Mental Health Support for NIH Staff during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Clinical Center Research Hospital Board (virtual)

July 23, 2021

National Institute of Mental Health

NIH Timeline

March 2020

- Maximum telework flexibilities begin; Group 0 -frontline workers
- Clinical Center ‘shutdown’ begins
- Intranet How to Cope page launched

May

- Return to Physical Workspace Plan is presented; Group A return
- Intranet Wellness Resources page launched

July

- Group B1 returns to physical workspace

August

- Group B2 returns to physical workspace

September

- Suicide Prevention Month

December

- Navigating Mental Health Resources at NIH Panel

February 2021

- NIH Vaccination Program begins

May

- Mental Health Awareness Month

How did NIH Respond?

NIH-wide efforts aimed at developing, delivering, and providing continued NIH mental health resources and activities for NIH staff, trainees, and contractors during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Trans-NIH Mental Health Response Team

  In early April 2020, mental health experts from across NIH developed a plan to provide coping resources for staff

- Individual Institutes
- OD Offices

Trans-NIH Mental Health Response Team Roster

Chairs:
Maryland Pao (NIMH)
Courtney Aklin (OD/IMOD)

Members:
Ann Berger (CC)
Bill Elwood (OBSSR)
Amanda Fine (OCPL)
Laura Kwako (NIAAA)
Megan McWilliams (OHR)
Sharon Milgram (OITE)
Karran Phillips (NIDA)
Nina Schor (NINDS)
David Shurtleff (NCCIH)
Anna Verschoore (EAP)
Victor Voloshin (Ombuds)
Michael Bell (OMS)

Additional expertise:
Meredith Fox (NIMH)
Susanna Sung (NIMH)
Anna Ordóñez (NIMH)
Debbie Snyder (NIMH)
Bonny Harbinger (OIR)
Tonya Lee (ORS)
Tara Schwetz (OD/IMOD first year Co-Chair)

Executive Secretary:
Erica Landis (OD/IMOD)

Trans-NIH Mental Health Response Team Goals

Leverage NIH expertise and **create partnerships with stakeholders** on well-being, resilience, and mental health to **share information** with NIH staff, trainees, and contractors

Advise NIH leadership on how to **identify those in need** of support and **refer them to resources**

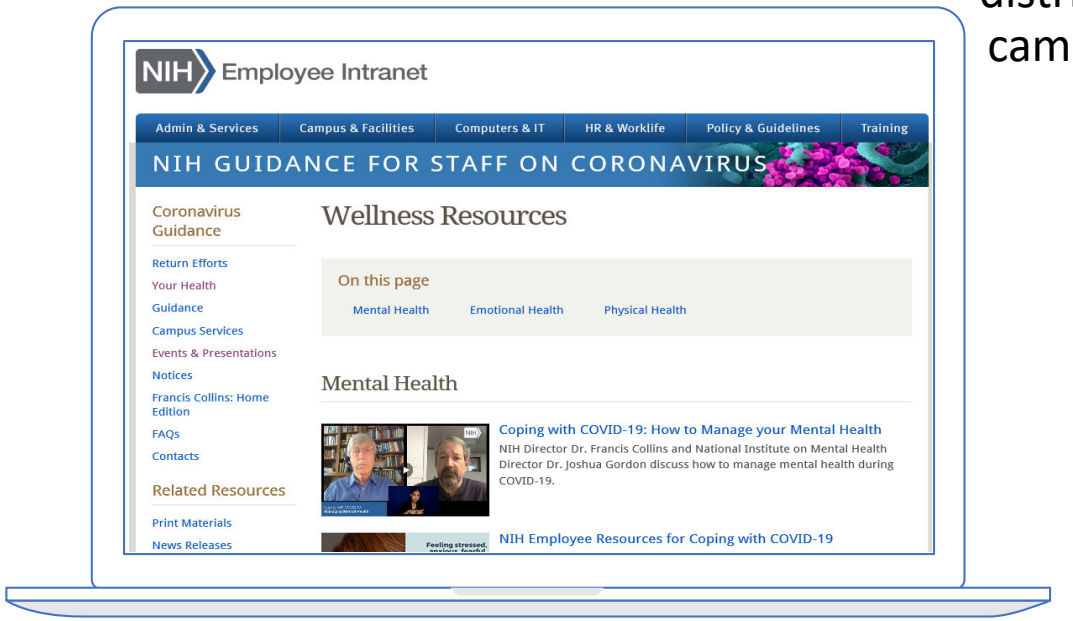
Develop a continuous needs assessment to identify evolving trends and **meet the changing needs** of staff

Educating and Supporting Staff

Leverage universal, quick guidance
Develop workshops and resources on mental health topics

Critical resources for mental health information

Posters on coping and mental health care strategies were distributed across NIH campuses and online.



Wellness and Coping on the NIH Intranet

The Team gathered mental health related videos, events, and other resources from across NIH to share on the Wellness Resources and Coping COVID-19 Intranet pages.

