**BURNOUT**

How COVID-19 is fueling health-care worker stress and fatigue

Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

1. **Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion**
2. **Increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job**
3. **Reduced professional efficacy**

From June-September 2020, Mental Health America surveyed 1,119 US health-care workers and found that:

- **76%** claimed self-reported burnout
- **39%** reported they felt they did not have adequate emotional support

**Recognize the Signs of Burnout**

- Sadness, depression, apathy, or indifference
- Easily frustrated
- Blaming others, irritability
- Isolation or disconnection from others
- Poor self-care or hygiene
- Tired, exhausted or overwhelmed
- Feelings of failure and hopelessness
- Misuse of substances (alcohol or drugs)

**Ways to Manage Stress**

- Open communication between coworkers, supervisors, and employers regarding stress
- Taking breaks
- Maintaining physical health with healthy eating habits, regular exercise, and proper sleep hygiene
- Understanding, reflecting on, and appreciating one’s role in and out of the work setting
- Knowing when to reach out for additional resources and aid, for both yourself and others

**Resources**

- Always ask your employer for possible employee assistance programs and resources.
- Disaster Distress Helpline: Call/text 1-800-985-5990
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 1-800-CDC-INF (232-4636)
- Physician Support Line: 1-888-452-INFO (452-4636)

**How can employers and organizations support health-care workers?**

1. Foster open communication to build trust, reduce fear, build morale, and sustain an effective workforce.
2. Remove barriers to maintaining mental health services and systems that support institutional and individual resilience.
3. Protect workers' safety using the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) hierarchy of controls framework.
4. Develop a flexible workforce to perform the work being performed and determine if it can be performed remotely.
5. Provide clinicians and others with opportunities to collaborate, lead, and innovate.

**References**

2. ^ Coping with Stress for Workers (2020, December 23). In Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Retrieved from