



# *Caring for the Caregiver*



This guide is designed to help managers and clinical leaders support health care team members who are experiencing a normal reaction to a stressful event or outcome.

## Who are peer supporters

Peer supporters are trained health care team members who provide one-on-one, confidential, emotional support. They represent a variety of disciplines including nurses, physicians, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, social workers, chaplains, and AHPs. The support is targeted to alleviate the second victim experience.

### Peer supporters

- Practice active listening
- Help reflect back what is heard
- Share their experiences
- Help put incidents into perspective
- Provide information on available resources

### Peer supporters do not

- Counsel or problem solve
- Judge
- Take notes

## How to access peer support

- Managers or health team members may email **[caringforthecaregiver@ucsf.edu](mailto:caringforthecaregiver@ucsf.edu)**
- The Caring for the Caregiver team will match a health care team member with a peer supporter



# *Caring for the Caregiver*

## Overview

UCSF Health has developed the Caring for the Caregiver program to ensure that providers and staff are emotionally supported through the experience of patient care. Approximately 50% of clinicians are involved in an adverse event each year, which leads to decreased morale and lack of productivity—the “second victim” phenomenon.

As service leaders and managers, you may encounter individuals who could benefit from emotional support after a challenging patient care experience.

In addition to existing resources such as FSAP and Spiritual Care Services, UCSF Health now has trained peer supporters from a variety of disciplines who provide one-on-one, emotional support to second victims through confidential conversations.



## Who is a second victim

A second victim is a care team member who is traumatized by involvement in an adverse or unexpected patient event, a medical error, or stressful patient care experience.

## Why support the second victim

- They may feel personally responsible for an unexpected patient outcome
- They may believe that they have failed the patient
- They may second-guess their clinical skills
- They may experience a professional crisis and seek a change in job assignment or career path

## High risk situations

- Adverse events
- Litigation
- Patient or staff member death
- Multiple patients with bad outcomes within a short period of time
- Unexpected death or pediatric death
- Involvement in adverse event review process

## Second victim signs and symptoms

- Change in sleep pattern
- Anxiety
- Feeling emotional
- Personality changes
- Lack of concentration
- Attendance problems
- Physical symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, and light-headedness



# Engaging the second victim

A possible approach to the initial conversation:

## Introduction

- Ask “How are you doing?”
- Let them know you are available to talk

## Exploration

- Acknowledge the second victim experience
- “How are you feeling?”

## Information normalizing

- Emphasize that their feelings are normal for caregivers who experience traumatic events
- Healing might take time

## Follow-up

- Give them the Caring for the Caregiver brochure containing additional resources
- Let them know that a peer supporter may contact them to offer additional support
- For those who need ongoing support, referral to FSAP may be helpful
- Refer the case to Spiritual Care Services for group debriefing if you think others have been impacted by the experience
- Follow-up, check-in, and remind them that they are a valued part of the care team
- Refrain from revisiting event details as this is not the goal of the initial conversation

If there are questions about disclosure or litigation, please advise the individual to contact Risk Management at **415-353-1842**.



## Resources

### **Peer Support Program**

Kiran Gupta, MD, MPH, Medical Director  
for Patient Safety

Email: [caringforthecaregiver@ucsf.edu](mailto:caringforthecaregiver@ucsf.edu)

Intranet page:

[caringforthecaregiver.ucsf.edu](http://caringforthecaregiver.ucsf.edu)

### **Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)**

Email: [fsap@ucsf.edu](mailto:fsap@ucsf.edu)

Phone: 415-476-8279

### **Department of Patient Safety**

Email: [PatientSafety@ucsf.edu](mailto:PatientSafety@ucsf.edu)

### **Spiritual Care Services**

Susan Conrad, Manager

Email: [Susan.Conrad@ucsf.edu](mailto:Susan.Conrad@ucsf.edu)

Phone: 415-353-1941

### **UCSF Health Risk Management**

Email: [riskmgmt@ucsf.edu](mailto:riskmgmt@ucsf.edu)

Phone: 415-353-1842

24-Hour Pager: 415-443-2284

Employees only website:

<https://rm.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/>

### **Student Health Services**

Email: [shs@ucsf.edu](mailto:shs@ucsf.edu)

Phone: 415-476-1281

### **Wellness Resources**

Website: [livingwell@ucsf.edu](http://livingwell@ucsf.edu)