A REFLECTION

It feels like a lifetime ago that we published a bulletin. The months since March feel like years, and we are all changed. Our department is different. We have been through and are still experiencing history, stressful and traumatic history that has left many of us with experiences we’d never thought we’d have seen. So, how do we move forward? What does this “new normal” look like for us? For wellbeing? This is a time of change. We all learned about a brand new disease entity in real time. Attendings who haven’t worn hospital scrubs in over a decade are breaking out the stiff blue scrubs again, to stay safe and keep their families safe. So where does that leave a bulletin about wellbeing? I’m not sure. But I know it’s brought some positivity to people in the past, so I will start writing it again.

EAT THIS, NOT THAT - WHIPPED COFFEE
ONE OF THEIR MOST POPULAR RECIPES DURING QUARANTINE

INGREDIENTS
For the coffee:
2 Tbsp instant coffee
2 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp hot water
3/4 cup hot or iced milk

For the flavors (choose one):
1 Tbsp cocoa powder
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp caramel sauce

DIRECTIONS
1. Boil some hot water in a tea kettle or in a small saucepan.
2. In a large mixing bowl or stand mixer, add the instant coffee, sugar, and hot water. Whisk until the color becomes light and the texture is frothy—about 5 minutes. This will much easier for you if you use an electric mixer.
3. Once the coffee is frothy, add in your flavoring. Whisk for another 15 seconds or so. Remove the electric mixer and mix the rest with a spatula, until everything is combined.
4. Scoop the whipped coffee on top of milk. Top with any desired toppings, like extra chocolate or caramel sauce. Mix and enjoy.
IDEAS FOR PROCESSING PROVIDER GRIEF

We have all experienced loss during this pandemic, at much higher numbers than we are used to. Tragically, suddenly, and sometimes in people we otherwise wouldn’t expect to see die. And it is normal to experience grief. We all are, to varying extents. You are not alone. These are some ideas, compiled from speaking with colleagues and scouring the internet, that can help you in processing the grief and experiences you have had throughout this pandemic. We know this isn’t one-size-fits-all, it’s about finding what works for you and trying to stick with it to some regularity to help you process what’s happened at work.

• Journaling: Find a notebook and dedicate it to this purpose. Write about what happened and how you felt about it. Type it into the notes on your phone. Scribbles on napkins work fine too. Save it, shred it, light it on fire. Your future self may really appreciate re-reading your experiences in twenty years.
• Mindfulness: Consider using an app (like Headspace, free through the end of the year for providers)
• Expressive Art: Try singing, picking up an instrument you used to play, or making art (painting, sketching, sculpting). This is for you, so it doesn’t have to be a Renoir.
• Mind-Body: Acupressure, meditation, guided imagery.
• Gratitude: Flip your journal over and work from the back: once a day write down something you’re grateful for. Or stick it as a post-it on your desk at work. It can be something simple, like having toilet paper at work.

If you feel you are suffering from depression or PTSD, or just need to talk, please reach out to someone. Our Safe Zone physicians wear buttons on their badges and have resources to help you, including finding a counselor. We are here for you.

FRONTLINEINDY

An ongoing documentary project using photographs

The way I’ve personally been processing and reflecting on this pandemic has been through photography. I have felt compelled to capture our experiences since the beginning of this. I created my own coffee table book and have expanded it to a website to share, www.frontlineindy.com. Soon, I will create a coffee table book for us, too. The photos included in this bulletin are from my project. If you want to contribute, email me. I am looking into taking scans of any handwritten stories or reflections about your experiences if you’ve been writing and want to share.