



Dear Mount Sinai community:

We appreciate and admire the work you do every day but never more than your ongoing efforts to prepare for COVID-19. While the situation has continued to evolve, your ability to continue to provide world-class, compassionate, safe, and skillful care for *all* our patients every day has never been more important or impressive. Particularly during this time of uncertainty, the professional response that you all have exhibited truly speaks to the resilience and strength at the heart of our Mount Sinai community.

Many of us are experiencing a wide range of emotions that may include stress, anxiety, or fear in relation to COVID-19. This is not just true for our patients, but for many of us as workers in a health care setting. In response, we wanted to provide a bit more information and remind everyone of the programs and resources that is available to everyone at Sinai.

During challenges such as these, it is normal to respond with some anxiety and concern. Some of us may want to control this increased anxiety by focusing on preparing and protecting ourselves; others may respond by wanting to avoid thinking about the situation; still others may feel naturally calm in the face of the unknown. Please know that everyone responds to stressful situations in different ways and there is no “right” way to respond. Sometimes it also helps to remember that our emotions may fluctuate throughout the day, and that during times of increased stress, they may fluctuate even more; which may leave us feeling more exhausted or emotionally drained.

If you are feeling increased stress or anxiety, here is some advice that may help with managing some of these emotions:

1. Try not to judge your emotional response. Even though anxiety that paralyzes us is not healthy, some anxiety is protective and ensures that we remain safe.
2. Try to reach out to individuals who often make you feel better and minimize contact with those who are critical of you. As social beings, we process our emotions by talking to others and we often benefit from talking with others about what concerns us. The key is to speak to those who we often find helpful, and in times of stress, to limit discussions with others who are not supportive.



3. Try to limit the amount of time you are spending on social media or watching the news, especially if you find that afterwards you are left feeling worse. Choose one or two reliable sources that provide information without sensationalism. Remember to take care of yourself and apply self-care techniques that work for you. For some, this can be in the form of exercise, meditation or simply watching your favorite funny television show.

It is also important to keep in mind signs that you may benefit from speaking to a professional for additional support. Some of these signs are:

1. Inability to stop thinking about the subject matter and focus on other matters
2. Anxiety that is interrupting your ability to function at home or at work
3. Difficulty sleeping at night
4. Change in appetite or weight
5. Anxiety that feels like you are in a state of panic and leaves you feeling overwhelmed
6. Misusing substances in order to avoid strong emotions

If you'd like to seek further support, please find below some of the resources that are available to you:

The [Employee Assistance Program](#) at Mount Sinai provides free, confidential short-term counseling services to Mount Sinai employees and your covered dependents. Licensed social workers trained to provide counseling services to individuals in need of personal assistance provide counseling. EAP is located at 19 East 98th Street, third floor, Suite 3A. To obtain additional information or to make an appointment, please contact EAP at 212-241-8937.

[Student and Trainee Mental Health](#) is available for medical students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, resident physicians, and clinical fellows at all campuses. To connect with these services, email STMH@mssm.edu, or reach members of the Student and Trainee Mental Health Team confidentially at 212-659-8805.

[ICARE](#) at Mount Sinai provides emotional peer support and counseling for staff who have been involved in an adverse event or workplace crisis. To contact ICARE or learn more, call 212-241-8989. A confidential voicemail system is available 24/7.



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The [Office of Well-Being and Resilience](#) offers additional resources and support, and may be contacted at owbr@mssm.edu. We provide support for departments interested in offering well-being workshops in narrative medicine, mindfulness, and facilitated discussion. If your department is interested in finding out more or applying to participate in a series of sessions, please contact our office at the email above.

To connect with the [Center for Spirituality and Health at Mount Sinai](#), please call 212-241-7262.

[Mount Sinai Calm](#): To support the Mount Sinai Health System community's self-care efforts, stress management, and work-life balance, free and confidential consultations are available in person or via phone. Clinical social workers assist faculty and staff members with the design and implementation of personalized self-care action plans that combine on-campus and community resources. To set up a personalized consultation, please send an [email](#). For more details about our programs, please visit their [website](#). To connect with us on Facebook, please join our Mount Sinai Calm Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MountSinaiCalm/>.

To reach the [Psychiatry Faculty Practice](#), please call 212-659-8752.

[NYC Well](#) is a program of the New York City Department of Health Mental Health Service that provides free, confidential mental health support. Speak to a counselor via phone, text or chat and get access to mental health and substance misuse services. To reach NYC Well, text "well" to 65173, call 1-888-NYC-WELL, or visit their [website](#).

As much as we all may want to help and do as much as we can to help, it is essential that we also take the time to recover, refresh and revive. This will not only help you feel better but work better too, enabling us to continue to do our best for our patients and communities.