



mhca's e-Newsletter

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Self-Care in the C-Suite

Experiencing high levels of stress over a prolonged period, as many have experienced over the past few months, can leave you feeling physically, mentally and emotionally drained, increase your risk for a myriad of health issues, and even derail your career. Chronic stress can trap people in a fight, flight or freeze mentality that prevents them from thinking creatively and developing innovative solutions to address challenges – and when this happens to leaders, it also significantly impacts their teams leaving the entire organization vulnerable.

As a leader, you may instinctually think of ways you can help your front-line workers manage the stress of this pandemic, while practicing self-care may seem like a distraction or unnecessary indulgence. Far from being an occasional luxury, self-care is a discipline and a critical leadership competency. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to self-care, it's important that deliberate efforts to maintain well-being are woven into daily living to prevent burnout.

Burnout is a growing problem for healthcare leaders. Senior executives often overlook the early signs of burnout: lack of physical energy, loss of enthusiasm for their work, and loss of self-confidence. In [The Impact of Burnout on Healthcare Executives](#), a 2019 study by WittKieffer, researchers found that a majority of survey participants agreed that burnout was negatively impacting their organizations. Being a leader doesn't imbue any of us with superhuman characteristics; but prioritizing self-care can help us be more resilient so we can care for others and keep our organizations on course in stormy waters.

Some basic ways you can practice self-care and avoid burnout are eating nutritious meals and not skipping meals, engaging in regular physical activity without overdoing it, drinking plenty of water and getting at least six hours of sleep a night. Some other ways to practice self-care might include engaging in a hobby, reading for pleasure, spending time in nature, meditating, or practicing gratitude.

It's also helpful for leaders to stay connected with supportive communities. As CEO of Jefferson Center Kiara Kuenzler recently wrote, "We have become more and more attuned in the past few years to the critical importance of social connectedness to our mental and physical wellbeing. Mounting research shows that social connectedness as a basic need can be just as important to health as food and shelter. A lack of social connection leads to higher rates of anxiety, depression, aggression and violence, and additionally, has a larger impact on physical health and mortality than obesity, smoking and high blood pressure combined."

Connectedness matters to everyone, from clients to front-line workers and C-suite leaders. At **mhca**, we want to do everything we can to support you and keep you connected to your peers during these trying times. I encourage you to make use of our many online resources, to attend our upcoming online session featuring Anne Collier from Arudia - **Improve Your Resilience by Upgrading Your Personal Operating System** and to please let us know how else we can help.



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