

### **Free Help for Dealing with the Distress of Living Through a Pandemic**

It is normal to have distressing and negative thoughts and feelings during a pandemic. Especially now and more than ever, our medical professionals and support staff, impacted by COVID-19, deserve the opportunity to receive support.

- UVA Health's Population Health department is interested in contributing to a culture of greater support and wellness for doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals.
- This pandemic shows signs of continuing, and we know that our own providers and staff are experiencing situations never before seen, increases in stress including grief, loss, frustration, failure, and moral distress related to treating patients, fear of getting sick or exposing their loved ones and families, and watching people die from this illness.
- Corey Feist, CEO for UPG, cited clinician burnout as a national public health crisis well before the COVID-19 pandemic, in his article published with spouse, Jennifer Feist, [Our Family's Tragedy: Dr. Lorna Breen Is the Canary in the Coal Mine](#). (U.S. News & World Report).
- Benefits of early intervention include less severe and fewer persistent symptoms, longer and fuller recovery, prevents people from turning to harmful and even life threatening practices such as substance abuse, self-harm, and even suicide, and gives people healthy coping skills to prevent recurring symptoms or burnout from becoming unmanageable.
- Jody Sweeney, LCSW and Arminda Perch, MBA, MSW\* have provided stress reduction, psychotherapy, and emotional support to health care workers through the Population Health department for over three years for the BeWell program. This context offered a safe and supportive environment that did not require a DSM diagnosis.
- Jody has been a member of Virginia Community Response Network (VCRN) since 2017. VCRN is a network of over 50 specially trained Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) clinicians who volunteer to respond to traumatic events that occur across Virginia. VCRN is currently offering free assistance to front line providers and essential workers for COVID-19 emotional distress. <https://www.vcrn.org/>. Jody and Arminda have been trained in EMDR and to help alleviate suffering and decrease distress around disturbing memories associated with COVID-19.
- EMDR is an evidence-based psychotherapy that has been shown to help individuals recover from trauma, distressing experiences, and stress-related issues. For more information about EMDR, visit: <https://www.emdria.org/>.

Population Health believes that health care professionals at UVA should be able to receive these services in-house. We are ready to help and offer support (1-6 sessions) using short-term intervention protocols specifically designed to address stress, negative thoughts, and negative feelings directly related to COVID-19. After treatment, these protocols can be used on your own to help you manage symptoms: For more information, email: (M-F, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm)

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