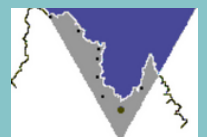




Caring for the Essential Services Workers

**MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS COPING
RESOURCES FOR NUNAVIK WORKERS IN
CONTEXT OF COVID-19**

Supporting resilience for all essential services workers
Recognizing the value of your work
Promoting protective factors for your well-being



Nakurmiik!



Essential services workers in Nunavik:

- are often persons already helping others and making a difference in their community;
- might already be exposed to various situations of stress;
- often work in small teams (reduced human resources) and may be in emergency mode (adrenaline).

Considering these elements and the uncertainty of the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be **particularly important** to ensure that all employees can:

- ✓ not forget about themselves and be attentive to their needs and emotions;
- ✓ have access to regular breaks (to take a step back, find a state of calm, assess their needs, relax);
- ✓ be in open communication with their team leader;
- ✓ use support and connection with colleagues as a source of resilience.



Reminders for the essential services workers

You might have **emotional and physical reactions** to the increased stressors you are encountering during these exceptional times. **It is normal.**


Exercise self-compassion - almost everyone impacted by an emergency will experience psychological distress and stress.

Essential services workers may experience fatigue, important stress and symptoms of distress during this time. **It is not a sign of weakness.**

It is easy to play up the importance of care for others while downplaying it for ourselves. **You are important.**

Help is available (see last page) if the symptoms you are experiencing impact your ability to do your job or your functioning in the same way you did before the pandemic.

We recognize the crucial and important role you hold in the community. **Thank you** for your actions, solidarity and professionalism.



Coping with Stress and Uncertainty

We are going through a very particular moment on a world-wide scale, and it is a source of tension and concern for many.

It is all the more important as caregivers to take care of ourselves in order to be able to take care of others. It is also a completely new situation and it is normal to not always know what to do.

We adjust as we know more about the situation.

Why do we feel stressed?

Stress is a normal response to a threatening situation. Stress is important, it keeps us alive! Without stress, we wouldn't feel the urge to run or to defend ourselves when we see a polar bear!

When we feel stressed, the first step to reduce it is to identify WHY we are stressed.

All humans are different, and what stresses us varies from person to person. However, the underlying causes of stress are the same.

Control: You feel you have little or no control over the situation.

Unpredictability: Something unexpected happens and/or you are unable to predict what will happen in the short to medium term.

Novelty: Something new that you have never experienced happens and you have to adapt.

Ego Threatened: You feel that your skills are being questioned.

Can you associate your stress with any of these causes?

We may feel like we are losing control over our lives and that everything is becoming unpredictable. That's normal.

Fortunately, there are ways to help!

Stay connected, even if you are physically isolated.

Keep in touch with friends and family: Use the phone, Skype, Facebook, Zoom, Instagram, etc.

Talk about things that make you feel good: Step away from bad news.

If you are confined with your family: Connect with them!

info@atautsikut.com

Focus on what you can control.

Plan your day: make a routine for yourself even if you are confined.

Control what you can do to stop the virus: wash your hands, smoke on the porch, don't go to the Coop too often.



Take care of yourself and of the community

Accept being taken care of through small gestures to ease your daily routine as a caregiver.

Do things you like: Go out on the land, cook, draw, listen to music, sew, crochet, etc.

Help someone in need: Grocery shop for an elder, cook a meal for someone, etc.

Stay in action: Do things you never have time to do.

Stay informed... but not too much!

Consult reliable sources of information (e.g. from the government).

Limit the number of times you check for updates.

Step away from the media if you feel overwhelmed.

Remember:

This is not a permanent situation.

Implementation of a "Buddy-system"

This approach is recognized by the United Nations in the context of a humanitarian crisis to protect front-line workers' mental health.

We invite you all to identify a trusted colleague who could become your "partner" ("buddy-system").

The objective would be that you and your partner regularly check each other's state: if your basic needs are met (eat, drink, sleep), how you feel, recognize difficult situations and achievements.

