The School Nurse & Covid-19 Series

Session IV: Self Care and Support for Others in the Era of Covid-19

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Disclosures/Disclaimer

- I have no financial disclosure or conflict of interest concerning the material discussed in this presentation.

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving incident: please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s COVID-19 website for the most up-to-date information and resources.

- The information in “The School Nurse & COVID-19” series are recommendations at this point in time on August 20, 2020, based on CDC and DESE guidance.
Self Care and Support for Others: Coping and Resiliency

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September 1, 2020
Conflict of Interest

We have no financial disclosures or conflicts of interest.
We’ve been through this before ...
Can we get through this?
Can we hang on?

YES!

Liz Climo, “Lobster is the Best Medicine”. 2015
How do crisis events affect people?

Although everyone is affected, there can be a wide range of reactions and feelings each person can have. How someone reacts depends on many factors, including:

- the nature and severity of the event(s) they experience;
- their experience with previous distressing events;
- the support they have in their life from others;
- their physical health; or personal or family history of health concerns;
- their cultural background and traditions;
- their age (for example, children of different age groups react differently).

Every person has strengths and abilities to help them cope with life challenges. However, some people are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation and may need extra help.
**Coping & ABC’s of Provider Self-Care**

- Think about what has helped you cope in the past and what you can do to stay strong.
- Try to take time to eat, exercise, rest and relax, even for short periods.
- Minimize your intake of alcohol, caffeine or nicotine and avoid non-prescription drugs.
- Check in with fellow helpers to see how they are doing, and have them check in with you. Find ways to support each other.
  - Using humor thoughtfully and situationally
- Talk with friends, loved ones or other people you trust for support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABCs of Provider Self Care</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AWARENESS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be aware of reactions to stress (over working, isolation, substance use)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Monitor stressors and set limits with patients and colleagues</td>
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<td>• Talk to a professional if stress affects your life or relationships</td>
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<td><strong>BALANCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diversify tasks and take breaks during the workday</td>
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<td>• Eat sensibly, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep</td>
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<td>• Engage in activities outside of work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONNECTION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect regularly with family, friends, and community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use mindfulness, meditation, relaxation or journaling to connect with yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Disconnect from professional role and email outside of work</td>
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Adapted from www.HealthCareToolBox.org
Foster Wellness

- **Take care of your body.**
  - Promoting positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, hydration and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of emotions like anxiety or depression.

- **Practice mindfulness.**
  - Mindful journaling, yoga, and other spiritual practices like prayer or meditation can also help people build connections and restore hope, which can prime them to deal with situations that require resilience.

- **Avoid negative outlets.**
  - ...that’s like putting a bandaid on a deep wound.
  - Focus instead on giving your body resources to manage stress, rather than seeking to eliminate the feeling of stress altogether.

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**Professional Resources**
- [www.HealthCareToolBox.org](http://www.HealthCareToolBox.org)
- [www.kevinmd.com](http://www.kevinmd.com)
- Professional Quality of Life Measure
Reframing Perspective and remembering your "why"

- Remember the value in your work – why did you become a nurse?
- Connect with colleagues and friends
- Prioritize your needs: set boundaries, take break from technology, nourish your creativity, set aside relaxation time, get plenty of sleep
Empowerment generally reflects our ability to control or influence attitudes - you have that power!

We many not be able to change an event, but we can change how we interpret or react to it.

Liz Climo, “Lobster is the Best Medicine”. 2015
“How very little can be done under the *spirit of fear.*”

Florence Nightingale
Supporting our colleagues

Liz Climo, “Lobster is the Best Medicine”. 2015
The Power of Giving...and Receiving

Liz Climo, “Lobster is the Best Medicine”. 2015

Where the world comes for answers
Resiliency:

- the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.
- As much as resilience involves "bouncing back" from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.
- There are many aspects of your life you can control, modify and grow with.

