

After two years of COVID, many of us are feeling physically and mentally exhausted. We may be anxious and stressed in response to unpredictability – not knowing what Omicron will bring in the next few weeks. We can feel frustrated and angry – perhaps in response to those who choose not to vaccinate or towards family or friends who do not abide by public health recommendations. We may feel our work is pointless - all of the good efforts of the past and yet we are facing yet another wave of disease. All of these feelings are normal and while it can be difficult to stay positive, there are things within *our control* that can help.

Omicron – the 5th Wave: Tips for Coping

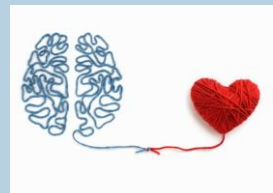
'Fill Your Cup'

Come up with a list of nourishing activities. Ideally, include at least one per day in your schedule to help balance out work and chores that can be depleting. This can be simple; it is not meant to be one more thing to add to a busy schedule (e.g., a bath, cuddling with pet, a hot cup of tea and some music, etc.).



Be Aware of Your Thoughts

They have a direct impact on our MOOD, PHYSICAL REACTIONS and BEHAVIOURS. For example, if we head to work thinking “*This is going to be a terrible day*”, our MOOD is likely to be low, we are unlikely to be as friendly or talkative with colleagues (BEHAVIOURS) and our body (PHYSICAL REACTIONS) may tense up leading to aches and pains. Look out for negative thoughts, look around for good things - people volunteering or redeployed staff doing their best. Look for ‘little wins’ – any small achievements in our days.



Exercise Compassion

Remind ourselves why we got into healthcare in the first place and our purpose – providing compassionate care to those in need. Take care to also practice self-compassion – acknowledge we are doing the best we can with what we have. Remember - we are all in this together and while we are all struggling, we made it through previous waves and will make it through this one.



Maintain Good Self-Care

We all know these - regular physical exercise, sleep, getting outside for a nature walk, healthy diet, avoid substance misuse. Also consider - relaxation strategies, meditation, journaling, taking breaks from reading or watching COVID filled news.



Pause

Try to make a conscious break between work and home; for example, upon arriving home, take a couple of minutes to pause before going inside - take a few breaths to calm your body and disconnect from work before heading inside.



Reach out for Support

You are not alone. Talk to colleagues, friends, family or if you are feeling overwhelmed and your distress is affecting your daily functioning, reach out to a health care professional. See 'Mental Health Supports' tab on COVID-19 intranet page for UHN CARES Resource infographic.



Contact UHN CARES

- 416-340-5033 or 14-5033, Monday to Friday: 9AM-5PM
- UHNCARES-COVIDPROGRAM@uhn.ca
- 'Mental Health Supports' tab on COVID-19 Intranet page

Sources:

- Public Health Ontario [Link](#)
- Global News - Omicron Holiday Tips [Link](#)