

9/11 Health Research and Care

September 11th marks 21 years since 9/11, and there are thousands of people who need ongoing health care monitoring and treatment. The Program provides this health care and supports health research efforts that improve our understanding of 9/11 health impacts. Research can also lead to better health care for those impacted. The following link provides information on role of research for members of the 9/11 community and also lists current research studies: www.cdc.gov/wtc/research.html.



Health Effects of 9/11: An Online Exhibition

This online exhibition, developed by the WTC Health Program in partnership with the David J. Sencer CDC Museum, examines the ongoing health effects linked to 9/11 exposures and the emergence of WTC-related health conditions. It also explores the events and advocacy that established the WTC Health Program and research achievements that have led to improvements in medical treatment and knowledge. Responders and survivors actively participated in the development of the exhibition, sharing their stories, images, and experiences as 9/11 health advocates and World Trade Center Health Program members. This is the first iteration of the exhibition; a physical installation is being planned for the David J. Sencer CDC Museum in Atlanta at a future date. Please direct any questions or comments about this online exhibition to: WTCHP_Exhibit@cdc.gov. Explore the exhibition or select a specific section here: www.cdc.gov/wtc/exhibition *



*Sensitive Content Warning:

The content and images in this exhibition may be sensitive in nature to some audiences, especially responders and survivors of 9/11. Discretion is advised.



Pharmacy Update

As of June 1, 2022, the WTC Health Program has completed the transition to a new pharmacy benefit manager called Express Scripts. We are aware that some members are experiencing issues getting their prescriptions. Call Express Scripts at **1-800-935-7179** to reach their 24-hour call center for assistance with resolving any issues. More information is available on the PBM Transition Information page: <https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/pbmtransition.html>



Help One More 9/11 Responder

If you know of a fellow 9/11 responder who is not yet enrolled in the WTC Health Program, ask them to enroll. They may have a health condition related to 9/11 exposure and not know about it—many people don't realize that chronic cough, heartburn, or anxiety might be related to their 9/11 exposure. Some conditions, like cancer, can take several years to develop after exposure. WTC Health Program providers are experts at recognizing and treating the kinds of WTC-related health conditions seen in responders. Our Mount Sinai CCE Outreach Team is available to assist 9/11 responders with WTC Health Program enrollment and application process.



Mount Sinai
Selikoff Centers for
Occupational Health



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Letter from the Medical Director



Michael Crane, MD

For many World Trade Center (WTC) responders, witnessing the horrific September 11, 2001, attacks and being exposed to the environmental disaster and psychologically disturbing events during the months that followed resulted in ongoing WTC-related health conditions. The trauma of September 11 has had an enduring impact that persists to this day.

Many responders continue to struggle with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and unhealthy substance use, and this is especially challenging if they also have chronic medical conditions. In addition, notable worsening of stress-related symptoms may occur following natural disasters, global events such as war, and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. An increase in distress around the anniversary of 9/11, referred to as an “anniversary reaction,” is also commonly reported.



Sandra Lowe, MD

Fortunately, effective treatments are available. Many WTC responders have benefited from specialized care such as counseling, group therapy, and medication to treat symptoms when needed. Lifestyle modifications such as exercise and mindfulness practices may also be helpful to support overall physical and emotional health.

How to Get Help:

Social Work and Mental Health Services at the Mount Sinai World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP)

Our team of social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists at the World Trade Center Mental Health Program are experienced in identifying and treating members suffering from World Trade Center related mental health conditions.

If you are a responder in the Mount Sinai CCE and need help with social, emotional, or psychological difficulties, please reach out for help. Let your treatment provider know during your monitoring or treatment visit if you are experiencing emotional distress. Or you may call the WTC Mental Health Program directly at **212-241-8462** or **212-241-3250** to request an appointment for an evaluation. In addition, our social work team is always available to provide assistance with benefits, advocacy, and referrals.

Should you require immediate medical attention, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. You may also contact Mount Sinai's Emergency Department at **212-241-6500** or **988**. If you live in New York City, you may also contact NYC Well at **1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355)**.



For additional information on coverage and resources, please refer to the WTCHP:

- Mental Health Resource Webpage: www.cdc.gov/wtc/mentalhealth.html
- Social Assistance Webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/socialassistance.html>

Healthier Relationships:

The Key to a More Satisfying Life for Responders and Their Families



Healthy relationships are critical to our overall well-being. They provide connection and support, and help to sustain us during times of difficulty, including the ongoing pandemic. Many program members have noted that their 9/11 experiences, as well as their emotional or medical health conditions, have significantly affected the quality of their relationships with their family or loved ones. Adversity can bring loved ones closer together, but chronic stress may also lead to social withdrawal, anger, and difficulties with communicating effectively—all common barriers to closer connections with loved ones.

Improving family relationships is important, but may be challenging. These tips can help you practice new ways of communicating with your loved ones to minimize conflict and increase support:

STOP AND IDENTIFY YOUR EMOTIONS. What are you feeling as you experience situations that you dislike or that make you uncomfortable? Identifying your feelings is often the first step. Sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings before sharing them can be helpful.

BREATHE. Practicing deep breathing can help you become more aware of your emotions and improve your listening skills during tense moments.

BE SPECIFIC. Try to name what your loved one is doing and the emotions you are feeling. Be specific about what your loved one can do to help you feel more understood.

USE “I feel” statements. For example, instead of beginning a sentence with “You really upset me when...,” start with “I felt really upset when...” Instead of saying “You don’t even care,” try saying “I feel hurt when it seems like my feelings are not taken seriously.”

LISTEN ATTENTIVELY. It takes time to listen and really hear what your loved one is trying to communicate. You can demonstrate your desire to understand by rephrasing what the other person says and asking if you heard them correctly.

ASK QUESTIONS. This can let your loved one know that you are listening and want to understand them better. It also may help them feel more inclined to listen to you.

ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS. Are you being pulled into familiar arguments or pressures and do not understand why? The more you understand your motivations, the better you can make decisions about where to invest your time and energy.

TAKE TIME OUTS AS NEEDED. If you’re trying to talk to your loved one and emotions start to get fired up, it may be best to take a break, go for a walk, take time to breathe, and then return to the conversation when you’ve both calmed down.

By practicing these tips, you can significantly improve your communication, and benefit from healthier relationships.

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Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Connecting People to Crisis Counselors

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides immediate crisis intervention and support to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, substance-use crisis, or any other kind of emotional or mental health emergency. When someone calls 988, a trained crisis counselor will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem is affecting them, and provide support and share resources, as needed. Loved ones may also dial 988 if they are worried about someone who may need crisis support. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline educational magnets are now available at <https://store.samhsa.gov/> and at the Mount Sinai CCE. Help spread the word to those who are struggling in your communities. 988 is available via phone, text, or chat on 988lifeline.org

Learn more about the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline