



RAINIER OLYMPIC NURSES ASSOCIATION

ENGAGE + ENCOURAGE + EMPOWER + SUPPORT

Vaccinating the Virus

By Lori Banks, PhD | Assistant Professor of Biology, Bates College



Since the beginning of the SARS-CoV2 global pandemic, the clock has been ticking for us to have vaccines to prevent infections and antiviral medications to limit or treat disease. Through the miraculous efforts of Operation Warp Speed, we've been able to produce multiple vaccines to SARS-CoV2, which causes COVID-19 disease, but the process has brought up some legitimate concerns about safety of these vaccines. Additionally, there have been some new strains out of the UK and South Africa that appear to increase infectivity and possible virulence of the virus. These are extremely valid concerns affecting our choice to take one of the new vaccines, but there is definitely hope.

Initial concerns focused on the side effects noted in the Phase III clinical trials for both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Some volunteers experienced a mild fever, body aches, and other cold-like symptoms for 24-48 hours after receiving the vaccine shots. Though some believe that the vaccine has infected them with SARS-CoV2, the vaccine does not in fact contain a whole virus, so no infection can take place. This kind of reaction is also common with other vaccine products and is just your immune system waking up. This can be an issue for those who have previously had severe reactions to other vaccines, and should be discussed with your primary care physician. Others that should consult their physicians about taking the new SARS-CoV2 vaccines, may include but are not limited to those who are receiving cancer treatments and those with other immune or auto-immune conditions. Hav-

ing these conditions does not necessarily mean you should not get the vaccine, but that you should discuss the matter with your primary care physician first. Overall, the vaccines were found to be safe and are now available to front-line workers in several countries including the US. As well, because the factors that lead to poor outcomes of COVID-19 disease are not well understood, refusing vaccination leaves us open to possibly experiencing those poor outcomes.

The great news is that in the absence of immune conditions like those listed above, it is encouraged by the CDC that the rest of us get the vaccine, and here's why. Vaccines empower your immune system to fight infections with minimal disease in the process. In most cases, this prevents you from spreading the virus, and keeps the prevalence of virus low in the general

population. The less virus floating around in people's cough/sneeze spray, the less people become infected in the population as a whole. In order for this to happen, however, 90% plus of the population need to receive the vaccine. This is how we achieve herd immunity. So, while the well-documented vaccine reactions are not comfortable, not taking one of the vaccines will ultimately decrease our ability to control the spread of SARS-CoV2, and end the pandemic.

In the meantime, we must use the public health tools that we know limit infections. We must remember that every newly infected person represents a chance for the virus to mutate. In fact, within hours of the writing of this article, we have seen reports of SARS-CoV2 variants initially detected in South Africa, that may be more virulent than those circulating around the world, and less covered by available vaccines. We are all ready to get back to pre-COVID life, but we are on the verge of losing some of the few tools we do have to fight SARS-CoV2. We have to stay vigilant to protect those who are more likely to die from COVID-19 disease, and to get us back to normal sooner.

Resources

For the most up to date information on Vaccine Administration in Washington State visit doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/vaccine.

Want to volunteer to help with the vaccine administration? Register for the Washington State Emergency Registry of Volunteers at [WAserv.org](https://www.waserv.org).

Or contact your local Medical Reserve Corps: The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. In many of our communities, the MRC is actively helping administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

For links to your regional MRC and additional information, visit rainierolympicnurses.org/volunteer-opportunities.

Transforming Trauma: Sustainable Practices Tools for Nurses

Saturday,
March 20th
9 to 11am
via Zoom



This training and discussion will offer practical tools to help us sustain, individually and collectively, in the face of the secondary trauma and overwhelm in our work, the pandemic, and the current national focus on systemic racism.

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Brought to you by WA state regional nurses associations



Register at
kcnurses.org

We Should Talk About Grief

By Josie Hansen, RN, 200 RYT | Yoga Instructor, Grief Yoga Movement Nurse

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you." ~Rumi

Grief has profound and deeply impactful effects on emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of our beings. Grief is a universal response to loss, crossing everyone's threshold at some point in their life. Collectively, as a culture grief is not acknowledged for many different reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic provides us with a unique opportunity to invite grief to come out of hiding, to acknowledge it, to talk about it, to share our feelings and to create greater compassion for all as we realize grief is one of many things we have in common. Nurses are optimally positioned to assist our patients, our colleagues and our communities to bring education, awareness, and empowerment to reduce burnout, workforce degradation and mental health distress. For nurses to be effective in their roles self-care is an absolute priority. Self-care is not selfish—it is essential.

