engage in physical activity,
 - stay in contact with family and friends.
- Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol or other drugs
 - In the long term, these can worsen your mental and physical wellbeing.



Stay connected

- Some workers may unfortunately experience avoidance by their family or community due to stigma or fear.
- This can make an already challenging situation far more difficult.
- If possible, stay connected with your loved ones.
- Digital methods is one way to maintain contact.
- Turn to your colleagues, your manager or other trusted persons for social support- your colleagues may be having similar experiences to you.



Diverse Communication

- Use understandable ways to share messages with people with intellectual, cognitive and psychosocial disabilities.
- Forms of communication that do not rely solely on written information should be utilized if you are a team leader or manager in a health facility.



Work together

- Ensure good quality communication and accurate information updates are provided to all staff.
- Rotate workers from high-stress to lower-stress functions.
- Partner inexperienced workers with their more experienced colleagues.
 - The buddy system helps to provide support, monitor stress and reinforce safety procedures.
- Initiate, encourage and monitor work breaks.
- Implement flexible schedules for workers who are directly impacted or have a family member impacted by a stressful event.



Make help accessible

- If you are a team leader or manager in a health facility, facilitate access to, and ensure staff are aware of where they can access mental health and psychosocial support services.
- Managers and team leads are also facing similar stressors as their staff, and potentially additional pressure in the level of responsibility of their role.
- It is important that the above provisions and strategies are in place for both workers and managers, and that managers are able to role-model self-care strategies to mitigate stress.



Educate

- Orient responders, including nurses, ambulance drivers, volunteers, case identifiers, teachers and community leaders and workers in quarantine sites, on how to provide basic emotional and practical support to affected people using psychological first aid.

