Recognize this is a time of collective loss, grief, and uncertainty. We need to be aware of and take care of our own physical and mental health needs in order to help others.

- Have self-compassion and reduce negative self-talk.
- Limit comparisons and judgements about your own and co-worker’s workload and coping mechanisms. Avoid comparative suffering.
- Use available resources related to mental health and well-being to manage stress, cope with grief and loss, and strengthen resilience.

For audiologists and speech-language pathologists to fulfill their ethical obligation to “hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve professionally,” they must take care of themselves.

- Monitor warning signs of extreme stress and seek help from a mental health specialist when needed.

WARNING SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS*

**Physical**
- Rapid heart rate, muscle tension, headaches, tremors, gastrointestinal distress, nausea, inability to relax, trouble falling or staying asleep, nightmares

**Emotional**
- Fear, anger, frustration, argumentativeness, irritability, deep sadness, difficulty maintaining emotional balance

**Social**
- Irritability, anger and hostility, blaming, reduced ability to support teammates, conflicts with peers or family, withdrawal, isolation

**Behavioral**
- Unnecessary risk-taking, failure to use personal protective equipment, increased use or misuse of prescription drugs or alcohol

**Cognitive**
- Disorientation or confusion, difficulty problem-solving and making decisions, memory issues, misinterpretation of comments and events

*Source: SAMHSA Disaster Responder Stress Management

MANAGING STRESS

**Understand the stress response** and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, or the “brakes” of our body. Spend time in nature, read, journal.

**Practice mindfulness**, movement [Exercise for Stress and Anxiety](#), deep breathing (10 Breathing Techniques), art, music, meditation [Aura, Calm, Headspace, Shine], prayer, or gratitude practice. Nourish yourself with [foods that help reduce anxiety](#).

**Master stress and enjoy restful sleep**, and leave stress behind at bedtime. Chronic stress and anxiety negatively affect sleep and other body systems.

**Build a support network** and make the most of your social circle. Social support is strongly linked with increased health and wellbeing.

**Be of service to others** enhances meaning and purpose to life. Participate in professional communities [ASHA’s Special Interest Groups, multicultural constituency groups], state associations, and interactive online communities.

For more information and ways to seek help, go to the ASHA Mental Health Resources page.

Call 911 in an emergency.