



The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare envisions a world where all who seek and provide healthcare experience compassion. The Schwartz Center's mission to put compassion at the heart of healthcare holds true no matter how extraordinary or difficult the circumstances. Since our founding in 1995, healthcare organizations have relied on our programs, education and resources to support the goals of improving healthcare staff well-being and mental health, enhancing the quality of care, enabling better outcomes, and creating a more positive experience for all members of the care team, patients and their families.

We have more than 500 members in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand, including hospitals, long-term care facilities and other healthcare organizations, and more than 200 healthcare organizations conducting our programs in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Through them, we have positively impacted hundreds of thousands of clinical caregivers and their patients across nearly every healthcare setting with our programs and resources.

Our programs include a free public webinar series, an interprofessional healthcare conference, the National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award program, and member programs, including the signature Schwartz Rounds® and Stress First Aid (SFA). Schwartz Rounds – offered in hospitals and healthcare organizations since 1997 – provides healthcare organizations with a structured forum for facilitated discussions about the social and emotional experiences of caregiving. Schwartz Rounds are inclusive, supportive exercises in perspective-taking that have been shown to significantly reduce psychological distress among healthcare staff; they can be offered on an organization- or unit-wide basis, and in person or virtually.

Early in the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we became concerned about the possibility of a second pandemic of psychological distress and clinically significant mental health issues in the healthcare workforce. In March 2020, we began offering a series of free webinars with trauma experts and others to support healthcare workers with evidence-informed strategies to cope with stress, loss and grief individually and within their organizations. The international participation in these webinars was far greater than we had expected and the response, particularly to the webinars on Stress First Aid, was overwhelmingly positive.

This response prompted us to initiate organizational trainings in SFA for our members. SFA is a model for psychological peer support and self-care that was originally developed for the military and first responders. In consultation with experts from the National Center for PTSD and others, we have adapted this program to meet the needs of interprofessional healthcare workers and staff.

We view our programs as important culture-changing forums, aimed not only at fostering individual compassion, well-being and resilience, but at building social connectedness, support and relationships within teams, and at all levels of healthcare organizations and systems. Social

support is one of the most powerful factors that modulate psychological distress and trauma and support resilience. We are now launching a new organizational initiative to assist healthcare organizations and systems in their efforts to address burnout, psychological distress, traumatic stress, and barriers to well-being, including mental health stigma among healthcare professionals and staff. This focus on creating more positive practice environments is consistent with the recommendations of National Academy of Medicine's (NAM) 2019 Consensus Report.

The Schwartz Center's values, programs and aims are closely aligned with those of the NAM's Action Collaborative on Clinician Wellbeing and Resilience. We welcome the opportunity to become involved with this collective work. There is much to be done.

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