

# COPING WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Providing care to others during the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to stress, anxiety, fear, and other strong emotions. How you cope with these emotions can affect your well-being, the care you give to others while doing your job, and the well-being of the people you care about outside of work.

## RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING:

- Feeling irritation, anger, or denial
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling helpless or powerless
- Having trouble sleeping
- Lacking motivation
- Having trouble concentrating

The emotional toll it takes to respond to COVID-19 may lead to experiencing secondary traumatic stress. Secondary traumatic stress is stress reactions and symptoms resulting from exposure to another individual's traumatic experiences, rather than from exposure directly to a traumatic event.



## WAYS TO REDUCE SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS REACTIONS:

- Acknowledge that secondary traumatic stress can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event.
- Take a break from media coverage of COVID-19.
- Learn the symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt).
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.
- Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic.
- Learn more tips for taking care of yourself during emergency response.
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy, such as spending time with friends and family, exercising, or reading a book.





## KNOW WHERE TO GO IF YOU NEED HELP.

### **ND Critical Incident Stress Management Team (cooperating with the Chaplains Community Service Program)**

The North Dakota Department of Health (DoH) administers a critical incident stress management (CISM) system in order to provide assistance in developing healthy stress-coping mechanisms. This free resource can be activated by calling State Radio at 800.472-2121 seven days a week, 24 hours a day (page unit 6501).

### **Project Renew 701.223.1510**

Get free and anonymous brief support services at [projectrenew.nd.gov](http://projectrenew.nd.gov)

### **Disaster Distress Helpline 1-800-985-5990**

Provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

### **FirstLink 211**

Confidential service available to anyone for listening and support, referrals to resources/help and crisis intervention.

### **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**