



TIPS for Managing Stressful Times related to COVID 19: *Healthcare Workers*

Topic 3: Managing Isolation in these Difficult Times

As healthcare professionals, you're being asked to make the ultimate sacrifice by being on the frontlines all day long and then socially distancing yourself at the end of a long shift. Isolation is hard on mental and physical health. While we will all be missing out on the regular doses of oxytocin we rely on through daily interactions with friends and extended family, you may be feeling most deprived having had to give so much of yourself to others in the work that you do. Some tips to keep in mind:

It's important to stay connected with your primary people. None of the experts are saying that you have to keep this distance from your significant other, your children or your pets. Surround yourself with those in your small inner circle that can help ease the stress of social isolation. If you live alone, consider broadening your circle to one or two other people who have similar exposures as you. For example, two young nurses living alone and working on the same unit could plan to have a meal together, knowing that they have the same work exposures and no extended circles of exposure at home.

Social distancing is not always possible when having to work in close proximity with co-workers, patients, and families. Mindfulness can be a tool to use to keep you more aware of your distance to others, maintain appropriate protective precautions, while engaging in meaningful interactions. Chances are your institution is attempting to limit exposure and interactions, so you may find yourself working with only a few individuals throughout your shift. Take this time to get to know them on a deeper level and learn about their interests.

Taking Charge Tip: Relationships

Just as loneliness and isolation can cause stress, having someone to talk to can help you deal with feelings of being overwhelmed. Talking about your feelings with someone you trust can help make the feelings of stress seem more manageable. Remember, a strong relationship involves equal partnership—so when your friend calls you after a rough day, be ready to listen. Getting through hard times together will make you feel closer and less isolated when problems do arise.

[Click to learn more about nurturing relationships and maintaining connections.](#)



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