

### Prioritizing the Psychological Well-being of Staff Working in Specialized Geriatric Services

COVID-19 continues to have a considerable impact on the psychological well-being of health care workers (HCW). According to Statistics Canada, seven in ten health care workers who participated in a national crowdsourcing initiative<sup>1</sup> reported worsening mental health during the pandemic. Among the participants, HCWs who worked in direct contact with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, and those who experienced restrictions or conditions on the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) were more affected than others<sup>1</sup>. Work-related stress has been further compounded by staff and bed shortages<sup>2</sup>. The impacts of such challenging work conditions may range from anxiety to severe emotional and physical distress due to trauma, including compassion fatigue<sup>3</sup> and/or moral injury<sup>4</sup>.

Senior Care Network urges our partners to further prioritize the psychological well-being of their staff, especially front-line workers, during these unprecedented times. Staff should be provided with enhanced supports, such as education on self-care and coping strategies, safe avenues to share concerns or challenges, and access to professional help when needed. Additionally, efforts should also be made to mitigate those factors that may potentially contribute to their work-related stress (such as policies to guide staff through ethically difficult decisions).

Below is a list of some free support platforms, and educational tools and resources for dissemination among management and staff:

Support Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Together All:</b> An online peer-to-peer support community for mental health. <a href="https://togetherall.com/en-ca/">https://togetherall.com/en-ca/</a></li> <li>• <b>Wellness Together Canada:</b> Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support. <a href="https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA">https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA</a></li> <li>• <b>Bounce Back Ontario:</b> A free, guided self-help program. <a href="https://bouncebackontario.ca">https://bouncebackontario.ca</a></li> <li>• <b>211:</b> to be linked to local support services</li> </ul>
Educational tools and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hamilton Health Sciences: COVID-19 Resilience Support Toolkit <a href="https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/covid19/staff-physician/hhs-resources/resilience-support-toolkit/">https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/covid19/staff-physician/hhs-resources/resilience-support-toolkit/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Compassion fatigue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian Medical Association: <a href="https://www.cma.ca/physician-wellness-hub/content/compassion-fatigue">https://www.cma.ca/physician-wellness-hub/content/compassion-fatigue</a></li> <li>• Compass Mental Health Program, B.C.: <a href="https://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/INT2011.pdf">https://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/INT2011.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Moral Injury/Distress:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Royal Mental Health- Care and Research: <a href="https://www.theroyal.ca/news/guide-moral-injury-supporting-healthcare-workers-during-covid-19">https://www.theroyal.ca/news/guide-moral-injury-supporting-healthcare-workers-during-covid-19</a></li> <li>• Moral Injury Guide- Executive Summary: <a href="https://www.moralinjuryguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MI-Guide-Executive-Summary.pdf">https://www.moralinjuryguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MI-Guide-Executive-Summary.pdf</a></li> </ul>

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada (2021). Mental Health among health care workers in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Approx. 18000 HCWs across Canadian provinces and territories filled the crowd-sourcing questionnaire.

<sup>2</sup> Bonsall, L. (2020). Beyond Burnout – The Moral Injury of Healthcare Today

<sup>3</sup> Refers to the emotional residue of exposure of working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. Source: Transitional Support Australia, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Refers to the psychological, social, and spiritual impact of events involving betrayal or transgression of one's own deeply held moral beliefs and values occurring in high stakes situation. Source: Centre of Excellence on PTSD, 2020.