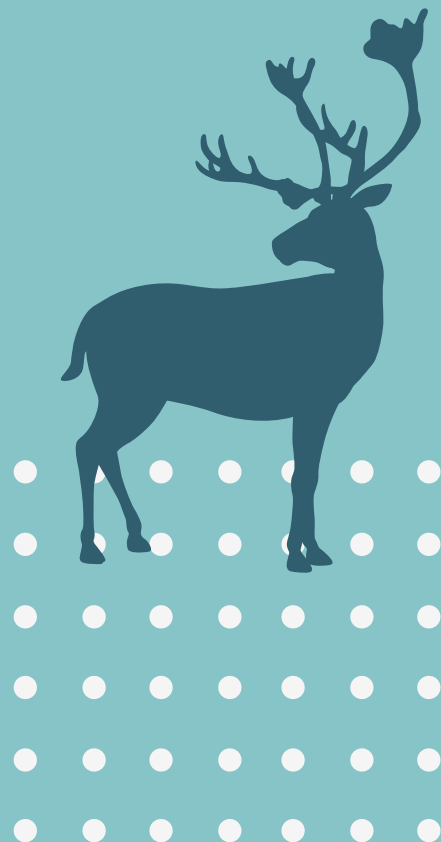
It is recommended not to have too many partners or "buddies" (one or two, maximum).

We encourage you to:

- Integrate **simple routines** (e.g. "check-in", ask questions a few times a day, phone calls);
- Encourage **self-care ideas** (e.g. remembering regular breaks times, listening, recognizing stress signals, reflect strengths);
- **Share with your team leaders** concerns you may have for your "buddy" colleague (e.g. limits reached, specific needs) and you can also encourage your "buddy" to express themselves in confidence.

From:

drc.ngo/media/2113528/unhcr-booklet-on-stress-management.pdf



Positive Healing Practices



Spiritual Wellness

- Spiritual counselling (e.g. speak to an elder or a counsellor)
- Meditation, silence, prayer
- Expressing gratitude
- Connect with the land and nature
- Practice traditional cultural activities
- Teaching younger people about views of the world, traditions and the land

Emotional Wellness

- Laughter / humor
- Creative expression
- Respectful and supportive social / work relationships
- Debriefing, expressing feelings
- Relaxation and deep breathing
- Support from friends and family
- Visualization
- Letting go / self-forgiveness

Physical Wellness

- Focus on healthy sleep patterns and nutrition
- Daily intake and sufficient water
- Daily routine and regular exercise
- Regular breaks throughout the day
- Set limits with others
- Time with pets
- Home improvement, cleaning, discarding clutter

Intellectual Wellness

- Journaling
- Learning about well-being
- Prioritizing and setting achievable goals
- Use positive communications styles
- Reading
- Putting feelings into words

Extra Self-care Tools...



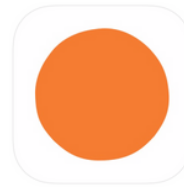
01 Meditation APPs



Insight
timer



Calm



Headspace

02 Video on stress management during COVID-19:



F.A.C.E. C.O.V.I.D:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM

03 Healthy communication style:



Check-List

If you recognize some signs of burnout or secondary trauma, we invite you to [contact the mental health resources](#) on the following page and [speak with your manager](#) for additional support.



Signs of Burnout:

- Sadness, depression, or apathy;
- Easily frustrated;
- Blaming others, irritability;
- Lacking feelings, indifferent;
- Isolation or disconnection from others;
- Poor self-care (hygiene);
- Tired, exhausted or overwhelmed;
- Feeling like:
 - A failure;
 - Nothing you can do will help;
 - You are not doing your job well;
 - You need alcohol or drugs to cope.



Signs of Secondary Traumatic Stress:

- Excessively worry or fear about something bad happening;
- Easily startled, or on guard all of the time;
- Physical signs of stress (e.g. racing heart);
- Nightmares or recurrent thoughts about the traumatic situation;
- The feeling that other's trauma is yours.

Resources

NRBHSS Inuit Values & Practices Team (9am-5pm)

- 1-877-686-2845 (Inuktitut / English)

Kamatsiaqtut Help Line

- 1-800-265-3333 (Inuktitut / English)

First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line

- 1-855-242-3310 (Inuktitut / English / French)

Order of Psychologists of Quebec (tele-therapy)

- 1-800-561-1223 (English / French)

Employee Assistance Programs

- See with your employer (e.g. RG, alimentation)
- UTHC: 1-800-361-4858 / IHC: 1-800-663-1142

Contact your local CLSC

- 9090 (for emergencies)



You are welcome to share any interesting initiatives that you may observe in your community that support mental health of Essential Services Workers in Nunavik, by emailing:

CaringWorkers
Nunavik@gmail.com

