

Supporting Clinicians Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tip Sheet: The Furloughed/Fired Physician



If you are a physician who has been furloughed or have lost a practice during the pandemic, here are some tips for you to reflect on.

- **You are extremely valuable and needed.**

- Your role as a physician is incredible. You have helped so many patients, family members, friend, and colleagues over your career. They still need you and will need you again when the situation normalizes.
- This pandemic has created problems in the economy of health care as never experienced previously. But it doesn't negate the need for physicians. Just as many patients will still have other healthcare concerns and illnesses.
- You are still, and always, needed
- You are never alone.



- **Do not allow the process of being furloughed reflect who you are in spirit.**

- You were created for a purpose and those purposes may change over time. Your role as a physician continues.
- Remind yourself, what you have to offer.
- Remember, your good works of the past.
- Release contempt and anger.
- Find solutions for the here and now.
- Be grateful even in the challenging times.
- Keep things in perspective – balance the realities you face (loss of income) with the hope of prevailing (seek new opportunities)



- **Healing is a process.**

- You must remember that healing takes time.
- There are stages of grief and healing.
- Allow yourself time to heal.
- Make no decisions out of haste.
- Connect with those who are supportive, and caring and loving to vent, cry, yell, and laugh.
- Seek help from specialists.



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- Avoid behaviors that only mask your fears, concerns, anger, and sadness. Go to people before you go to alcohol, smoking, substances, porn, etc.
- Healing is sometimes a delayed response. You may develop deep emotions, hurt feeling, and depression. Recognize these symptoms and get help as soon as you begin to experience them. Please are available to help. Counselors and coaches do online or phone sessions, and physicians offer telehealth.



- **Seek opportunities that support your purpose, meaning and values.**

- If your furlough is a short time frame, give yourself time to heal, then time to reflect on what you need to fill the current void.
 - Consider resting for a while.
 - Find meaningful ways to fill your calendar.
 - Build knowledge, take online courses, expand your hobbies and interests.
 - Find opportunities to volunteer.
 - Donate your skills to special needs populations and philanthropic causes.
 - Be the support for colleagues who are on the frontline – donate meals or snacks to those caring for COVID-19 patients in the ER, ICU, and hospital wards.
 - Train on telehealth or advanced care skills for the inpatient side.



- If you were released, fired, or lost a practice or job, you will have to think for the long haul.
 - Do all the above.
 - Seek out opportunities that are priority areas.
 - Consider if temporary or permanent relocations are needed.
 - Identify and eliminate barriers to next steps for employment.
 - When all else fails, think out of the box. What skills do you have that can be valuable to others? Can you teach, write, do art, build systems, etc. many physicians find great joy in using their individual talents, linked to healthcare, without providing patient care.
 - Seek help as needed for your own mental sanity, financial aspects, family concerns, etc.

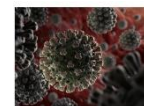
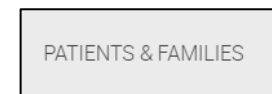
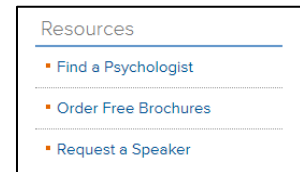


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Resources: MH specialists, coaches, psychiatry, primary doctor, etc. Each picture is hyperlinked to the actual webpage. Simply click on the picture.

- American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/> - click on *psychological help center*, then *find a psychologist*.
- International Coaching Federation: <https://coachfederation.org/> - click on *find a coach*.
- American Psychiatric Association: <https://www.psychiatry.org/> - click on *Patient/Families* then click *find a psychiatrist*.
- The American College of Physicians – COVID-19 Resources for physicians. <https://www.acponline.org/>
- The American Medical Association – resources for Physicians. <https://www.ama-assn.org/>
- The National Academy of Medicine – Well-being resources. <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/clinician-well-being-resources-during-covid-19/>



PUBLIC HEALTH
COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus) resource center for physicians
10/15/2020

