

Rush University Children's Hospital

Tips for Coping with Coronavirus Anxiety: for Health Care Workers who have to go to Work



Some Anxiety is Normal- Especially Now



- Some anxiety is productive- motivates us to; wash our hands while singing a song; keep our hands out of our face (use hand sanitizer that smells to remind you not to touch your face; open doors with non-dominant hand (you usually touch your face with your dominant hand); practice social (physical) distancing; listen to the news- but not tooo much (we get Rush COVID-19 updates)
- Too much anxiety can be paralyzing- Causes us to ruminate, catastrophize, obsess about the news - thinking we will have “more control” if we just have “more information”

Need to Protect our **Emotional** Health

- Need to protect our “**emotional**” health, not just physical health – even more now than before
- Everyone is sharing a very “surreal” space – you are not alone!
- And your lives are up-ended, with changes, losses, cancelled trips, plans, celebrations, concerns about friends and family who live in other parts of the country/world – a lot of loss – and loss of control; constantly changing schedules

Coronavirus Anxiety driven by **Uncertainty**

- Anxiety- “future-oriented emotional response to a perceived threat” *(Joel Minden, Ph.D.)
- Try to focus on what you are able to do/have done – rather than the “what ifs” or “yeah buts,” because uncertainty is really, really hard!

Lots of Tips for Coping in the Media largely based on those who are staying at home

- Self-care
- Maintain a routine, when possible (eating, sleeping, down time, etc)
- Prioritize well-being
- Meditate
- **Walk/exercise – this is Critical!!!!**
- Keep in touch with friends and family – text, call, face time or skype (facetime with someone you usually just talk with) – virtual happy hours through zoom

Tips (continued)



- Help others
- Try to focus on the positives- the “silver linings” – the difficulty is that with all of you working, **and** balancing home life, silver linings are harder to identify (e.g. having a job; insurance; being together with friends and peers at work...others?)
- Acknowledge your feelings
- Be creative- arts and crafts, puzzles, board games, read, plant, paint, cook
- Netflix, etc.
- Appreciate taking a shower and other daily activities as “wonderfully normal or routine”

“That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief”



- Article by Scott Berinato –
- <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>
- David Kessler – founder of www.grief.com and co-author of a number of books with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
- Important to acknowledge the grief you may be feeling right now – collective grief
- Anticipatory grief- “that feeling we get about what the future holds when we’re uncertain” Usually it is about the death of a loved one, a life threatening diagnosis. But it also is about “more broadly imagined futures” – a storm coming, ... the Coronavirus.

Stages of Grief



- **Denial** – won't affect us
- **Anger** –making me stay home- constantly changing my work schedule at the hospital; taking away my activities; all the things I have lost
- **Bargaining**- If I social distance for two weeks, everything will be better; If I..... then.....
- **Sadness** – I don't know when this will end
- **Acceptance** – This is really happening. I have to figure out how to proceed – Wash my hands. Maintain social distancing. Work virtually
- These stages do not necessarily happen in a given order–varies individually

With feeling grief, there can also be physical pain and racing thoughts



- Unhealthy anticipatory grief is really anxiety
- And techniques for dealing with anxiety can really help!
- **Meditation and Mindfulness** – Name 5 things in a room, Breathe, Get present in the moment, Feel the materials touching you
- Need to let go of what you cannot control
- “Stock up on compassion”
- “There is something powerful about naming this as grief. It helps us feel what’s inside of us” Its OK to talk about it, say you are having a hard time, share that you cried.

Two strategies for Mindfulness and stress reduction

S-T-O-P

- For some individuals, there has been a change from feeling “**overworked**” to “**overwhelmed**” (working from home; not working, fear of the future, etc)
- For all of you, who have to go to work, it is likely the combination of overworked **AND** overwhelmed
- One strategy proposed by Laurie Cameron who practices mindfulness, is **STOP** – **S**top, recognize that you are triggered, anxious, afraid, frustrated, scared; **T**ake a Breath, or two; **O**bserve what is happening in your body, your thoughts and emotions; **P**roceed with kind, compassionate actions you can take for yourself or others.



Mind Full, or Mindful?



