

Boston Medical Center Guide for Resident Mental Health and Wellness during COVID-19

Background:

As you are all aware at this point, COVID-19 is having substantial repercussions on our professional and personal lives, particularly with long-term social distancing. It's normal to feel stressed, confused, scared, sad and/or angry during this crises.

WHO recommends proper diet, sleep, exercise, and particularly social contacts with loved ones at home and virtually--FaceTime and Skype highly encouraged--as often as your schedule allows in order to help mediate undue stress and anxiety.

We have all made it through unreal challenges in order to get to this point--however, in no way does or should that minimize the very real worry and agitation that COVID-19 is placing on many of our lives. Please be understanding that everyone, residents included, reacts differently to stressful situations.

To reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions, please read on for several additional tools designed by residents to be helpful to residents in overwhelming times.

FAQs:

Q: *What are best practices to stay sane despite the emotional toll of COVID-19?*

A: STS symptoms range from physical (fatigue, illness) to mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt, etc). Beyond typical burnout symptoms, acknowledge that STS can uniquely impact front-line providers at any point in this process.

Allow unstructured time for you to do absolutely nothing to recover from tirelessly responding to this pandemic at work. Put serious effort into creating a menu of personal self-care options that you truly enjoy. Even if you do not rigidly follow-through on it, attempt to schedule these self-care activities into your regular calendar.

Q: *How intensely should I be practicing social distancing?*

A: Guidelines recommend limiting all outdoor activities as possible--including going to the grocery store, exercising outside, and going to work (unless you are essential staff). Stay home as much as you can, but if you must go out, avoid gathering in groups, stay 6+ feet away from others, and do not shake hands or hug.

Q: *Where can I travel for a quick get-away?*

A: All work-related travel is prohibited per BMC policy. Personal travel is permitted but highly discouraged, and you may have to self-isolate for 14 days if you return from a CDC-restricted location.

Local travel for outdoor activities such as hiking is theoretically possible at time of this publication, within the bounds of good social distancing. However, there is increasing concern for state/local lockdown policies, which may prohibit you from entering or leaving certain communities, potentially including our own.

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BMC Mental Health Resources:

Staff Behavioral Health Support pager: Page x5804 or call the BMC operator, and an on-call licensed clinician who understands the hospital environment will call you back within 30 minutes.

Psychiatry & therapy services for trainees/faculty:

- Dr. Roopa Mathur (Roopa.Mathur@bmc.org)
- Dr. Isidore Berenbaum (bbq@bu.edu, x88674, p0196)
- Beth Milaszewski, LICSW (Employee Assistance Clinician, x 4-4357, or 857-292-2625)
- Accept most insurances (\$5 copay for BMC Health Plan, otherwise depends on insurance)
- Available M-F, flexible times, email or call to schedule

Boston and Virtual Resources:

1. Medical student-led volunteer initiative has been set up to offer childcare and other support services to all BMC providers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Services include:
 - Grocery and pharmacy runs (Note: groceries and other purchases are delivery only and must be reimbursed)
 - Childcare/babysitting
 - Other miscellaneous tasks
 - Fill out this [form](#) with contact info/services
2. There are [virtual fitness classes](#) being offered from Boston based instructors and trainers
3. [Headspace](#) is available free for you
4. Core Power Yoga has a selection of [free online classes](#)
5. [305 Fitness dance studio](#) holds live classes at noon and 6 p.m. EST (recorded and available) on YouTube everyday
6. [Down Dog](#) workout app is available for free
7. [BollyX classes](#) are available at a discounted price

Important Links and Contacts:

- **Command Center:** 617-414-6860 (operating 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. *Call for any needs related to COVID-19*)
- **Behavioral Health/Psychological First Aid [Resources](#) for BMC Employees**
- **Working Well Clinic:** Covid19WWC@bmc.org; Staff and providers should use this email address to report symptoms of and possible exposure to COVID -19
- **COVID-19 Information on [BMC.org](#):** Includes clinical guidelines, screening, testing, and PPE usage
- **MA [DPH Information](#) on COVID-19**

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Additional Mental Health/Recovery resources:

- [SAMHSA National Helpline](#) 1-800-662-4357
- Information and resources for recovery:
 - Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990
 - Boston Emergency Services Team(24/7) 1-800-981-4375
 - Narcotics Anonymous Online Meetings - see [Grayken Center](#) website for listings

*If you have **any** questions about management of your patients with substance use disorders, you can call **MCSTAP (MA Consultation Service for Treatment of Addiction & Pain) 1-833-PAIN-SUD (1-833-724-6783)** for real-time consultation with a board-certified addiction specialist.*