

# Preventing Burnout for Healthcare Workers Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Using the Buddy System

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased anxiety, stress, workload, trauma, and grief reactions among healthcare workers. One highly recommended technique to help prevent burnout is the Buddy System. The Buddy System is built upon the evidence-based approach that the military developed for those who have been in combat situations. It pairs healthcare workers in similar roles to share responsibility for his/her partner's safety and emotional well-being. Buddies promote resilience, understanding, and physical safety for their partners.

The Buddy System couples individuals in similar roles, who work within physical proximity and similar shifts so that they can keep an eye on each other. Encourage the pair to get to know each other's background and prior work experience so that they may build trust. The pair should communicate daily if possible, without judgement. The purpose of the daily communication is to check in and discuss daily challenges and tough situations. The Buddies should:

- Offer to help each other with basic needs such as getting a snack, water, or transportation to/from work.
- Encourage each other to take breaks throughout the shift.
- Watch each other put on their Personal Protective Equipment, for their physical safety.
- Acknowledge difficult situations that have occurred that day.
- Demonstrate appreciation for achievements, even the smallest moments of the day.
- Share humor, hope, gratitude, and optimism.
- Share stress relief opportunities such as breathing exercises, stretching, meditation, and healthy sleep habits.



The Buddies should be aware of resources to help their partner if they have concerns outside of their role such as significant emotional distress, burnout, and risk of physical harm. Encourage the Buddies to seek out management or leaders for support. Buddies should not become a counselor or push their partner to discuss problems if he/she is uncomfortable. Carebridge Employee Assistance Program offers 24/7 access to professional counselors for immediate support and guidance. In addition, the Carebridge EAP App offers a Self-Care section with short audio messages on stress management, relaxation, gratitude and more.

*Copyright © 2020, Carebridge Corporation. All rights reserved*

Contact Carebridge at **800.437.0911** or visit **[www.myliferesource.com](http://www.myliferesource.com)** for more information!

