



TO: ALL CCLS, CLE, Fast Pace, and Magnolia Hill employees
FROM: CCLS COVID 19 Task Force
DATE: 11/13/2020
RE: COVID UPDATE #20

When Will This End? We are sorry to say the short answer is, “not soon”. We all know someone who has contracted the virus: a co-worker, a family member, or a friend. You’ve each done a wonderful job in protecting yourself and those you care for. Thank you. You value the care you give your residents/clients. Without visitors in the programs, the only way our residents encounter COVID is through you. Please take care of yourself throughout the day, while at work **and** home.

Governor Ever’s Recommendations. This week we’ve seen multiple days with more than 7,000 positive cases. To date, more than 2,500 Wisconsinites have died. In his messages and executive orders, the Governor is recommending we stay at home except for essential trips such as going to work, to the grocery store, the pharmacy, or health visits. He and other healthcare officials have encouraged us to limit our holiday gatherings to small physically distanced groups of people within the same household.

As we enter the winter months it becomes MORE important for us to practice what we’ve learned to be the best practice:

- At work, always wear a mask.
- Wash your hands, often while at work and home.
- When performing personal cares at work, wear a mask and gloves.
- Fill out the COVID -19 Symptom Screening Intake form at the beginning of each shift
- Frequently disinfect commonly touched surfaces throughout your shift

I know all of this is repetitive, but we can’t stop, we can’t give up.

COVID-19 Vaccine. CCLS has filed with the federal government, the paperwork for all clients and healthcare staff to receive the COVID vaccine for our mutual protection. You’ll receive more information once we have it.

Stress and CCLS – CLE Caregivers

To say that the coronavirus outbreak is a challenging time is an understatement, especially for you already stressed caregivers. Fear and anxiety, along with self-isolation, cause strong or overwhelming emotions and may even contribute to depression. On top of that, extra caregiving responsibilities can lead to fatigue, anger, or resentment. Many of our caregivers are suffering from **COVID Fatigue.**

To protect your health and overall well-being, taking care of your mental health has become even more essential. Here are some ideas, (condensed from DailyCaring.com) that are realistic coping tips that can help protect your mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Maintain a regular daily routine and healthy lifestyle

In times of uncertainty, having a regular daily routine provides some comforting structure and predictability. Plus, maintaining a healthy lifestyle by eating well, moving our bodies, and getting fresh air and sun will boost our health, well-being, and immune system. Many caregivers already have a daily routine because they're caring for a client who needs one.

2. Improve sleep

As a caregiver, sleep is often in short supply and isn't always the best quality. With coronavirus worries and self-isolation challenges on top of reduced support, it might be even tougher now to get a good night's sleep. But rest is one of the most effective ways to boost the immune system and improve well-being. Plus, being more rested increases your ability to be patient with your clients and to ride the waves of change.

3. Focus on what you can control and limit "what if" thinking

The news is scary. Individuals, companies, or other organizations might be doing things that you don't agree with. But there's nothing you can do about them. So, don't worry about the things that are outside of your control – it will only make you anxious and angry. Instead, let go and focus only on what you *can* control.

4. Lighten up on yourself

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stressful time that has forced major lifestyle changes on everyone. So, we shouldn't expect ourselves to adjust right away and be able to do everything that we had been doing. Things will be forgotten or just won't get done, plans will change, and you'll have episodes of frustration and anger. That *doesn't* mean that you're doing a bad job as a caregiver. It means that you're human and you're taking on a lot right now, both physically and emotionally.

So, give yourself a break. You're doing your best to get through a really challenging time. The first step is to notice when you're being hard on yourself or holding yourself to an unfair standard. The next step is to use [positive self-talk](#) to give yourself a break from self-criticism. Speak to yourself like a kind, supportive friend would. Hearing positive, supportive statements in your head reduces stress and is a lot more pleasant and calming than a steady stream of negativity.

5. Take mini-breaks throughout the day

As much as you need and deserve a long break, [taking tiny breaks](#) throughout the day will improve your physical and emotional health and help you keep going. Our top mini-break suggestions:

- Throughout the day, consciously relax your jaw, neck, and shoulders to relieve the overall tension in your body. Set an alert on your phone to get regular reminders.
- Drink some water and have a healthy snack.
- Move and stretch your body to loosen tense muscles and get your blood flowing.
- Do a 2- or 5-minute guided meditation at the free website [Calm.com](#) or use the [Calm app](#)

6. Remember, you are not alone

It's never been more important to connect with other people. Everyone's lives may be different, but we're all going through this pandemic together. Reach out to supportive family and friends and spend some time talking on the phone or have a cup of tea together over a video call. To connect with fellow caregivers who are in situations similar to yours, join an online caregiver support group where you can get support 24/7. As you reach out for support, remember HIPAA and confidentiality laws still apply so do not share client information.

7. Use humor to relieve tension

Life has changed dramatically and some of the things that are happening right now are pretty funny. Give yourself permission to notice and laugh when something is funny. Laughter eases tension and makes life more positive. You could even use social media in a positive way by following accounts with positive, funny memes about life during a pandemic.