

TIP SHEET

Recover and Learn

This tip sheet provides resources to support health care workers and leaders in building plans to recover and learn from each other to strengthen our health care workforce for future challenges, including:

- Guidance on supporting staff dealing with trauma, anxiety, depression or burnout
- Emergency preparedness: tools to assess your organization's pandemic response, identify gaps that created issues, and plan for addressing these gaps for future emergencies
- Business recovery tools and opportunities for contracting for tailored support

[Caring for Healthcare Workers during Crisis: Creating a Resilient Organization](#)

This tip sheet from the American Medical Association (AMA) offers suggestions for your organization at all stages of crisis. Following a crisis, the AMA recommends "learning from the crisis how to be an even more resilient and effective organization in the future." Explore the tip sheet for additional resources related to each recommended action outlined:

- Debrief unit by unit as well as by profession
- Catalog what was learned and update the crisis plan for future needs
- Deploy an organization wide approach for supporting the workforce after the crisis; identify new needs to facilitate recovery and restoration
- Honor the dedication, commitment and sacrifice of health care professionals
- Memorialize health care professionals that were lost
- Resume efforts to attend to organizational and system factors that promote well-being and create a resilient organization

Supporting Staff Dealing with Trauma, Anxiety, Depression or Burnout

As with each stage of crisis, it is important to support and encourage staff to care for themselves in the usual ways, including eating healthily, getting plenty of sleep, exercising, avoiding alcohol and drugs. Additional resources for your staff have been created in response to humanitarian aid worker and disaster responder trauma.

Here are a few additional ideas for how to support your staff following crisis:

- Work with your employee assistance program to aid staff in developing self-care plans
- Consider providing staff with access to a PHQ-9 survey to self-identify areas of support or need
- Learn about and look for signs of persistent or severe stress in your staff and ask them to seek help from a licensed mental health professional
- Make sure staff know where to seek help if they need it. [SAMHSA Treatment Locations](#)

Emergency Preparedness – Identifying Gaps and Making Plans

Plan for dedicated time to debrief on how your organization’s crisis processes went. Allow both real-time (e.g., staff debrief meeting) and asynchronous (e.g., suggestion box) opportunities for staff to offer kudos for things that went well and recommendations for things that didn’t go well. Consider using a process like [root cause analysis](#). If your organization practices just culture, use existing processes to address gaps and make improvements to your [Emergency Response Plan](#).

Business Recovery

A variety of organizations can help you create a formal [business recovery plan](#). Find one in your community or contact us to help build a custom solution for your organization to support your efforts to get operations back quickly and stronger than before.

Additional Resources

SAMHSA hosts a number of tips and guides resources – many geared toward disaster response workers but are translatable to frontline workers following a pandemic - that can help your supervisors and staff in recovery after this crisis. Linked below are a handful of brochures to start your exploration of the site.

Tips for Staff	Tips for Supervisors
Tips for Health Care Practitioners and Responders: Helping Survivors Cope With Grief After a Disaster or Traumatic Event Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event Tips for Disaster Responders: Returning to Work Tips for Disaster Responders: Preventing and Managing Stress Returning Home After Disaster Relief Work	SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach Tips for Supervisors of Disaster Responders: Helping Staff Manage Stress When Returning to Work Understanding Compassion Fatigue and Compassion Satisfaction: Tips for Disaster Responders

Tips for Both Staff and Supervisors
A Post-Deployment Guide for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers A Post-Deployment Guide for Supervisors of Deployed Personnel Adjusting to Life at Home: Tips for Families of Returning Disaster Responders A Post-Deployment Guide for Families and Disaster Response Workers

As a sample from the “Post-Deployment Guides” linked above, both supervisors and staff may benefit from acknowledging difficulties associated with:

- Change of pace
- Unrelenting fatigue due to chronic stress
- Cynicism – assist employees in regaining perspective and focus on positive results of their work
- Dissatisfaction with routine work – find ways to incorporate the positive things workers have learned and experienced during their disaster response into their personal and professional lives

- Easily evoked emotions due to fatigue and stress/trauma– be aware of reactions, discuss experiences and be sensitive of comments that might be hurtful or upsetting
- Relating experiences
- Difficulties with colleagues and supervisors – acknowledge them and show proper appreciation for the impact of their work
- Cultural issues – appreciate and respect differences by knowing the cultural groups you supervise

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have recommendations for front-line workers following traumatic incident stress, such as in the wake of a pandemic response. Linked below are sample tips from a few webpages.

- [Traumatic Incident Stress](#): this webpage includes recommendations to maintain health following the incident including:
 - Reconnect with family, spiritual and community supports.
 - Consider keeping a journal.
 - Be aware that you may feel particularly fearful for your family. This is normal and will pass in time.
 - Remember that “getting back to normal” takes time. Gradually work back into your routine. Let others carry more weight for a while at home and at work.
 - Be aware that recovery is not a straight path, but may be a matter of two steps forward and one back. You will make progress.
 - Appreciate a sense of humor in yourself and others. It is okay to laugh again.
 - Your family will experience the disaster along with you. You need to support each other. This is a time for patience, understanding, and communication.
- [Interim NIOSH Training for Emergency Responders: Reducing Risks Associated with Long Work Hours](#)
- [Guidance for Emergency Responders in U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico](#): lists tips for post-response planning, in particular:
 - Guidance for post-exposure medical screening of workers
 - Coping with traumatic events
 - Surviving field stress for first responders
 - [More Information and Resources on Disaster Response](#), in particular, take a look through
 - Emergency responder health monitoring and surveillance
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Stress associated with traumatic incidents and emergency response
 - Work hours and fatigue

[Managing Stress in Humanitarian Aid Workers Guidelines for Good Practice](#)

The Antares Foundation outlines several principles of good practice for organizations to consider in their support of humanitarian workers. The concepts are translatable to our current situation and may provide useful ideas for your organization to consider in support of your health care workers following the pandemic. In particular, the indicators under Principle 7: End of Assignment Support, and Principle 8: Post Assignment Support, may be helpful in your planning.