Your wellbeing and emotional resilience is essential to our students and CHS as we work to help our community through the Covid-19 pandemic. Everyone is experiencing stress because of limiting contact with others, unknowns about the impact of the virus, worries about the safety of ourselves and loved ones, and information overload. As an ASU faculty or staff member, additional stress comes from constant vigilance, remembering and following new and frequently changing procedures, tensions between procedures and student wishes, and conflict between our own needs and the demands of the workplace.

Here are a few recommendations for stress management during this time. Not only will effective stress management help you feel less exhausted and more productive, it will help maintain a healthy immune system.

Self-care is especially important under heightened stress:

- Take brief breaks to refresh and care for basic needs
- Take time each day to do at least two things for relaxation and enjoyment, even if only for brief periods of time
- Maintain a healthy diet and get regular exercise, even if only for 10 minutes a day
- Keep your schedule of daily activities as regular as you can
- Avoid or limit use of alcohol and caffeine

Use relaxation and social support:

- Spend 5 minutes a few times a day, just taking deep breaths. Breathe in for 4 seconds and out for 4 seconds to help your body cope with the physical symptoms of stress
- Talk to your co-workers and friends. Support one another

Manage cognitive impact of stress:

- Keep informed, but limit excess exposure to news and social media. Constant intake of frightening information can be overly stressful. Focus on reliable sources of information such as CDC.gov, WHO.int, and health.state.mn.us
- Try to focus on what is within your power. Those are your best tools for managing infection risk and stress.
- Remember that it is okay to ask for breaks or say “no”. While it is true that your co-workers are also stressed and busy, we need to lean on each other. You will be there when your co-workers need help, so count on them to be there for you.
- Add hope and calming phrases to thoughts about the situation. For example, if thinking “This is terrible”, try “This is terrible, but I can get through it.”

Keep an eye on anxiety around students. Emotion can act as a contagion. All of us read emotion in the actions and words of those around us, and use that to shape some of our own emotional response.

- Answer students’ questions with accurate information. If asked about your own fears, acknowledging worry can be helpful, but be careful of giving details or using words that might make students feel more anxious than they already are.
- Take a moment to check-in with yourself on body language before speaking with a student. Give yourself a second to calm any irritability or anxiety that may be just under the surface.

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