



2020-2021

University of
New Hampshire



#UNHTogether for Employees

Using Self-Care and Support to Cope with Stress

COVID-19 has introduced extra challenges to everyone at UNH, including faculty and staff. We know many are juggling job responsibilities, student well-being, family care, uncertainty, and sometimes illness, loss, and injustice, along with life's daily stresses.

These challenges affect our mental, emotional and physical well-being in dramatic ways. If you're experiencing burnout, compassion fatigue, and/or "COVID fatigue," you're not alone.

This brief guide includes effective and evidence-based strategies to address burnout and compassion fatigue, as well as brief descriptions of the on- and off-campus services and emergency resources available to UNH faculty and staff to support you.



Wildcats Care:

Practice self-care.

Reach out for support.



Wellness is an active, positive, life-long process through which you become aware of, and make choices towards, a more balanced life. But the goal is not to achieve perfect balance. *Perfect balance is a myth.* Instead, the goals are to celebrate when you are thriving, and to recognize and give yourself what you need when you are out of balance.

What is burnout?

Everyone experiences stress. It's a natural response that happens when something we care about is at stake. A healthy amount of stress can help us stay motivated and energized. However, too much stress for too often can turn into chronic stress, which can then lead to **burnout**.

Symptoms of burnout:

- chronic fatigue
- insomnia
- forgetfulness or trouble concentrating
- lack of motivation
- cynicism and detachment
- anxiety, depression, and/or anger
- loss of appetite
- increased illness resulting from a weakened immune system
- physical symptoms (e.g., chest pain, heart palpitations, gastrointestinal issues, dizziness, headaches)

Systemic injustice, caregiving, grief and loss, job stress, relationship challenges, COVID fatigue, constant exposure to news and social media, loneliness, and election stress are just a few of the factors that might lead to burnout, and many are attempting to cope with multiple factors at once.

What is compassion fatigue?

Though the symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue are similar, the two are not the same. **Compassion fatigue** arises from secondary exposure to another person's trauma.

Professionals who work closely with others experiencing trauma (e.g., healthcare, psychology, social work, military, journalism) are especially vulnerable to compassion fatigue. The general public may also experience compassion fatigue; we are exposed to the news, social media, and others' trauma more than ever before.

It is common for people experiencing compassion fatigue to turn to substance use (i.e., drugs or alcohol) to cope. Untreated, it can also lead to depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

How can I prevent or cope with burnout or compassion fatigue?

If you are feeling challenged right now, perhaps in the form of stress, burnout or compassion fatigue, there are many ways to reconnect with the values and the purpose that guide your life and work. And the good news is that you don't have to do it alone. Wellness is a community effort. Resources are available to support you.

Finding ways to cope with chronic stress and rediscover a sense of balance is a deeply personal, ongoing process. What works for someone else may not work for you. Be patient with and kind to yourself.

You Can't Pour From an Empty Cup

Self-care is the practice of taking action to prevent illness, restore and build resiliency, and improve overall health. Self-care involves doing what grounds you and what brings you closer to your natural state of well-being. **Self-care is not** expensive, exclusive, forced, obligatory, stressful, trendy, or selfish.

Juggling too many tasks and responsibilities, and always putting others' needs first (e.g., caregiving, workplace demands, fighting for equity and justice, trying to meet all of your students' needs) can leave you feeling depleted, irritable, and resentful. It can also trigger anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns.

It's important to understand that *you will be better at caring for other people if you are caring for yourself*. Remember: you can't pour from an empty cup.

Self-Care Strategies

Set aside time just for you each day. You might need to strategize with family to carve out time, write yourself into your schedule, or ACTUALLY take that hour lunch break. If an hour feels like too much, start with 15 minutes and work up from there. Learning to prioritize yourself is the goal.

When in doubt, focus on the basics.

- **Sleep:** get at least 7 hours.
- **Nutrition:** eat colorful, whole foods and hydrate.
- **Body movement:** you don't have to run a marathon, just move in a way you enjoy.
- **Social connection:** make time to connect with others.