- Ch
- A
- B
- T
- C
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@forbesoste

Personal Strategies for managing Stress – (ChristianaCare)



- **Check-In with Yourself** – take a moment before and after each shift to check in with yourself to assess feelings/thoughts
- **Schedule Worry Time** – If you are having trouble focusing while worried, take 3-5 minutes to write down all your worries. Or have a dedicated time during the day when you will write them down.
- **What you Can and Can't Control** – make a list of what you can and cannot control – focus your efforts on what you can control
- **Focus on Success and Strengths** – Remind yourself of what is going well, and what you are GRATEFUL for. Think of the strengths that you have that have helped you in the past

Personal Strategies (cont'd)



- **Pace Yourself-** Fighting the Coronavirus is a marathon, not a sprint! Take mini-breaks. There will always more to be done, than you can possibly do.
- **Breathe and Be Present** – Future concerns and “what if” questions can take you out of the present moment. Practice deep breathing or mindfulness while washing your hands (and counting to 20), brushing teeth, etc.- to help stay present, focused and centered.
- **Stay Connected** – with family and friends, colleagues. Call, text, facetime with individuals or groups Connect over shared interests, entertainment
- **Exercise, Rest, and Eat Well** – Attend to your basic needs; If you are at the hospital,do what you are able to so that you are able to get some fresh air!

Additional Tips for You as Physicians

- **You are an expert- and you work at Rush** - You are going to be contacted by family, friends, and many others for your opinion, information, updates. Different people respond differently. It is OK to have boundaries - It is probably essential that you have boundaries. As it is, with the changes/updates occurring as frequently as they are, it is hard not to feel that you are “on” 24/7 – which is challenging in and of itself. You are going to need to define/protect some down time- You cannot be working as much as you are taking care of patients at the hospital, in the increasingly stressful and constantly changing environment, and then continue after you leave the hospital. **This is not being self-ish, this is being self-preserving.**



Self-care is not about
self-indulgence, it's
about self-preservation.

- Audrey Lorde

www.facebook.com/twuhealthstudies

“FACE COVID”

by Dr. Russ Harris, author of *The Happiness Trap* 

- “**FACE COVID**” is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to the Coronavirus crisis, applying the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
- F = Focus on what’s in your control
- A = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings
- C = Come back into your body
- E = Engage in what you are doing- in the moment

FACE COVID cont'd

- C = Committed action
- O = Opening up
- V = Values
- I = Identify resources
- D = Disinfect & Distance

F = Focus what's in your control



- Facing a crisis of any kind, fear and anxiety are inevitable and it is easy to get lost in ruminating about all sorts of things that are out of our control
- We have more control over what we do, than what we think, or how we feel.

You Can A-C-E it!



- First step is to “drop anchor” like in a storm, using following ACE formula:
- **A = Acknowledge** what is happening “inside” you -your thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, etc.
- **C = Connect** with your body physically (e.g. press your fingers together, push your feet on the ground, slow breathing, stretch).
- **E = Engage** in the activity that you are doing **Mindfully**. Notice where you are - focus on the activity – and there are many ways to do this- eg Notice 5 things you can see, 3-4 things you can hear, **Breathe!!!**

You Can A-C-E it! - cont'd



- Ideally run through the A-C-E cycle 3 or 4 times slowly, turning it into a 2-3 minute exercise.
- There are free audio recordings (40 seconds (I tried it!)-11 minutes) of “dropping anchor” exercises, which you can listen to
- <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/free-audio/>
- Whatever you do, do not skip the A of A-C-E! It is important to **acknowledge the thoughts and feelings that are present**, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable
- Dropping anchor is a very useful skill to develop – “the better you anchor yourself in the here and now, the more control you have over your actions”

COVID



- **C = Committed Action** –guided by your core values – “what can I do right now”, no matter how small it may be -
- **O = Opening up** – making room for difficult feelings and being kind to yourself. **We can't stop the feelings (fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, loneliness, etc) – they are very NORMAL!**
Acknowledge the feelings, and treat yourself kindly. Self-kindness is essential if you are to cope well with this crisis – especially as a caregiver – and your role as a treating physician. Self-kindness is your own oxygen mask- like on a plane, you need to put yours' on first, before helping others.

COVID, Cont'd

- **V = Values** – what do you stand for in the face of this crisis? Values could include love, respect, humor, courage, caring, etc. Find ways to practice your values during your day.
- **I = Identify resources** – for help, assistance, support, advice, including friends, family, neighbors, etc.
- **D = Disinfect & distance physically** – wash your hands, and practice social (physical) distancing as much as possible!



Take a Walk

Madoka Ogitani

Resident and Faculty Wellness

- Not that long ago, Dr. Kramer, Dr. Voigt and I gave a grand rounds on Wellness, and Burnout. We were focused on wellness, our 2nd year wellness rotation, our resident retreats, resident support groups, and developed a faculty wellness committee – How the world has changed in the last months-
- Now it is imperative that we find new and innovative ways to continue supporting all of you – residents, faculty, and staff.

