



SUPPORTING OUR

**NORTHUMBRIA FAMILY**

PROTECTING YOUR WELLBEING

## LEADER'S PACK

Helping your team through Covid-19

GROWING A



**HEALTHIER WORKFORCE**

PEOPLE LOOKING AFTER PEOPLE

building a caring future

# LEADING YOUR TEAM THROUGH COVID-19

We are in unprecedented times and all NHS staff are pulling together to navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. We all want to do our best to support our teams through this challenging period, and we know that our managers and supervisors are already offering outstanding leadership across the entire organisation.

The purpose of this guide is to offer useful information and practical tips to you, as one of our leaders, to help you support your team in the coming weeks and months.

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## WHY DO WE NEED

## TO SUPPORT OUR STAFF?

Like the rest of the population, healthcare staff will have concerns about the pandemic, including:

- The threat of the virus to themselves and loved ones – especially if they are directly exposed on the frontline
- Childcare availability
- Caring responsibilities
- Finances
- The impact of lockdown on wellbeing
- Feelings of guilt or helplessness, for instance because of shielding, self-isolation, home working or personal circumstances
- Uncertainty about what is going to happen in the future

It's important that we recognise and acknowledge these challenges and the impact they can have – but it's also important not to over-medicalise normal distress.

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We must help our colleagues remember:

- Feeling pressured by the current situation is normal
- Feeling stressed is not a reflection that you cannot do the job, and does not indicate weakness

*The thing that has helped me the most this week is my colleagues (and the words "do you want a cuppa?"). Hearing that it's not just me that doesn't feel 100% right now; we're all having more down days than we usually would.*

Northumbria staff member, April 2020









## STEP 2 HOT DEBRIEF

### What is a Hot Debrief?

Hot debriefing is where individuals or teams are provided with debriefing immediately after a critical event. It is a data-driven, performance-focused debriefing. **It is not a psychological debriefing.** We do not recommend the use of psychological debriefing in the immediate aftermath of a critical event, if you have any concerns about the mental health of your staff, please refer to the **safeguarding your team's mental wellbeing** section (page 16).

### How are they conducted?

Some departments have a culture that promotes critical incident debrief, some less so. We would recommend the following:

- Do it as soon as reasonably possible (and definitely during the same shift) – this is key
- Invite everyone who was involved, however peripherally. All might have useful insights and also benefit from being able to talk about the incident or ask questions about what happened and why identify a facilitator
- Find a quiet area away from the 'shop floor' where you won't be disturbed.
- Ensure that clinical duties (and bleeps) are all handed over to other staff for the duration of the debrief
- Encourage participation from everyone
- Follow the guide



### THINK

<b>I</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	Team members present and roles
<b>S</b>	<b>Summary</b>	Brief summary of the case
<b>W</b>	<b>What went well?</b>	Team work? Communication? Clinical decision making? Outcome?
<b>I</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	What can we do better next time?
<b>P</b>	<b>Points to take away</b>	Learning points - identify 1 or 2 from the team
<b>E</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	Any equipment issues? Missing equipment? Nominate someone to address

### Closing the Hot Debrief

- Thank everyone for the contributions
- Check that everyone can return to duties
- Remind everyone of peer support
- Identify anyone who may be more vulnerable and link in with existing sources of support within the Trust

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## STEP 3 GOING HOME CHECKLIST

# Take five...

...and take a moment to think about your day



### GOING HOME CHECKLIST

#### Before you leave after your shift at work take a moment to think about today

- Acknowledge one thing that was difficult on shift – let it go
- Consider three things that went well
- Check on your colleagues before you leave – are they OK?
- Are you OK? Your team are here to support you
- Now switch your attention to home – rest and recharge

## LOOKING AFTER

### YOURSELF AS A LEADER

You are just as important as anyone else and it's vital that you take steps to protect your wellbeing.

