Tips for Health Care Workers During COVID-19
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The spread of COVID-19 to the United States is a unique and unprecedented scenario for many of us at BJC HealthCare, especially those of us who have never been involved in a similar response.

If you are involved in direct patient care, your job-related stress has most likely increased dramatically. During times like these, it’s more important than ever before that you practice good self-care.

If you are on the front lines of care, here are a few things to remember during this time:

1. Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak.
2. Managing your emotional and mental health is as important as managing your physical health.
3. The strategies you’ve used in the past to manage stress can benefit you now -- even if the scenario is different.
4. As caregivers, we often overlook our own needs in favor of the needs of our patients. Don’t be tempted to dismiss yourself; listen to your body as well as your mind.
5. Be vigilant with your fellow team members; if you see a colleague struggling, offer encouragement or help if you can.

Follow these tips to take care of your basic needs:

1. Ensure that you’re getting enough sleep.
2. Take rest breaks as needed/allowed during work or between shifts.
3. Eat sufficient and healthy food.
4. Engage in some kind of physical activity every day – even if it’s just a few minutes.
5. Remember to breathe – take deep breaths frequently throughout the day.
6. If you find yourself forgetting to do these things, set reminders on your phone if you have to.
7. Avoid turning to tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. In the long term, these can worsen your mental and physical well-being.

Most importantly:
Some workers may be experiencing avoidance by their family or community due to stigma or fear. This can make an already challenging situation even more difficult. If possible, stay connected with your loved ones through digital methods. Or, turn to your colleagues, your manager or other trusted persons for social support. Remember, your colleagues may be having similar experiences.

*If you are experiencing stress or anxiety that is impacting your daily life at home or at work, remember BJC EAP is here to help. Call 314-747-7490 to make an appointment with an expert consultant. Both virtual and telephone visits are available.*