

# BUILDING RESILIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PRINCIPLES

This document tip sheet outlines practical steps to facilitate an empathic and collaborative approach. Framed by the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care, these support efforts foster a sense of safety when working with patients and families, as well as with colleagues and peers. \* See resources



## SAFETY: Physical & Psychological

### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

#### Physical:

- Knock on the door and introduce yourself.
- Say what you will do before you do it, even for sedated patients.
- Explain the medical equipment.
- Be at eye level with patients when possible.
- If relevant, assess basic needs: “Are you having any concerns about access to food, medicines, housing, etc?”
- Assess patient’s concerns: “Do you have any questions about masks, hand hygiene, or physical distancing?”

#### Psychological:

- Acknowledge how difficult it is not to see each other’s faces due to masks/ PPE.
- Consider asking: “What would make you feel safe/comfortable now?”
- Consider asking open-ended questions: “How are you and yours doing in the current situation?”
- Consider asking: “Have you had any life experiences that you think might be impacting your health or could help us in your care?”

#### Virtual Appointments:

- Establish the degree of privacy: “Are you alone? Are you able to talk freely? Are there issues that we can’t discuss today, but you would like to in another visit when you have more privacy?”

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

#### Physical:

- Are you tired, overloaded, distracted? Consider asking your team when you can take a break.
- Have you created a healthy action plan? \*
- Do you have questions about personal protective equipment, physical distancing, and hygiene protocols?

#### Psychological:

- What works best for support? Who is in your support team? This might include EAP\*, friends, family, clergy, primary or mental health care provider, etc.
- Have you thought about how to address worrisome thoughts or feelings?
- Can you notice your own strength? Remind yourself of one (or more!) things that went well today.
- Think about how you might use some of your time off to do things you enjoy.

#### Virtual Meetings:

- Consider virtual ways to socially connect while maintaining physical distancing.
- Recognize that people may have circumstances that make it challenging to engage virtually and may need different things at different times.



## CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, and GENDER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

- Ensure an interpreter is available for those whose primary language is not English.
- Consider how a patient’s life experiences, especially prior trauma or adversity might affect their experience, attitudes and beliefs of medical interventions.
- Some communities may distrust medical institutions and procedures. This could be based on historical trauma.
- Consider ways to include patients’ cultural and spiritual practices in their care plans.
- Consider who is included and excluded in developing and implementing care and intervention policies.
- We all have biases and they tend to surface during periods of stress. Positive or negative bias can impact care. Question and reflect on your responses to an individual’s race, ethnicity, weight, age, sexual orientation, gender identity.

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

- Recognize that our unique life experiences (personal and professional) will impact the ways we understand and cope with COVID-related stressors.
- Is your colleague from a community that is highly impacted by COVID? Recognize that colleagues may be affected in ways you are not.
- Consider attending a webinar or using resources to learn about health and racial inequities of COVID infection in Boston and more broadly.
- Are there other ways you can further understand and learn about health equity, white advantage and historical oppressions?

This Tip Sheet was created by members of the Partners/MGB Trauma-informed Care Initiative: Annie Lewis-O’Connor, Eve Rittenberg, Nomi Levy-Carrick, Samara Grossman and Archana Basu with the assistance of Jeannie V. Lee & Emily Dehmer

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## COLLABORATION



### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

- Be proactive about ways to connect with loved ones by video or phone.
- Assess resources available to the patient. Are they interested in peer-support networks such as 'Patient's Like me?' support groups, etc.
- Clearly communicate information about who is on patient's care team and how questions can be answered.
- Develop a care and communication plan for patient and family, including the use of interpreter services.
- Promote shared-decision making when possible.
- Consider whether patients have been able to process information and ask questions (for example, use 'teach back').

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

- Consider team-based care especially around complex cases.
- Are you including and communicating effectively with members of your patient's health care team?
- Is there a "buddy" at work with whom you can give and receive support?
- Consider offering support. i.e. "I appreciate your sharing with me, I am sorry for what you are going through. Is there something I can do to support you?"
- Consider effective ways to collaborate: huddles, text-page, epic note, use of 'stickies' in EPIC, use of Acute Care Plans for examples.