Partnerships within NIH

(301) 496-3164

Need emotional support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

HERE TO LISTEN
STAFF SUPPORT LINE
301.451.1151
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)
SUPPORTED BY NIMH

Monday - Friday, 9 am - 12 pm and 1 pm - 4 pm

Mental health clinician peers are here to:

- Listen to emotional challenges and stressors
- Provide encouragement and problem solving approaches
- Promote resiliency
- Offer resources

Calls are confidential unless there is a safety concern.
This is not an emergency line or clinical service.

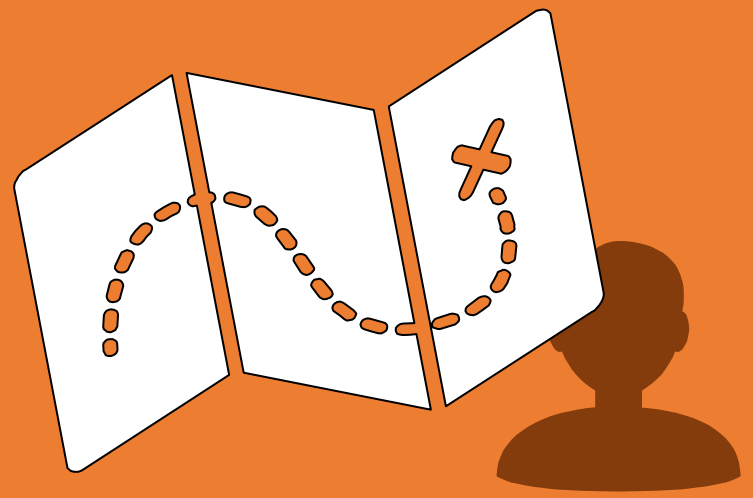
Roadshow: Managing Stress and Anxiety During COVID-19 (NIMH &EAP)

48

total presentations to NIH and Federal partners

over 7,759

total attendees



Part 1: Managing Stress During the Covid-19 Pandemic

- *Featuring NIMH and EAP*
- *Didactic and Live Q&A tailored to audience experience*

Part 2: A Mental Health Booster: Fostering Connection & Meaning in the Virtual Workplace (Deborah Snyder, NIMH)

- *Including didactic and experimental small group breakouts*
- *Live Q&A*

Coping with COVID-19 Presentations by the Employee Assistance Program

Requested by leaders across NIH, presentations are adapted to **meet the needs of each audience** and focus on the **skills and resources** needed for coping with the stress and anxiety of the pandemic.

49

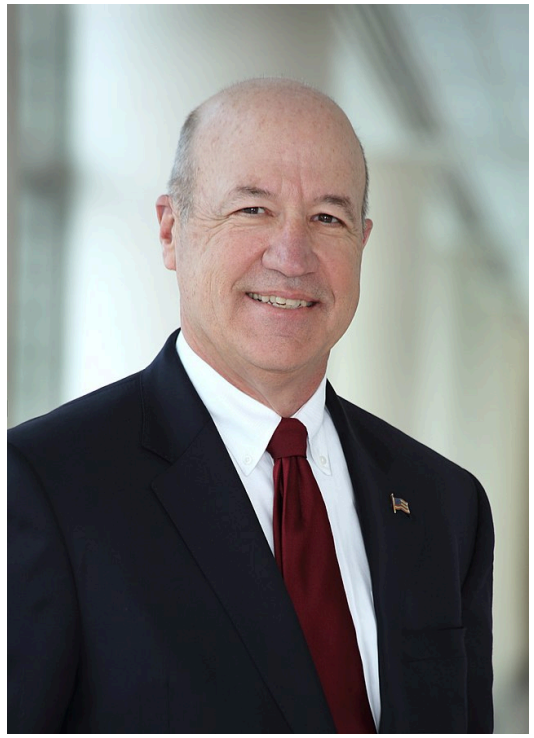
presentations

over

5,350

attendees

NIH CC Employee Well-Being is Our Priority: Help Seeking is a Sign of Strength



Four Main Things for Week of 3-7 August

CN CEO, NIH Clinical Center
To CCMEDSTAFF-L@LIST.NIH.GOV

Reply | Reply All | Forward | •••

Fri 8/7/2020 8:19 AM

You forwarded this message on 8/7/2020 8:46 AM.

1. ***Help Seeking is a Sign of Strength.*** In a couple of recent messages I have highlighted the "Hear to Listen" and OITE programs for staff experiencing any form of psychological distress during these challenging times. I was pleased to hear that these messages may have prompted a few staff members to make the help seeking phone calls. My suspicion is that there are others still in need of some assistance. Keep in mind that I will never know who made these calls (I will never ask and they wouldn't tell me anyway.) In addition to "Hear to Listen" and the call line for trainees, I want to remind everyone of the resources provided by the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is open to all staff, trainees ***and their family members over the age of 18.*** There are some limitations for contractors that the EAP staff will discuss one-on-one. EAP offers individual counseling and connects employees to additional resources as needed. ***Let me highlight that the services for family members during these times should be of particular interest.***

   EAP can be reached at 301 496-3164 or through their website at https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndWellness/EAP/Pages/index.aspx

CEO, Jim Gilman email 8/7/20

“At the Clinical Center, Employee Well-Being is our Priority”

Peer-to-Peer Support System (Buddy System)

encouraged colleagues to establish relationships to connect regularly and discuss, to whatever extent they like, the emotions and concerns they are experiencing during the pandemic.

