

Terra Firma for Nurses

Monthly Newsletter

June 6, 2023



A Message from Terra Firma:

Happy Pride Month to all LGBTQIA+ nurses!

We see you!

We value you!

We are grateful to you!

We love you!

In honor of Pride Month, Terra Firma for Nurses is 30%. Go to:

<https://terrafirmaapp.com/>. and use code: **"Pride23"** at checkout.



Expert Advice from Dr. Michael Olpin:

Question from a Student:

I am a healthcare provider; my working conditions are extremely stressful. They include twelve-hour days that start at 5 am. When I work, I am moving very fast, take care of others' needs, and need to schedule my breaks if I want them. In fact, in this line of work, our boss gets mad at the level of staff that do not take their lunch. I deal with patients who yell at me, are heavy labor, etc. (Though I have many nice patients too). The point is, my job is stressful. Because of this, I have tense shoulders, anxiety, and lower levels of sleep, and if I work too many days in a row, I can feel anxiety rising. I don't want to quit my job, I love the healthcare world, and this is my desired profession.

How do I manage my stress at work? I tried to calm down at one point while I was in the middle of accomplishing my showers (I do them all before 11); however, my shoulders are still tense, and I'm worried that I'm handling stress the wrong way. Is there a way to manage my stress while I'm at work?.

Thank you!

M.

Dr. Olpin's Answer:

Thanks for reaching out to me with this excellent question. You definitely work in a potentially high-stress environment. It sounds like your load is heavy with the ongoing tensions of the medical environment in which you find yourself. It's a challenge not to let the pressures of the day weigh on you.

I have some thoughts that I hope will make sense.

As we are learning in this class, it doesn't matter very much what environment we are in. The solution to handling stress is the same. In class, we mentioned that all our stress begins with the "Uh-Oh!" thought. If you don't have that thought, you don't activate the stress response. I realize that doesn't seem practical or realistic where you work. But it still is the only way to prevent stress from turning on. What we do instead, moment-to-moment is work on perceiving each situation in a way that doesn't include the threat thought. For example, we can upgrade our threat-thought or replace our threat-thought with thoughts of acceptance, gratitude, observation, or discovery.

Additionally, the more we stay in the moment, the more we experience each moment peacefully instead of stressfully. I realize these are muscles that perhaps you haven't developed very much yet, but fortunately, you have every day of the rest of your life to practice. These are powerful tools that work whenever we use them, and they are the best ways I know of to stay calm when our environment seems crazy. Having said that, there's one more thing I recommend that will help. Keep doing the guided relaxation exercises (and, later on, meditation). The more you do them, the more the feeling of calm, quiet, and relaxed will be your normal state. Little by little, things that used to set you off won't as much. The more you get into that very relaxed state (using guided relaxation and meditation), the more you will feel relaxed throughout your day.