

## Bust that Stress! Tips for Healthcare Providers



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In most jobs, recognising and learning to manage daily stress is critical to a successful performance. Healthcare industry workers are particularly prone to pressure, having to complete quotas and targets and assist patients around the clock. They are frequently faced with life-or-death scenarios, traumatic events or overflowing waiting rooms.

Motivated by the desire to improve their patients' health, people pursuing a career in the medical field usually work very long hours and tend to ignore signs of stress. These can lead to psychological and physical symptoms, impairing job performance and placing the person at risk of cardiovascular disease or other life-threatening conditions.

Here are some common areas of concern and suggested strategies to alleviate the stress:

### Impossibly High Expectations

Most patients seeking treatment expect quick results from their healthcare providers. Depending on the ailment however, this is often not possible and the attending medical care provider feels pressured and stressed, disappointed for not being able to fulfil the patients' expectations, especially when they are new to the job.

Openly and clearly discussing the situation with the patients is a good way to explain what can and cannot be the expected outcome of a chosen treatment.

### Caring Too Much

Referred to as 'compassion fatigue', the stress resulting from caring too much can lead to feelings of depression. Listening to patients' pain, fear and suffering causes some healthcare workers to develop similar emotions, especially if they themselves have lived through a difficult personal past.

Instead of seeking anti-depression drug therapies, successful coping strategies include participating in social and charitable community events, breathing exercises and the uptake of regular sporting activities.

### Keeping It In

ICU nurses, personnel in emergency rooms and palliative care departments can suffer emotional burnout when deaths occur. Having to provide support to the grief stricken family members is particularly stressful, and by not expressing their own feelings of anxiety, these healthcare providers are putting themselves at risk.

Talking therapy can provide comfort and reassurance, whether staff talk to each other or to a professional counselor. Some hospitals offer wellness programs to their employees in an attempt to provide assistance.

Building several uncomplicated de-stressing techniques into the daily routine is also recommended: using little squeeze balls to alleviate muscle tension, talking a short walk in fresh air, taking deep breaths by an open window and showing emotion – whether laughter or tears.

Source: HealthManagement

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