

## Checking in With Your Buddy

Establishing a buddy system has been a [widely recommended](#) strategy as health care clinicians continue to navigate complex feelings and realities associated with their work. Commonly used in [military settings](#), a quasi-structured peer-to-peer relationship can help support feelings of [personal safety and resilience](#), and create a more [compassionate and attentive](#) work environment.

In a buddy system, two people partner together to monitor each other's stress and to support each other. You may share with your buddy as much or as little as you feel comfortable. It is recommended that you and your buddy check in with one another at least weekly, at your discretion. Contact can take any form – text, phone call, virtual meeting, and/or in person (with social distancing, as appropriate).

The following are examples of questions and/or discussion items you can use to get started and then regularly check in with your buddy. Feel free to modify as you and your buddy feel comfortable. If your team does not yet have a buddy system, please refer to [this resource](#).

### Getting Started – Well-Being Emphasis on Basic Needs and Safety

- Physical health check (e.g., COVID-19 symptoms: cough, SOB, fever, sore throat, etc.)
- Mood and mental health check
- Supplies check (e.g., food, meds, thermometer, cleaning products, etc.)
- Concerns about family or loved ones
- Pet care/supplies
- Share home address, consider spare key, emergency contacts' phone numbers
- Advance directives (written and/or share verbally); identify HCP and share that person's contact info
- If hospitalized, where would you go? Permission for buddy to help coordinate care?
- With whom else in the program may your buddy share information, and under which circumstances (e.g., if sick at home, if hospitalized, critically ill, etc.)

### Ongoing Support – Well-Being Emphasis on Emotional Support and Resilience

- What are you worried about?
- What was hard today?
- What went well today?
- How are things at home?
- What challenges are you facing with (e.g., sleep, exercise, nutrition, family, etc.)?
- Additional questions as you and your buddy see fit

### Ongoing Support – Best Practices/Do's and Don'ts (excerpted from the [CDC](#))

- Get to know each other – talk about work, home life, hobbies, and family

- Listen carefully, validate, and share experiences and feelings. Acknowledge tough situations and recognize accomplishments, even small ones
- Monitor each other's workloads and encourage each other to take breaks
- Share opportunities for stress relief (e.g., rest, routine sleep, exercise, deep breathing)
- Support your buddy in communicating their needs to leadership – escalate operational issues, and help your buddy feel supported to speak up
- Offer to help with finding services for basic needs when needed
- Encourage your buddy to seek help and access mental health resources when needed
- Do not:
  - Argue or debate each other's perspective
  - Take on the role of a therapist
  - Offer clinical diagnosis or treatment
  - Pass judgment on people or decisions
  - Pry or demand that a buddy discuss problems