

Reflections



Sharing our experiences in health care, especially during intense, emotional, or stressful times increases our connectedness and well-being. Hearing stories from others helps us know we are not alone, and strengthens our community. The authenticity, compassion, creativity, and bravery of our colleagues helps us access our own emotions, and helps us carry on.

If you are interested in sharing a short reflection, (55 words or less), about how the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted you please [visit this webpage](#). We invite ALL members of UW Medicine to contribute across all professions and roles; feel free to share with colleagues.

Barriers

Caring for a COVID+ patient, this PPE makes me feel miles of distance between us.

How alone must they feel in this sterile room?

Do handshakes and hands on shoulders feel as comforting with gloves on?

If only they could see me smile underneath my mask.

I hope my eyes show how much I care.

By Daniel Cabrera, Attending Physician

Inhaling

Today in Seattle looks like every other day. So why the hush? Showered, as I always do – drank two mugs of coffee. So what's the weight? I don't know yet exactly what we're waiting for. I'm inhaling, but maybe not deep enough. Is anyone else feeling this? Also - can whoever that is, please mute?

By Jennifer Best, Attending Physician

The student Clinic - Should we stay or should we go?

At what point is the benefit provided less than the risk you can confer to those that you are trying to help?

As chair of one of the largest student run clinics, do we stay running and continue to provide help to the elderly and underserved or stop in fear of contracting and transmitting disease?

By Rohan Sehgal, Medical Student

It's a very small world

Here - sick patients for hours. Flu like symptoms.
Systems are already struggling. My alarms are firing.
Flu? Something else? One infected, none, or all?
We wouldn't know.
Isolation?
It's just hours away-by air.
I'm told "we're fine"
Three weeks later: "Where is Kirkland on that map?"
I am screaming into the wind
By Anonymous, Diagnostic Imaging

I'm Sorry

I'm worried. Your mom is very sick.
I'm sorry. You can't go in the room.
I'm worried. There's nothing we can do.
I'm sorry. She has passed away.
I'm worried. This is only the first of many.
I'm sorry. You can't go in the room.
I'm worried. We don't know what to do.
I'm sorry.
By Anonymous, Resident/Fellow

Away from Family

I know that social distancing is the only way for me to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. But now, my grandma is alone in her hospital bed, indefinitely. After a stroke, she's been bedridden with severe dementia, weakness, and no speech capabilities.

I miss her. She might miss us even more.
By Kevin, Medical Student

Building a plane while flying it

Colleagues tried to close the airport. We still ended up at the gate, begging passengers not to board.
When they didn't listen, duty brought us on with our loved ones, colleagues, patients. Buckling seatbelts.
Building as fast we can, knowing the plane will crash. Still with hope: the better we build, the more will survive.
By Jessica Bender, Attending Physician

2,000 miles apart

My parents both live alone, 2,000 miles away. They are both in the highest risk category for COVID-19, and they understand the full horror of an ARDS death. If there is a statewide quarantine, we'll be trapped apart, alone, waiting, knowing their fate if infected, treasuring every phone call as if it's the last.

By Anonymous, Medical Student

Love in the time of coronavirus

My patients know that I always offer them a hug or touch. Adjusting to coronavirus has been a challenge - but love finds a way!

Recipe for a hug, covid style:

Right foot bump

Left foot bump

Right elbow bump

Left elbow bump

Smile, laugh

Look into each other's eyes

We will get through this

By Jane Hitti, Attending Physician

Staying close while we are physically distant

Rather than talking about "social" distancing, we should be talking about "physical" distancing. Ironically, at a time when it is important to physically pull apart, what will get us through this pandemic is socially and professionally pulling together and supporting each other as a community. Luckily we have many ways to do that while maintaining physical distance.

By Anonymous, Attending Physician

Spring Backwards

Soap suds. Wash away the problems of the first patient before tackling the next. Wash in. Wash out. Bow, Namaste: in. Elbow bumping out. How do social distancing and healing touch work together?

The brain tumor is shrinking and he is getting better! So happy.

My patient leaps forward to hug me and I recoil.

By Lynne Taylor, Attending Physician

Father and Son

My father lives in Colombia. He is 72 and just recovering from a lung infection. I'm away from home and unable to take care of him. I talk to him every day and ask him to be cautious. He just replies that I'm the one that needs to be careful. That I should take care of my wife and my child.

By Daniel F Gallego, Resident/Fellow

The Daily Huddle

Texts, phone calls, 1am emails, pressure, anxiety, calm-assuredness, fear, stress, concern, unknown. Every day I watch our deans come together and rise higher and pull each other up to solve crisis after crisis and problem after problem. I am so proud. So very proud of our clinicians and leaders.

By Kellie Engle, Support Staff

Inglorious Admin-ers

Nurses, MAs, EVS, administrators

hustle through the hall

Purposeful energy radiates

they whiz past my open door

A bit of chaos

uncertainty, unknown

but tasks

- Don! Doff! Clean! Care! -

helpful plans

obviously useful

at my desk, I sit.

Guess it's time to keep reserving rooms, updating personnel files, ordering supplies, requesting funds, notifying volunteers, typing...

By Anonymous, Support Staff

Did I sign up for this?

I signed up for this, right? I signed up to help people. Why, then do I feel so scared when I show up to work these days? Why do I feel unprotected? I'm nervous, and I'm not really sure if I did sign up for this. A Pandemic. But I will still show up.

By Colleen Detweiler, RN

"Non-Essential"

We were a duo, my patient and I. I took care of his failing lungs, and we laughed together at his bad jokes even if it made him short of breath. I tried to live up to his trust. Then one day, I was told I couldn't see him anymore because I was "non-essential."

By Anonymous, Medical Student

Childcare

If daycare is closing, how can I still graduate on time? Medical students don't get sick leave.

It doesn't seem right to call up my mom, and put her in danger, so that I can shadow a neurologist in clinic.

By Anonymous, Medical Student

The Last Rest

Readying for bed he whispers "the hospital has 2 cases, will hit the news tomorrow".

I sleep like it is the last rest for months.

Abandoning a lazy Saturday, waking early, savoring the quiet.

I tell our kids, "Things are different now".

After brunch, checking his phone, colleagues quarantined, help is needed and he goes.

By Andrea Kalus, Attending Physician

Ice Cream

The problem was a pint of ice cream.

A stuck lid gave way to a fall, a bone broken.

Whisked off to surgery,

Fixed! Perfect recovery, joined for rehab stay by life-long love.

A sneaky sniffle, a cough gives way to breathlessness.

Never saw this coming; no one could imagine

Ice cream was this dangerous.

By Anonymous, Attending Physician

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