

## Sleep Well

By ALICE NUTTALL, MBA, RN, BA  
*Director of Behavioral Health*

Who else on our team is losing sleep? I know I have been. There has never been a more important time for us as healthcare professionals to take care of ourselves and find good ways to recharge because we are the heroes who will help everyone to the other side of this uncertain time.

### **Why is it hard to wind down and sleep after our shift?**

With ramifications of COVID-19 evolving rapidly and all of our duties at work also changing day to day related to the pandemic our stress at work is high. It's normal to be afraid and not feel safe in a situation like this. Also we worry for our patients, our families, and our community. With more stress hormones pumping through our veins than normal it affects our body and mind. We all are in a state of "hypervigilance," it is the biological way to prepare for danger and perform our best in times of stress. It makes lying down at night to rest and recharge hard, however. One may have intrusive thoughts and worries, or wake and not be able to fall back asleep.

### **So what should we do?**

This is a time for mindfulness, meditation, stretching, deep breathing, and physically and mentally unloading some of the stress before you lie down. You can talk to a friend, partner, colleague, or perhaps journal. Finding an outlet to unload some of the stress allows your body to recharge.

Also remember that positive emotions are more contagious than a virus. Joy, kindness, gratitude, compassion spread and help us all. A good solid dose of belly laughter a day also has healing and stress relieving properties.

Caring for ourselves is an important part of the job of caring for others during a pandemic, and getting rest and finding time for joy and laughter are important steps to caring for yourself.

---