

# IDENTIFYING STRESS

## Physical

Providers experiencing any of the following symptoms should seek IMMEDIATE medical attention:

- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe pain
- Symptoms of shock

If responders experience symptoms over time or if they become severe, they should seek medical attention.

- Fatigue
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dizziness
- Profuse sweating
- Thirst
- Headaches
- Visual difficulties
- Clenching of jaw
- Nonspecific aches and pains

## Cognitive

If symptoms occur on the scene, responders may not be able to stay clearly focused to maintain their own safety or to help patients in distress.

Responders may experience momentary cognitive symptoms; however, if symptoms are chronic or interfere with daily activities, workers should seek medical attention. These symptoms include:

- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Heightened or lowered alertness
- Poor concentration
- Poor problem solving
- Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people
- Memory problems
- Nightmares

## Behavioral

As a result of a traumatic incident, providers may notice the following behavioral changes in themselves or coworkers:

- Intense anger
- Withdrawal
- Emotional outburst
- Temporary loss or increase of appetite
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Inability to rest, pacing
- Change in sexual functioning

## Emotional

Strong emotions are ordinary reactions to traumatic or extraordinary situations. Providers should seek mental health support from a disaster mental health professional if distress continues for several weeks or if they interfere with daily activities. Emotional symptoms include:

- Anxiety or severe panic (rare)
- Guilt/sense of failure
- Denial
- Grief
- Fear
- Irritability
- Loss of emotional control
- Depression
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Blaming others or self

# MANAGING STRESS



**Recognizing stress in yourself is important. Here are some things you can do for yourself to help you manage your stress:**

**Talk to your peers** about the stresses of the day, jobs, and other worries you share. Place an emphasis on validating one-another's concerns without focusing on the grim. Help point out positive elements of the shift or day for one another.

**Seek help from support systems** available in the healthcare environment. Many systems have point people or resources to help with burnout, fatigue and other concerns. Having conversations about your worries can help reduce anxiety. Check out the list of resources at the end of this document as well.

**Self-care helps you stay strong** in order to better help others. Self-care can be eating healthy, exercising and getting good sleep. Self-care may also include taking care of family, including children and others. Making sure you fill your own cup is just as important as pouring from it to serve others.

**Stay in touch with older parents and family members** you would normally visit. Connect by phone or video chat, write letters, or send supplies safely to their residence to maintain your connectedness.

**Take things one day at a time** - step back from the "sprint" mentality and prepare for a marathon. Remember that this pandemic will not be solved quickly so pacing will be crucial.

**Take mindful minutes.** Slow breaths on the top of the hour, taking time to recognize all the small things around you, acknowledging them, and letting them go. Find mindfulness techniques you enjoy and do them regularly.

## National Disaster Distress Helpline



**Call**  
1-800-  
985-5990



**Text**  
TalkWithUs  
to 66746

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



**Call**  
1-800-  
273-8255



**Text**  
TALK  
to 741741