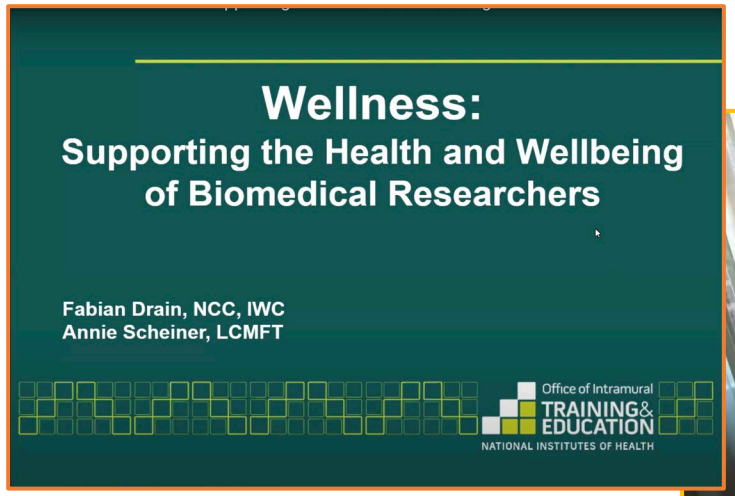
CC Connections and **Chaplain’s Chats** are offered through the Spiritual Ministry Office

with support from NIMH, CC SW, NCI staff and others

Nursing Wellness and **Code Lavender**

#OITEWellnessChallenge

OITE Supporting Trainees



- Wellness Wednesday virtual brown bag discussions
- Virtual meditations and affinity group meetings
- Workshops on building resilience and career development during COVID-19

How Trainees Cope with Stress

- OITE hosted small group sessions to discuss stress management throughout the Pandemic and during Mental Health Awareness Month

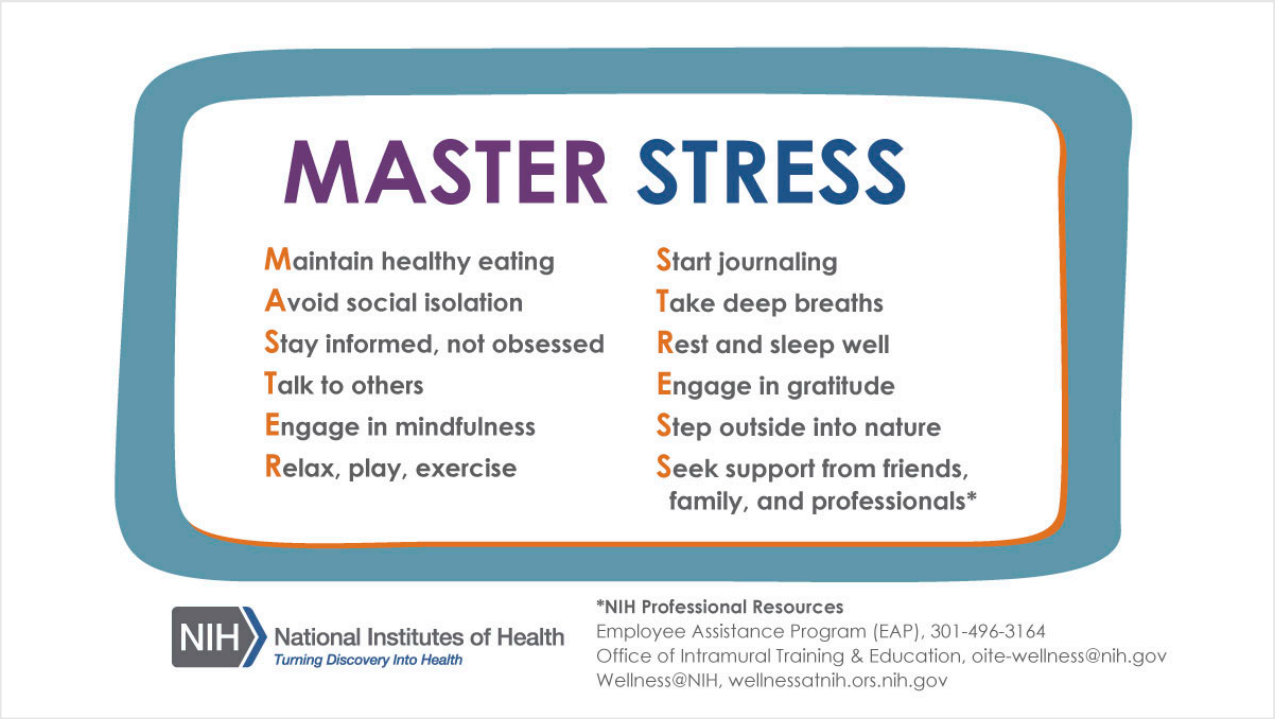
NIH-Wide Stakeholder Groups

- NIH Child Care Board
- Aging and Adult-Dependent Care Committee
- Health and Wellness Council
- Nurses Wellness Committee
- NIH Well-being Ambassadors
- Working Caregivers Taskforce

