



Frequently asked questions about supporting clinicians coping with COVID pandemic

What resources are there for clinicians during these stressful times?

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline = 1-800-273-8255

Employee Assistance Plans (EAP) – check with your local Human Resources department for details

Health Insurance helplines

Also, think about developing a “warm line” for your clinicians to call, leave a message and have someone call them back within 24 hours. This could be staffed by clinicians who are unable to see patients at this time.

Support Physical Well-being: Promote physical resilience through proper sleep hygiene to support physical, mental, and emotional restoration. Provide adequate supplies such as water, healthy snacks, and coffee. Provide lists and locations of available call rooms, phone chargers, and bags of toiletries for hospital-based clinicians or those working multiple shifts. Suggest designated times to take breaks, eat, and take medications. Advise clinicians to bring at least 3 days of their own medications to work and designate a clinician to provide one-time emergency refills.

What would it cost to create a space for clinicians to get nourishment during the pandemic?

There are ways you could create a space for your clinicians that doesn't take a lot of financial resources. Work with your Finance or Foundation arm to solicit donations from local groups (like food service providers, grateful patients, etc.) which could be used for the clinicians. Look for space that isn't being used (maybe a space that was previously doing procedures that is no longer seeing patients) and re-purpose it for a quiet space clinicians can go during the day to reset or process a difficult case and still observe proper distancing from colleagues.

If you have access to funds, think about delivering water, snacks or meals to clinicians. Or create a drop in space to go during the day to pick up nourishment. It doesn't have to be big, a granola bar and thank you are a nice start.

If there's the ability, start a virtual space clinicians can check for up to date information about testing, supplies, resources, etc. in your health system. A one stop shop takes some pressure off constant emails.

Whatever space you create, physical or virtual, be sure to have messages of thanks in it so they know they are appreciated. Maybe make a “3 good things” corner where people can write down 3 good things that happened to them on their shift; leave blank thank you cards for them



to fill out for colleagues, post messages from grateful patients and community members so they remember they are appreciated.

It's also important to provide adequate information about mental health resources. Be sure to post (physically or virtually) information about where/who to contact for mental health support.

What tools are there for surveying staff now so I know how stressed the team is?

A good place to start is by asking "How are you?". This conversation starter can allow people to really share how they are feeling. You don't have to have all the answers but be prepared for people to share difficult things with you.

If you are ready for something more formal, the American Medical Association is offering two no-cost surveys to help health care organizations monitor the impact COVID-19 has on their workforce during this pandemic. The 13 item survey is designed to assess stress and burnout on physicians, care team members, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The longer tool also has a smaller, 2 question "pulse" survey that can be distribute throughout the pandemic.

The surveys can be used to track trends in stress levels, identify specific drivers of stress, and develop supportive infrastructures based on these drivers. Organizations that use the surveys will receive free-of-charge support from the AMA in launching the surveys and access to data through an easy-to-use reporting dashboard. To learn more, go to [clinician.health](https://www.clinician.health) for details on the surveys and sign up.

More resources:

For a recent article about tips for supporting clinicians during the pandemic, please check out the recent *Annals of Internal Medicine* article:

<https://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/2763592/supporting-clinicians-during-covid-19-pandemic>

National groups' webpages have COVID related resources:

The American College of Physicians (ACP) Corona Virus 2019 (COVID 19): Information for Internists page:

<https://www.acponline.org/clinical-information/clinical-resources-products/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-information-for-internists>

The American Medical Association (AMA) COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus) resource center for physicians page:

<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/covid-19-2019-novel-coronavirus-resource-center-physicians>



If you find these questions and answers don't provide you with the information you need, we are glad to consider developing a contract that would support our consulting time so we could work with you and your healthcare system for a designated time period. If this is of interest, please contact our Operations Director, [Sara Poplau](#).