

Jerry Barba, PhD

Clinical Psychologist, Downey Service Area

Frontline workers have been under enormous pressure from the very start of the pandemic. Clinical psychologist Jerry Barba, PhD, saw that and was ready to do something about it.

“You have to get where the people are,” Barba said. “You can’t just advertise or have a phone number – you have to have a presence because people won’t access as well to get the help they need.” Barba began by supporting Kaiser Permanente staff over the phone but soon realized that wasn’t enough, deciding instead to volunteer his time in person at Kaiser Permanente Downey Medical Center.

After setting up an office right in the heart of the Emergency Department, Barba began providing quick interventions and offering coping tips for frontline workers in need of a little extra connection.

“During this moment in time, it is just about listening and letting people talk and debrief and just tell me what’s going on – what happened in the last half hour or what’s happening at home – and they feel lighter and they can get on with their day.”

Barba believes that connection helps ground us. “Staying connected reminds us of who we are – you know, the better parts of ourselves – because if we’re just in our own minds and reactions of emotion and thought, then we get lost,” he shared.

His advice for folks struggling through this unique time, “Hold on to hope and try to find some bright spots, even if they’re just moments in a day,” adding that it’s important to normalize the experience and allow yourself to feel what you’re feeling.



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