OD Support Groups – Throughout the Pandemic

- General Wellness
  - Work-life balance
  - Workplace flexibility
  - Anxiety of returning to workplace
- Parents and Caregivers of Children
  - Work-life Balance
  - Child care
  - Virtual Learning
  - Guilt and Shame
- Caregivers of Elderly and Adult Loved Ones
  - Highest interest and attendance rate
  - Most engaged participants of all groups
  - Caregiving from afar

Master stressful moments

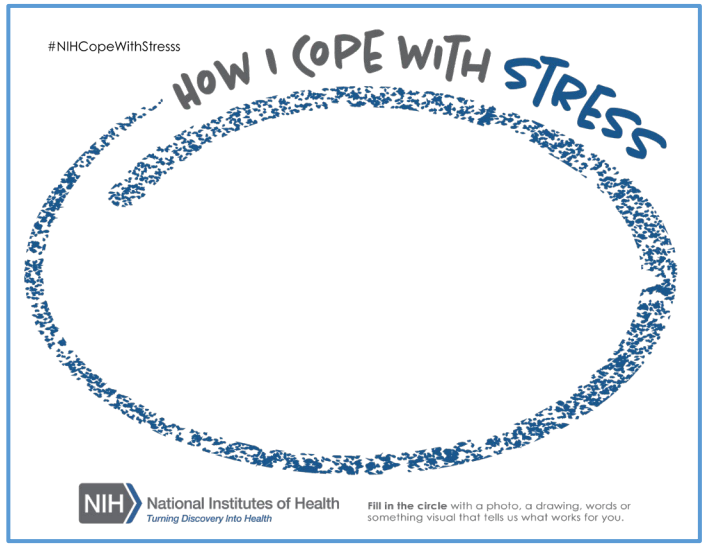


Wallet cards and screensavers offer quick tips for dealing with stress in the moment and contact info for NIH resources.

May Mental Health Awareness Month

Leaders across NIH have been asked to fill in the sign with pictures of how they cope with stress.

Photos of the signs have been shared on social media, with staff, and on websites.



Continuous Assessment

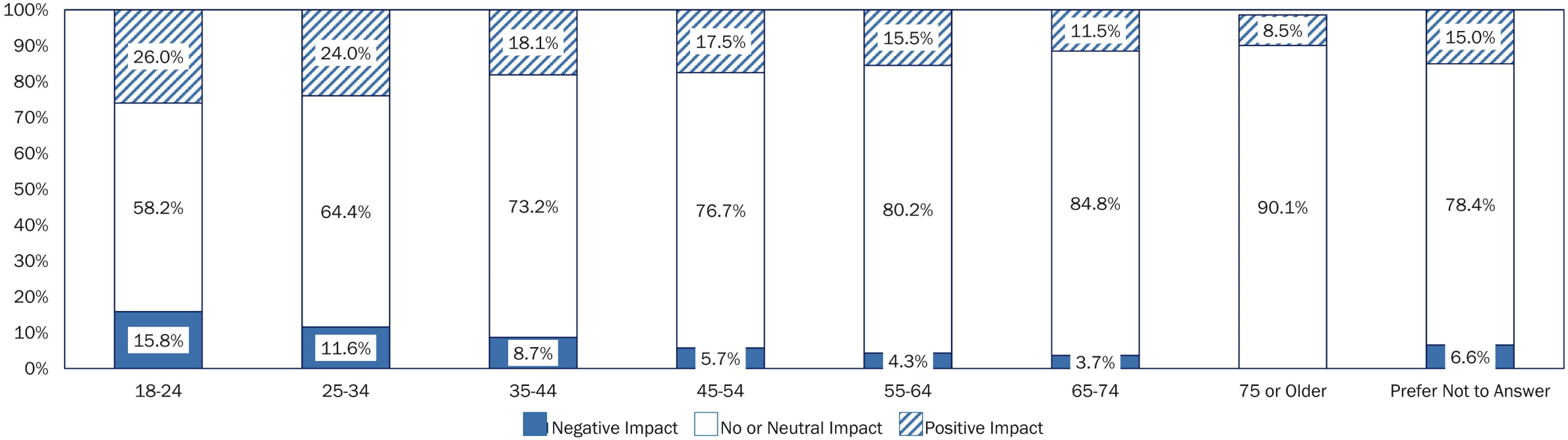
Tracking resource use and identifying needs

Impact of Mental Health on Productivity by Age

- The percentage of respondents reporting that awareness to mental health has a positive impact on productivity has an approximate gradient pattern with age: positive impact decreases as age increases, while the negative impact decreases as age increases
- Across all age groups, the highest percentages who reported that awareness to mental health had a positive impact on productivity were the 18-24 (26.0%) and 25-34 (24.0%) age groups

Percentage of respondents reporting that awareness or attention to mental health was one of the most impactful factors on productivity (Q24A, Q24B): n=15,575

