



ATs Care Commission  
Peer Support/CISM Team  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
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## **The COVID-19 Pandemic: Dealing with the Effects of an Ever-Changing Situation**

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We acknowledge the large-scale cancellations and postponements of meetings and gatherings affecting all aspects of our lives. Just last week the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers Association (GLATA) cancelled a significant portion of their annual conference due to COVID-19. Our daily routines are affected by the fluidly changing situation surrounding the Coronavirus. These changes directly impact both the Athletic Trainer's (AT) personal and professional lives, often with minimal or no input into the planning. As a result, we are thrust into a period of uncertainty that has the potential to negatively impact one's daily life.

As we see athletic events, tournaments and practices at all levels being cancelled or postponed, it is uncertain when things might return to some semblance of normal. Everything from protecting and caring for one's own family to dealing with changes in one's income and financial situation to managing changing work conditions affects us all.

As you process the ever-changing information and circumstances we at ATs Care want to remind you to take care of yourself mentally as well as physically. Along with hand washing, social distancing and universal precautions, learn to recognize the signs of emotional and mental stress in yourself and in those around you. Significant, ongoing psychological stress can have negative impact on one's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual well-being.<sup>1,2</sup>

It is important to remember that suppression of one's immune system is common with stress and fatigue, potentially increasing one's vulnerability to infection. Common changes that are seen in response to critical incident stress include disruption of one's ability to process information, feel or express emotions, sleep and interact with others. Abnormalities in physical signs and symptoms should be taken seriously and referred to an appropriate medical provider.

Please look at our infographic entitled [Self Care Following a Critical Incident](#).<sup>3</sup> It provides information about what to look for, some self-help strategies and some things to avoid. The infographic can be found at: <https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/self-post-care.pdf>.

Sometimes Athletic Trainers need to talk to another Athletic Trainer to "dump their emotional bucket". The members of the ATs Care teams across the country are not going to solve the complex issues arising from COVID-19, but they can give you someone with whom to have a confidential conversation about your response to the situation. If you want to talk with a member of the ATs Care peer-support team you can use any of the following methods to reach out:

1. Check your state or district association webpage.
2. Go to the ATs Care contact form on the NATA website at: <https://forms.nata.org/ats-care-contact>.
3. Email ATs Care at: [atscare@nata.org](mailto:atscare@nata.org).

## References

1. ATs Care Commission. Critical Incident Stress Management 101: Building Resiliency. In. Carrollton, Tx: National Athletic Trainers' Association, Inc.; 2017.
2. George S. Everly J. *Assisting Individuals in Crisis*. 5 ed. Ellicott City, MD: International Critical Incident Stress Foundation; 2017.
3. ATs Care Commission. Self Care Following a Critical Incident. National Athletic Trainers' Association. <https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/self-post-care.pdf>. Published 2018. Accessed March 11, 2020.