



SELF-CARE RESOURCES

Coping & Recovery after an Adverse Event

(adapted from Dr. J. Shapiro)

As a clinician, being involved in an adverse patient outcome may cause significant emotional distress. Although we may know that the outcome is not due to our professional or personal shortcomings, it is not uncommon for us to experience an array of strong feelings when we feel powerless in the face of the event.

Following an adverse event, we may question our competence and commitment to the practice of medicine. We might become fearful or defensive and feel diminished personal rewards from our work. Such reactions may occur in varying degrees and are all common and natural. Reactions may include:

- Behavioral: sleep disturbance, inability to get things done
- Emotional: anxiety, fear, anger, moodiness, feeling desperate, decreased self-worth, feeling out of control
- Cognitive: indecisive, confused, inability to concentrate, obsessive rumination about the event
- Physical symptoms: fatigue, backaches, nausea

Positive coping strategies include:

- Recognize that re-playing thoughts about the event is normal and will likely decrease over time. You may find it helpful to gently bring your attention back to something like your breathing or other calming thoughts.
 - Understand the factors that contributed to the event and advocate for changes.
 - Use those healthy positive strategies that have worked for you in the past during times of emotional stress.
 - Share your feelings with family/friends
 - Try to rest more and eat well-balanced and regular meals (even when you don't feel like it)
 - Exercise
 - Reestablish a normal schedule as soon as possible
 - Many clinicians find that talking to another clinician who has "been there" is incredibly helpful. If you haven't done so yet, reach out for peer support: peersupport@mspei.org.
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Resilience Resources

Reading

We Are All Perfectly Fine: A Memoir of Love, Medicine & Healing

Jillian Horton, MD

Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom Where Fear and Courage Meet

Joan Halifax

The Gifts of Imperfection

Brene Brown, PhD

The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions

Chris Germer, PhD

Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself

Kristin Neff, PhD

Mindfulness Tools

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com>

Insight Timer: <https://insighttimer.com/en-ca>
