



MENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

Caring for others requires that you also care for yourself. You are not alone.

In the demanding field of health care, stressors are inevitable. From adjusting to unusual hours and extra shifts, to the trauma of losing patients — your job is not easy. The COVID-19 pandemic and continuous Short Staffing has created added layers of uncertainty and increased loss, along with deep concern for the well-being of yourself and your family.

When To Reach Out

1. Sometimes it's easy to recognize the signs that you need to talk to someone about how you're doing. But as you continue to care for patients, fill extra shifts and manage all the usual stressors day after day, it can become routine to ignore the effects of stress and trauma. You can miss the signs that you need support, so it's essential to check in with yourself frequently. Reach out for support if you are experiencing any of these warning signs.
2. Feeling irritable or angry. You may have a lack of patience for things that never used to bother you. You may feel irritated or even angry a lot more than usual.
3. Feeling anxious, depressed, lonely or constantly sad. You may feel happy much less frequently. The bad days seem to far outweigh the good days.
4. Reliving traumatic events. You may want nothing more than to forget the distressing things you've experienced, or the losses and suffering you've seen, but those memories keep reappearing, often unexpectedly.
5. Isolating yourself and lack of trust in others. You may feel alone, yet you also prefer to be alone. You don't want to talk or socialize, and have lost interest in usual activities. You may question whether anyone cares, including your leadership at work, and maybe even people who are normally close to you.
6. Experiencing compassion fatigue, burnout or moral injury. You may find it difficult to empathize with others and are bothered by decisions and situations that feel wrong. The cost of caring may have stretched you thin, and you struggle to get through each shift.
7. Struggling to sleep or oversleeping. You may be negatively impacted by shiftwork and have little recovery time. You never seem to feel rested — if you can sleep at all. Or you may want to sleep far more than usual.
8. New or increased substance use. You, and perhaps others, have noticed an increase in how much you are drinking or using other substances.

(continued on reverse)

Know The Warning Signs

If you are experiencing any of these signs, please don't wait to find support:

- Withdrawal, or self-isolation from friends, family and colleagues
- Marked changes in mood, increased sadness
- Increased or excessive substance use
- Aggressive, impulsive or reckless behavior
- Comments or thoughts about suicide
- Feelings of being out of control
- Difficulty with concentration and usual activities
- Issues with sleep

There are many potential risk factors for a mental health crisis or suicide, such as cumulative trauma or being injured on the job. There are also protective factors, such as social support from those who understand, access to confidential services and physical wellness. Reach out for support, check on your peers, check in with friends and family.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created some unusual circumstances and as a result, you may find that you've taken on additional roles that create a range of emotions. These feelings and experiences are normal, but they can take a significant toll on your well-being.

It doesn't mean that you are destined to have a long-term mental health condition because you're experiencing this, but addressing signs and symptoms is vital to ensuring lifelong mental health and wellness.

IF YOU ARE FEELING SUICIDAL, CALL 911 or

The National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

The Emotional PPE Project is a directory that provides contact information of volunteer mental health practitioners to healthcare workers whose mental health has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The Emotional PPE Project is an independent tax-exempt nonprofit (501(c)(3)) organization fully staffed by volunteers. You may contact us at: **contact@emotionalppe.org**

Therapy Aid provides pro-bono therapy for frontline health care professionals, including individual and group support. **<https://therapyaid.org/search>**

Nurse Groups is a free and confidential videoconference group service for nurses to connect and process issues related to COVID-19 **support@nursegroups.org**

911 At Ease International (911AEI) exists to support first responders and their families, so they can do their best to serve their community. 911AEI is committed to keeping our first responders strong. Please dial **888 AT EASE 4 (888-283-2734)**