

# Outreach Guide for Colleague Care Teams

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## Background

The COVID-19 crisis presents unprecedented potential for stress amongst our colleagues. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we leverage our colleague health and well-being resources, that we model and practice resilience every day AND that we fortify our existing efforts in this space.

While it is reasonable to assume that all Trinity Health colleagues are experiencing higher stress levels than during non-crisis times, the degree, type and root causes of the distress will likely differ. The Resilience and Behavioral Health Task Force is supporting outreach calls to colleagues working in departments identified locally as high stress units. The goal of the call is to express gratitude and provide peer support to colleagues. If requested, callers are able to provide a list of additional supportive resources available through HR, chaplaincy/spiritual care services, the colleague health plan, or in the community.

## Identification of Colleagues for Outreach

Each RHM will locally identify the priority units for outreach. Once identified, HR should provide the Care Team with a list of every person in that unit regardless of position, with the colleague's phone number. Care teams should work with HR to identify day, evening and night shift staff and attempt to make calls during times that are less likely to wake them if they are sleeping.

Calls to colleagues should not be done using Care Team personal cell phones. Work with local TIS to determine the best option for anonymous calling (Jabber, Teams, etc.). RHMs should additionally explore options for text messaging, if that is the preferred means of contact for some colleagues.

## Beginning the Conversation

The following script provides some examples on how to begin conversations, open ended questions and appropriate ways to link colleagues with additional resources if requested. It is not intended to be read word for word, as each conversation will be unique.

Outreach calls are not intended to provide therapeutic interventions or be used to conduct any evaluation or assessment for depression, stress or anxiety. Colleagues experiencing distress that would like assistance should be referred to Carebridge EAP, chaplaincy/spiritual care services, or additional resources through their health plan.

Things to consider:

- Clarify who you are, where you are calling from and why you are calling
- Ask if this is a good time to talk briefly, or if there is a better time you can call back
- Colleagues may not want to talk at all and we need to respect that

*May I please speak to (X)*

*Good morning/afternoon, this is (insert caller first name) from (insert hospital or medical group). As part of an initiative to better support all our colleagues on the front line, I'm calling to express my gratitude on behalf of Trinity Health for your service to our patients and the community, and to see how you are doing. Is this a good time to chat or is there a better time I should call?*

## Engaging in Meaningful Dialogue

Be prepared to hear some heartbreaking stories. Many people process difficult information through telling and retelling the story. We know that many of our colleagues have experienced grief and loss with more patients than usual, and have not been able to comfort them or support them or their loved ones in typical ways.

## Start with gratitude and open-ended questions

For colleagues tha

*Thanks for taking the time to talk to me. I know that a lot of our colleagues are exhausted right now. I'd just like to thank you on behalf of Trinity Health for your dedicated care for our patients and their families.*

*How are you doing today?*

*What has this experience been like for you?*

*How have you found ways to take care of yourself and your family?*

*What kinds of things are you doing to relax when you aren't at work?*

*What has been the hardest part?*

Things **NOT** to say:

I understand, I can relate - or anything that equates your experience to theirs when someone is expressing difficulty.

Things **TO** say

Provide empathy and use your reflective listening skills

Find their why. Many people in healing professions have deep-rooted reasons for why they chose the profession, and why they continue to serve despite risks to themselves and their families. Listen to their reason and honor their service with deep respect and gratitude.

## Example:

Colleague: *It's exhausting and sometimes I just have this pit in my stomach when I walk into the hospital.*

Colleague Supporter: *That's really hard, and yet you are still walking through those doors, which is incredible. How do you find the courage to continue your work?*

Colleague: *Our patients are really scared right now. They can't see their families and I know that even a brief kind word of support can really make a difference to them and their families.*

Colleague Supporter: *Wow, I'm blown away by your bravery. Thank you so much for your service to our patients. Even though you are scared you are still mustering up the courage to go in so that you can continue to make a difference.*

### **Asking colleagues if they would like any additional resources**

If at any time during the call, the colleague expresses interest in obtaining additional supportive resources the Comfort Colleague should provide information about the comprehensive COVID-19 website for colleagues, the phone number for Carebridge EAP, chaplaincy/spiritual care services, or other resources available through his or her health plan (information found online or on the back of the health plan card).

*If you or your family need additional support during this challenging time, there is a lot available on the COVID-19 website, or through Carebridge EAP. Services are available telephonically or via telehealth, for convenience and safety. Would you like any help or additional information about these resources?*

### **Wrapping up**

Ask colleague if there is anything else they would like to talk about at this time.

Close the conversation with what's next, such as referring any questions you could not answer to HR and asking if they would like to be contacted in the future and when.

Provide any notes for follow up to the HR. Document the date you contacted the colleague on your call log.

