



## **Coach with Compassion**

The last two months have turned even the most level-headed humans into worrisome, anxious, scattered individuals. Those thoughts and worries that inundate our minds are unique to each of us but ever-present for all of us. Add our personal battles to the chaos in our workspace, and the uncertainty in our homes, and it's no wonder that people are blaming COVID for their recent "fog brain."

It's important to recognize we're not alone in how we feel. What's more important, is to understand how those same worries and concerns can be heightened for individuals with substance use disorders. Now is the time to stay focused in our work and coach with compassion. We may be great at evaluating a patient's Stage of Change and may use our Readiness Ruler 100% of the time. Your hospital may have a high referral to treatment rate and an even higher linkage to treatment rate because your team does great work understanding patient's motivation and helping them connect to the right services. All that is great, but COVID calls for more.

Right now, our patients need more than a brief intervention. It's important to check-in with our patients and ask "how are you?" Then, we need to actively listen to their response. Understand how they are feeling, what they are worried about and what is most pressing in their life right now. We can use our coaching skills to make sure our patients have a safe and comfortable space to talk about everything that is going on – not just their substance use behavior. As we do this, we can help patients compartmentalize things so they don't feel so overwhelmed. We can also help them by finding something positive in what they've shared, no matter how small.

## **Coach-Connect**

Dwayne Dean, a CPRS and Peer Supervisor at University of Maryland – Midtown Campus says, "Now, more than ever, it's important for peer coaches to understand the importance of connection. Our lived experience opens a door for us to meet each patient, but compassion is what encourages them to let us in."



## Self-Care Corner

As we work to coach with compassion, and avoid the COVID “fog brain,” it’s important to stay focused while we work. If we can slow down and remain present in our active tasks, then we’ll see better outcomes and improved productivity, too! It’s very easy to lose focus, so pay attention to these common distractions to help you stay focused:

1. **Cell phones:** Americans check their cell phone on average 80 times a day. Researchers have found that simply hearing the notification can derail you because it often prompts thoughts that are irrelevant to the task at hand
2. **Social Media:** Sometimes you may intend to quickly “like” a picture or scroll through updates and 45 minutes later you’re still scrolling.
3. **Lack of sleep:** If you’re not getting enough sleep, this impacts your short-term memory and your ability to pay attention.
4. **Negativity:** Whether it’s something at home or at work, negative thoughts can flood the mind and make it hard to focus.
5. **Poor hydration:** Concentration is reduced when you are dehydrated.
6. **Multitasking:** Instead of giving all your attention to one task and doing it well, you’re not giving your full attention to anything, so nothing is truly getting accomplished



## In the News Stop Multitasking

Dividing attention across multiple activities is taxing on the brain and can often come at the expense of real productivity, said Arthur Markman, a professor in the department of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. While tackling more than one thing at a time may seem like an efficient way to manage a full workload, multitasking may not be the most effective way to get everything done. Research shows that when you try to do multiple things at once that aren’t connected to one another, either you’re going to have to slow down on one of the tasks, or you’re going to start making mistakes.

<https://www.livescience.com/37420-multitasking-brain-psychology.html>

When we multitask, we lose focus on our patient.

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