EFFECTS ON NURSES

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses are exposed to multiple psychological distresses and those providing intensive and ongoing care have the highest rates of stress and mental distress. The type and volume of loss can result in complicated grief. Research has identified several categories of stressors for nurses, including: death anxiety, mortality rate, nurses' inability to help patients, anxiety due

to the [unpredictability] of the disease, the disease's unknown dimensions, anxiety related to burial, fear of infecting [personal] family, fear of being infected, emergence of obsessive thoughts, bad feelings about wearing PPE, public ignorance of preventive measures, and providing the final personal touch and final voice for a dying patient.

Historically, nurses, individuals, and our culture have not been inviting and supportive of those who are grieving. Somehow, it is implicitly implied that grieving is best done alone. To keep nurses from becoming burned out and second victims of COVID-19, strategies to address the current culture attached to grief and loss need to be provided.

EFFECTS OF GRIEF

Grief can be messy. Grief and loss can feel like a 7.0 earthquake has happened and it has forever changed the landscape of your life. The terrain is permanently altered—never to return to its original form. The map of your life is new and the old one has become a reference point of what once was.

Physically, you feel as though your guts have been ripped out because you either can't eat at all or you forage all day long in attempt to soothe the ache. Your sleep is either elusive or it's constant. New aches and pains have become more noticeable, present and potentially persistent.

Your friends have kindly recommended that you get and use a checklist system because your thinking is foggy and your memory is not as reliable. You notice that you can't concentrate on anything. Sometimes intrusive and ruminating thoughts creep in, leading to an unsettled anxious feeling.

Emotionally, it may seem like you are on a very bad roller coaster ride: emotions can be volatile, conflicting and overwhelming. Your family and friends, once a source of support and a sense of belonging in social circles, may shift as a result of your loss. Loneliness and isolation can slowly, insidiously creep into your life.

There may be times when you find yourself questioning, doubting, or turning even more to your faith or belief in that which is greater than yourself. Your world view may be questioned because of your loss. Even your sense of purpose and spark for life may be dimmed.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is a universal, natural, adaptive and instinctual response especially that caused by someone's death or significant personal loss. It is often accompanied by deep sorrow. In itself, grief is neither good nor bad. It is simply a complex, deeply felt emotional reaction to change or loss. Furthermore, grief is a highly individual, nonlinear process. It can bring isolation. It can be viewed as a healing process and transformative.

NURSING INTERVENTIONS

Specifically addressing the losses of COVID-19, it is "a disaster of uncertainty" with ambiguity about its nature and trajectory. These features amplify its psychological toxicity and increase the number of psychological casualties it inflicts.

How can nurses mental burden be reduced? How can nurses' mental well-being be addressed and boosted? The following offerings are possible suggestions. The very first intervention is to acknowledge the pain and grief openly. Leaders are positioned to facilitate communication to honor

OPEN TO ALL NURSES

Nurse Huddle:

Building resiliency through conversation and connection with fellow nurses

Monthly

- April 10th 9-11am
- May 10th 6-8pm
- June 10th 6-8pm

What is a Nurse Huddle?

It's a place to talk. A place to share how the pandemic has impacted you. A place to build resilience through sharing your experience. A place to support each other through a debrief about the pandemic. A place to learn skills and to increase our collective resiliency through conversation and connection with other nurses.

Rainier Olympic Nurses Association is partnering with the Trauma Resilience Team (TRT), part of Pierce County Medical Reserve Corps, to hold several Virtual Nurse Huddles this Spring. TRT volunteers will facilitate the sessions and provide brief, practical trainings on compassion fatigue and self care.



REGISTER AT WWW.RAINIEROLYMPICNURSES.ORG



Common Symptoms of Grief Include:

- Anger
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Disappointment
- Fear
- Hurt
- Sadness
- Frustration
- Guilt
- Out of Control
- Emptiness
- Panic
- Helplessness

the losses, especially those of their fallen colleagues. Create and hold trainings and educational workshops on how to cope with COVID-19, the resulting losses, listen to each other concerns, and intervene negative news from spreading.

For fallen colleagues, a specific Bereavement Team could be developed. Establish a virtual Death Café which are informal discussions focusing on death, dying, loss, grief, and illness rather than a grief support or counseling sessions. They allow for reflection, community and collaboration among colleagues from multiple healthcare environment to come together, ideally in a virtual format. (To find out more or details on how to establish a Death Café please visit www.DeathCafe.com) Optimal goals are to reduce burnout, provide compassionate listening and refrain from advice giving.

Without support being implemented workforce degradation and burnout is quite possible.

SELF-CARE INTERVENTIONS

There is power in turning towards what is hard rather resisting it. On a personal level, consider these offerings of self-care tools for support. What works one day may not work the next day. Some have found it useful to alternate between "loss" related activities (looking at photos, crying, talking about your loss) and "restorative" activities (hobbies, making plans for the future, etc.).

