

To the UW Medicine Community:

If this is a marathon, we have been running hard for a while now and have found our pace. Perhaps we are even getting used to this way of providing care, this new way of being. Now is a critical time to reflect on our own experiences and how we're responding individually to this crisis to help build the skills and coping mechanisms that will be essential as we face the road ahead.

Drawing from what we know of the long-term effects of the stress typically experienced by healthcare team members following crisis, our next level of support includes 1) supporting individuals in developing healthy patterns of behavior and promoting help-seeking behaviors, and 2) building the capacity of our teams and our system to handle and support the on-going nature of the stress we are facing. Our resilience as a system will depend on leveraging the expertise around us to support each other during the acute stress we are facing.

Many of our healthcare team members know how to be "fine" and white-knuckle their way through incredible challenges. We have been trained to be OK. Knowing how hard the stress, uncertainty and loss of control is on all of us now, we want to encourage you to seek out the supports around you. From a [peer support](#) session as you come off service to a free [supportive conversation](#) with our Psychiatry clinician colleagues — we are here to help. It is okay to acknowledge just how hard this time is and to give and receive support now and into the future.

Over the next couple weeks, we'll offer support to help develop and maintain your capacity for compassion and mindful micro practices that you can deploy in stressful moments.

- **Today**, Join Blair Carleton from the UW's Center for Child and Family Well-Being for a 30-minute [Mindful Self-Compassion Session](#) on **giving and receiving compassion** during challenging times, April 22 from 12:30 to 1 p.m.
- Tune in with Dr. Tony Back (Oncology) and Larisa Benson for **Recovery Room: Stop for an Infusion of Renewal** this [Friday, April 24, from 12:30 to 1 p.m.](#) and [Wednesday, April 29, from 12:30 to 1 p.m.](#) In these 30-minute sessions you will learn three different micro practices that improve well-being, curb anxiety and regulate emotions so that you can sustain your ability to do your best work.
- Movement is important: 8 Limbs Yoga Centers is offering three free livestream yoga classes to all healthcare workers helping out with the COVID-19 response. To redeem, sign up for a class and use the promo code **8LIMBSTHANKSYOU** to "pay" for the class. Healthcare workers may take three free classes. Livestream info and FAQ: 8limbsyoga.com/livestream/

We are tackling the stress caused by COVID-19 through enterprise-wide interventions such as training a new cohort of peer supporters and teaching leaders and managers about Psychological First Aid in partnership with the Department of Psychiatry's [Trauma Recovery Innovations](#) project.

As an institution, together we have built out many supports to help our teams thrive in this new environment: child care, parking, peer support, food donations, clear communication, clinical debriefs, partner and spouse support, gratitude messaging and more. Much of the tremendous work we are all doing at UW Medicine is captured in the American Medical Association's recent paper on [Caring for](#)

[Healthcare Workers During Crisis](#) as best practices that will inform the experiences of providers, patients and communities well beyond our own.

Know that as the miles stretch out ahead of us, our community keeps cheering us on. Thanks for being amazing role models for folks in our community:

"Dear UW medical staff, I wish to send this letter of support and encouragement, but also gratitude to all of you. I also want to thank you out of deep gratitude for putting your lives on the line to save people that you have never meet, that means a lot to me. It is also really encouraging, knowing that there are people as kindhearted and selfless that are our frontline against this pandemic. You are really people that I can look up to and that are worthy of being looked up to. I am deeply touched by your work during this time, it really leaves an effect on people like me. Thank you very much. Sincerely, Lucas Pearce, 7th grader at Kenmore Middle School."

"Thank you for your amazing commitment and grace as you serve your patients. There are no words big enough or loud enough to adequately celebrate your willingness just to show up for work each day. In gratitude, we will work to do our part to press people around us to make choices that slow this horrible disease. As you traverse this nightmare marathon, know that we are cheering you on at each mile marker!!"

"I've heard it said that courage isn't the absence of fear, but being willing to act even when we feel afraid. I think of you all when I hear this. Thank you, all of you, for being courageous in this time when we need you so badly."

With so much uncertainty still surrounding COVID-19, please take time to reflect on the highs and lows you are experiencing and the behaviors you can control to keep yourself healthy for the long haul. We're all in this together and we are grateful for the work each of you are doing.

Sincerely,

Anne Browning, PhD

Assistant Dean for Well-Being, UW School of Medicine
Founding Director, UW Resilience Lab
Affiliate Assistant Professor, UW College of Education

Patricia Kritek, MD, EdM

Associate Dean - Faculty Affairs
Professor - Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine
University of Washington School of Medicine