

Self-Care for First Responders

COPING WITH LOSS DURING THE PANDEMIC

GRIEF
SPACE

Support Practices Adapted for this Challenging Era



www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com

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You are America's unsung heroes and, while helping others, you may be struggling with the reality of loss to an invisible enemy. It is more important now than ever to care for yourself, so you can help others cope.

STAYING HEALTHY WHILE SERVING OTHERS

- ❑ Take care of yourself; you need to stay well to take care of others.
- ❑ Exercise, walk, meditate. Videos and programs are available online even if your gym is closed.
- ❑ Eat healthy. Grocery stores, restaurants, and online retailers all deliver fresh options and snacks.
- ❑ Rest.
- ❑ Maintain connection with your family in-person or through technology, window and porch visits, nighttime stories and tuck-ins via video chat.
- ❑ Create a staff support group or find a safe place to vent the emotional trauma you absorb.
- ❑ Engage in team huddles to support one another.
- ❑ Ask for or obtain items to reduce the stress and discomfort that can be caused by your personal protective equipment (for example, skin balm, "ear savers," etc.).
- ❑ Find time for yourself and the activities you enjoy; sharing those activities is a great way to connect even when apart.
 - Have a watch party
 - Play multi-player video games
 - Share a virtual beer, coffee, or other refreshment
 - Host an online movie night or virtual concert



HELPFUL RESOURCES

You spend your time helping others—you might be reluctant to reach out to others when you need help. Don't hesitate. Needing help doesn't make you weak, and asking for help is the key to being strong.

Resources are available, including your peers, your unit chaplain, your religious community, helplines, and online:

- [First Responder Support Network](#)
- [Responder Rel8](#)



REMINDER

Be kind and forgiving of yourself and others.

Much of what is happening now is beyond our ability to change, and it is easy to feel pain, rage, and guilt as a result. It is important now to take time for yourself, be kind to yourself, accept the kindness of others, and reach out for support when you need it.