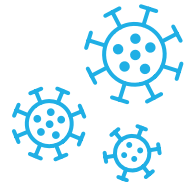


Long Haul COVID Behavioral Health Recommendations

Beth Israel Lahey Health
Beth Israel Deaconess
Medical Center

The toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of all patients and families is beyond anything most of us have ever experienced before. Individuals have experienced a wide range of psychological responses to the stress of the pandemic, and this effect is compounded for those who continue to live with COVID long haul symptoms, now commonly referred to as “Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC),” “Long-COVID,” or “Long Haul COVID.”

Long Haul COVID can be an incredibly difficult and complex process of recovery. Along with the medical specialist care and physical/occupational therapy you may need, there are a number of things you can do to alleviate the mental distress that accompanies this illness.



- **Notice what you are feeling:** when you are feeling upset, take a moment to notice any physical sensations, emotions, and thoughts that might be arising. Naming what you are experiencing can be helpful so you can decide what might be most helpful you in the moment.
- **Practice patience & self-compassion:** You have been through a lot – it may take a while to feel like “you” again. Whatever emotions you are feeling are ok. Instead of getting frustrated with yourself for these feelings, treat yourself like you would a loved one – with patience, compassion, and understanding.
- **It is normal to have emotional ups & downs;** it can be useful to remind yourself that the hard times will not last forever.
- **During your recovery process, try not to compare yourself to your ‘pre-COVID’ peak;** instead focus on progress you have made since first becoming ill or when you were at your sickest. It is often easier to see positive progress over a period of months instead of days.
- **Focus on what is within your control:** you may not be able to make yourself “better” in this moment, but you can control how you feel & think about your life
- **Ask for & accept help: you are not in this alone!** Most likely, the people in your life will want to help in some way. For many people with long-COVID, they find themselves shifting from ‘caregiver’ to ‘needing care.’ This can be difficult to accept, but it is important to let others help when you need it.
- **Make self-care a daily practice:** when you work out at the gym, your muscles gradually get stronger – the same goes for your mental health. The more consistently you practice these techniques for mental wellness, the more natural they will feel, and the greater improvement you will see in your mental health. Incorporating even just ten minutes of self-care, relaxation, or mindfulness techniques every day is a great start!
- **Seek professional care!** Just as you would see a cardiologist for a heart issue, you should see a mental health professional if you are struggling emotionally or psychologically. See the attached list of referral sources for how to find a provider.

Find the full behavioral health guide at the [BIDMC Critical Illness and COVID-19 Recovery website](#).