Set boundaries and short-term, achievable goals. Multi-tasking is no longer a strength, but an expectation, and it takes a toll. Decide: what is one thing I want/need to achieve or focus on today? Setting your priority makes it easier to juggle others' requests and manage responsibilities.

Identify activities, people, or places that make you feel whole. Journaling, laughing, singing, playing, listening to music, deep breathing, and getting out into nature are all research-based ways to promote positivity and relaxation.

Practice mindfulness. You can learn to be present to what you are feeling, thinking, and experiencing with an attitude of curiosity and non-judgement. Check in throughout the day; ask yourself, "how am I feeling?" and "what do I need?"

Practice gratitude. Gratitude helps re-wire our brains to focus on the positive. Start by taking 2 minutes a day to write down 1-3 things you're grateful for.

Celebrate wins (no matter how small). Take time to reflect: Where have you made a positive impact today, this month, this semester, or this year? You are doing the best you can, and you deserve credit for it.

Be compassionate with yourself. Work to embrace your imperfections, let go of self-judgment, and treat yourself as you would a friend.

Seek Out Social Connection and Community Support

Human beings are social creatures with a drive to connect. We were not meant to go through life's challenges alone. Pandemic or not, it's important to reach out for support and extend support to others.

- Work to maintain and build relationships that are authentic and caring, whether through in-person, physically distant meet-ups, email, or video.
- On the following page, you'll find brief descriptions of resources available to UNH faculty and staff.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Quick Reference

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call 911 or visit your local emergency room.

Health & Wellness: Call (603) 862-9355 or visit unh.edu/health

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255) or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to "741741"

If you are having trouble meeting basic needs (e.g., food, housing, money), visit 211.org or text your zip code to 898-211.

Behavioral Health Screenings

Online screenings for students, faculty, and staff are provided through PACS and Health & Wellness. They offer a quick way to determine if you or someone you care about may need to reach out to a professional for an evaluation. Screenings include substance use, mental health, disordered eating, gambling, life satisfaction, and general well-being.

[ACCESS SCREENINGS »](#)

Body Movement and Staying Active

Staying active is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Follow **Campus Recreation** on Instagram at @UNHCampusRec, [download](#) the new Campus Rec App, and learn more about their Workouts of the Day and in-person and virtual [group exercise classes](#). [ACCESS CAMPUS RECREATION UPDATES »](#)

The **UNH Employee Fitness Program** through the Department of Kinesiology provides two free opportunities for UNH employees to stay active and improve their fitness: an individualized, one-year program, and an exercise facility exclusively for employee use. They also have a new Instagram account (@unh_efp) with home workouts, virtual group training options, and other updates. [LEARN MORE ABOUT THE UNH EFP »](#)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Everyone needs help from time to time dealing with life's challenges. When you feel like you need help dealing with a situation that is troubling you, call EAP at 1-800-424-1749, 24 hours a day/7 days a week. It is free of charge to eligible faculty/staff members and their families.

The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can assist you and your family (spouse and dependents) with a variety of life issues and challenges. It also offers a large library of well-being webinars as well as planning and savings tools.

[VISIT THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM »](#)

Login is required. *Note: Enter "USNH" as the company code.*

Healthy UNH Website

A robust, in-house, online UNH resource. It provides a wealth of information on resources for faculty, staff, and students. The site offers a specific resource page devoted to managing in these challenging times, including information about accessing healthcare, caregiving, creating life balance, caring for emotional wellness, staying socially connected, and working remotely.

[ACCESS HEALTHY UNH: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING COVID »](#)

UNH Health & Wellness

Health & Wellness offers services to UNH employees and dependents, including non-emergency medical care, pharmacy, radiology, massage therapy, biofeedback, light therapy, [immunizations and travel clinic](#), and nicotine cessation. We have also moved many of our workshops, classes and educational programming options online.

