

COVID-19 Headlines

May 18, 2020

■ “I CAN’T TURN MY BRAIN OFF”: PTSD AND BURNOUT THREATEN MEDICAL WORKERS

That is the title of a [New York Times](#) article on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health care workforce. An excerpt:

On Wednesday, the World Health Organization issued a report about the pandemic’s impact on mental health, highlighting health care workers as vulnerable. Recent studies of medical workers in China, Canada and Italy who treated Covid-19 patients found soaring rates of anxiety, depression and insomnia.

I hope you will take the time to read this article. It is a reminder that our reactions to working and living through this pandemic can take on many forms. And it is a reminder that we are not alone in our struggles. That is for sure. These are predictable responses to what we have been through. And, by the way, this includes all of us and not just those of us involved in direct patient care.

If we are honest with ourselves and recognize, even just a little bit, that we are struggling, that can provide the first step to healing. What does struggling look like? It can take on many forms. Some examples include feelings of hopelessness, irritability, and anger; a sense of isolation; difficulty sleeping; poor concentration; increased use of alcohol and other substances; lack of energy or motivation; anxiety; and feelings of betrayal. It can just be feeling “off kilter” and not knowing why.

If you are feeling any of these things, one thing I can say for sure is that you are not alone. We are simply not wired to go through the degree of trauma that we have experienced without being impacted. Not feeling normal is quite normal right now.

And I promise you that this is not permanent. You are not destined to spend the rest of your days feeling this way. In many cases, joining a support group and/or working with a professional will be of enormous benefit. And we have so many resources that you can take advantage of. I hope you will all find a few minutes to [visit](#) and learn about them. They are for all of us.