

Those on the front-line, including health care providers and first responders, may experience increased stress responding to COVID-19. Coping with stress is essential to maintain mental health and allows continued service of those in need. Use these tips to reduce burnout and minimize secondary traumatic stress.

### UNDERSTAND BURNOUT AND SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS AND KNOW THEIR SIGNS -

- **Burnout** – feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed. Signs include:
  - Depression
  - Irritability
  - Isolation or disconnection from others
  - Apathy
  - Poor self-care (hygiene)
- **Secondary traumatic stress** – stress reactions and symptoms resulting from exposure to another individual’s traumatic experiences. Signs include:
  - Excessive worry or fear about something bad happening
  - Being easily startled, or “on guard” all of the time
  - Nightmares/recurrent thoughts about the traumatic situation
  - Physical signs of stress (e.g. racing heart)

**BE SELF-AWARE** - Know your personal signs of stress. Understand your own limits. Communicate those to your family and friends.

**STAY INFORMED** - Ensure you follow [proper protocols for cleaning and preventing the spread of COVID-19](#). Know what [protections you need](#) in your work environment to meet best practice standards. Ask for what you need. Your safety and wellbeing are important.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY** - Eat well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid, alcohol, tobacco, and excessive caffeine.

**DEVELOP A SELF-CARE PLAN** - Evaluate your current coping skills and identify your self-care needs. Include activities that make you feel safe and supported. Examples may include [relaxation techniques](#), positive self-talk, time in nature, and virtual social support. Review your self-care plan with your mental health provider or a trusted friend.

**CHECK-IN ON YOUR PEERS** - Share experiences and feelings. Encourage each other to take breaks. Share ideas for stress relief.

**TAKE SOME TIME OFF, IF AND WHEN POSSIBLE** - Remind yourself It is not selfish to take breaks. The needs of patients are not more important than your own needs and well-being.

**SEEK EMOTIONAL HELP WHEN NEEDED** - Reach out to a trusted friend. Schedule an appointment with a mental health provider. Many mental health providers are offering phone or video appointments. Most health insurance companies are covering telehealth services at this time.

- Contact Oakland Community Health Network’s Access line at 248.464.6363 for mental health and substance use disorder recovery resources or call the number on the back of your insurance card.

We are in this together, help is available. If having thoughts of suicide, feeling alone, or struggling, call or text the Common Ground Resource and Crisis Helpline at 1-800-231-1127 or chat online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at [www.commongroundhelps.org](http://www.commongroundhelps.org).

Visit [www.oakgov.com/covid](http://www.oakgov.com/covid) for the latest COVID-19 updates in Oakland County.