

## **Staying Well**

Many people have asked about ways to stay well and resilient during this time of extreme stress, fear, and uncertainty. While we know there is not a “one size fits all” or silver bullet for well-being, it seems prudent to pass along a few things to think about.

- **Take care of yourself.**

It may sound cliché, however as health care providers (and parents, friends, partners, etc.) it is very easy to neglect our well-being in order to care for others. Be aware of the concept of “over-caring” (depleting yourself while giving to others). Think about the things that are most important for YOU to feel well. Is it sleep, exercise, good nutrition, connecting with family and loved ones? Make a list of a few top priorities and remind yourself that in order to take care of others, YOU need to be well to do that. Remind your colleagues that they deserve to be well too. Give everyone permission to take care of themselves.

- **Social Media, News, etc.** What information are you inundating yourself with? Do you have limits to the types of notifications you receive on your devices? Do you purposefully turn off the news and alerts to give yourself a break from the barrage of information coming at you? What is your threshold for getting “what you need to know” but not becoming overwhelmed with information? Consider the sources from which you get your news and consider limiting the volume/intensity at which it comes your way.

- **Share in Positivity.** Science shows that our brains at positive work better than they do at negative, neutral or stressed. There are well-studied “Positive Psychology Interventions” that are proven to promote well-being. Some of them are:

- a. **Random Act of Kindness**—do something nice, wholly unexpected and notice what happens to your mood
- b. **3 Good Things**—just before your head hits the pillow at the end of every day, reflect on 3 good things and your role in bringing them about. Doing this practice for 7 days in a row has shown improved happiness and decreased depression *6 months after* the intervention.
- c. **Gratitude Letter (or text, email, call)**—Think of someone you are grateful for, tell them. Tell them why, what, when, where and how they did something that you are grateful for. Write them a letter, call them and read it to them. Or send a quick text or email of thank you or appreciation.
- d. Practice hope—what is something you hope to be doing 15 years from now? How does it make you feel to think about that thin? To participate in an exercise/ study out of Duke, follow this link: [https://duke.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_03rPaBIBXRt5TuZ](https://duke.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_03rPaBIBXRt5TuZ)

- **Practice Mindfulness.** There is ample science behind the benefit of mindfulness for improving well-being. Mindfulness helps us recover from stress and “self-regulate” during times of stress. *Mindfulness is present moment awareness, on purpose, without judgement.* Simply notice what is happening right now. Do a body scan or notice your 5 senses. Notice your reactions to things coming at you. Perhaps try out an app such as **Insight Timer, Headspace or Calm** to do regular guided meditation practice or a beginning meditation course. Try setting aside time today to practice being mindful (maybe just 3 breaths, or maybe 10 minutes) and notice how you feel after doing so. If you like the way you feel, do it again tomorrow. Headspace is offering free access to their app for all US healthcare professionals who work in public health settings.

- **Have Compassion, Kindness and Patience.** When stress runs high, we tend to be at our worst, and that can come out in how we treat each other. Try to find extra patience, grace, and kindness in your interactions with colleagues, loved ones, and especially strangers. We can set the tone for what people around us are experiencing. Sharing an attitude of caring and compassion can be as contagious as stress and anxiety. Have compassion for yourself. What we do is hard, and everyone one of us deserves to be appreciate for the difference we make in the lives of others.

## **TIPS FOR LEADERS**

- **Leaders are in a position to model self-care.** Tips for teams that can be incorporated into the course of the day:
  - Start or close meetings with 2 minutes of “what is going well today?” or “What should we be thankful for in the last 24 hours?”
  - Start meetings with a mindful moment: Take 60 seconds to do whatever you need to do to be fully present for our time together: deep breathing, finishing a text/email, jotting down your to-dos that are floating in your brain, a mindful stretch, etc.”
- **Delegate.** Leaders’ plates are already full, now we are taking on even more. Be creative (and trusting) about delegating and asking for help. We need to be able to lead effectively over the long haul.
- **Take Breaks, ensure others are taking breaks**
  - Hold each other accountable
  - Schedule days off, disconnect from emails when taking time off
- **Offer help to others you see suffering/struggling**
  - Remind people of resources that are available are for everyone (encourage leaders to access them too)
  - It’s hard to recognize distress/suffering in ourselves, so maybe we need to hear from others
    - Be gentle—don’t say “you look exhausted/mad/upset”, instead say “I want to check in on how you are doing...is there anything you need right now? Anything I can do to help? What are you doing to take care of yourself right now?”

## **Additional resources:**

### **Links to COVID resources for Faculty/Staff and Training**

- Link to states child care resources <https://covidchildcarecolorado.com/>
- Cu School of Medicine Resources <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/medicine/faculty-affairs/covid-19>
- Department of Psychiatry <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/psychiatry>

### **Free Apps and Articles on Staying Sane in Corona Virus Times**

- Ten Percent Happier: Corona Virus Sanity Guide, free app for health care workers <http://bit.ly/39ZPmSP>
- Washington Post Article: How to stay psychologically resilient during coronavirus <https://wapo.st/2WmZ9hQ>
- Headspace free for health care professionals: using your NPI and e-mail address where it is registered <http://bit.ly/2x8LKiz>
- Insight Timer: Free Meditation App <https://insighttimer.com/>
- Insight Timer Ease Coronavirus Anxiety <http://bit.ly/2TZDYAJ>
- Free Apps through Apple Store including Carrot Fit, Down Dogs, Planet Fitness, Dark Noise and News Apps such as New York Times that have removed paywalls for the time being: <http://bit.ly/38ZQwMA>
- Knowing how many healthcare workers are on the front line right now, we are extending free access to all of our apps until July 1st for anyone working in a healthcare setting. If you are a healthcare professional, please visit <https://www.downdogapp.com/healthcare> to fill out a short form and sign up with your medical/work email address.
- Free workout apps for home fitness:
  - Asana Revel is a yoga-inspired fitness app that has guided yoga flows alongside "regular" workouts, which still have some yoga elements in them <https://asanarebel.com/>
  - Nike Training Club: The [Nike Training Club](#) app offers a variety of guided workouts at different intensities and lengths in easy-to-follow video formats
- From Lara Kirkbride Romero, one of our PRA’s and WellDOM division champions for Department of Medicine: <http://lararomeo.com/yoga-lala-on-alexa/>