

COPING WITH STRESS

- Take breaks, eat, hydrate
- Leave at the end of your shift
- Keep up your normal routine at home
- Get plenty of sleep, and drink in moderation
- Know where your body holds stress and what works best for you to release it.
- Spend time with loved ones
- Do what calms and nourishes you
- Control the TV you watch – don't over- load on flu reports
- Talk with your co- workers about your experiences; get and give support to one another
- Try to maintain your sense of humor
- Draw strength from faith, family, and friends
- Ask for help if you need it

REMEMBER TO PROTECT YOURSELF

During a Pandemic, remember to practice what you preach in order to protect yourself and limit the spread of germs and prevent infection—

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- If you feel yourself getting sick, keep your distance from others *and seek medical help*
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Practice other good health habits:
 - Get plenty of sleep
 - Stay physically active
 - Drink plenty of fluids
 - Eat nutritious food.



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SELF-CARE TIPS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS DURING A PANDEMIC



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SELF-CARE TIPS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS DURING A PANDEMIC

Should a pandemic occur in Rhode Island, you will experience a far greater sense of stress on the job than normal. Both clients and colleagues may become ill. The staff to client ratio may decrease dramatically causing additional stress.

As always, remember to regularly review and update Emergency Preparedness planning, staffing and training

You need to become fully informed about the impact that such an event may have on you personally and learn how to protect yourself from the emotional toll this event may have on you.

Understanding the Stress Cycle

Stress elevates arousal or readiness. Within manageable levels, stress can help sharpen your attention and help you to cope with threatening situation. When stress arousal reaches maximum effect, however the gain in performance is lost and your performance and health begin to deteriorate. Should your stress response be active for a long

period of time, it can damage the cardiovascular, immune and nervous systems.

People develop patterns of response to stress that are as varied as individuals. Most people are resilient and experience mild or transient psychological reactions that are short-lived. *The stress response becomes a problem when you cannot turn it off; it lasts too long; or it interferes with your daily life.* The following list of common reactions is offered to help you monitor your stress level during the pandemic flu response.

Normal Reactions to a Prolonged Disaster Response

- You may not want to leave the scene when the work is finished – regardless of whether your replacement has arrived
- You will likely try to override stress and fatigue with dedication and commitment
- You may deny the need for rest and recovery time
- You will not be untouched by the enormous gravity of the situation and may experience sadness, grief and/or anger



Reactions to be monitored

Physical

- Gastrointestinal problems
- Headaches, other aches and pains
- Visual disturbances
- Weight loss or gain
- Sweating or chills
- Tremors or muscle twitching
- Being easily startled
- Chronic fatigue or sleep disturbances
- Immune system disorders

Psychological/Emotional

- Feeling heroic, euphoric or invulnerable
- Denial
- Anxiety or fear
- Depression
- Guilt
- Apathy
- Grief

Thinking

- Memory problems
- Disorientation and confusion
- Slow thought processes; lack of concentration
- Difficulty setting priorities or making decisions
- Loss of objectivity

Social

- Isolation
- Blaming
- Difficulty in giving or accepting support or help
- Inability to experience pleasure or have fun