

# Promoting the Well-Being of Team Members

Dealing with the Physical and Emotional Demands of Working During a Public Health Crisis



**Providing ongoing psychosocial and well-being support services for employees and their families involved in the response to public health emergencies can enhance the employee’s ability to cope with high-stress environments.**

## 7 Ways

The physical and emotional demands of working during COVID-19 are immense. The response to COVID-19 has brought substantial professional, personal, social, and emotional challenges to most people involved. By targeting the needs of health care professionals and staff, essential service employees, administrative staff, and leadership, provider resiliency can be enhanced. Health systems and providers must take care of their employees to avoid burnout and prevent reduction in available staff.

### **1 Provide staff with an environment where they feel their safety is of utmost importance to the organization.**

- Provide ongoing support for basic needs such as food, adequate hydration, and breaks. Also, consider temporary housing options to limit infection risk to staff member’s relatives.
- Consider implementing policies, operations, or practices that promote social distancing in the workplace and common gathering areas.
- Revisit personnel guidelines to add guidance for those with serious underlying medical conditions, symptomatic persons, and those who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Prevent unexpected changes in processes that can add stress and uncertainty to daily work environments, and design new processes to minimize frustration and anxiety.
- Respect employees’ time-off periods as opportunities to “recharge.”

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*While taking care of others, health care systems and providers must not overlook the needs of their own employees.*

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**2 Maximize flexibility to optimize workforce support and maintain continuity of operations.**

- Update telework guidelines and reporting to maximize telework flexibilities that provide a safe working environment and support workers in higher risk populations.
- Consider updating or implementing Human Resources/Administrative Leave Guidance that enables full recovery for employees who test positive and reduces exposure to other employees.
- Foster an environment where staff feel empowered to work from home when exhibiting signs and symptoms of illnesses that resemble COVID-19.
- Consider limiting travel based on mission needs and federal and state guidelines.
- Review resources available to provide employee health services and consider revising policies to strengthen capacity to support crisis impacts on staff.

**3 Elevate the importance of communications and mental wellness of each health professional and their families by prioritizing exceptional communication strategies.**

- For example, provide ongoing update(s) by phone or social media from trusted sources.

**4 Provide logistical support and communication mediums for health professionals to properly distance from each other and their families when off-shift.**

- For example, hotel accommodations, temporary housing, supplies for home decontamination routines, etc.
- Establishing safe interaction with loved ones and coworkers can help avoid panic and mental stress that could lead to decreased workforce.

**5 Develop a phased approach for returning staff to the workplace that proceeds gradually until reaching unrestricted staffing of worksites.**

**6 Follow relevant linkages with the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund, which has a wide array of provisions to support providers and the health care workforce.**

**7 Create COVID-19 education and training plan(s) focused heavily on driving recovery for health care personnel and communities.**

- Collaborate across stakeholders and interdisciplinary teams to develop a training program that is multifaceted, virtual, and educational.
- Prioritize outreach communications to families of health personnel to minimize impact to the workforce. Consider using tele-education webinars on established platforms.
- Refer to available trainings for health care professionals, including those related to contact tracing plans.

LEARN MORE

For more insight, download the **whitepaper: COVID-19 Lessons Learned: A Resource for Recovery by Deloitte & Joint Commission Resources**



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