

Caring for the Carers: Promoting Mental Health of Frontline Healthcare Workers of COVID-19

The well-being of frontline healthcare workers may be one of the most essential factors in ensuring quality health care services. For healthcare workers themselves, responding to public health crises such as COVID-19 from the frontline can be rewarding, but it also can be extremely stressful. It becomes doubly important therefore, to pay special attention to their mental health and overall well-being.

Typical sources of stress for healthcare workers treating patients with COVID-19:

- High daily workload
- Feeling under pressure
- Being exposed to scenes of human suffering
- Dealing with difficult emotions like frustration, grief, guilt and fear
- Physical isolation and separation from family members (to be followed even after working hours)
- Constant vigilance and fear regarding possibility of infection (and implications for self and family)
- Inner conflict between duty towards public health and wanting to be with family
- Facing stigma & Discrimination



How can you care for yourself at work?

- Take brief breaks and avoid working long stretches
- Use relaxation exercises during breaks
- Work in teams / partnerships
- Access supervision from mentors and peer support from colleagues
- Discuss and share work experiences with each other
- Focus on what is in your control
- Check unhelpful self-talk such as: "Unless I work round the clock, my contribution won't matter."



Finally, do not hesitate to seek professional help if you feel that your stress levels have been persistently high or feeling emotionally overwhelmed

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Email: icall@tiss.edu
Chat: Download the nULTA app on your phone
Timings: Mon-Sat 10:00 am to 8:00 pm



How can you care for yourself after work hours?

- Seek social support and connect with family and friends; even if it is virtual
- Schedule time off-work on a daily basis to do something unrelated to it / something that you enjoy
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Make sure you're getting enough sleep
- Limit media exposure / getting constant updates
- Perform regular "self check-ins": monitor yourself for symptoms of burnout / distress such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating, sense of hopelessness, fatigue etc.
- Avoid/limit use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
- Incorporate spiritual practices into your routine if they have been helpful for you



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