Situation:
Due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 it is critical that YNHHS/YM continue to function in its essential role to care for the sick. As a healthcare community, a healthcare family, we are committed to working together and overcoming whatever challenges we may face. As such, it is imperative that we support our most precious asset, our staff, throughout the system. One critical program to provide that support is the “Buddy Program”.

Background:
The Buddy Program is adapted from the military’s “Battle Buddy” Program”. Essentially it is the pairing of two individuals who have similar roles in order to support and care for each other in complex environments and in times of crisis. This program builds connection and resiliency. The “buddies” monitor and help each other promote physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Assessment:
The Covid-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly through our community, and we will need everyone in our YNHHS/YM community to meet this challenge while caring for each other. The “Buddy Program” is urgently needed to ensure every individual is looked after physically and psychologically.

Recommendation:
We are strongly encouraging each staff member to identify a buddy, with whom they will check in daily (phone, text, in person). We are asking that everyone from administration, to physicians and nurses, to environmental services participate in this program in order to ensure its success.

Leadership Responsibilities:
• Roll out by leadership would generate visibility, lend priority and promote credibility
• Communicate at all leadership levels
• Standing agenda items – all meetings
• Support the Buddy Program

Buddy Check In Items Include:
• How are you doing? (simple, to the point and honest)
• Sleep
• Exercise
• Nutrition
• Family and friends
• Recreation
• Coping mechanisms
• Sense of safety
• Sense of an optimistic future

Red Flags:
• Withdrawal or isolation
• Complaints of sleep problems
• Irritability or broken relationships
• Increasing use of alcohol or other substances
• Disconnection from Buddy

Scan Here For Resources
Buddy Program

Talking Points:

We are in the midst of challenging times.

As a health care community, a healthcare family, we are committed to working together and overcoming whatever comes our way.

In an effort to care for our most valuable asset, our staff, we are implementing a Buddy Program that ensures that each one of us is connected to a caring and supportive colleague.

Purpose

The buddy program is the pairing of two individuals who have similar roles in order to support and care for each other, particularly in times of crisis and in complex environments.

At its core the buddy program is about connection - we all know how important social connection is to our overall wellbeing – it gives us a sense of belonging.

Science has shown us this type of human connection can lower our anxieties and depression and can actually improve our immune system.

Application

The buddy program aligns with this organization’s values of accountability and compassion, among others. Its primary goal is to support our staff. While The Buddy Program is essential in times of crisis, it extends beyond disaster.

We are strongly encouraging each staff member to identify a buddy, with whom they will check in daily. We are asking that everyone from administration, to physicians and nurses, to environmental services to participate in this program in order to ensure its success.

This program builds connection and thereby fosters resilient behaviors.

Buddies monitor and help each other promote physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, in an ongoing fashion.

The simple goal is to remain connected each day, each week, whether in person, by phone or by text. We are recommending that Buddies check in on important issues such as:

- emotional well-being
- sleep
- nutrition
- exercise
- family and loved ones and
- work life balance
- overall wellness
- optimism
- tools used to cope with stress

Implementation & Sustainability
What we are doing is giving it a formal structure. We are holding ourselves accountable and instilling a sense of responsibility for each other.

The buddy program should be raised during all meetings. The program should be a standing agenda item – not a day goes by that we are not inquiring of each other – who is your buddy? – have you checked in with your buddy today? We are talking about our greatest asset - our staff - and that deserves continuous attention.

With unwavering support it will ultimately become part of the fabric of this organization.

The buddy program works when leaders give it attention - it lends visibility and credibility.

IF YOUR BUDDY DISPLAYS RED FLAGS
It’s important – that we help people understand when it’s time to escalate matters – when it’s appropriate to recommend that your buddy seek out additional resources. Materials/handouts about the buddy program identify what a check in is but also highlights red flags and more intensive services that a buddy may refer.

We are strongly encouraging each staff member to identify a buddy, with whom they will check in daily. We are asking that everyone from administration, to physicians and nurses, to environmental services participate in this program in order to ensure its success.

Successful roll out and implementation of the buddy program will hinge upon this organizations commitment to promote and support at all levels, ensuring accountability for each other as a health care family.

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