## PEER SUPPORT

### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

- Proactively consider ways for hospitalized patients to connect with loved ones by video or phone.
- Assess patient's interest in peer-support networks such as 'Patient's Like me'; support groups, etc.
- Provide resources for community-based supports in the patient's primary language.
- Help patients identify their social supports.
- Ask patients to share how they cope best so you can support them. For example, "what has worked for you in the past." (i.e. family, religious practices, music).

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

- Are you feeling isolated? Are you feeling stressed? How might you seek out peers, so that you don't have to worry alone.
- Check in with your colleagues. Ask: "How are you doing?" "You can share as much or as little as you want, I am here to support you and can just listen if you prefer."
- Acknowledgment is powerful: "I am sorry for what you are going through., "Let me know if there is something I can do to support you." Remember you don't have to fix things.
- If your stress is impacting your quality of life or functioning, think about reaching out for support.
- Consider how to adapt huddles and social gatherings to video platforms (texting, face-time, social media, etc)\*

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## EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, AND CHOICE



### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

- Invite patients to share any concerns or discomforts: explain that this is not considered “complaining”, but rather information that can help optimize their care.
- Ask patients to share how they cope best so you can support them.
- Consider ways to respect a patient’s decision, even when you do not agree.
- Consider when patients might have opportunities for choice. (i.e., approaching a patient on their right side based on their preference).

#### Virtual Appointments

- Acknowledge that this way of ‘seeing’ your provider is different.
- Listen to patient mode preferences of their visit; telephone or video or in-person, and balance with your clinical opinion on the optimal format.

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

- You are an essential part of the fight against COVID.
- Are you a manager or supervisor? Find ways to engage *all* your staff in decision making or creative responses to issues.
- What are some ways you could share your concerns and worries with managers and colleagues (in dialogue, conversations, meetings, or emails)?

#### Virtual Meetings

- Consider how to adapt huddles and social gatherings to video.
- Offer participants opportunities to provide input through modalities such as chat, reaction buttons, off-line feedback. Some people may not be comfortable with virtual platforms.

## TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSPARENCY



### WHILE CARING FOR PATIENTS & FAMILY

- Explain the reasons for changes in normal procedures such as visitor limitations.
- Be transparent during these uncertain time by acknowledging that we don’t have all the answers (“I don’t know the answer to that question, but I will try to find out”).
- Invite questions from patients and their family members.
- Share information in a timely fashion.
- Share with patients the limits of confidentiality (i.e. **mandated** reporting).

### FOR YOU AND YOUR CO-WORKERS

- Assume good intent.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Seek to understand and gather more information (“Can you tell me more about that?”), before judging.
- Ensure colleagues and team-mates understand their roles and why procedures and policies are changing.
- Take personal responsibility for learning about new policies and procedures.

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## DEFINITIONS

- **Trauma-informed Care:** Practices that promote a culture of safety, empowerment, and healing. A medical setting can be a terrifying and a triggering experience for someone who has experienced trauma and adversity.
- **Health Equity:** When all people have a fair and just opportunity to be healthy, especially those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice, and other avoidable systemic inequalities that are often associated with social categories of race, gender, ethnicity, social position, sexual orientation, and disability. (Vermont Department of Health)
- **5 stages of Grief:** Grief is unique - there is no 'right' or one way to grieve. Stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. <https://www.psycom.net/depression.central.grief.html>
- **Moral Injury:** An injury to core values and often occurs when people are unable to provide maximal care for individual patients due to limitations that are outside of their control. This can include witnessing or learning about these circumstances. Signs include guilt, shame, outrage, distrust, and isolation.
- **Burnout:** A product of chronic workplace stress characterized by exhaustion, negativity, and reduced productivity. Other signs of burnout include hopelessness, cynicism, and mentally distancing oneself while at the workplace
- **Resilience:** The capacity to recover from or adjust to a misfortune, a difficulty or a change. Ability to 'bend' not 'break'
- **Physical distancing:** sometimes referred to as social distancing. We refer to physical distancing as maintaining physical distance, donning a mask, and refraining from physical contact. Socially, we believe that people need to connect while maintaining physical distancing.

