



## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST

### Managing Stress During COVID-19: 5 Brain Healthy Strategies for Healthcare Workers

The COVID-19 global outbreak has created new levels of stress and burnout for healthcare workers around the world. Based on current projections, the course of the outbreak is a marathon — not a sprint — making it even more important for those of you on the front line to find ways to boost your resilience, protect your brain health and fight brain illness.

Stress can lead to physical, cognitive and mental health challenges. Changes in concentration and thinking may occur. You may feel tense or anxious. Many people experience changes in energy, appetite and sleep during times of stress.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Most health care organizations are providing numerous resources to support their physicians, nurses and care team members. If you need additional help, here are five coping strategies recommended by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health:

- Stay connected with family/friends/community in creative ways.
- Manage challenging emotions with acceptance, mindfulness, relaxation, soothing and/or pleasurable activities.
- Avoid unhelpful coping strategies like substance use, rumination, constant worrying, or high-risk behavior.
- Engage in positive lifestyle behaviors such as physical activity and eating healthy, using acceptance, re-framing, and problem-solving as needed.
- Practice sleep hygiene.

For additional resources, most healthcare organizations provide employee assistance program or visit the CDC website for tips on handling stress during COVID-19: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html).

**About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))**

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to promoting brain health and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. Through education, research, innovation and action the collaboration between Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance intends to build brain healthy communities with cultures that increase brain health protective factors and reduce risk factors, improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Gulf Coast region and beyond. Join the movement, lifestyle makes a difference.

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