Time to get additional Help...



- Use your coping skills – If symptoms start to significantly interfere with your personal life or your ability to work, ask for help – let someone know – Our amazing Chiefs – Sacha and Kelsey, Faculty, your peers
- Burnout (which understandably is more present now) can lead to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and occasionally PTSD (secondary trauma)
- Warning signs might include: Increased Irritability, withdrawal, suicidal thoughts, increased alcohol/drug use or other ways of self-medicating, difficulty sleeping, changes in eating patterns, difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, paranoid or delusional thinking; noticeable change in behavior

Other Resources



- For Residents and Medical Students: If established care is already established with the Rush Counseling Center (312-942-5726; Dr. Hilarie Terebessy 312-942-3013 is a fabulous contact), phone sessions will be scheduled (Monday-Friday 9-5). The counseling center is not conducting intake sessions via phone. New clients will be referred to Perspectives (833-304-3627).
- For medical students, residents, faculty and all Rush staff, Rush Wellness Assistance Program/Perspectives (833-304-3627) is available to provide mental health services 24/7 for you and any family members, no matter where they are (in the country- maybe the world). These are virtual counseling sessions through Zoom. After 5 sessions, they will help you find a therapist in network. If you need a medication consultation/evaluation, they will help you find a psychiatrist in network.
- If you are in crisis, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All calls are confidential, and this service is open to anyone/everyone. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

HEADSPACE



- **Headspace** is “the most science-backed meditation app in the world.” **Meditating**, or deliberate breathing, even for one minute during the day, can make a difference in your stress level!
- Headspace is the Meditation app our residents had access to last year, though the Heal the Children grant
- All healthcare professionals are now eligible for free Headspace access – all you need is an individual NPI (or be a member of the AMA)
- And, with a more limited number of meditations, **Weathering the Storm**, is available for free for everyone!
- Headspace also has good meditations for kids
- <https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19>

Additional support from In-House Mental Health Professionals



- Mental Health workers in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences are being asked to provide Wellness care for “our Rush family”
- The Wellness Task Force has initiated Wellness rounds with teams visiting each unit and meeting with staff, all staff including hospital supportive services
- Their delivery of support is accommodating the growing need for emotional support

Rush Wellness Consult Service

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- “Rush Wellness has launched a Wellness Consult Service to support on-site employees and providers coping with stress and anxiety related to COVID-19. This service is supported by an interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, advanced practice providers, psychologists, social workers, and chaplans. Simply page 2323 while on campus to have a member of the team respond to either individuals or units in need of support. This service provides in-person support and resources to those on-site at RUMC”

RMC Student Childcare/Household Management



Volunteers for **Housestaff**



- Childcare/babysitting
- Grocery run
- Pharmacy run
- Pet Care
- Tech assistance for those figuring out Zoom/remote technology
- Other
- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKMJCbw75bDUfTQ1ceHTeCTo4nr_242nb-nLLeYMFeKAY5Hg/viewform

CCOM medical students to help **healthcare workers** in Chicago and surrounding suburbs



- Sponsored by Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine - Midwestern University (contact: Palak Patel ppatel52@midwestern.edu)
- **For Healthcare workers:**
- Pet care
- Childcare/tutoring
- Food/Supply Delivery
- Meal Preparation
- Other
- **For Clinics and Hospitals:**
- Screening/Triage; Staffing Hotlines; Blood Draws; Patient Transportation; Interpreting; Blood Draws and medication administration; Clinical documentation; make calls to cancel/reschedule non-urgent appointments and elective procedures; Telemedicine
- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeyJgfyRSSoFFio6DOCwsLcbQ44HjBEll7tdqlrx2n0WBSr7Q/view/form>

Daily Centering Message



- If you would like to receive the daily centering message each day, send an email to:
- Naomi Parrella <Naomi_Parrella@rush.edu>
- My recommendation is that we enlist the entire department.
- It is a pause, a moment to stop, and breathe. Has a Grounding exercise that is easy to follow. Important for everyone, especially now.

