

I am  
You are  
We are

# Not A Well



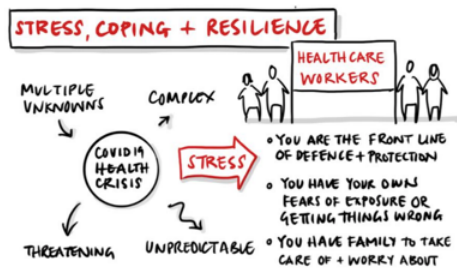
## Healthcare Professionals and Front Line Workers: Staying Well Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Just like a health care professional, a well is a reliable and constant source of invaluable resource. It's easy to forget that while a well may never need replenished to continue to offer this resource, healthcare providers are not wells. This resource page offers information to help care for the helpers during a time when it could be easy to become depleted.

## Stress

### Uncertain Times in Health Care

Many factors during the COVID-19 crisis place health care providers at an increased vulnerability for negative reactions to, and impact from, the COVID-19 crisis.



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### Stress Reactions

Some reactions to stress are normal. These may include:

### Emotions

Fear, anxiety, anger, guilt, irritability, sadness, shame, uncertainty, helplessness

### Psychological

Disbelief, loss of concentration, forgetfulness, preoccupation of thoughts (i.e. with work, with media coverage), indecisiveness, confusion, lack of patience

### Physical

Headaches, nausea, tight muscles, numbness, aches and pains, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping (too much or too little), GI issues, fatigue, heart palpitations

### Behavioral

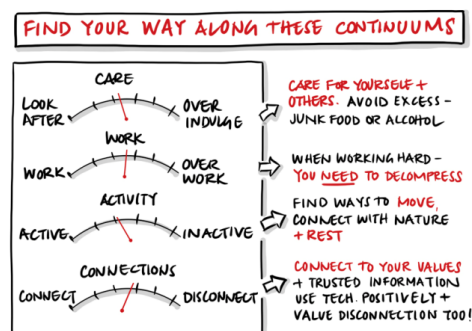
Withdrawal from activities, friends, or family, tendency to blame (others or self), increased use of alcohol or medications, keeping busy all the time without rest

### Stress reactions are not normal when:

- They last 2 to 3 weeks or more
- They interfere with functioning, at home and/or at work
- They are accompanied by intense despair, sadness, helplessness, or suicidality

If this is the case, or if you notice a significant change in yourself, it is advisable to seek mental health care support.

## Self-Care



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Health care professionals face multiple, conflicting demands between their patients, families, and themselves. Therefore, it is essential to find a balance in meeting the needs of the others, as well as oneself.

### Self-Care Tips:

1. Eat
2. Drink water
3. Breathe (mindfully)
4. Take breaks at work and home
5. Sleep
6. Rest
7. Pace yourself
8. Be flexible
9. Exercise (move your body)
10. Connect - to others
11. Connect - to nature
12. Connect - to yourself
13. Maintain structure
14. Practice mindfulness
15. Practice self-compassion
16. Refrain from blame or judgment - of others and yourself
17. Focus on what you can control
18. Seek supports
19. Take a break from media and news
20. Engage in enjoyable activities
21. Ground
22. Find your center, every day
23. Positive self-talk
24. Practice gratitude
25. Foster an attitude of strength, hope, patience, and tolerance

*"When I find myself thinking about everything that's changed, I take a walk outside, in the woods. I look around and I recognize, **nothing here has changed.**"* - paraphrased, with permission, from a patient of the NPLC.

# Mindfulness

## Five Mindfulness Practices for Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Crisis

- from Dr. Dzung Vo, March 26, 2020

1. Coming back to the present moment
2. Gratitude of what *is* still available in the present
3. Walking with a primary intention of walking
4. Mindful consumption of media
5. Allowing time and space to just *be* and not *do*

# Gratitude

Gratitude has demonstrated dramatic and powerful positive effects on mental health, mood, and sense of well-being. Though counterintuitive, the COVID-19 crisis presents many opportunities for which one can practice gratitude, including the opportunity to:

## Question what we have accepted as true

- distinguish and acknowledge real courage and authentic bravery

## Gain clarity

- societal and personal shift of how we use time, energy, and other finite resources.

## Get creative and motivated

- crisis and need lead to innovation and the courage to make "some day" dreams happen now.

## Discover our own inner strengths and values

- share our gifts, love, and light.

## Come together and re-connect

- we are all in this together.

- from <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/gifts-of-gratitude-in-the-midst-of-the-covid-19-crisis/>

# Psychological Strategies for Managing Stress During the COVID-19 Crisis

- from the Institute for Disaster Mental Health

## Name It and Tame It

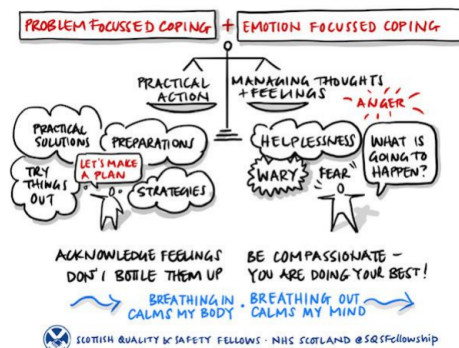
1. What am I actually worried about?
2. How likely is it to happen? (0-100) Am I confusing a possibility for a certainty?
3. How catastrophic would it be if it did happen? (0-100)

## Change What You Can

Implement **problem-focused problem solving** by focusing on that which you can change, in a situation with many things you cannot.

## Accept What You Can't

Implement **emotion-focused problem solving** to manage emotions and reactions and to keep them from becoming overwhelming.



# Resources

## COVID-19 Trauma Response Working Group

Their webpage hosts a plethora of excellent resources for clinicians who are coordinating psychosocial responses to the COVID-19 crisis including resources related to clinician mental health and wellness.

See: [www.traumagroup.org](http://www.traumagroup.org)

# Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) COVID-19 Discussion Board

This discussion board provides an opportunity for peer-to-peer interaction and discussion related to the COVID-19 crisis.

See: <https://covid19.camh.ca/mod/forum/view.php?id=1>

## Support the Workers

Based in the UK, the Support the Workers collective is an international group of experts in disaster response, crisis psychology, high pressure decision-making, and human performance and health under conditions of extreme stress.

They offer a series of single page briefing notes on multiple relevant topics including:

- Leadership
- Extreme stressors
- Resilience
- Motivation
- Anxiety and fear
- Moral injury
- PTSD

See: <https://www.supporttheworkers.org/useful-resources>



For more information or support, please contact:

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- Your Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)