

To the UW Medicine Community:

As the weeks pass, we find ourselves not just experiencing the stress and anxiety of navigating COVID-19, physical distancing, clinical realities and the impending surge of cases in our community – we are also struggling with the [grief](#) at the loss of our routines and what we had been looking forward to: travel plans, birthdays, graduations and the celebrations in life that pass by on our calendars as if belonging to a different reality.

There will be a time in the future beyond this pandemic, but the distance between now and then is challenging to wrap our minds around. We often keep something on the horizon to look forward to, but that horizon keeps moving. The uncertainty we are experiencing now can be overwhelming.

This week we want to focus on [taking control of stress and anxiety](#) and [coping with uncertainty by leveraging resilience during COVID19](#). Psychologist Lisa Damour encourages us to realize that anxiety is a normal and healthy emotion that helps alert us to the need to protect ourselves. Here are a couple reminders from Dr. Damour of what you can do to help yourself and those around you:

- Adopting new, temporary routines will help to reduce overall stress. Decisions are mentally taxing; having routines reduces the number of decisions we make each day. COVID-19 has upended many regular routines and increased decision-making stress.
- Major stressors, such as COVID-19, cause a cascade of microstressors, such as worries about how to get a haircut. Microstressors add up over time to become a significant source of stress. You can take the pandemic seriously while addressing microstressors. And tackling microstressors will be key to managing stress over the long run.
- When stress increases, we need and deserve more support. If you can't reduce your stress right now, work on the other side of the equation by seeking the help you need. Get emotional support by connecting with the people you love and use the resources listed below.

Know that teams across UW Medicine and the broader University have been working to help provide support for you and your families. For up-to-date information on [child care](#), [Friday Town Halls](#), [Care & Share](#) offerings, free parking, [Peer to Peer](#) support, and [Department of Psychiatry](#) support for our faculty and staff, please continue to check our [Well-Being and Support website](#).

- **Today:** Fortify your skill set to cope with the challenges ahead: Dr. Tony Back (Oncology) and Larisa Benson will offer “**Preparing Ourselves for the Next Wave.**” This 30-minute session will introduce mindfulness practices you can use on the fly and create space to address your concerns. Tune in so you can develop skills to meet the challenge we’re facing.
  - Wednesday April 1, [12:30pm-1:00pm](#)
  - Wednesday April 1, [4:00pm-4:30pm](#)

- Let your spouse or partner know that we're here for them as well. On April 7, from 1-2 p.m., [Jared Baeten](#) will join us for a drop-in Zoom session for **Partners and Spouses of Healthcare Team Members**. Drop-in [here](#) and please share your [questions with us in advance](#).
- Our friends from **The Sports Institute at UW Medicine** remind you that you can [Exercise Anywhere](#) using this awesome resource list of compiled apps and videos.

Know that during this challenging time, our community is behind us. We've received over 330,000 items of personal protection equipment (PPE), food (including from [Lizzo](#)), financial donations and over 1,200 messages of encouragement in the last week, including this one that captures what much of our community hopes to convey:

"To our friends at UW Medicine, thank you for everything you are doing. You are leaving your houses each day with courage and bravery, and your Seattle community sees you and appreciates you. We see your sleepless nights, your long shifts, and your dedication to and love for strangers. From the new babies being born to the oldest patients, the love and care you're providing is uplifting to all of us who feel helpless...From our homes, we hope we are helping you heal the world." – Anonymous

The horizon that we are hoping for may feel very far away, but we are building toward it together one day at a time.

Sincerely,

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