

## Adverse clinical events may not only affect healthcare providers, but their teams, their families and their other patients

Experiencing a difficult clinical situation can lead to a spiral of shock, obsessive second-guessing, and self-doubt. This can be accompanied by a variety of physical and mental health symptoms, such as sleeping difficulties or lack of energy and concentration.

In addition, healthcare providers may feel a sense of isolation as they try to cope on their own.

Despite best intentions, other people may be impacted – patients, the healthcare team and family members.

## What do Stanford physicians say about the program?

*“Just having someone neutral check in specifically about my wellbeing was comforting...I felt incredibly supported and it was nice that there were not secondary motives behind the support (i.e. data gathering about the incident, etc.).”*

*“Thank you for taking your time to talk to me yesterday. It made some things much clearer. Thank you also for the references you sent so promptly.”*

*“Great addition for our physicians, as we often feel the need to sort through these issues alone.”*

### TO FIND OUT MORE:

<http://wellmd.stanford.edu/get-help/peer-support.html>

### PROGRAM SPONSORED BY:

Stanford Physician Wellness Committee  
Stanford Medicine WellMD Center

## University HealthCare Alliance (UHA) Peer Support Program



*Healthcare providers  
caring about each other*



**Stanford**  
MEDICINE | WellMD  
[wellmd.stanford.edu](http://wellmd.stanford.edu)

# What is the Peer Support Program?



In response to research showing that physicians are more likely to want to talk to a colleague about an adverse event than other types

of confidants, in 2014, Stanford created a volunteer peer support program. In 2016, UHA volunteer peers were trained, and the program expanded to include advanced practice providers (APPs).

Physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants are referred to the program after a difficult event occurs, or they can self-refer at any time.

## Look for email with Subject Line “Touching Base”

Involved providers will receive an email or text from a peer supporter, inviting them, if they'd like, to chat informally either on the phone or in person.

Providers who take advantage of this free service usually engage in one phone call. Follow-up later is always an option.

## Q&A

### Who are the peer supporters?

The peer supporters are trained volunteer physicians and APPs from across UHA. They are your colleagues.

### Will our conversation be confidential?

Yes, the supporters do not discuss your conversation with anyone else. The only caveat to confidentiality is if there is concern about your safety.

### What does the supporter know about my situation?

The supporter is only given your name and contact email. They do not know any details of the case. Their focus is on your well being, not on analyzing the event.

### So what do we talk about?

Supporters can help you be aware of how you're coping and can provide perspective. It is often reassuring to know that all providers have been or will be faced with these situations. Supporters can also suggest a variety of resources, depending on your needs.

### What if I happen to know the peer supporter, and I'd rather talk to someone more anonymously?

We try to match supporters by institution/ entity, medicine or surgery, level of experience, and different service. You can always contact the program and ask for a different supporter for any reason.

## Why talk to a peer supporter rather than a familiar colleague?

Familiar colleagues can be very helpful, but also consider:

- Peer supporters are trained for this situation with appropriate listening and responding skills and are aware of what you might experience now and in the future.
- Supporters may be able to offer a fresh perspective.
- Since this program is a function of a committee of the medical staff office, conversations are legally protected. The supporters also do not take notes and do not discuss your conversation with anyone else.
- Supporters are aware of a variety of resources that might be helpful to you.
- Supporters have access to discrete 24/7 psych back-up to connect you to formal counseling as needed.
- Talking to someone who understands the pressures, but who doesn't know you, may make the conversation easier.

## CONTACT

[medpeersupport@stanford.edu](mailto:medpeersupport@stanford.edu)