Centering Message



- Today, is Wednesday, March 25, 2020. The cherry blossoms are blooming in places, it is crisp outside, and as of this writing, the sun is coming up.
- It's been an emotionally draining time. There is uncertainty and fear around us right now. There is also love and kindness around us, always.
- During times of uncertainty, it helps to have some structured routines. We'd like to offer a daily anchoring message for those of you who may find it helpful for you, your coworkers, your loved ones, and/or your community/patients.
- And if you have something uplifting or inspiring or empowering that you'd like to share, a story, a quote, thought, please send and we can include it at the end of each day's Daily

Mindfulness/Relaxation Exercise

- Here's what you can do today, right now, during transitions, after listening to the news or when going sleep:
- Roll your shoulders back, smile to yourself, & relax your jaw.
- Take slow deep belly breaths, allowing your stomach to rise with each breath in and relax with each breath out. You may find that each breath gets better and better. Allow your shoulders to relax on each exhale.
- Practice Physical grounding
- When you are sitting in your chair take a few seconds to feel your feet on the ground, feel your buttock on the seat, feel your back against the chair.
- As your feet are grounded, with each deep belly breathe out, allow your shoulders to release and loosen.
- Count backwards from 100 by 7's

Anchoring Yourself



- Anchor yourself with this daily statement:
- “I am [**Name**].
- I work at Rush and I’m doing an AMAZING job taking care of sick and worried people.
- I love myself because I have kindness and love in my heart and soul.
- I am part of the Rush family and we are all working together to get through this.
- This is temporary.
- We can do this.
- As I think about those I love and care for, I send loving kindness out to all people.”
-

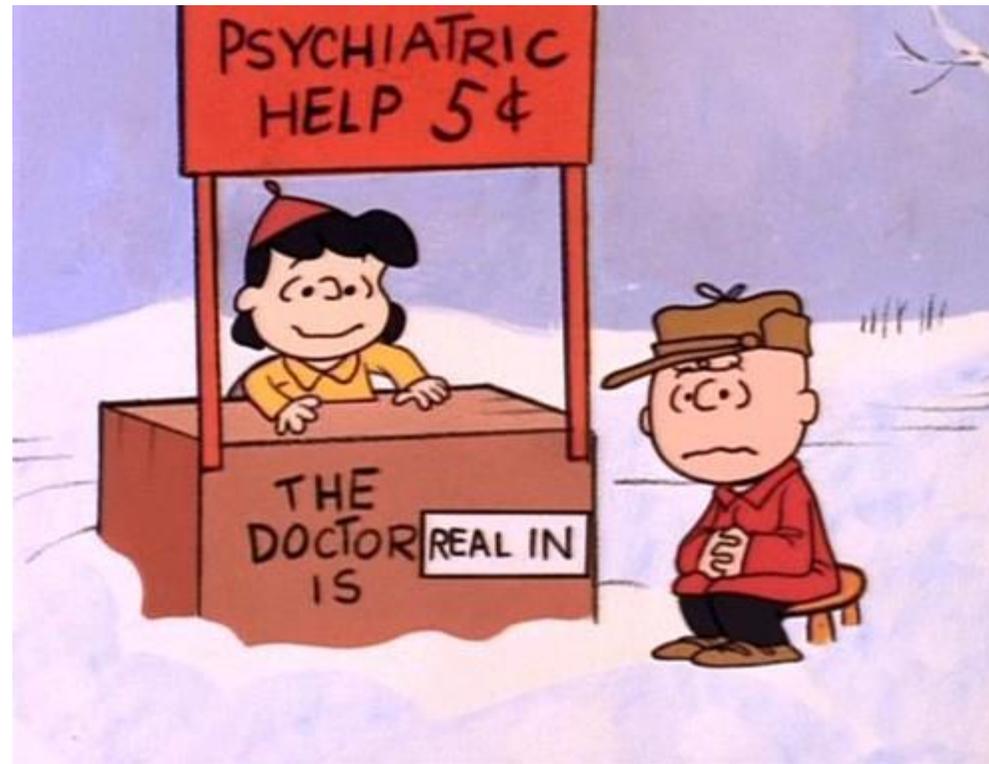
Check in with Each other



- Check in with each other
- Ask “How are you doing right now?”
- Anything I can do?
- Asking, and checking in with faculty, residents, staff, clerks, inside and outside the hospital – can make a HUGE difference
- Faculty is going to check in regularly with residents
- I’m going to check in regularly with residents
- What are the best ways to check in regularly with faculty?- What do **you** need to help support all that you are doing? How are you doing? Anything I/we can do for you right now?

Additional Resources: Jeannie Aschkenasy 

Call or text anytime: 312-420-0934 



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Dr. Latania Logan- Teaching Children about Handwashing



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWQARQrH3yA&feature=youtu.be>