

Resilience – Your Key to Self-Care during the Pandemic



As a frontline healthcare worker, working within high stress environments is familiar. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a new challenge—chronic stress and uncertainty that can threaten both your physical and mental health. By practicing the following strategies, you can build your resilience and protect your mental wellbeing.

Slow Down

When faced with a threat, we usually flee, fight or freeze. Our heart rate increases and our muscles tense. If chronic, you can experience restlessness, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. It's important to recognize these thoughts, feelings and behaviors and then slow down—close your eyes for a minute and take some deep breaths, take a walk, relax—before moving on to the next patient or going home after a long day at work. Other ways to slow down include reading, meditating and journaling.

Establish Healthy Habits

As much as you possibly can, establish a sense of routine. Plan meals, turn off the news, put down the phone before bed, and find time each day to move your body, and disconnect. Good sleep, healthy food and regular exercise will impact your immune functioning as well as your mental health.

Take One Day at a Time

This new virus has thrust us into the unknown. The unknown causes fear, which creates stress. Learn to live one day at a time. The situation is so fluid that if you try to look two or three months into the future, fear can lead to anxiety and depression. Take time every day to make a list of what you are thankful for.

Stay Connected

Strong social support and connection is a significant predictor of positive mental health. At work, engage a “buddy” and commit to checking in with each other every day – sometimes multiple times each day. Outside of work we are protecting our friends and family by self-isolating or physically distancing. You will probably need to be creative, but it is more important than ever to give and receive support. Connect with extended family over Zoom to play a game of trivia, call a friend and share your experiences, drop off food at someone's house. The key is to purposefully and regularly connect with others by scheduling activities.

Remember that you are not alone. Throughout the world, health care workers and frontline staff are feeling the emotional weight of this pandemic. And, throughout the world, individuals, organizations, communities and countries have extended support.

For more resources and information about how to build resilience and cope with the emotional toll of COVID-19, call your Best Care EAP. **Counselors are available at the time of your call, as well as by appointment. Conversations with a Best Care EAP counselor are confidential and free. Don't wait!**

Call **402-354-8000** or **800-801-4182** or email eap@BestCareEAP.org