## RESOURCES

- **SAMHSA Psychological First Aid for First Responders**  
<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/nmh05-0210.pdf>
- **NCTSN: Psychological First Aid (PFA) Field Operations Guide: 2nd Edition and PFA Mobile edition**  
[https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa\\_field\\_operations\\_guide.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_field_operations_guide.pdf)
- **Psychologic:**  
[https://pg.postmd.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Psychological\\_FirstAid\\_HealthCare\\_COVID-19\\_Workbook\\_Final\\_2.pdf](https://pg.postmd.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Psychological_FirstAid_HealthCare_COVID-19_Workbook_Final_2.pdf)
- **TIC approach:**  
<https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma-informed>  
<https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma-informed-care/>
- **Infographic: COVID-19 Crisis Mode: Building Resilience**  
<https://covid19.ariadnelabs.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2020/05/COVID-19-Crisis-Mode-Building-Resilience-HCWs-2020-04-30.pdf>
- **Infographic: COVID 19 Crisis Mode: Building Resilience- Strategies for Leaders and managers**  
<https://covid19.ariadnelabs.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2020/05/COVID-19-Crisis-Mode-Building-Resilience-Managers-2020-04-30.pdf>  
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## Trauma Recovery and Resilience Building Resources

	Resource Title	Description	Access
Educational Video	<b>Caring for Yourself &amp; Others During the COVID 19 Pandemic: Managing Healthcare Workers' Stress</b>	The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare video recorded conversation with Patricia Watson, PhD, of the National Center for PTSD about ways healthcare workers can manage stress — theirs and others' — as we face the ever-changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.	<a href="https://youtu.be/F4LU-EoAFew">https://youtu.be/F4LU-EoAFew</a>  Accompanying resources: <a href="#">Handout: For Mental Health Providers Working with COVID-19 Patients</a>  & <a href="#">Handout: Managing Healthcare Workers' Stress Associated with COVID-19</a>
	<b>Headspace</b>	Guided meditations aimed at tackling problems related to anxiety, sleeplessness and relationships.  iOS and Android	<a href="#">Sign up using your work email</a>
Mobile Apps	<b>Evermind</b>	Help you build resilience and handle stress using cognitive behavioral therapy techniques. In the app, you can access guided programs on improving sleep, disconnecting, challenging negative thought patterns and more. Available activities include meditations, audio and games to help you unwind, relax and get better rest.	<a href="#">Sign up using your work email</a>
Online Tools	<b>Care Online: iCBT (Internet Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)</b>	Offers CBT therapy through clinically created online modules. It is appropriate for mild to moderate depression, anxiety, or mixed anxiety and depression.	Employees will need an initial screening and referral from an EAP provider to sign up for this program. Note: Some Partners primary care providers (PCPs) also offer access to this program.
	<b>Sanvello</b>	App for self-care, peer support, coaching and therapy harnessing the tools of CBT and aimed at providing on-demand access to virtual care.	<a href="https://www.sanvello.com/">https://www.sanvello.com/</a>
	<b>Partner's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</b>	EAP provides information and is a resource to discuss stress and resilience concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.	1-866-724-4327 (In case of emergency, please call 911 or your local hospital emergency service.)  BWH/Partners EAP is free, confidential and open for appointments Monday through Friday. If you are experiencing a crisis, please call us at 1-866-724-4327. A counselor is available 24 hours per day/7days per week.  <a href="http://eap.partners.org/WorkLife/HealthyLiving/Stress_Management_and_Self-Care.asp">http://eap.partners.org/WorkLife/HealthyLiving/Stress_Management_and_Self-Care.asp</a>
	<b>Partner's Pulse</b>	These resources have been compiled to help employees cope with everyday stresses and concerns as well as those specific to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the coming days and weeks, they will be adding additional resources and will provide updates when we do.	<a href="https://pulse.partners.org/hub/departments/emergency_preparedness/coronavirus/wellbeing">https://pulse.partners.org/hub/departments/emergency_preparedness/coronavirus/wellbeing</a>

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## Employee Assistance Program Resources

### Stress Management and Self-Care

Those of us who work in healthcare are used to playing the role of caretaker. However, in order to provide the best care for others, we must remember to take care of ourselves as well. Below are some resources to help with managing stress.

