



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**
- 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

Intranet page: caringforthecaregiver.ucsf.edu

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)

Andrew Parker, PhD, Manager

Email: fsap@ucsf.edu Phone: 415-476-8279

Department of Patient Safety

Jim Stotts, RN, MS, CNS

Patient Safety Manager

Email: james.stotts@ucsf.edu

Phone: 415-514-8495

Spiritual Care Services

Peter Clark, Director

Susan Conrad, Manager

Email: peter.clark@ucsfmedctr.org

and susan.conrad@ucsfmedctr.org

Phone: 415-353-1941

Risk Management

Susan Penney, JD

Director of Risk Management

Email: susan.penney@ucsf.edu

Phone: 415-353-1842

24-Hour Pager: 415-443-2284

Student Health Services

Email: shs@ucsf.edu Phone: 415-476-1281

Wellness Resources

Website: livingwell@ucsf.edu