*Resiliency is a learnable skill that we all have the capacity to develop*
Resiliency

- Takes time and intentionality – like building a muscle
- Focuses on 4 components:
  - Connection
  - Wellness
  - Healthy thinking /intentionality /mindfulness ---> proactive
  - Meaning
Resiliency is not:

- Being resilient doesn’t mean that a person won’t experience difficulty or distress.
- While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn’t necessarily a personality trait that only some people possess.
- On the contrary, resilience involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that anyone can learn and develop.
- The ability to learn resilience is one reason research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary.
- Increasing your resilience takes time and intentionality.

Resiliency IS based on connection, wellness, healthy thinking and meaning.
Supporting Coping & Resiliency in Others

- Be a listening ear
- Validate peoples concerns
- Be thoughtful with your words and ensure psychological safety
- Collect questions, encourage curiosity, seek answers
- Send personal follow up to people to check in
- Message and refer to resources
- Be available, but do not force help on people who do not want it

Factors helpful to long term recovery:
- feeling safe, connected to others, calm and hopeful;
- having access to social, physical and emotional support; and
- feeling able to help themselves, as individuals and communities.

**Things to say and do ✓**

- Try to find a quiet place to talk, and minimize outside distractions.
- Respect privacy and keep the person’s story confidential, if this is appropriate.
- Stay near the person but keep an appropriate distance depending on their age, gender, and culture.
- Let them know you are listening, for example, nod your head or say “hmmm...”
- Be patient and calm.
- Provide factual information, if you have it. Be honest about what you know and don’t know. “I don’t know, but I will try to find out about that for you.”
- Give information in a way the person can understand – keep it simple.
- Acknowledge how they are feeling and any losses or important events they tell you about, such as loss of their home or death of a loved one. “I’m so sorry. I can imagine this is very sad for you.”
- Acknowledge the person’s strengths and how they have helped themselves.
- Allow for silence.

**Things not to say and do ✗**

- Don’t pressure someone to tell their story.
- Don’t interrupt or rush someone’s story (for example, don’t look at your watch or speak too rapidly).
- Don’t touch the person if you’re not sure it is appropriate to do so.
- Don’t judge what they have or haven’t done, or how they are feeling. Don’t say: “You shouldn’t feel that way,” or “You should feel lucky you survived.”
- Don’t make up things you don’t know.
- Don’t use terms that are too technical.
- Don’t tell them someone else’s story.
- Don’t talk about your own troubles.
- Don’t give false promises or false reassurances.
- Don’t think and act as if you must solve all the person’s problems for them.
- Don’t take away the person’s strength and sense of being able to care for themselves.
- Don’t talk about people in negative terms (for example, don’t call them “crazy” or “mad”).
Empathy

Empathy is feeling with people
4 qualities of empathy:
- To be able to see the world as others see it, recognizing their truth
- To be non-judgmental
- To understand another person’s feelings
- To communicate that understanding

Katy Davis, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369jw
Supporting Families - “Lessons from Triage”

- Consider where you think the family is at in your approach

- As questions to seek understanding:
  - What are they worried about today? Don’t assume!
  - Encourage families to describe their experience as they see it – letting them know through our body language, tone and word choice — I’m not judging you.

- Be an ally to where they are right now. Validate concerns, and provide resources and clear information.
  - It is okay to say “I don’t know; let’s work together to find that information”
Dear Mr. Cuomo,

I seriously doubt that you will even read this letter, as I know you are busy. Beyond belief with the disaster that has befallen our country. We currently have over 200,000 (as of March 26, 2020) as a nation in lockdown. Of that there is no doubt. Your approach has been grossly incorrect. I commend you for that or for especially for telling the truth, something that has been sorely lacking as of late.

I am a retired farmer, hemmed in by N.E. Kansas. With my wife who has had one leg and occasional problems with her remitting cancer. She has had a stroke. My age is over 70 and my wife is 74. Frankly, I am afraid for her.

Recent finds a solitary N95 mask left over from my farming days. It has never been used. If you could, would you please give this mask to a nurse or doctor in your city? I have kept two masks for my immediate family. Please keep on doing what you do so well, which is to lead.

Sincerely,

[Signature]