

USING CREATIVE ARTS TO SUPPORT COLLEAGUES



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PRONOUNS: HE/HIM AND THEY/THEM

My Role: During the COVID-19 pandemic, I have found that my role has expanded in some challenging and wonderful ways. Initially, we needed to work on meeting the immediate needs of our patients and our staff, such as transitioning psychiatry to medicine units and developing socially distanced therapeutic programming. I then realized we needed to do more to create spaces for staff to mourn and process the impact that COVID-19 was having on us all. I spent time conceptualizing and building Mourning Rooms—physical spaces for staff to reflect, meditate, and find support as we work through our grief together.

I have also been working with a brilliant team of clinicians to bring creative arts therapy interventions to staff wellness in partnership with Helping Healers Heal. We provide drama therapy, art therapy, dance therapy, and music therapy to help staff process trauma, mitigate compassion fatigue, and build coping skills. I have found meaning in this work, which has allowed me to center and ground myself during this time, and ultimately be able to show up more for our patients and my colleagues.

On COVID-19 and LGBTQ

Communities: Given the fact that one in four LGBTQ individuals report experiencing healthcare discrimination, I fear LGBTQ individuals, especially LGBTQ people of color and transgender/

gender non-conforming people, are less likely to seek out care, or wait too long to get care even in the face of an emergency. I also worry that the new limitations on visiting in hospitals leaves LGBTQ patients without their chosen ones to serve as their advocates. I am deeply concerned that the actual impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ communities will never truly be known, as sexual orientation and gender identity demographic information is not uniformly collected across the country. I am, however, grateful to work for a healthcare system whose commitment to LGBTQ person-centered care is made clear on a daily basis.

Celebrating Pride during the

Pandemic: For me, Pride is about celebration, visibility of our diverse queerness, a time for remembrance, and ultimately: resistance. We have to re-imagine Pride this year, which is something LGBTQ communities do well; we have been re-imagining for decades. I plan to find community with those I love, most likely in virtual spaces. I plan to do a lot of writing, reflection and collaborative storytelling. My hope is that through virtual platforms, visibility can be brought to places that historically have not created spaces for Pride celebrations in the past.