TEAM MORALE IN THE SETTING OF A PANDEMIC

Ellen Norton, MS, APRN, ANP-BC, ACHPN
Laura Fosler, RN, MS, FNP-BC, ACHPN

This work is conducted by the Illinois Area Health Education Centers Network Program, funded by grant No. U77HP26847 from the Health Resources and Services Administration, and administered by the National Center for Rural Health Professions at the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Medicine - Rockford.
Presenters have no financial relationships to disclose.
Team Morale: Learning Objectives

1. Discuss team communication and resources to support resilience
2. Identify operations and workflow considerations in supporting team function
3. List respectful behaviors to maximize team cohesion
4. Discuss impact on morale of ethical dilemmas facing front line staff
Case

50 y/o male COVID-19 positive intubated with respiratory failure, whose wife is at home with symptoms (not tested) and their 2 school-age children.

• How do you best support the family?
• How do you best support the staff?
• What resources do you have?
• How do you go to the next patient?
Team Morale defined

- Self-esteem, assurance, confidence, drive, humor and a good outlook are in abundant supply within a group.

- When a team exhibits good morale, there is enthusiasm as well as motivation and an optimistic approach toward the team effort.

careertrend.com
C.O.R.E.

Communication

Operations

Respect

Empathy
Communication - Internal

Team meetings

- **Frequency**
  - Institution and team meetings
  - Predictability is important!
  - Facilitates team flexibility, make plans in small chunks

- **Content**
  - Personal check-in, how are emotions/coping?
  - Pass on information about what needs to happen
  - Talk about what’s working--amplify the positive!
  - Opportunity to give a shout-out to team members
  - NOTE: this is not the time to make big, lasting changes

- **Name the challenges**
  - People stretched and stressed
Resources

- Vital Talk (free) [www.vitaltalk.org/GUIDES/COVID19-COMMUNICATION-SKILLS/](www.vitaltalk.org/GUIDES/COVID19-COMMUNICATION-SKILLS/)

- CCCC Coalition for Compassionate Care of California [www.coalitionccc.org](www.coalitionccc.org) - COVID Conversations Toolbox

- Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (resource list, many free) [www.advancingexpertcare.org](www.advancingexpertcare.org)

- Center to Advance Palliative Care COVID-10 Response Resources [www.capc.org](www.capc.org) (free)
Operations

- This is a marathon, not a sprint!!
  - Vaccine is still at least 8 months away
  - Antibody testing is still in its infancy
  - We don’t know how long we’ll be sheltering in place
- Assess Preparedness
  - How nimble are you, how quickly can you pivot?
  - How do you get equipment and other things you need?
  - How’s your institution doing?
- Schedules
  - Is your team flexible? Inpatient/outpatient?
  - Are people getting deployed to other areas? Called off?
- Morale considerations
  - Where can you be flexible? Dress code? Hours?
  - Adequate housekeeping?
  - What extra can be done? Meals, time off, donations
Remember to respect others

- Know thyself - over reactor vs under reactor
  - Over-reactors: take over, assign rather than collaborate
  - Under-reactors: pull back, get labeled
  - Brene Brown podcast 4/3/20, Unlocking Us
- Process for cleaning/sanitizing common areas
- Remember to say thank you
  - Each other
  - Housekeeping
  - Security
  - Food service
- Respect the impact of multiple challenges
  - New pt populations--prisoners, COVID-19
  - Change in role/redeployments
  - Help the new people in your area, reach out to your colleagues who’ve been deployed elsewhere
Respect for Self

- Don’t forget the basics! Nutrition, sleep, exercise
- Pamper yourself
  - Light candles at dinner
  - Aromatherapy
  - Solitude vs creative social connection
- Stop judging yourself!
  - Emotions may be labile
  - You may be working in an area where you don’t feel expert
- Recognize the positive
  - Increased team cohesion and common sense of purpose
  - Many, many online uplifters (Dolly Parton’s storytime, Jon Krasinski’s SGN, Met Opera nightly streams)
  - Free stuff, decreased traffic, what else?
Empathy

- Collective and Individual Grief
  - Unlocking Us with David Kessler
  - Loss of what’s normal, knowledge that “after” will be different
  - Personal losses: prom, milestone celebrations, weddings, funerals

- Gratitude
  - We get to go to work

- Uncertainty
  - How long will this go on?
  - What will after look like?

- What’s the right thing?
  - When do we “open” again? Who decides? When should we make exceptions?
Empathy, cont.

- Celebrate those recovering!
- Consider a formal way to mourn those who’ve died
- Accept help
  - survivor guilt
  - second victim
- Accept gratitude
PTSD - Next steps
Ethics considerations

- Podcast: Making the Call--Who Gets the Ventilator? with bioethicists Dr. Zeke Emmanuel & Jonathan Moreno

- Fair Allocation of Scarce Resources in the time of Covid-19

- The Hastings Center for Bioethics
  https://www.thehastingscenter.org/ethicalframeworkcovid19

  https://www.thehastingscenter.org/guidancetoolsresources covid19/
Palliative Care Resources

COVID-19 Response Toolkit | Center to Advance Palliative Care www.CAPC.org

Resources to Address COVID-19 | American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine www.aahpm.org

COVID-19 Resources | National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care www.NCHPC

The Role of Palliative Care in a COVID-19 Pandemic | CSU Shiley Institute for Palliative Care www.CSU.org
Resources for Resilience

- Podcast: Unlocking Us with Brene Brown
- The coronavirus anxiety workbook: https://thewellnesssociety.org/free-coronavirus-anxiety-workbook/
Earth has no sorrow that earth cannot heal … John Muir
Normalcy … TBD

The COVID-19 battle continues as we all help “flatten the curve”. Continue to evolve and equip yourself and your team. You have many talents and resources to share!

Best time ever to GOOGLE what you and your team needs!

Be safe and be well - you are amazing!