### **Leaving a Message on Voicemail**

It is acknowledged that some colleagues do not regularly answer their phone and it will be necessary to leave a voice message. Colleague Care team members are allowed to leave messages on voicemail and should follow a script similar to the one below:

*Hello (Name of Colleague),*

*This is (Colleague Care Team Member name) from the Trinity Health Colleague Care Team. I was just calling to express my gratitude for your continued service and hard work during this difficult time. We are attempting to call all colleagues to thank them and check in to see if they needed anything. I will try calling back again (Insert day/time), but if you need anything in the interim, please don't hesitate to call or visit the Carebridge EAP website, explore the Live Your Whole Life wellness activities, join us Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for a moment of prayer, or reach out directly to your local HR for assistance.*

*Thank you again and I hope to speak with you soon.*

## Additional Resources and FAQs

### Possible questions the colleague could ask may refer to the following:

#### **General HR questions** (financial worries, paid leave questions, PTO, furlough, etc.)

- Local HR – have contact name(s) and info or HR Service Center (where applicable) or HR4U where applicable.

#### **Community Resource Questions** (emergency food, shelter, etc.)

- Trinity Health Resource Directory <https://communityresources.trinity-health.org/>

#### **1:1 Spiritual Support – local Spiritual Care**

- Prayers: <http://www.trinity-health.org/workfiles/covid-19/prayers-and-reflections.pdf>

#### **General Body-Mind-Spirit Resilience Information/Support**

- Live Your Whole Life

**Stress Check-ins:** Carebridge will provide online weekly stress check-ins to assist health care workers and professionals with the emotional strain induced by the pandemic. Learn how to thrive during this stressful time and to enhance your physical, mental and emotional well-being. Habits, beliefs and behaviors that promote resilience will be highlighted.

**Grief and Loss:** Grief and loss support groups are available to all colleagues to help them understand and make their way through both anticipated and actual losses. If you need help with personal and/or work-related grief, you are encouraged to participate.

All group sessions will be 30 minutes and will be facilitated by mental health, wellness and/or grief experts. Participants will have the ability to ask questions of the facilitator and to share experiences anonymously through a chat box to protect privacy.

Advanced registration is encouraged for all webinar presentations and virtual support groups but can also be done just prior to the start of the session.

If you are not able to participate in a live group or presentation, you can still benefit by viewing a recording of the support group session or presentation. To watch, visit CarebridgeConnects Resources located in the COVID-19 Resource Center at [www.myliferesource.com](http://www.myliferesource.com).

### **Additional support for behavioral health via Carebridge Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or through the colleague's health plan**

#### **Q. What is Carebridge EAP?**

A. Carebridge, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Work-Life benefits partner, offers free, direct support to you and any person(s) living in your household. It is a 24/7, confidential resource, providing counseling, information and referral services to help address personal, family and work-related concerns.

#### **Q. Who is eligible for Carebridge EAP?**

A. Carebridge EAP is an easily accessible source of support, available at no cost, to all Trinity Health colleagues, their dependents (including college students), spouse/eligible adult and any person(s) living in your household.

**Note:** Due to regulatory and compliance reasons, non-employed individuals (such as non-employed physicians, agency personnel, volunteers etc.) are not eligible for either benefit.

**Q: How can I contact Carebridge?**

A: Carebridge is available 24 hours a day, seven days per week by calling 800-437-0911 or online at [www.myliferesource.com](http://www.myliferesource.com). To access these resources, please enter the Trinity Health access code: **BKKR5**.

**Q: Where to refer non-employees:**

A: Refer individuals to call the number on the back of their medical insurance card for to identify supports available through their health plan

**Q: How many Individual Counseling\* sessions are covered?**

A: Carebridge EAP and Work-Life Specialist provide up to 6 FREE counseling sessions per issue. They provide an array of service support to include grief and loss, work-stress, anxiety and depression, stress management, etc.

\*Due to pandemic, counseling is now available via phone or video

**Q: What if a member is in need of additional counseling services for an individual issue beyond the 6 free sessions?**

A: If it is determined that colleague is in need of additional services beyond the 6 free sessions, Carebridge can triage to respective medical TPA to discuss medical benefit plan provisions.

## **Behavioral Health (Medical)**

While the majority of our colleagues are enrolled with either BCBS/Aetna, some ministries have other third-party administrators (TPA) (Excellus, IBC, Health Choices, etc.). The Colleague Care Team should ensure they know which TPA administers the health plan locally.

**Q: How do providers apply to participate Health Plan Behavioral Health?**

A: *The below TPAs provided the direct link to their onboarding process for Aetna and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.*

- Aetna <https://www.aetna.com/health-care-professionals/join-the-aetna-network.html>
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) <https://www.bcbsm.com/providers.html>

**Q: Who is eligible for health benefits?**

A: An individual who is employed as a regular full-time or regular part-time employee (as defined by their ministry).

Note: While an individual may be eligible for health benefits, they may receive their medical benefits elsewhere (e.g. through a spouse, Medicare or another employer...)

**Q: Does my Trinity Health medical plan cover behavioral health services?**

A: Yes, you learn the specific benefit coverage provisions reference the benefit plan summary for the health plan you are enrolled in.

**Q: How to find a participating provider?**

A: Varies by medical TPA. Refer colleague to provider search tool on the applicable TPA website (such as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Aetna...).

**What to do if you are concerned about the colleague's immediate safety**

The safety of our colleagues is imperative in everything we do. In the unlikely event that there is concern around the *immediate* safety of a colleague because he or she is expressing intent to harm themselves or others, the Comfort Colleague should contact the local police department immediately to complete a wellness check.