By Age*



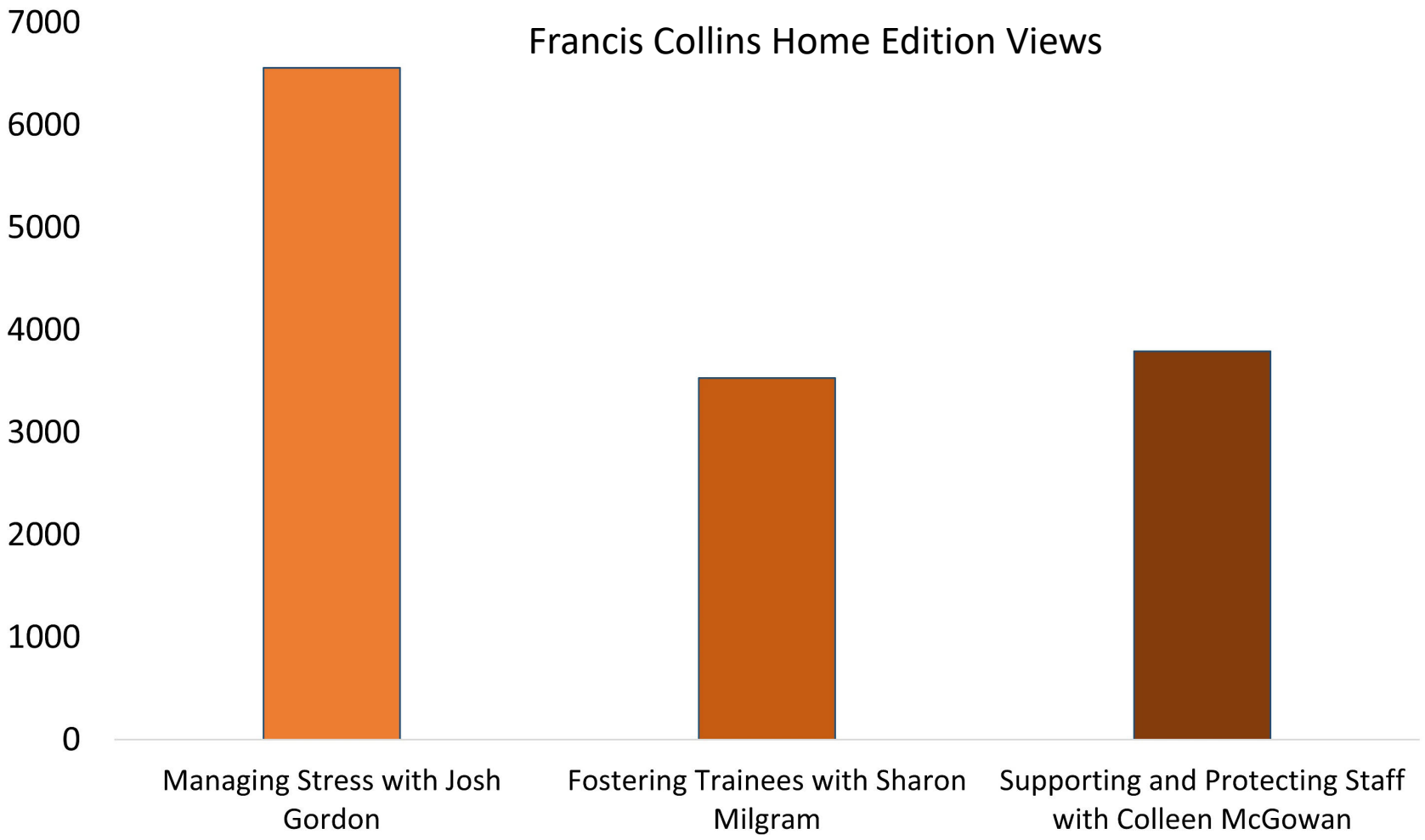
Note: A chi-square test found that differences between groups are statistically significant

*Percentages do not add to 100 due to removal of response groups of five or less for privacy

Mental Health Related Video Views

712

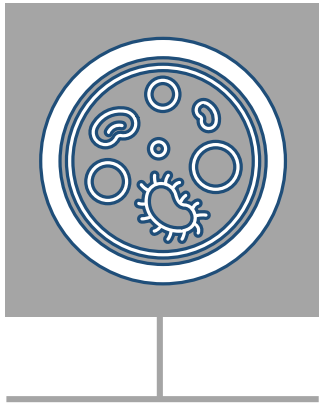
Views of the *NIH Employee Resources for Coping with COVID-19*



