Managing mental health during COVID-19

During a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is common for everyone to experience increased levels of distress and anxiety, particularly as a result of social isolation. Physicians and other frontline health care professionals are particularly vulnerable to negative mental health effects as they strive to balance the duty of caring for patients with concerns about their own well-being and that of their family and friends.

Use the strategies and resources in this resource (PDF) to manage your own mental well-being while also caring for patients during the pandemic or any other crisis.

Take care of yourself

Airline safety briefings remind us to put on our own oxygen mask before helping others in the event of an emergency. Attending to your mental health and psychosocial well-being while caring for patients is as important as managing your physical health.

Please refer to the additional resources in Caring for our caregivers during COVID-19.

Take care of your staff

Leadership should strive to maintain critical infrastructure and have other support in place for staff during this time, knowing that this may require modifications to existing strategies, tactics and/or roles. Practices will want to protect, to the degree possible, staff from chronic stress and poor mental health, so that they are able to support patients and because it’s the right thing to do.

Take care of your patients

Mental health and psychosocial considerations should be integrated into all response activities. Ensure that your practice has a system in place to identify and provide care for mental health conditions.

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988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

With an increased number of people reporting worsening mental health in recent years, it is imperative that people are aware of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) telephone program.

People experiencing a suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress can call, chat or text 988, and speak to trained crisis counselors. The national hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The previous National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will continue to be operational and route calls to 988 indefinitely.