

Starter list: How you can support frontline staff during the COVID-19 crisis



Expand access to opt-in emotional support services

- Set up confidential mental health support for frontline workers. When staff call in, connect them to targeted internal or external behavioral health support services.
- Provide virtual drop-in sessions or "office hours" with staff from your organization who have expertise in providing mental and emotional support.
- Offer virtual one-on-one or group moral distress consults with a trained facilitator.



Strengthen peer networks with formal support systems

- Run virtual peer "support sessions" once a week where a moderator prompts staff to discuss their personal and professional concerns with a small group of peers.
- Set up a buddy system. Partner junior frontline staff or clinicians taking on critical care patients for the first time with more tenured team members to get advice and voice concerns.
- Encourage staff to share stories of providers going above and beyond the call on a public forum.



Create space for staff to decompress—even if just for a moment

- Allocate a quiet, dedicated space in your facilities where providers can go to decompress for a few minutes during their shift.
- Start team meetings or huddles by having a staff member share a [90-second uplifting story](#) that exemplifies one of their core values.
- Create "bounce back kits" with items like a reflection exercise, earplugs, etc., and store them in a central location so staff can access them in moments of distress.
- Encourage staff to bring mementos that remind them of positive times—like photos of their family—to store in their locker and glance at when they're feeling overwhelmed.
- Provide onsite or virtual meditation for staff.



Take care of the necessities so staff can focus on caring for patients

- Launch a "care and share" website where community members can volunteer to help staff with tasks like grocery shopping and childcare.
- Partner with organizations providing free meals to health care staff, like [Sweetgreen](#) and [UberEats](#)—and when possible, order and encourage group meals.
- Connect staff to alternate housing options if they're worried about exposing their family to COVID-19. Hotels like the NYC Four Seasons have offered up space to health care workers in need.



Widely share resources that staff can tap into on their own terms

- Share open online resources on coping with anxiety and stress with frontline staff, such as Headspace's [meditation sessions](#) or the NHS in Mind's [free videos](#) with eight techniques for coping with anxiety and stress.
- Send out weekly "wellbeing" email updates to the organization where staff can access centralized information on mental health and support services—or include a daily reflection in a standing COVID-19 newsletter.



Help us add to the list. How is your organization supporting frontline staff?

If your organization is investing in additional services for clinical staff during this time and you think other leaders should know about it, send a brief overview to Virginia Reid at ReidV@advisory.com.