

### During your assignment:

- Be proactive in getting what you need—transform your concerns into helpful actions
- Stay connected to family and friends
- Build meaningful relationships with your new colleagues

### After returning home:

- Expect that you might experience some re-entry reactions
- Create a buffer zone between the field and home
- Prepare for “those” conversations with family and friends
- Debrief your experience with a counselor or people you trust who will understand
- Get involved and back into “routine”
- Avoid making big decisions in the immediate aftermath of returning home

**1 Minute Relaxation:** Take a slow and deep breath. Place your hand beneath your navel, feel the rise & fall of your breathing. Continue to breathe deeply for 1 minute. Repeat “I am” as you inhale & “at peace” as you exhale. Repeat slowly 2-3 times.



### Do Not Forget:

- Taking care of yourself is as much a part of your duty as your other official functions
- Remind yourself that you are functioning in a new environment and facing more challenges than usual
- The Staff Counselor’s Office is here to support you at any time. We can provide confidential consultations in person in New York, or phone, or Skype while you are in the field. You can reach us at [scohq@un.org](mailto:scohq@un.org) or +1 (212) 963-7044

## Ebola Response



## Psychosocial Self-Care

UN Staff Counsellor’s Office

Going on a field assignment can be both exciting and stressful.

**Ebola-related work comes with unique psychological stressors.**

## UN Staff Counsellor's Office

UN Secretariat Building, 405 E 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York, NY, 10017 USA  
[scohq@un.org](mailto:scohq@un.org)

# Self-care tips

Stick to the Medical Protocols provided by MSD

Build resilience by making connections, taking helpful actions, and keeping things in perspective

Maintain healthy habits: get enough sleep, eat well and limit alcohol and tobacco

Try to nourish your social support both at home and in the mission

Identify what is under your control and what is not, and try to focus on the things you can control

Take time off during your assignment to help you maintain your efficiency and well-being

## Taking care of yourself—including your mental health—is a top priority.

**Ebola can have serious psychological and social effects even on people who are not infected with the virus, including healthy UN employees.**

Anxieties about being infected, lack of cooperation from local communities, social stigma simply for being associated with Ebola—all of these can take a toll on your well-being.

### Keep in mind the difference between:

- 1) The medical reality and realistic dangers of Ebola  
vs.
- 2) The irrational fear, anxiety, and other distress reactions that a disease like Ebola can “cause” in healthy people

Learning to judge the difference between rational and irrational thoughts related to Ebola will help you maintain your health and well-being before, during and after your mission. **Therefore, be sure to educate yourself about the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) before leaving for the field,** and keep yourself updated while you are there.

**While a certain degree of uncertainty and anxiety is normal, too much worry can cause problems.** Living in a constant state of alarm can have severe health consequences over time. Individuals as well as entire communities can be susceptible to paranoia about Ebola. Panic is contagious! Maintaining a level-head is thus a critical responsibility for all UN staff.

## Before, During, and After Your Mission

### Before you go:

- Get a UN medical briefing about Ebola—educate yourself about the real risks and how they differ from irrational worries
- Address your own concerns about Ebola as well as the concerns of people close to you

### During your assignment:

- Avoid denying any feelings of discomfort and danger that may arise—take practical actions to improve your comfort and protect yourself
- Learn to judge the difference between rational and irrational thoughts
- Make time to create your own space—don't wait for someone to do it for you