**\*\*SUICIDE PREVENTION: SAMARITANS HELPLINE: 877-870-4673\*\***

#### Grief Related Stress During COVID-19

- Our Grief and Grieving Page Contains Resources and Articles on this Difficult Topic.

#### Maintaining Sobriety during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline -COVID-19 Resources for MA **new!**
- Virtual Recovery Resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- How Isolation can affect Recovery and how to Deal with it

#### Managing Stress

- May Is Mental Health Month 2020: Tools 2 Thrive
- MGH psychiatrist and EAP Medical Director, Dr. John B. Herman shares practical tips for coping with Covid stress-Video **new!**
- The Care Program: iCBT program
- McLean Hospital-How Much News Is Too Much News for Good Mental Health?
- How to Cultivate “Healthy Thinking” Habits During Corona-19-National Center for PTSD-VA.Gov
- Caring for Your Mental Health Despite the Coronavirus-McLean Hospital
- Address Your Stress with Recorded Mini-Sessions!
- Sanvello-Free Premium Access to App for Stress, Anxiety and Depression
- Managing the Fear of Coronavirus-PHS-EAP
- Managing Anxiety and Stress-CDC
- Coronavirus and Mental Health: Taking Care of Ourselves During Infectious Disease Outbreaks-American Psychiatric Association
- Coronavirus Anxiety: Coping with Stress, Fear, and Uncertainty-Help Guide
- Tips on Reassuring Children About COVID Related Financial Hardships
- Harvard-Pause for Art-Creative Moments

#### Focus on Stress in Healthcare Workers

- Caring for the Clinician Sue E. Morris, Psy D, Director of Bereavement Services DFCI **new!**
- Schwartz Center Resources and Videos for Healthcare Professionals Coping with COVID-19
- Benson-Henry Institute-Clinician Resiliency Groups for Partners Direct Care COVID-19 Providers
- Building Resilience in Response to COVID-19 for Healthcare Workers
- Resilience Augmentation for Medical Personnel (RAMP) During the COVID-19 Outbreak

#### Stress in Young People and Children

Youth Resiliency Groups: To manage stress and build resilience in children and adolescents, the **Benson-Henry** is offering Resilient Youth workshops for kids in grades 1-12. The classes are appropriate for pediatric patients in our network and to children of all employees across the system. The workshops will be held twice weekly for three weeks. There are also plans to add more trainings and multilingual facilitators. **new!**

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## Employee Assistance Program Resources (cont.)

### Support for Those with Eating Disorders

- Eating Disorder Recovery Support Groups-MEDA-Now On-line Only

### Mindfulness and Ways to Maintain Calm

- Video: How to Feel Less Overwhelmed During the COVID-19 Pandemic-McLean Hospital
- 5/28/2020 - 12:30-1:00pm - Virtual Pet Therapy Online, Live From BWH new!
- Success with Stress- Daily Stress and Resilience Sessions-PHS EAP
- EAP 16-Minute Chair Yoga Practice Watch anytime! Update – EAP sessions phone/video only, no in-person visits
- MGH MoodNetwork-Mindfulness for Wellness-Free, Self-Guided On-Line Program for Skills for Coping with COVID-19 stress
- Free Access to Guided Meditation on the Headspace App for iOS, Android or Desktop via your Partners Log-in
- Free Access to Programs that Build Resilience through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) on Evermind, an App Available for iOS and Android via your Partners Log-in
- Free Access to Calm-Take A Deep Breath

### Spiritual Care Resources

- BWH Spiritual Care
- Harvard Divinity-Spiritual Resources During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- MGH Spiritual Care
- NSMC Spirituality and Wellness
- NWH Department of Spiritual Care
- Free Access to Ten Percent Happier for Health Care Workers-Corona Virus Sanity Guide

### Maintaining a Healthy Life

- Strategies to Promote Better Sleep during COVID-19-Harvard Medical School
- Managing Fatigue During Times of Crisis: Guidance for Healthcare Workers-CDC
- Eating during COVID-19: Improve your Mood and Lower Stress-Harvard Medical School
- Easy, Affordable and Healthy Eating Tips during COVID-19)-Unicef
- MGH Sports Medicine Physical Therapists Provide At-Home Exercises & Stretches-You Tube Video
- How to Stay Active While You're At Home-Sport New England