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## Staying Well

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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” for well-being, it seems prudent to pass along a few things to think about.

1. **Take care of yourself.** It may sound cliché, however, 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.
  2. **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.
  3. **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.
  4. **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. Follow this [link](#) for access.
  5. **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.
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