- ☐ **Newsletter:** [Subscribe](#) for updates on in-person and virtual services, events, programs, and more.
- ☐ **Telehealth:** Available for non-emergency medical care for employees and dependents.
- ☐ **Pharmacy:** We fill prescriptions from both UNH and off-campus providers, sell over-the-counter medications at reduced prices compared to local retailers, and offer a curbside pick-up option. Call (603) 862-1094 or [visit our website](#).
- ☐ **COVID-19 Resources:**
 - ☐ Learn more about COVID-19 and find FAQs at our [Education & Resources page](#).
 - ☐ Send your health-related questions about COVID-19 and contact information to HW.COVID19@unh.edu.
- ☐ **Self-care opportunities:**
 - Download our [Monthly Wellness Calendars](#).
 - Visit our [Events page](#) for upcoming events and workshops.
 - Practice and learn more about [mindfulness and meditation](#), two evidence-based strategies for health and emotional well-being. Our site includes videos for practice and links out to further resources and apps.

[VISIT HEALTH & WELLNESS EMPLOYEE SERVICES PAGE »](#)

USNH Human Resources

COVID-19 Benefits for Employees/Employment: This site provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the financial protection USNH provides through your benefits program and on benefits-related laws recently passed by the Federal government. It also includes other valuable information and resources related to COVID-19. [VISIT COVID-19 BENEFITS SITE »](#)

Work/Life Flexibility: UNH believes that a flexible work environment yields beneficial work and health-related outcomes for both the employer and employee. Find workplace policies and programs that promote workplace flexibility, physical and mental health and supports the diverse needs of our workforce. [VISIT WORK/LIFE FLEXIBILITY PAGE »](#)

UNH Marriage and Family Therapy Center

The Marriage and Family Therapy Center provides assistance to individuals, couples, and families experiencing a wide range of personal or relationship problems. Therapists are advanced graduate students who are specializing in marital and family therapy. They are mature individuals with diverse life and professional experience. Therapists are supervised by senior staff who are all clinical members and approved supervisors of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT).

To arrange your first appointment, call (603) 862-2134. Our intake coordinator will return your call promptly, take necessary information, and arrange for one of our therapists to contact you for an appointment. Both day and evening appointments are available. All inquiries will be treated with complete confidentiality.

The Marriage and Family Therapy Center is committed to a treatment approach in which individual growth and development is best understood and promoted within the context of family and community relationships. It recognizes diversity in our society and embraces a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY CENTER »](#)

UNH Office of Community, Equity & Diversity

The Office of Community, Equity and Diversity is available to serve our community and we are working to foster a culture of belonging even while we are physically apart. To learn more about upcoming opportunities:

[VISIT EVENTS, PROGRAMS, AND TRAININGS PAGE »](#)

Online Recovery Support

[In The Rooms](#): A Global Recovery Community, Your Recovery Space When You Can't Meet Face-To-Face. This resource includes 12-step and non-12-step online groups.

[We Connect](#) has online Peer Recovery Support Groups.

WellTrack

WellTrack is a self-guided and interactive resource provided by PACS and Health & Wellness to support your mental health and well-being. It's easy to use and free-of-charge to UNH students, faculty and staff (anyone with a unh.edu email address)! WellTrack can help you identify, understand and address anxiety, stress, depression and public speaking anxiety.

[LEARN MORE AND ACCESS WELLTRACK »](#)

Have you experienced an incidence of bias in an online setting related to UNH?

The ReportIt! website is available to you regardless of whether the incident was online or in person. Help us improve our campus and community climate. If you have observed or experienced an incident of bias, discrimination or harassment, please report the incident by contacting the Affirmative Action and Equity Office at affirmaction.equity@unh.edu or TEL # (603) 862-2930 voice/ (603) 862-1527 TTY / 7-1-1 Relay NH, or log on to the [ReportIt! website](#). Anonymous reports may be submitted.

Looking for more information about COVID-19 at UNH?

Visit:

unh.edu/coronavirus

unh.edu/health/health-alert-covid-19



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