OITE Workshops for Trainees and Staff

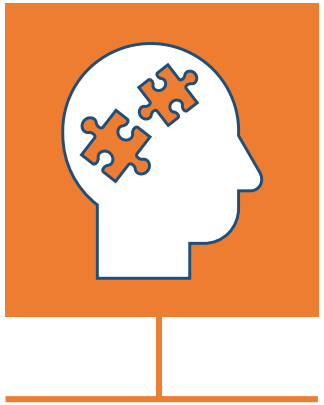
1,729

Participants in meditation sessions, mindfulness study and skills groups



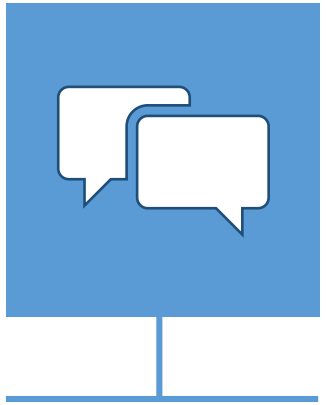
9,407

Attendees at Fall and Spring Resilient Scientist Series lectures



1,650

Participants in drop-in support and skill building wellness groups

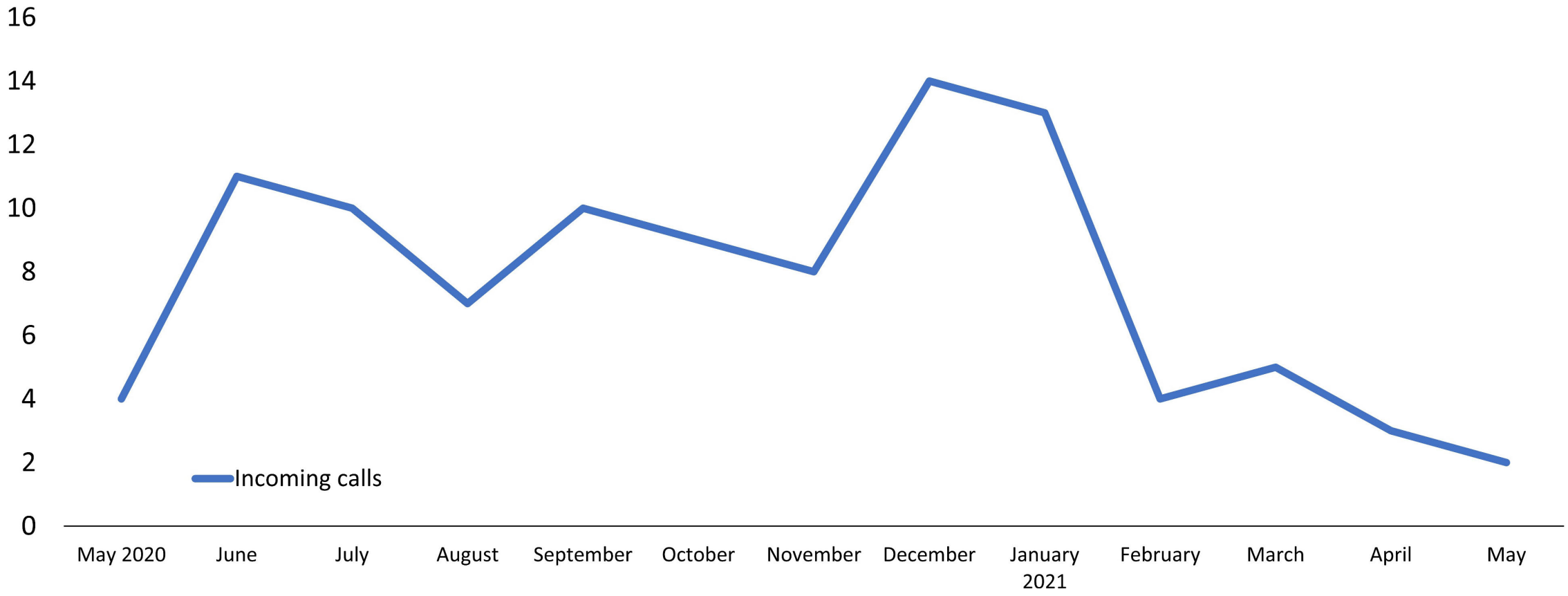


