Self-Care Topic: Companions in Care
Developed by the AAHFN Membership Committee and Area Representatives

Sometimes it is hard to cope with the stress of working with heart failure patients. We don’t always get support from our colleagues/leadership/administration. We will see many of our patients die from their conditions which can be difficult. Especially since we also have the same non-work life challenges that most people experience. We may not have the support services available to help us cope with these issues.

My colleague and I rely on one another a great deal during these times. We talk, cry and move forward together, even though we are very different people. We understand what being a heart failure nurse feels like and the issues involved. We have experienced both the frustrations and rewards. The ability to listen to one another has been one of the most influential factors in supporting my practice on a day to day basis.

In the AAHFN we work with a specialized and challenging population. If you have no one you can talk to, please reach out through the AAHFN and contact the National Office at information@aahfn.org. I am very lucky to have the support of my colleague and I am more than willing to help other nurses who don’t have such a resource. Ask for help, it is not a sign of weakness, but a mark of strength to ask for help when it is needed.

Naturally conversations must be HIPAA appropriate, but talking over the difficulty of heart failure nursing (or any nursing, for that matter) can allow you to gain a different perspective and understanding of situations. Other nurses also may have ideas about how you could have resolved a particular situation more effectively. If you see another nurse struggling, have the courage to reach out. Please support, love, and cherish them for who they are and the values we share as nurses. Leaning on one another helps us all stay standing.

If there is enough interest, perhaps the AAHFN could create a list of nurses who are willing to be contacted by other nurses who don’t have someone who they can talk to. Please contact information@aahfn.org if you are interested.