Helping Staff Cope During COVID-19
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The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has caused a range of reactions, top among them fear and anxiety. While everyone responds differently to stressful situations, there are steps communities can take to help staff cope during this difficult time. Learn how you can help your employees take care of themselves in the midst of the outbreak.

70% of people are experiencing stress as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

ABC News/Washington Post Poll
No one is untouched by COVID-19, and it has caused increased levels of distress among all groups. Yet frontline healthcare professionals are particularly vulnerable to the impact on their mental health for several reasons:

- Potential exposure to the contagious virus
- Protective gear shortages
- Strict rules governing their work
- Balancing the care they deliver with concerns about their own health and safety
- Worrying about residents as well as their own family and friends

Compounding the situation at work are the effects on employees’ personal lives like social isolation and financial uncertainty.

The culmination of all of these factors can lead to several changes in individuals, both physical and emotional, including:

- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Low energy
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Digestive problems
To lower the threats to worker health and well-being, communities can take steps to protect their mental health by putting support in place.

**Schedules:** Be sure to monitor hours worked and offer appropriate work/rest schedules so your team has adequate breaks.

**Mental Health Services:** Promote any mental health benefits your community offers like an EAP or telepsychiatry available through their insurance as well as in-house support groups.

**Information:** Keep employees informed and supported but make sure any information about COVID-19 that you share is accurate, clear and easy to access.

**Connections:** Even if workers have to stay physically separated, keep the conversation going from six feet apart or by phone or email.

**Help:** Foster open communication and remind workers that they should ask for support if they are experiencing stress.

It’s also important to encourage self-care during workers’ shifts. Help employees recognize and take care of their own needs while at work through several actions:

- Foster a spirit of collaboration by promoting working in teams.
- Suggest workers take brief time-outs during their shifts to relax or check in with co-workers, family or friends.
- Remind employees to focus on what they can control and accept what they can’t.
- Maintain a spirit of patience and hope in the community.
- Acknowledge the efforts of workers and discourage negative comments about their contributions.
- Provide workers a list of stress indicators so they can self-monitor.
PharMerica is redefining pharmacy management service for skilled nursing facilities, long term care facilities, hospitals and other institutional care settings. With a singular focus on tailored customer service, we collaborate with our clients to develop products and services that help them provide quality care, control costs, and remain compliant with ever-changing regulations.

As a long term care pharmacy that specializes in assisted living, PharMerica can help communities overcome challenges with supplement interactions and improve the quality of resident care.

Contact us at PharMerica@pharmerica.com or 855-637-1755 to learn more.