

Staff Support Guide for Leaders



Rounding by leadership is critical to addressing uncertainty and decreasing stress and burnout. At its core this means being present, transparent, genuine, receptive, and empathetic. It does not mean being a therapist for your

employees. The framework below has proved useful in supporting staff and team members.

*Adapted from Hartford Healthcare Leadership Rounding & [Shanafelt, Ripp & Trockel, 2020, JAMA](#)

Hear Me and Respond to Me

- Use check-in and check-out routines each day with staff as an open forum to hear concerns and provide information (e.g. beginning and end-of-shift huddles)
- Ask open-ended questions (e.g. "what are you worried about the most?")
- Follow up on staff concerns, even if you have no answers yet or the issue cannot be resolved.
- Consider self-disclosure where appropriate (e.g. by sharing your own questions and personal concerns)

Prepare Me

- Assure that staff have the resources they need to do their jobs and/or clearly acknowledge resource issues. [Staff Resources](#)

Protect Me

- Ask about safety concerns and provide up-to-date information. [Staff Safety Hub](#)
- Acknowledge good adherence to COVID-19-related and more longstanding safety protocols

Support Me

- Acknowledge that everyone is affected in some way by the pandemic. A survey in March and April of 2020 of MSH front-line workers showed that 39 percent experienced symptoms of depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress.
- Educate yourself about the continuum of stress responses, both for yourself and your workers:

STRESS CONTINUUM MODEL

READY

Doing OK: Sense of mission, healthy sleep, problem solving/critical thinking, effective and in control, coping well

REACTING

Transient, more mild distress: Mild anxiety, problems with focus, worry, problems feeling joy and happiness

INJURED

Increasing severity and risk: Sleep issues, numbness, burnout, disengagement, physical symptoms, exhaustion

CRITICAL

Persistent distress: Insomnia, hopelessness, panic, anxiety, depression, substance use, thoughts of suicide

Adapted from: Nash (2011), US Marine Corps and Navy Operational Stress Continuum Model: A Tool for Leaders

- Know that stress may manifest in the workplace: lapses in attention or judgment, irritability, breakdowns in communication, or less efficient work. Be curious about issues affecting staff rather than assuming they are "checked out" or being difficult. Watch [Psychological First Aid: Dr. Katz](#) for more information.
- Staff may be grieving multiple losses [A Bereavement Toolkit for MSHS Leaders and Department Heads](#)
- Normalize help-seeking and provide up-to-date information about staff support: [Covid Staff Well-Being Resources](#)
- Share infographics in visible locations, during huddles and in regular emails: [Staff Mental Health and Support Infographic](#)

Care For Me

- Support staff access to basic needs: food, shelter, child care, elder care and transportation, as well as programs for physical and emotional health and well-being. [Staff Well-being: Basic Needs & Self-Care, Mount Sinai Wellness](#)
- If the employee is struggling with work life challenges, consider other options such as schedule/shift flexibility, work-from-home options, or part-time programs, etc.

Honor Me

- Consider individual recognition and emailed notes of appreciation to your entire staff
- Note specific behaviors and traits that you are grateful for or wish to recognize
- [Sinai Spotlight Recognition Strategy Guide by TDL](#)

Additional Resources

Office of Well-Being and Resilience 212-241-5057, owbr@mssm.edu & **OWBR Pandemic Workforce Well-being Toolkit**
Center for Stress Resilience and Personal Growth 212-659-5564, MS-CSRPG@mountsinai.org