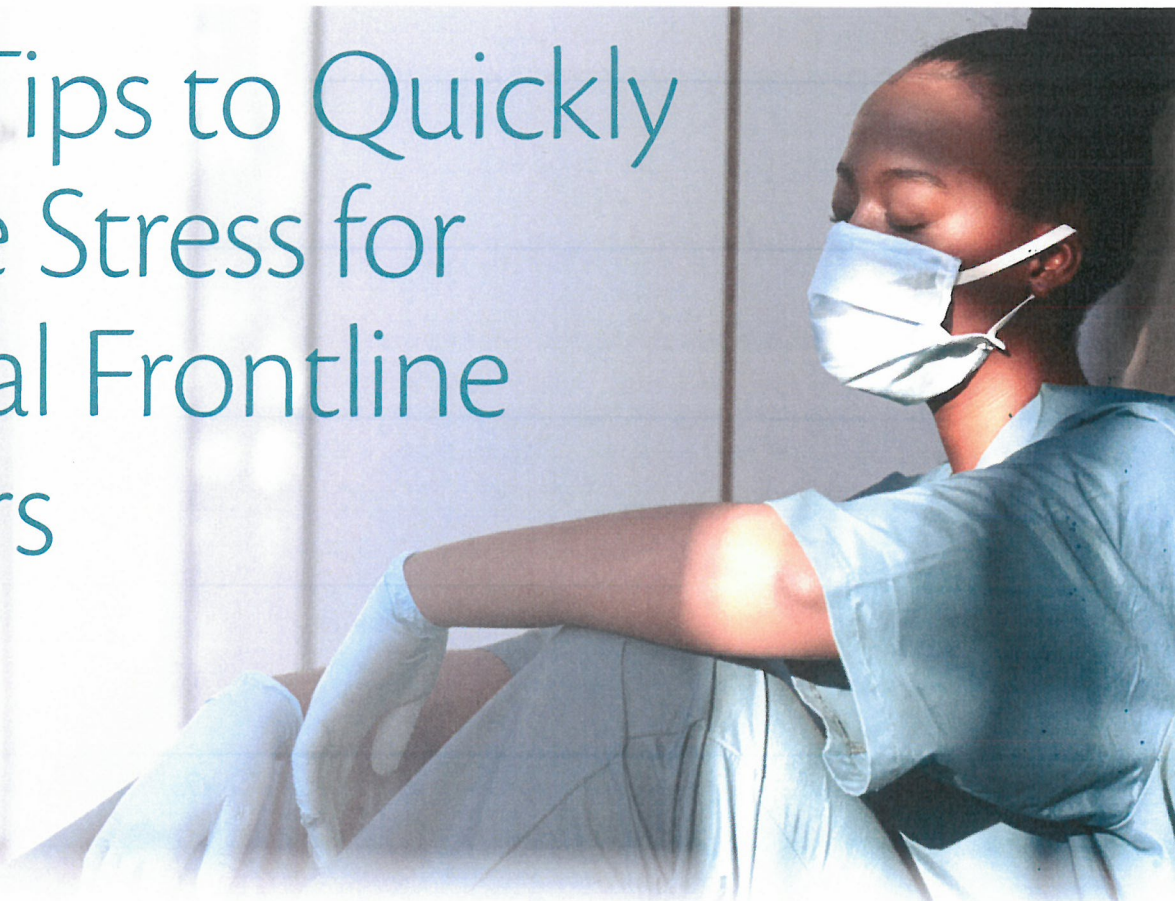


Three Tips to Quickly Reduce Stress for Essential Frontline Workers



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As holistic practitioners, we use supportive therapies to help others find balance and relaxation, and act as part of a wellness plan. There is a great deal of research showing the importance of practitioner self-care. However, this endeavor may be a more significant challenge for those practicing in healthcare organizations when chaos and stress are rampant.

We've all been impacted by traumatic world events such as the pandemic, rising mental health concerns, the opioid crisis, greater violence, etc. Essential frontline workers deal with these problems every day, and the effect of these events can create a devastating impact on their emotional and physical well-being. Patient concerns and issues have taken a challenging toll on healthcare workers.

