

Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

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In a time of COVID-19, many people around the world are working to take good care of themselves and stay well while dealing with social isolation and major changes to life as usual. As essential frontline staff, in addition to your own personal concerns, you are also supporting people every day in residences to manage stressors that come with changes in routine, isolation, and fear. We know how hard staff work in all departments at BCARC to support the individuals we serve every day. We want to be sure that you are taking care of yourselves during this time and reaching out for support when you need it. Below are some suggestions of steps to take while on the job and while at home to look after yourselves and each other.

While on the job:

- **Stay Informed**
Watch for news updates from reliable sources like the CDC or WHO. Make sure to be checking your email frequently for important updates from BCARC as they occur.
- **Avoid**
Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of the event. Hearing about the pandemic over and over again can be upsetting. Make suggestions about other things to watch on TV or some other activity to take a break from the news on common area TVs.
- **Take Breaks**
Make time to unwind. Talk to a manager or coworker if you need a five minute break. Take deep breaths, listen to music, stretch, or meditate as time permits.
- **Self-Monitor**
Pace yourself. Schedule time to take a step back and see how you feel physically and emotionally. Do you need a drink, help with something, a short break...?
- **Watch out for Each Other**
Have regular check-ins with co-workers. Recognize when someone needs a break and offer to step in. Keep things light, joke around, let co-workers know what they are doing well, etc.
- **Reach Out**
Regularly seek out managers, supervisors, nursing, and clinical staff for additional support, ideas, and decision making.
- **Positive Self Talk**
Try to avoid overgeneralizing fears/concerns. Maintain helpful self-talk and focus your efforts on things that are within your control. Foster a spirit of fortitude, patience, tolerance and hope.

While at Home:

- **Keep to Your Daily Routines**
It is important to attempt to maintain your personal routines as much as possible. Structure is important -- try not to let outside factors which you cannot control affect your essential daily living patterns: (hygiene, eating, exercise, sleep, etc)
- **Take Time to Focus on Yourself**
Focus on the aspects in your life that you are grateful for. If we examine ourselves closely we all have things to be grateful for. Try journaling, doodling, or even creating your own 'happiness jar'.
- **Focus on a Healthy Lifestyle**
Maybe this is time to begin exercising more, taking walks and/or hikes while maintaining social distancing practices. Utilize technology to exercise while at home. Perhaps try to cook more meals at home utilizing a variety of fruits and vegetables. Do something as simple as spending quality time with your pets.
- **Activities to Keep Your Mind and Body Active**
For example, listen to music or sing; try dancing or biking, yoga or meditation; take virtual tours of museums and places of interest; sketch or paint; read books or novels; solve puzzles or play board games; try new recipes; and learn about other cultures.
- **Spring Cleaning Projects**
Keeping ourselves busy and active is important. What better way to feel a sense of accomplishment than by cleaning out the basement or tackling some yard work.
- **Reach Out to Old Friends, Acquaintances and Family Members**
Haven't talked to Aunt Sue in a long time? Why not check in on her and see how she is doing? Reach out to an old friend or acquaintance; reconnecting with someone can go a long way in improving your mood as well as theirs. Reach out to people, see if you can help. It might make their day and yours!
- **Social Distancing Does not Mean Social Isolation**
Keep communicating with others! We are all in this together. We all have our own set of anxieties and worries but if we continue to talk to each other and keep each other positive and grounded we will get through this!
- **Know Where to Find Help or Someone to Talk to if You Need it**
BCArc's [Employment Assistance Program](#) is a great place to start and is completely confidential! They can be reached at (800) 538-3543

The tips were adapted from these two sources, which you can refer to for more information:

CDC https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/pdf/Coping_with_Disaster.pdf National Center for PTSD
<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID19ManagingStressHCW032020.pdf>