

COPING WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS IN STRESSFUL TIMES

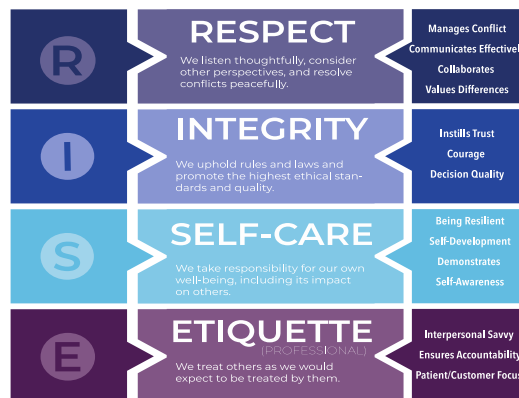
We are being challenged during these unprecedented times -- both as leaders and as individuals. Following periods of high stress, disillusionment and emotional exhaustion can set in. Left unchecked and unaddressed, these symptoms can manifest as behavior which can be deemed unprofessional. As leaders, it is important for us to encourage self-care, recognize emotional red flags and react effectively to incidents of unprofessional behavior.

Focus on Self-Care

Occasions of heroic community response and cohesions are commonly followed by a period of disillusionment and emotional low. During these phases, it is essential to focus on self-care, one of the organizing principle of our professionalism code of conduct.

Take responsibility for your own self-being by making time for:

- *Exercise, sleep, healthy diet*
- *Deep breathing, yoga, meditation*
- *Check ins with ourselves and our teams*
- *Time with our families and friends*
- *Dedicated time away from work*



Recognize Emotional Red Flags

Take a moment daily to review how you are feeling. Ask team members about their own coping. Be aware of the behavioral, emotional, physical and cognitive red flags that could indicate that you and/or others are in need of mental health first aid such as: social withdrawal, emotional instability, worsening of health conditions or difficulty completing normal tasks. If you encounter these signs, explore further to determine whether an intervention is needed. Consider scheduling a facilitated, individual or team-based group support session through PennCOBALT.

Address Unprofessional Behavior

When we don't make time for our own well-being, times of stress can also manifest as unprofessional and/or nonproductive behavior. When you encounter such behavior, it is important to:

Check yourself

- Understand yourself and your reaction. Is your response objective or based upon a more personal reaction?

Name the beast

- Define the specific behavior that is causing the difficulty in order to respond appropriately.

Try to empathize

- Take a step back and try to understand what the other party is experiencing that might make them act this way.

Call out the behavior

- Intervene early, even when it is uncomfortable. The longer the behavior goes unchecked, the more likely it is to continue.

Keep it short and be direct

- Provide clear feedback. Be as concise as possible and make the message easy to understand.

If these steps are not effective and the unprofessional behavior continues, you may need to contact your HR partner.

In this time of change and uncertainty, our teams foster life, safety and a profound sense of belonging.

We are one Penn Medicine and we are in this together!



Want to learn more?

- [PennCOBALT](#)
- [Penn Medicine Together](#)