6,601

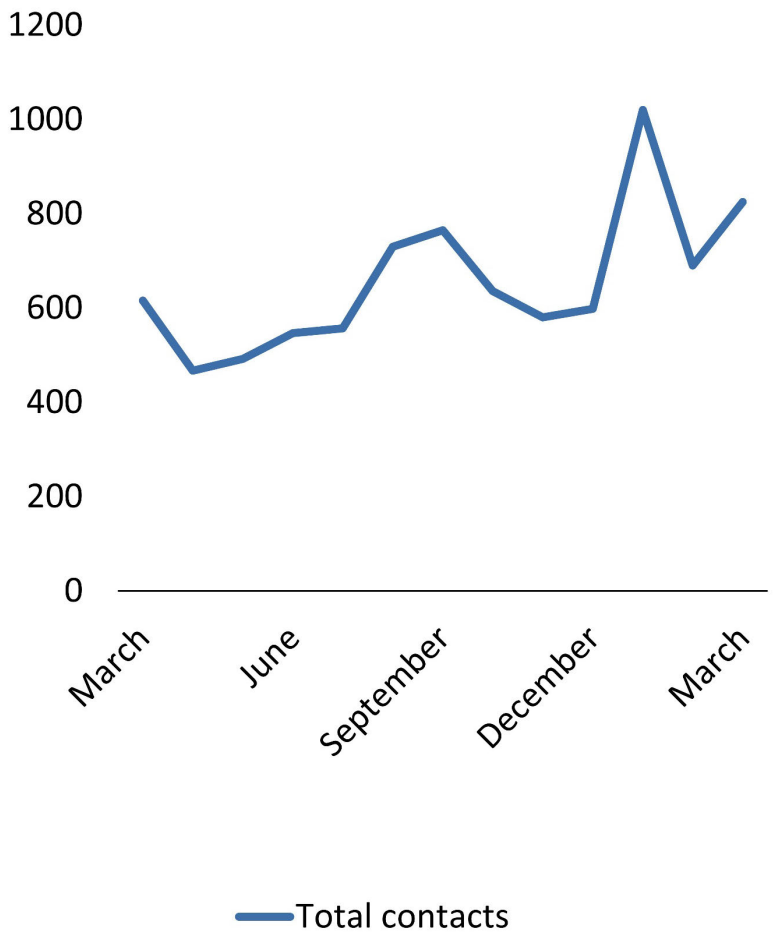
Mental Health Series Webinar attendees

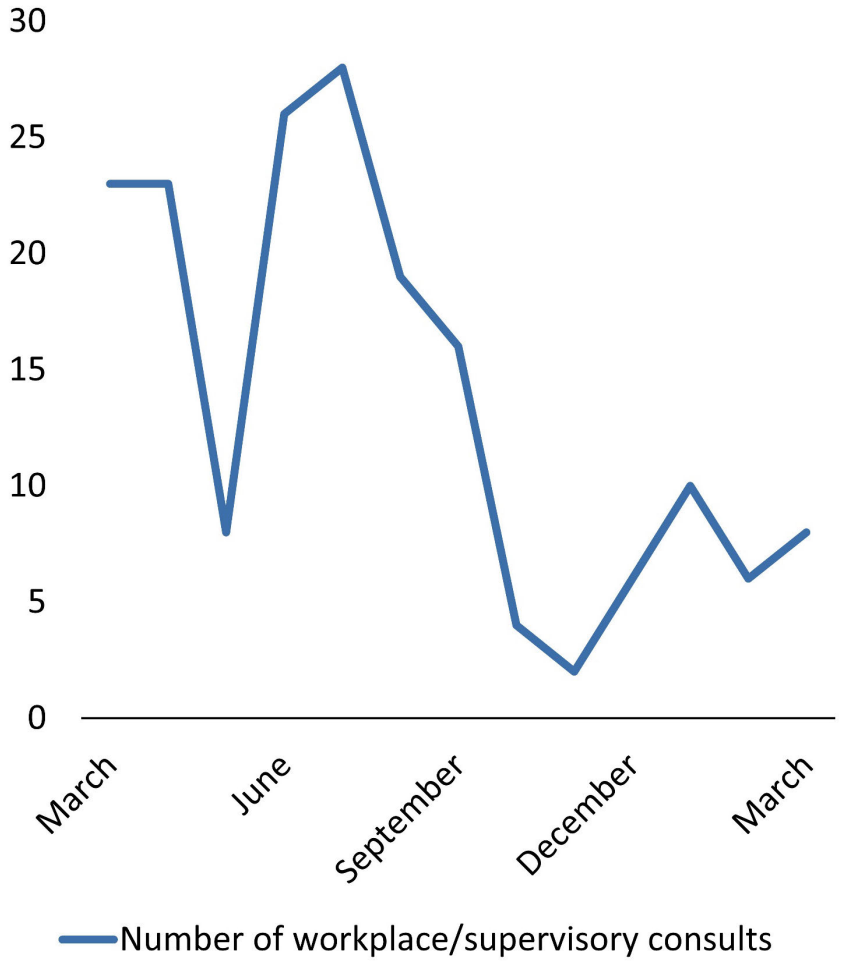
NIH Staff Support Line by NIMH

The NIH Staff Support Line was rapidly stood up and launched in May 2020. After helping **over 105 callers**, the Support Line will be sunset at the end of May 2021 to support other mental health resources.



