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## WORDS ABOUT WELLNESS

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Today's "Words About Wellness" is brought to you by:

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## Tips from the CDC on coping with Covid-19

Adapted from the [CDC website](#).

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is stressful for us all. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in both adults and children, and the uncertainty about what might happen next is an added source of stress. Doing our best to cope well during this difficult time will make us, the people we care about, our patients, and our communities safer and stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who have mental health conditions, including problems with substance use
- **People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers and first responders**

**Stress responses during an infectious disease outbreak can include:**

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.

**Things you can do to support yourself include:**

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. You may not be able to avoid constant updates from UNC Health, but you can limit how much time you spend listening to or watching the news, or looking at social media, when you are not dealing with work-related issues.
- **Take care of your body.** Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some non-work activities you enjoy, even if time is limited.
- **Connect with others** – while practicing social distancing! Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Consider reaching out to friends or family you haven't had

much contact with in a while.

- **Call your healthcare provider** if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row. This is always a hard thing to do if you ARE a healthcare provider – but there is no reason to think that you would be immune to the effects of stress that other people experience. If the support from your supervisors and coworkers isn't enough, your doctor might have ideas about things that might help.

#### **Additional tips for health care providers:**

Secondary traumatic stress (STS) is the emotional distress that results when an individual hears about the first-hand trauma experiences of others. Healthcare providers are particularly susceptible. There are some things you can do to reduce STS, though:

- First, acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping patients and families after (or during) a traumatic event.
- Learn the symptoms, including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt).
- Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic. While the crisis is ongoing, this may be difficult, but don't tell yourself that self-care can wait until the crisis is over – because we don't know when that might be, and you will feel and function better if you start or keep taking care of yourself NOW.
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy, such as spending (virtual) time with friends and family, exercising, or reading a book, and make a point of doing at least one every day.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.

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## **Resources for coping with COVID-19**



[UNC Health Resource](#) list for mental health/emotional support for co-workers and providers.

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When dealing with COVID-19 (Corona Virus), listen to Baby Yoda (feel free to spread on social media)

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Headspace is offering all US healthcare professionals who work in public health settings free access to Headspace Plus through 2020. What's going on right now is a challenge for everyone. But you, our healthcare professionals, are particularly overburdened. Headspace wants to be here for you and support you as best we can. Helping you be kind to yourself, and your own health, during this difficult time.

If you are a healthcare professional, you can redeem your subscription using your National Provider Identifier (NPI) and email address.

**Here's how you can access Headspace Plus:**

- Select the state where your NPI is registered from the dropdown menu below. This may not necessarily be where you currently live.
- Enter your first and last name as it was registered. This may be the name you used before getting married.
- Enter your individual NPI. This should be your personal ID, not from a hospital or healthcare system.

Scientific Rigor

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studying the science of meditation. Science has been an integral part of the Headspace business since day one. We recognize that the only way to know if we are achieving our goal of improving the health and happiness of the world is to measure it. That's where the research comes in.

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When this is over,  
may we never again  
take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbors  
A crowded theatre  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine checkup  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.

When this ends,  
may we find  
that we have become  
more like the people  
we wanted to be  
we were called to be  
we hoped to be  
and may we stay  
that way—better  
for each other  
because of the worst.

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LAURA KELLY FANUCCI

*wellness*

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