



Promoting Mental Health & Wellness Among Our Critical Care Nursing Staff

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 frontline workers are experiencing substantial negative mental health outcomes.

Throughout the pandemic, ICU nurses have faced suffering, pain, death, and numerous complex ethical dilemmas.

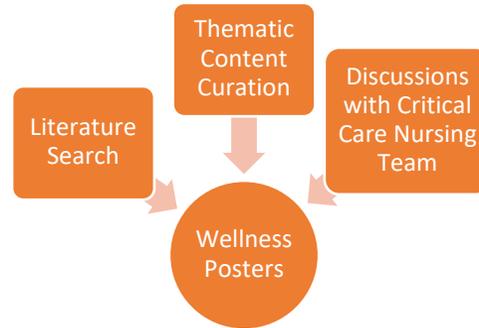
Hospital staff members also faced shortages of personal protective equipment and increasing work hours.

Insomnia	Fatigue	Exhaustion
Depression	Anxiety	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Burnout	Isolation	Fear

COMMUNITY PARTNER

In collaboration with Dr. Valcin and several Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse managers, our project aims to develop a Wellness Toolkit of posters for the Critical Care Department and its staff members. In total, the critical care department employs approximately 600 individuals. The ICU nurses and staff at Strong Memorial Hospital are stressed, exhausted, and burned out. The nurses and staff of the ICU are community members and have been caring for the entire Rochester community during the pandemic.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Practicing Gratitude

Gratitude is a recognition that there is goodness in our lives, gifts or benefits that we have received (and might often take for granted).

Practicing gratitude improves sleep, cardiovascular health, and mood, as well as increases motivation to exercise, and develops optimism and hope.

Gratitude reduces substance abuse, blood pressure, stress, and depression.

Join a 21-Day Thankfulness Gratitude Challenge at: [Think.org!](http://Think.org)

URMC Wellness Resources

Practicing Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional, and physical processes.

Download a Mindfulness App to Get Started!

URMC Wellness Resources

Incorporating Healthy Physical Habits

- URMC Well-U Online Fitness Classes
- Day Trips Near Rochester
- Places to Visit Virtually From Your Home
- Meal Preparation Tips & Healthy Recipes

URMC Wellness Resources

Are You Suffering From Compassion Fatigue?

Signs	How to Cope
Anger	Focus on adequate sleep, good nutrition, regular exercise & active relaxation.
Long Absence	Get enough sleep or rest.
Depression	Stay hydrated and eat nutritional foods.
Feeling of failure	Practice good hygiene.
High self-expectations	Wash up after your work shift as a symbolic "washing away".
Hypertension	Communicate with friends and family.
Increased irritability	Create small rituals that allow you to focus your thoughts on letting go of stress or honoring a memory of something positive.
Low self-esteem	Celebrate successes and mourn losses with your co-workers.
	Allow yourself some time to be alone so you can think.
	Practice your spiritual beliefs or reach out to a faith leader for support.
	Take time away from work to experience other things.
	Find things to look forward to.

Explore More Resources About Compassion Fatigue

URMC Wellness Resources

Promoting Good Sleep Habits

Get 15-60 minutes of bright light upon waking to signal your biological clock that it's time to start the day.

Exercising closer to wake time can signal daytime and improve sleep quality.

Taking short naps (20 minutes) can improve alertness, performance, and memory.

Use caffeine judiciously, being within 16 hours of your desired bedtime.

Limit alcohol before bed as it disrupts sleep quality.

Create a regular bedtime routine of clear activities (showering, reading) to get your mind and body ready for sleep.

Limit alerting activities close to bedtime, especially light, caffeine, exercise & work.

Keep a regular sleep/wake-time schedule as much as possible to keep your circadian rhythm in sync.

Optimize your sleep environment - keep it DARK, cool, quiet & comfortable.

URMC Wellness Resources

Promoting Resilience

- Connect with other healthcare workers via PeerMeds!
- Explore the Road to Resilience Podcast
- Practice Effective Resilience Habits

Read More About Resilience in Nursing!

URMC Wellness Resources

CONCLUSIONS

As I was reflecting on a community service project, I was thinking about my sister, an ICU nurse, and how the pandemic has affected the nursing community. During my 4th year clerkships, I witnessed the challenges that the nursing staff at Strong were facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This project aims to promote wellness among the community of nurses who are tirelessly working to care for our community.

Throughout this process, I have learned about the multitude of resources in place at URMC and beyond for healthcare workers. My in-depth look at wellness resources has allowed me to learn about mindfulness, meditation, compassion fatigue, sleep hygiene, and much more. I have learned that the critical care nursing department is resilient and truly cares about their employees.

Through working on this project and thinking about the pandemic at large, I have reflected on the social and societal factors that have contributed to the pandemic, to differences in health outcomes, and to differences in vaccination status. Race, ethnicity, education, and culture are all at play in an interconnected web. The hospital system must work to achieve health equity for all patients and prioritize the health and well-being of its employees especially the frontline workers in the intensive care unit.

The limitations of this project include a limited understanding of how nursing staff at Strong are currently using the available resources or formal assessments of how the resources are perceived.

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The goal of this project is to promote mental health and wellness among our critical care nursing staff. Our intended impact is to create a more positive environment that nurtures gratitude and resilience. Our hope is that these posters promote discussion about wellness and generate a sense of community and support among the staff. All posters and wellness resources will be uploaded to Box and available to edit as new resources and tools become available.