



Take Care of Yourself in a Stressful Time

While most nurses are experts at caring for others and used to being under a considerable amount of stress, this on-going heightened state can negatively impact your immune system making you prone to illness. It's important to check in with yourself from time to time, and assess emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Performing a self-assessment can help you determine where you might give yourself some more attention.

Throughout this guide, you will find information and resources to help you take care of yourself and your community during this global pandemic. Topics include: Self Care, Stress Reduction, Family, Workplace and more.

Self-Care

The ABCDEs of Self-Care

- A** About: Remember to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- B** Body: Create healthy routines for exercise, diet/nutrition, sleep. Maybe you take a walk around the block every evening, incorporate more greens into your meals, or take a bath to wind down before going to bed.
- C** Connect: Connect to your friends and family, but also yourself. Turn negative thoughts into positive thoughts by distracting yourself (i.e. celebrate the small stuff, focus on what you're going to make for dinner, or do something you're good at).
- D** Develop: Develop innovative and creative approaches to problem solve, such as supporting small businesses in new ways or attending a drive through farmer's market.
- E** Emotion: During times of heightened stress we can experience our emotions more vividly and sometimes our normal coping skills aren't enough. If this is you, know that it is a common experience and there are many resources available to you.

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Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) Self-Care Resources: OCN developed the ["RN Self-Care Rx" infographic](#)

Stress Reduction Tools

Podcasts are available to help you to find some peace in the present moment. Podcast such as

- [Ram Dass-Here and Now](#)
- [Mindfulness Mode](#)
- [On Being](#)
- [Tara Brach](#)
- [Pathways to Happiness](#)

You can even search for podcasts that will make you laugh if you're looking for a different kind of distraction (after all, laughter is the best medicine as it helps to trigger positive emotional responses in the body).

A toolkit for COVID-19, [Shine: Calm Anxiety & Stress](#), offers special resources for dealing with anxiety during this time, including a free app focusing on relaxation

and meditations, daily motivational messages, and an “ask an expert” section.

Apps such as [Headspace](#), [Insight Timer](#), and [The UCLA Mindful: Meditations for Well-Being](#) are excellent resources offering stress reduction strategies, guided meditations, relaxation methods, and sleeping tools.

[The Society for Health Psychology](#), a division of the American Psychological Association, offers a wide range of recommended wellness tools, including a sleep app and resources to address trauma.

[Calm Your Nervous System](#) is a free, streaming, 20-minute guided relaxation audio file. Using headphones or earbuds allows background binaural technology to deepen your relaxation response.

Family

[OHSU Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Fellows](#) have several great resiliency tips on how to care for your family during this time. Remember, children follow the lead of their parents. They look to you to see if they should be afraid, concerned, confident, calm or carefree. You can set the stage for their response to be concerned and confident by taking a moment to check in with yourself before you check in with them.

Consistency & structure can help establish a sense of normalcy and be calming.

- Try to establish a simple routine for your family in 60- or 90-minute chunks.
- Get your children involved in the planning process to give them a sense of control.



Physical activity has been shown to combat symptoms of anxiety and depression.

- Taking regular breaks to go outside for fresh air and exercise is great for mental health.
- Look for free online resources for youth-focused at-home workouts, such as [Fitness Blender Kids Workout - 25 Minute Fun Workout for Kids at Home](#).

Relearn how to be present with your family.

- Being present and available for your family can be the best way to support and help during this stressful time.
- Consider working on tasks or projects alongside your children and set aside time to offer your family your full and undivided attention.

Maintain technologic well-being.

- The key to healthy screen use is awareness and open conversations with your children.
- Consume news judiciously from reputable journalism organizations, the [Oregon Health Authority](#) or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- Participate in technology alongside your children, for example by engaging with them via social media apps or video games they frequently use.

Workplace

During time of stress, it can be cathartic to discuss current issues and events with coworkers. However, too much of this can contribute to an unhealthy work environment. If you feel like your workplace could use a little brightening up, be the light that shines positivity, gratitude, and strength during this uncertain time. Some ways this can be done:

- Say thank you! Tell your coworkers how much you appreciate them. It's times like this we are reminded of the team-based approach that is so important to quality care.
- Practice gratitude in your morning huddles. Discuss something that went well during the previous shift or maybe throw a little gratitude to your whole team.
- Ask your children to draw a picture for health care workers and possibly post it in the breakroom.
- If a patient or coworker expresses gratitude towards you, allow yourself a moment to really take it in.
- Be mindful of emotionally charged language. For example, instead of saying "You never answer the call light when Room 20 calls. I always have to do everything myself!" Say "It would be really helpful if you could keep an ear out for Room 20. Let's make a plan to check in frequently with one another."

- Give your coworkers the benefits of the doubt. They may be dealing with another issue you're unaware of.
- There is always something to be grateful for. Celebrate the small victories!



Virtual Live Support Meeting Resources

Clinician Support Group “Caring for Clinicians”: [Sign up for these weekly webinars](#) to participate and support other clinicians on a mission to support the world’s health care providers through community, compassion, and courage. The group is facilitated by expert psychologists with special guests every week.

Recovery Support: If you’re experiencing any issues with substance misuse you may find it useful to visit the [Nurse Assistance Network \(NAN\)](#).

Resources

- [Holistic Stress Management Toolkit](#) (American Holistic Nurses Association, 2020)
- [Strategies for Coping & Wellness](#) (MedPage Today, 2020)
- [Stress & Coping](#) (CDC, 2020)

Need help, or know someone who does?

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others

- Call 911
- [Disaster Distress Help Line](#), call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

