CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Have you ever heard the saying, "Oxygen to yourself first?" It's a routine announcement that airline crew advises passengers on each flight prior to take-off. It means, "Take care of yourself before helping others." Whether its everyday or during a prolonged emergency, mental health professionals recommend that we all incorporate a daily routine of basic self-care practices. Remember the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:



Sleep/adequate rest, food/nutrition/hydration, sheller in lines are all so important, that we as humans, could not survive without them.

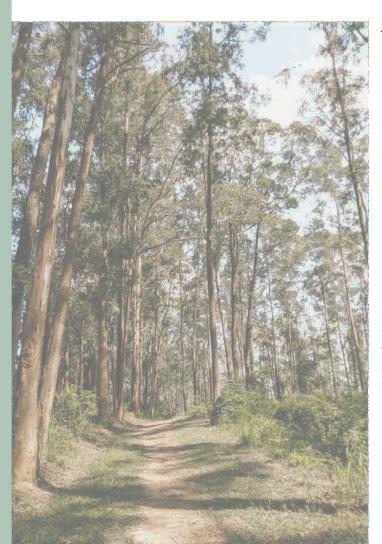
Especially for the caregivers among us – when we are typically at the schedule and needs of others, we may often lose awareness about what are own needs even are. Constantly ignoring your own needs, can unfortunately lead to a lack of self-awareness and make us <u>less</u> resilient and <u>less</u> able to tolerate stress and strain.

How about setting 5 minutes each day to perform a quick assessment of your own needs? Ask yourself some questions and perform a self-inventory. When you do it every day, it will become much more routine. There's lots of examples available and it may look something like this:

Yes/No

- Have I gotten enough rest/sleep during the past two weeks?
 Am I taking meal breaks and eating well-balanced meals and healthy snacks?
 - Am I able to concentrate on tasks?
 Do I have built- in physical exercise added to my day (suggested at least 3x/week)
 - Am I taking all my prescribed medication?
 - ______Is my social circle intact and am I keeping up with my friends and family?
 - _____Do I take time to reflect/pray or engage in some spiritual time?
 - _____Do I feel that my sense of perspective/sense of humor is intact?
 - When I have a rough day, am I able to recover from it and move on?
 - _____Do I know how and where I can reach out for help if I need it?

If you have any "No" answers, it is time to change! Take advice from the health experts (and possibly your close friends and family). Check out available websites such as mentalhealth.gov and even some apps that can help; Calm, Shine, BreathingZone and Happify are just a few.



How to Know If You Need Help

Typically, having difficulty sleeping and not able to concentrate, feeling overwhelmed, irritable and hopeless are all signals that our brains and bodies may need assistance. This is the time to reach out to your peers and colleagues, and your family and friends who know you best. Usually in times of crisis, your coworkers who are also going through a similar situation, can be very helpful but are also feeling stressed. Help each other by making sure you and your team are getting emotional care when you need it.

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Resources

During the crisis, CONCERN is set up for prompt telehealth. Be pro-active for yourself and family members and set up an appointment if you need it.

Additional Resources

The Healing Room is available, as always 24/7. We've added hours with Dr. Mary Ann Donohue-Ryan, a mental health advanced practice nurse, from 1 PM – 3 PM Mondays – Thursdays and additional hours from 7 AM – 9:30 AM on either Saturday or Sundays. Her cell is xxx-xxx-xxxx if you'd like to check in with her @ anytime, or to come to your huddles in your departments.

An Additional Note

A heartfelt "Thank you" for everything you do, every day, on behalf of the patients, their families and your community. Future newsletters will address Coping with Daily Life; Dealing with Personal Family/Public Pressure; How to Manage Social Distancing as a Healthcare Professional: How to Help Your Co-Workers. If you have any other topics, please email: maryann.donohue-ryan@atlantichealth.org

Positive Updates on the COVID-19 Outbreaks from Around the World:

Johns Hopkins researcher says that antibodies from recovered COVID patients could help protect people at risk (hub.jhu.edu)

Today's Positive Podcast: The Positive Head Podcast