Over 70% of nurses surveyed¹ related they felt little-to-no emotional support in their department. Healthcare workers dealing with stress and burnout have almost doubled since the pandemic. Self-care is essential, but who has time during stress-filled days?

TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Perhaps you find time for meditation, exercise, or a healing session, which is fantastic! However, most healthcare providers feel like there isn't time during their busy day to do self-care strategies. Using a relaxation app or finding a handout on stress management tips doesn't work when the chaos hits.

There are employee assistance methods, but you must make an appointment. Many find themselves unable to do this type of intervention. Another method is debriefing strategies after a crisis event. Stress debriefing is a great tool but doesn't help *during* the event. It's time for a paradigm shift to provide adequate care for caregivers.

SHIFTING THE PARADIGM - CREATING WAYS FOR RELAXATION AND BALANCE DURING A CRISIS EVENT

Supportive therapy tools are helpful for patients to bring them back to balance. This strategy is quick and successful in various situations, such as to calm an anxiety attack or to help reduce the claustrophobic feeling during a procedure. These tools have much evidence supporting their outcomes and ability to give balance and relaxation to those receiving the intervention.

Now is the time to shift energy interventions to the care provider. Frontline healthcare workers can learn supportive therapies that bring them to balance, focus, and inner peace during stressful times. This type of thinking is a paradigm shift from speaking about self-care for the care provider, and it's not only integrating renewal strategies during your off time but also during your work time. Utilizing self-care strategies anytime and anywhere is a cutting-edge approach to providing care to the healthcare provider. When an organization or leader supports their staff in learning and receiving supportive therapies, they show their workers caring emotional support, and understanding of the stress within the setting; together this helps them find ways to manage their stress, even during a crisis event.

THREE TIPS TO CALM THE STRESS NOW

1. Relaxation Therapies - include breathwork, visualization, and energy therapy like Healing Touch. You may use these modalities alone or in combination to quickly bring you back to focus and peace. Perhaps add a visualization trigger to serve as a reminder for relaxation. The visualization trigger may be helpful with breathwork along with the energy of heart-centered touch, which serves as a reminder of inner peace.


2. Aromatherapy – consider using essential oils in the clinical setting, which can be available for staff support. You can drop the essential oil on a tissue

and then inhale or use it with breathwork. Consider adding your intention along with centering to help stay in focus. Aromatherapy may help a person relax during a crisis, focus on the situation, and help with mental clarity. You may use Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) to facilitate relaxation, Lemon (*Citrus limon*) for mental clarity, or Cedarwood (*Cedrus atlantica*) to help ground and balance.

3. Gentle Movement – practitioners may consider doing gentle stretching, leg pumps, or movement with their feet to facilitate flexibility and tension release. One outpatient unit has “happy feet” at the top of the hour to remind staff to stretch, do a little dance, and have some fun! Patients have gotten into the practice too and will stand up and stretch at their chair or move their feet for added circulation.

HOLISTIC THERAPIES BENEFIT CLINICAL STAFF QUICKLY

Energy therapy tools can be taught to healthcare staff, guiding them to find the balance that feels best for their plan. Some people wish to be more subtle with using their tools, such as breathwork. Others may want to role model quick self-care by using breath, aromatherapy, and movement within the setting – all of which you can do in 5 minutes or less with practical benefits.

Supportive therapies during times of stress to facilitate stability, focus, and peace is a new concept. Essential frontline workers can learn quick holistic tips such as relaxation therapies, aromatherapy, and gentle movement to be a part of their plan. With practice, you can instantly bring these strategies forward to reduce stress, keep you in balance, and stay in a place of peace even during the chaos. 

References:

1. Kirzinger A., Kearney A., Hamel L., Brodie M. (2021). The toll of the coronavirus pandemic on health care workers. The Washington Post Frontline Health Care Workers Survey.



To learn more about Debra Reis visit:

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