March 25, 2020

Dear American Trauma Society (ATS) Member:

We are living in challenging and unprecedented times. We are being flooded with predictions and precautions, and it is frightening. As healthcare providers and trauma survivors, we are joined in this new experience. Sentiments we have heard long from our trauma patients take on new meaning:

_I can’t believe this is happening!_  
_Can’t they do anything?_  
_This has ruined so many of my plans!_  
_Why can’t they tell me when I will be better?_

We are all experiencing a collective trauma as we fear for our own safety and our loved one’s safety. You, our healthcare workers – among our most important professionals in this crisis – are at highest risk for burnout. In this time when social responsibility looks like social isolation, what we most need right now is each other.

At the ATS, we recognize that this pandemic may be triggering feelings of isolation (all of us) and retriggering of post-traumatic stress (survivors), and we are shifting our operations to enable providers and survivors to connect virtually and “gather” regularly. The ATS is able to do this through its educational offerings for trauma care staff and health providers, and through the Trauma Survivors Network, now active in over 100 sites nationally.

With travel restrictions, hospital providers are unable to attend our courses, so our staff and instructors are working to be able to facilitate live courses virtually. The first course is being piloted next week with a Trauma Program Manager Course, with courses for registrars, injury prevention professionals, and TSN coordinators being reworked as well. Our members can attend webinars featuring COVID-19 related topics for healthcare workers facing increasing stress.

With social gathering restrictions, trauma survivors are unable to attend in-person support groups. The TSN is, by definition, a program that promotes networking and mutual support among survivors.
The national TSN staff are hosting virtual support groups for survivors and making national peer visitors available for virtual peer visits and will continue to provide ongoing support for TSN coordinators.

The mission of the ATS is to save lives, improve care, and empower survivors. We are humbled by our members’ ongoing efforts to join in this mission. Stay in touch, and stay connected. Let us know how we can help you with this.

Well wishes,

Anna, Sue

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