



COVID-19

Leadership Checklist

Mitigating Team Stress

Developed by Walter Reed Army Institute for Research

SHARE INFORMATION

Sharing information establishes communication and trust with your team.

- Stay up-to-date on the latest developments*
- Share what you know with the team*
- Let them know when you don't know the answer*

Self Check: Have you updated your team recently?

CONNECT

Connecting with others can help prevent people from feeling isolated and alone.

- Run regular meetings to provide structure and stability*
- Strengthen your team's sense of community and shared purpose*
- Set up a group text to check in regularly with all team members including those without government iPhones*

Self Check: Are you connecting with your own leaders and teammates?

RECOGNIZE LIMITS

Stress can diminish people's ability to process complex information.

- Remember to repeat whatever is important and over-communicate*
- Be patient if someone makes a mistake or isn't tracking*
- Build in redundant checks for critical pathways to reduce errors*

Self Check: Are you making simple mistakes? Do you need to take a minute to recharge?

MAINTAIN PHYSICAL RESILIENCE

When people take care of themselves physically, they can handle stress better.

- Prioritize sleep*
- Encourage good nutrition*
- Get regular exercise*

Self Check: Are you remembering to take care of your physical health?

MAINTAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Using mental resilience skills can help people manage stress and stay strong.

- Encourage a balanced diet of news to avoid feeling overwhelmed*
- Keep a detailed to-do list to keep things manageable*
- Use positive self-talk or buddy talk to get through stressful moments*
- Use “Grounding” (name 3 things you can see, hear, and physically feel) to reduce anxiety spikes and orient yourself to the moment*

Self Check: What mental resilience skills are you practicing?

NORMALIZE STRESS

It is important to acknowledge the impact of stress, letting unit members feel more connected and less emotionally isolated.

- Recognize your team’s stress (“This is uncharted territory”)*
- Remember there are individual differences in how people cope with stress*
- Give permission to talk about stress to the team*
- Recognize that high-achievers are likely to feel even more stress during crises*

Self Check: Have you acknowledged your own stress level to someone?

SEIZE THE MOMENT

Leaders can reframe this moment as a critical opportunity for the entire team to contribute to the shared mission of finding solutions to the crisis.

- Remind your team of the important mission at hand*
- Everyone has an essential role to play, no matter their rank or occupation*

Self Check: How can this challenge provide you a leadership opportunity?

CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES

Reduce stress and save energy by focusing efforts on what can be controlled and accepting what can’t be controlled.

- Encourage your team members to identify what they can control*
- Have team members practice deep breathing and mindfulness when things start to feel like they are out of control*

Self Check: What is within your control? What do you have to accept?

TAKE THE LONG VIEW

**This isn’t a one-time process.
Pace yourself and your team for a marathon.
Remember to be kind to yourself and your team.**