Some additional self-care tools include: good nutrition and hydration, adequate sleep, regular movement or exercise, mindfulness practices, routine prayer, meditation, connect with nature-get outside, read positive thinking/inspiration books every day before work, take a news break, turn off the TV (especially the news), music, creative activities, foster opportunities to show gratitude, journaling about your experiences, explore labyrinths, create space-take time off and get away, and do regular, honest check-ins with yourself.

Acts of kindness are a form of self-care. By availing yourself to your peers in initiating direct conversations when you identify they are experiencing distress you are helping them and yourself. An inquiring, invitational question might be "This is really difficult for anyone to handle. How are you doing?" And then, actively listen. Be present for them. Avoid grief comparison stories. Avoid advice giving (unless asked). No need to fix them or you. There is nothing wrong with you. You are not broken. You are in grief.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Supporting the Next Generation of Nursing

With COVID-19 impacting our ability to raise money at events, we've created a monthly giving program to raise money for scholarships for nursing students. Your tax deductible donations of \$5, \$10, \$20 per month will have a big impact for nursing students in our region. Visit our website to sign up as a monthly donor or give a one time donation. Let's support our future nurses and nurses who are advancing their education!

Thank you to monthly giving donors(*) and one-time donors from our Fall campaign drives:

Sandra Crossland
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Kimberley Russell*
Evelyn Street*

Racism, Social Determinants of Health & Covid-19

Part 1 & 2

Recordings Available

Nurses who watch the webinars and complete an evaluation form, will receive a certificate of attendance.



As nurses we have empathy, compassion, dedication, and a calling to serve our community.

Having tools can empower us to educate ourselves, listen and participate in difficult conversations as we work against systemic racism to help improve the health outcomes for people of color in our community. Recordings are available at rainierolympicnurses.org until March 21st.

FREE WEBINAR FOR NURSES

Your Purpose Driven Career

Saturday,
March 27th
9am to 11am



Have you lost the passion you once had for the work you are doing? Are you feeling burnt out? Or do you want to restart your career but don't know where to start?

Then this workshop is for you! We'll discuss ways to get re-energized in your nursing career whether you are a new or seasoned professional!

REGISTER AT WWW.RAINIEROLYMPICNURSES.ORG

Free Webinar for Nurses

Alzheimer's & Dementia

Saturday, April 17th
9:00-11:00am

REGISTER AT

WWW.RAINIEROLYMPICNURSES.ORG





Tami Green
RN, BC
Mental Health
Lakewood

Challenge is the word that best describes 2020 to me. Who knew the kind of challenges we would face last year and it looks like 2021 may not be far behind. We have been physically challenged, professionally challenged, financially challenged, politically challenged and emotionally challenged. We have been, overscheduled, furloughed, upskilled, called off, exposed, vaccinated, donned and doffed and

exhausted. We have put ourselves and our loved ones at risk as we try to make our way through this pandemic. Through this all we have tried to stay calm and level headed with our patient's, our co workers and our families. We have debunked silly conspiracies and pushed forward with education of everyone we know to wear masks, social distance and wash hands. We have been examples of how to fight this Virus with science and resilience.

As we become vaccinated and the vaccine becomes more available to the public I hope as nurses we will take a collective deep breath. We deserve it. But, our work isn't done. We still have to do everything we can to encourage people to get the vaccines. We will get through this, but only if nurses are leading the way by example and by raising our voices to everyone we know to continue to follow safety guidelines until this vaccine is eradicated.

COVID-19 may be deadly but nurses are tenacious and unrelenting in protecting our health. If I had to bet, my money is on eradication with nurses leading the way.

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Keep up to date on Association activities and events, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!
Postmark your ballot by **APRIL 10th.**



Rainier Olympic
Nurses Association
223 Tacoma Ave. S.
Tacoma, WA 98402

We have 100 complementary Rainiers tickets to give out to members!

Thanks to Tacoma Rainiers for inviting us to partner with them for their **Heroes of R City Program**. To receive a ticket, simply complete the request form at rainierolympicnurses.org, we'll mail you a ticket good for a reserved seat at a Tacoma Rainiers Home Game and a ballpark meal.

WSNA Convention

Are you planning to attend this year's **WSNA virtual convention?** Rainier Olympic Nurses Association is providing reimbursement for up to 60 members who attend. Visit rainierolympicnurses.org to sign up for a reimbursement on a first come, first serve basis.



"Through Their Eyes" is part of The Mask Project, by artist Jessica D. Perez. The original purpose of the artwork is in gratitude to the front lines and the nurses of this pandemic.

2021 Nurses Week

- Virtual Nurses Week Celebration & Annual Meeting
Friday, May 7th 6:00-7:30pm
 - Celebrate our Nurse of the Year & scholarship winners
 - Keynote Presentation - "Zen at the Bedside"
 - Signature Cocktail/Mocktail - Raise a glass in celebration of nurses.
- Request a \$5 coffee gift card (members only) at www.rainierolympicnurses.org

Honoring Nurses – Honoring Ourselves