



Dear Colleagues

The **WCED** cares about your mental and physical wellbeing and wants you to have someone to turn to whenever the need arises.

This wellness service is a means for the WCED to show you that you are a valued and appreciated employee. The Employee Health & Wellness Programme (EHWP) is administered by Metropolitan Health, this service is available to all employees and immediate household members.

# HOW TO DEAL WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## COPING WITH STRESS

The WCED understands that the situation at hand may affect each of us in different ways, including instances of heightened stress and anxiety regarding what may lie ahead. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. People who may respond more strongly to the stress of this crisis may include:

- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors, nurses and other health care providers, or first responders such as EMS, etc. (we appreciate you, our everyday heroes). We encourage you to take care of yourself first, as well as your colleagues and your families during this difficult time.
- People with chronic diseases as well as older people are at higher risk for COVID-19.
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.



# THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

- Take a break from social media and the constant information overload can be upsetting and cause panic.
- Take care of yourself, physically, mentally and emotionally (eat healthy, have well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs).
- Try to do some other activities you enjoy within the social distancing boundaries (connect with others via technology, read a book, start gardening, etc.)
- Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.



## FOR RESPONDERS



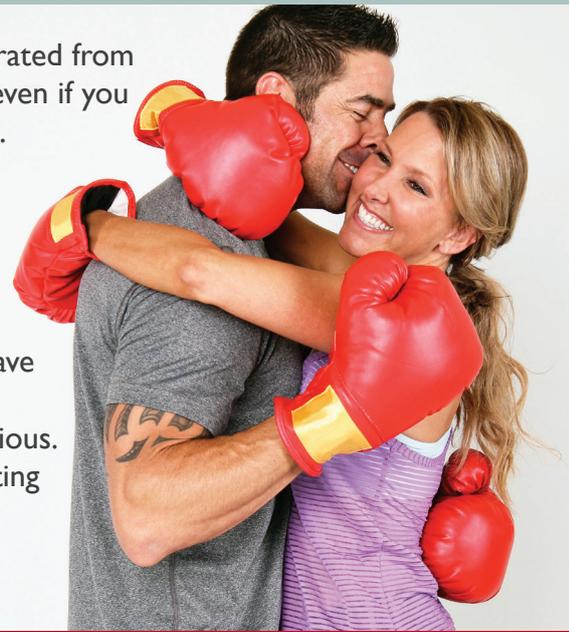
- We acknowledge your sacrifice and the great work you are doing and we realize that this could take an emotional toll on you.
- Look out for symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt) so you can reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions.
- Allow time for you and your family to recover after you have completed a shift and spend quality time with them.
- Practise all the recommended health and safety requirements and personal self-care activities. It is vital at this stage. You cannot pour from an empty cup; ensure that you maintain a balanced lifestyle.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family or patients.

# FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM ISOLATION

If you have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and you were separated from your family and friends, this must have been the most stressful time, even if you did not get sick. Everyone feels different after coming out of isolation.

Some feelings may include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief, fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sadness, anger or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during isolation.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.



## WHAT NOT TO DO

- Spread fake news, especially via social media. The official channels provided are your best source of accurate information.
- **IMPORTANT:** As a public servant your comments on social media are not entirely your own. What you say can be misconstrued by readers as directive from WCG so be sure to **ONLY** post & share health information relating to COVID-19 from our official pages.

If you are in need of psychosocial support or advice during this time, please contact our Employee Health and Wellness Programme using the following details:

- ▶ Health department toll free:  
**0800 111 011**
- ▶ Send a USSD to:  
**\*134\*664\*38#**
- ▶ Email:  
**wced@mhg.co.za**

***Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves***

