

PENN PSYCHIATRY

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER | RESURGENCE AND ANTI-RACISM

JULY 22, 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Faculty, Trainees and Staff:

I wanted to thank you again for all of the work you do for our patients, trainees and research projects. In a way, we are blessed because our work products are altruistic, making a difference for mental health in so many different ways.

The pandemic is slowly receding from our health system, but we need to stay alert. We are prepared for a second wave in the fall but have a huge advantage. “We got this.” In other words, while COVID is still a daunting illness with no easy remedy, we do know a lot more now than we did before. And, we also know how to provide care safely for COVID and non-COVID patients by using PPE and physical distancing protocols etc. At the same time, we need to continue to be diligent about wearing masks at work and outside of work and do all we can to avoid a second wave. An ounce of prevention...

Please take good care of yourself. Remember to mind your routines around sleeping, eating and exercise. If possible, take some time off to relax. It’s hard to overestimate the restorative effects of a break.

Warmly, m

COPING FIRST AID PROGRAM AT PENN MEDICINE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Emily Becker-Haimes and Dr. Courtney Benjamin Wolk developed and implemented the Coping First Aid program at Penn Medicine. Coping First Aid is one of the individual emotional well-being support options offered to employees on the

Cobalt platform. The mission of Coping First Aid is to implement an individualized, accessible, and supportive service to the health care workforce at Penn Medicine affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID Resilience Coaches are trained to listen, provide support, help individuals engage in adaptive coping, provide resources, and help link to higher levels of care when needed. COVID Resilience Coaches are not counselors or therapists. Rather, they are community members who are trained to support others during a difficult time. Coaches have access to licensed psychologist or social worker for weekly supervision and in emergencies, and a clear protocol for connecting individuals in need of higher levels of care to appropriate supports. The program is grounded in principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and adapted specifically for COVID-19. The materials Dr. Becker-Haimes and Dr. Wolk have developed for Coping First Aid include a webinar training and a number of resources and tip sheets. Prior to beginning coaching and following training, coaches receive three hours of training via webinar and submit a video role-play for competency evaluation. The program was founded in March 2020 after initiation of shelter-in-place restrictions for the state of Pennsylvania. Since March, they have developed a digital training and onboarding infrastructure, on-boarded over 40 coaches and seven supervisors, and provided consultation to other hospitals looking to enhance their wellness resources. In just a few months, the Resilience Coaches in the Coping First Aid program have conducted hundreds of sessions and have been deployed to provide targeted support to incoming medical trainees in the Penn system.

Coping First Aid has been an entirely volunteer team effort thus far! UPHS is exploring ways to provide support for it. Dr. Wolk and Dr. Becker-Haimes oversee the program and provide weekly supervision to coaches. Rebecca Stewart, PhD, Keiran Rump, PhD, Shari Jager-Hymen, PhD, and Gabrielle Gordon, LSW lend their support to the program as supervisors. Jennifer Nguyen, Lauren Callahan, Grace Kinkler, and Kit Wislocki provide/have provided administrative and operational support. A team of Penn psychology graduate students help review competency evaluations with supervision from Dr. Becker-Haimes. David Mandell, ScD provides strategic leadership support.

I am proud to have faculty and staff who rise to the challenge with dedication and altruism. It is heartwarming indeed! --Dr. Oquendo

CONGRATULATIONS CESAR DE LA FUENTE

Cesar de la Fuente has won the Inaugural NEMO Prize and to develop rapid COVID-19 virus breath tests. The paper-based test could be integrated directly into facemasks and provide instant results at testing sites. Click [here](#) to learn more.

WELLNESS RESOURCES

Click [here](#) to access our Wellness Resources.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Vision

Promoting health for the brain and mind to transform lives and the world.

Mission

Penn Psychiatry develops and implements new ideas to understand, prevent, and treat disorders of the brain and mind, through innovative research and discoveries, outstanding educational, world renowned clinical services, and transformational public health policies.