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 LOVED ONE'S HEALTH Pet Care Death of Patients Elder Care ETHICS
 ONBOARDING NEW STAFF CRISIS STANDARDS OF CARE

Coping on the Front Lines of a Pandemic: Understanding and Managing COVID-19 Stressors

HIGHLIGHT

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature and frequency of stressors experienced by the healthcare workforce have increased exponentially. Rachel Kaul, the Behavioral Health Lead for ASPR EMMO, shares how to recognize and mitigate these stressors while bolstering resilience.

After just about every major disaster or significant emergency event, I convene a call of federal and local behavioral health stakeholders where we share information and identify needs related to the mental and behavioral health impacts for affected areas and where we can look for ways to collaborate and coordinate our efforts. During these calls, we always take time to discuss how responders and providers are doing, as we have long understood them to be vulnerable to adverse stress effects related to response and recovery work.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cumulative and often overwhelming nature of the stressors experienced by the healthcare workforce as part of their jobs has become a particular concern. Understanding the role behavioral health plays in the overall health and performance of workers on the front lines has become a priority for everyone.

That said, as many of you already know, being in the field every day, even in the face of extremely challenging circumstances such as those brought on by COVID-19, many healthcare professionals still find talking about their behavioral health needs and how to address them difficult.

In this issue of *The Exchange*, we focus on various topics to make this easier. ASPR TRACIE interviewed subject matter experts (SMEs) who work in the field to gather information about the acute and chronic stressors healthcare workers are facing right now. These can include things like fear of the unknown, extreme fatigue, constant worry about selves and loved ones, and even moral injury. SMEs also shared strategies for identifying at-risk employees. For example, how do we define risk? What are some of the signs and behaviors we might typically associate with compassion fatigue, or burnout? How has COVID-19 affected healthcare workers in particular? And finally, we talked to SMEs who shared ways preserve and bolster healthcare worker resilience, during a long-term, unpredictable event like a pandemic.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [COVID-19 Behavioral Health Resources](#)
- [COVID-19 Workforce Resilience/Sustainability Resources](#)
- [Behavioral Health Compendium](#)
- [ASPR TRACIE Speaker Series Recording](#)



This issue and the related [webinar series](#) are part of a larger collection of tools, resources, and training that ASPR and ASPR TRACIE have collaborated on developing or collecting from our partners pertaining to behavioral health, COVID-19, and responder and workforce resilience.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for stepping up to address the needs of your communities; please take care of yourself, your loved ones, and your teammates. I encourage you to take some time and visit the [ASPR TRACIE Novel Coronavirus Resources webpage](#) to explore the material and information there. I particularly recommend you view those related to behavioral health and consider ways you can enhance your own ability to cope with stress, while also promoting the overall well-being of those around you or at home.