

**TIP SHEET**

## Managing During Peak

During the peak of a pandemic, it is vital to promote whole-person health and wellbeing of staff. In order to provide care for patients, frontline health care workers' physical health and safety and mental well-being must be sustained. In a rapidly changing environment, providing a clear daily plan, resources and daily communication will be key tools to assist you in managing through this challenging and unpredictable time.

Adapt **First Responders First: Sustaining Yourself During the Coronavirus Crisis** from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Thrive Global and the CAA Foundation, to create a customized list of microsteps for self-care, managing stress, mental well-being and connection. This outline can provide a foundation for daily check-ins with staff around their plan for sustaining themselves for the duration of the crisis. <https://content.thriveglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FRF-Microstep-Sheet.pdf>

Access the free fact sheets provided by the **Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress** <https://www.cstsonline.org/resources/resource-master-list/coronavirus-and-emerging-infectious-disease-outbreaks-response> to share with staff and post in break areas and staff offices. This library contains resources for providers, families and leaders impacted during the peak of a pandemic.

### Active Steps for Intentional Staff Engagement and Support

- Provide staff anonymous, written and/or in-person opportunities to speak to you and provide feedback.
- Build bridges to communicate by having an open door policy and spending time in staff space.
- Survey your staff every week via email, suggestion box and/or written survey.
- Trust your gut. If you think your staff member is struggling, they probably are. If you think your staff needs extra support or relief, they probably do.

**The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** provides a free training curriculum <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/longhourstraining/default.html> to reduce the risks associated with long work hours.

Your team will find steps to teach and plan for:

- Physical and mental impact of sleep deprivation
- Safe work practices for managers and staff
- Personal strategies to promote improved sleep
- Additional action steps and quizzes

## Intentional Leadership During Peak of Pandemic in Word and Action

| Peak of Pandemic Brings   | Action of Leader to Support Staff   | Message to Team   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Uncertainty               | Post daily plan to address physical safety (personal protective equipment, infection control) and mental health and wellness (classes, virtual groups, outreach). | The situation is uncertain, but we have a plan.                                     |
| Physical Fatigue          | Survey staff to assess fatigue levels and encourage respite.<br>Schedule free in-house classes such as yoga or other staff-requested classes.                     | You must put yourself first and take time away if needed.                           |
| Increased Trauma          | Provide resources for private crisis counseling, on-site assistance and respite.  | We are resilient and we will get through this together.                             |
| Safety Concerns           | Gather and share data daily; reassess safety concerns as often needed.  | Your health and safety are our priority.  |
| Rigid Attitudes           | If current protocol does not work, change it.   | We can pivot and change to improve this situation.                                  |
| Emotional Exhaustion      | Know your limits; ask for support and assistance.   | You must put yourself first and take time away if needed.                           |
| Loss and Grief            | Acknowledge loss and grief in the moment and provide plan for space to grieve and unexpected trauma during shifts.  | We are here to listen.  |
| Forgetting Basic Needs    | Provide food, hydration, in-house service for meals.  | Take time for your health.  |
| Opportunities for Support | Institute fresh air breaks, a buddy system or other learned best practices.   | We will all adapt to manage a difficult situation.                                  |
| Need for Extra Space      | Provide quiet space for staff to prepare for their shift or decompress after work.  | Claiming space and setting boundaries are needed to preserve health and well-being. |

***“Real heroes don’t wear capes. They wear scrubs and are called health care workers.”***