

Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak



WHO messages for healthcare workers

Manage your mental well-being

Feeling under pressure is a likely experience for you and many of your colleagues. It is quite normal to be feeling this way in the current situation. Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak. Managing your mental health and psychosocial well-being during this time is as important as managing your physical health.

Take care of yourself

Try and use helpful coping strategies such as ensuring sufficient rest and respite during work and between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engage in physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends. Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. Even so, using strategies that have worked for you in the past to manage times of stress can benefit you now.

You're not alone

Some healthcare workers may unfortunately experience isolation from their family or community owing to fear. This can make an already challenging situation far more difficult. If possible, staying connected with your loved ones, including through digital methods, is one way to maintain contact. Turn to your colleagues, your manager or other trusted persons for social support – your colleagues may be having similar experiences to you.

Good quality communication

Use understandable ways to share messages with people with intellectual, cognitive and psychosocial disabilities. Where possible, include forms of communication that do not rely solely on written information.

Get well informed for your patients

Know how to provide support to people who are affected by COVID-19 and know how to link them with available resources. This is especially important for those who require mental health and psychosocial support. The stigma associated with mental health problems may cause reluctance to seek support for both COVID-19 and mental health conditions.

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