EAP Contacts and Case Numbers



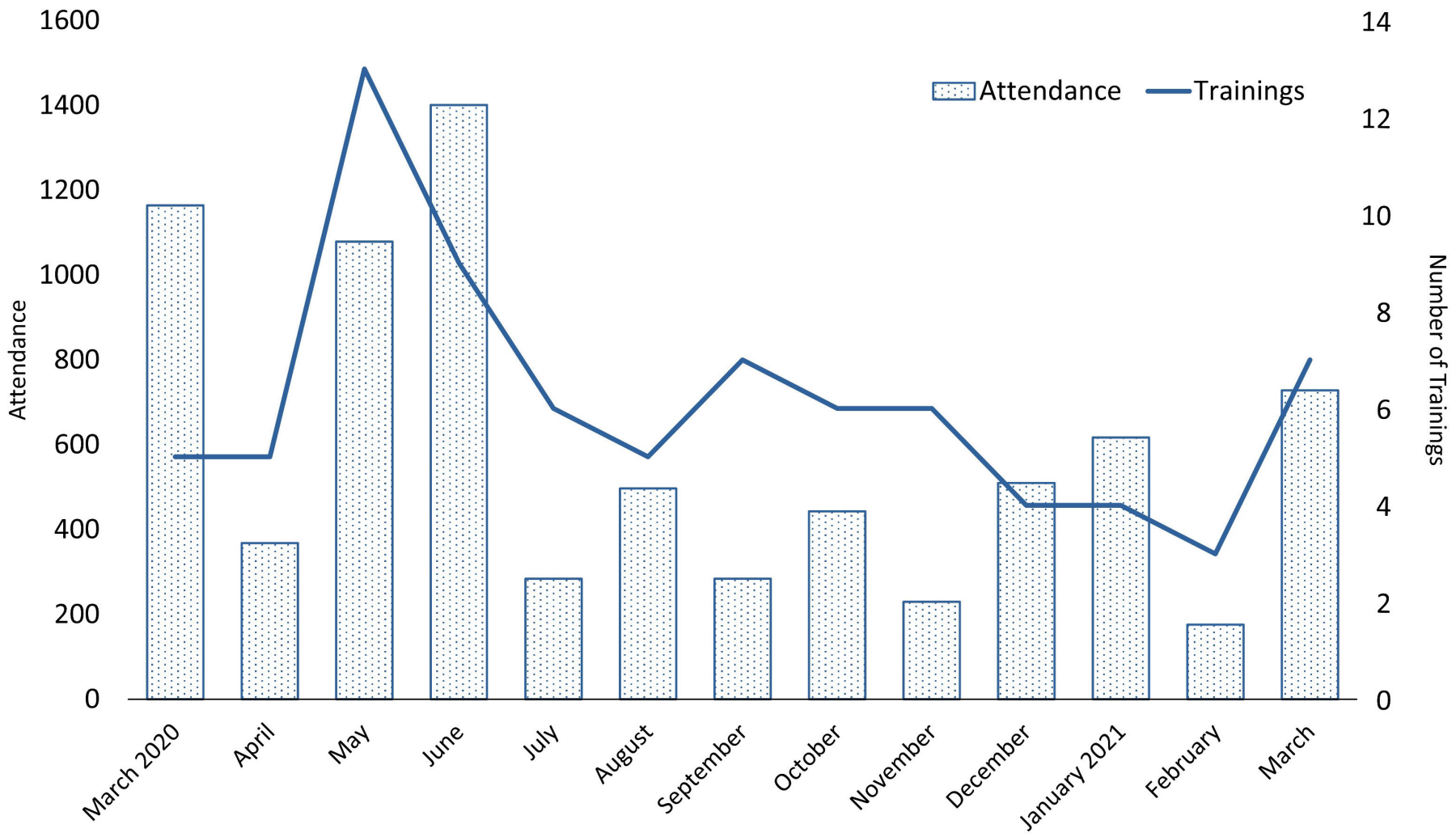


The number of EAP contacts has increased since September.

Topics raised by clients are consistent. The number of clients with COVID-19 related concerns (34%) is rising.

An increasing number of clients are presenting with mental health concerns.

EAP Trainings



NIMH Stress and COVID-19 Web Resources

Resource Links	Public Page Views (March-October)
Director's Message on Coping with Coronavirus: Managing Stress, Fear, and Anxiety	96,116
Coping with COVID-19 Shareable Resources	39,058
Coping with Traumatic Events Health Topics	27,909
Supporting Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Science News Update	18,976
I'm So Stressed Out! Fact Sheet	8,934
Director's Message on Coping with Coronavirus: Support for the Autism Community	4,473
I'm So Stressed Out! Infographic	4,046
Director's Message on The Kindness of Strangers: Supporting Each Other During COVID-19	2,929
Digital Mental Health: Innovating in a Time of High Anxiety - Science News Update	2,510

Potential Stressors for Summer 2021

Return to the physical workplace

Increase in emotional dysregulation reported

Vaccine decision-making and concerns for unvaccinated children

Creation of a CC Well-Being Program

- Business Case
  - *Attrition is double among physicians experiencing professional burnout*
  - $4.6 billion is estimated annual US cost of healthcare burnout
  - Ave cost of $500,000 - $1,000,000 to replace a physician
  - Costs associated with decreased productivity
- Tragic Case
  - Suicide
- Moral Case
  - The right thing to take care of our own
- Recognition Case
  - Being recognized as a top tier program (e.g. AMA's Joy in Medicine Recognition Program)
  - Magnet
- Regulatory Case
  - AAMC/ACGME/CLER
  - Magnet

The New York Times

tbreak › LIVE Latest Updates Maps and Cases The Stimulus Deal The Latest Vaccine Ir

Top E.R. Doctor Who Treated Virus Patients Dies by Suicide

"She tried to do her job, and it killed her," said the father of Dr. Lorna M. Breen, who worked at a Manhattan hospital hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak.

Shanafelt, et al. JAMA Int Med. 2017; Han et al, Ann Intern Med. 2019; 170: 784-790

NIH STAFF:
WE
APPRECIATE
YOU!
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO.

THANK
YOU
AFETY
RESILIENCE
COMPASSION
CARING

Thank YOU for being the FOOT SOLDIERS
the HEROES in the
NIH Clinical Center
APRIL 2020

You are
ROCK
STARS

WE ARE
GRATEFUL
FOR YOUR WORK

WE
NIH
STAFF

Thank You
NIH!
You are awesome!

Thank You
NIH STAFF!