



Coping with Eating Disorders

Addressing the Need (Clinicians)

Dear Clinicians,

These are challenging, unprecedented times for all of us. We have had to rack our brains as to how to support our patients during this season. I have never felt more helpless or useless in my profession (sitting across a screen from a bawling patient and being unable to offer my physical presence, a tissue or a pat for comfort, but a mere *"I'm so sorry you are feeling so lousy"*) but I accept that this is a normal feeling, given the circumstances.

1. Check In On Your Patients

Once the flurry of administrative tasks at work die down, check in on each one of your patients. Some may not be coping as well but are unsure of whether their needs "can" or "should" be voiced during this time. I have found that combing through my patient list and emailing every active patient has been a good way for me to ascertain where they are at and what support they may need during this time.

2. Manage Your Expectations

What we had initially envisioned for our patients may not necessarily be feasible, so we need to temper our expectations given that mental health services have been quite disrupted during this season. We also need to be prepared to deal with the fallout, post-Covid-19. I expect that we may have a lot of "catching up" work to do, then.

3. Speak To Other Eating-Disorder Specialists

Of all times, this would be the perfect one to speak to some of your contemporaries to find out what they are doing in their work and how they are getting around some of the common challenges. Now is the time to band together and brainstorm, to see how we can best support our patients with varying needs.