- Show self-compassion – it's ok and normal to feel worried or stressed
- Talk to your peers
- Try to get adequate rest outside of work. If you're having issues with sleep take a look at Sleepio, a clinically-evidenced, online sleep improvement programme
- Balance nutritious food that can sustain you throughout this period and treats too
- Try to ensure you take your daily exercise – walk, run or cycle
- Try to avoid alcohol as a coping strategy – it can make you feel more tired and worsen your health in the long run
- Keep checklists and aide memoires
- Make use of existing support such as Occupational Health, Staff Psychology and Counselling, Staff Wellbeing Team, Organisational Development and Staff Experience

*What has helped is the routine of going to work. Getting plenty of sleep, taking exercise. As a team we have taken time off, stayed at home and regrouped. People are now thinking about what we can do rather than all that had to be cancelled. A more positive and creative approach.*

Northumbria staff member, April 2020





**SAFEGUARDING YOUR  
TEAM'S MENTAL HEALTH**

**KEY CONTACT DETAILS**

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

Wansbeck General Hospital: **01670 529 213 (Ext. 33213)**  
North Tyneside General Hospital: **0191 293 4373 (Ext. 4373)**

**STAFF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING SERVICE**

SPCS can be contacted via the Occupational Health telephone numbers provided above or send an email query to:

**staffpsychology.counsellingservice@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk**

**MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS TEAM / INITIAL RESPONSE SERVICE:**

**People living in:** Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland: **0303 123 1145**  
Newcastle, North Tyneside or Northumberland: **0303 123 1146**  
Durham and Teesside: **0191 441 5738** Darlington: **01325 552 230**  
Hartlepool: **01429 285 858** Stockton-on-Tees: **01642 524 714**  
Middlesbrough: **01642 680 706** Redcar and Cleveland: **01642 838 300**  
Cumbria: **01228 602 000**

**PRIMARY CARE TALKING THERAPIES SERVICES:**

For people with non-urgent, mild to moderate anxiety/depression/stress presentations\* - staff can self-refer:

North Tyneside Talking Therapies (NHCT): **0191 295 2775**  
Talking Helps (Newcastle): **0191 282 6600**  
Talking Matters Northumberland: **0300 303 0700**  
Gateshead Talking Therapies: **0191 283 2541**  
South Tyneside Talking Therapies: **0191 283 2937**  
Talking Changes (Durham and Darlington): **0191 333 3300**  
Sunderland Psychological Wellbeing Service: **0191 566 5450**

\*This is not an exhaustive list of services available.



**TIPS FOR  
LEADING YOUR TEAMS**

**ENSURE CONSISTENT  
ACCESS TO PHYSICAL  
SAFETY NEEDS**

- Adequate PPE (sufficient to permit leaving 'hot zone' for breaks), adequate training
- Protected place to rest/relax/cry, 24-hour easy access to food and drink.
- Sleep is essential for staff to maintain decision-making abilities

**VISIBLE LEADERSHIP**

- Be visible, be available, and be supportive
- Role model a cohesive caring approach
- Guide staff to the resources they need (see page 15)
- You do not need to have all the solutions all the time
- Tolerate and manage uncertainty for yourself and your staff

**COMMUNICATION**

- Communicate to staff regularly and frequently in simple clear ways
- Do prepare staff for what they might face and have to do
- Check in's and check out's for staff help
- Actively encourage expression of concerns and fears - listen with patience and compassion
- Create feedback mechanisms so staff can tell what they need more or less of - act on feedback
- Prepare staff who may have to give difficult news to patients and relatives

*"Your wellbeing is important too, be compassionate towards yourself"*

*“Resilience comes from the connections between people in times of great challenge”*

### **NORMALISE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES IN STAFF**

- Remember – this situation is unprecedented; it is okay to not be okay
- Experiencing symptoms of stress doesn't mean you aren't up to the job, it means you're human
- **Do not force direct psychological interventions, these are not helpful to everyone in the midst of crisis, but allow psychological support to be available in different ways**

### **ENCOURAGE PEER SUPPORT AND BELONGING**

- Establish explicit peer support mechanisms e.g. daily buddying -'look out for your buddy'
- Consider needs of new or less experienced staff support
- **Don't offer single session interventions that require staff to talk about their thoughts or feelings – this may increase the likelihood of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**

### **BUILD MORALE**

- Help staff acknowledge good work
- Keep a calm approachable demeanour
- Maintain a sense of positivity
- Model capability
- Help direct staff (see page 22)

### **CREATE THINKING SPACE**

- Allow space for taking stock and processing of experiences
- Organise active learning events that feed learning into future preparedness plans
- Organise thanks and rewards for everyday going above and beyond
- Needs assessment of staff – what did they find helpful, what on-going input would they want now
- Provide spaces for on-going peer support

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

- Communicate with staff
- Contain staff reactions attend to basic needs
- Use operational **“hot debriefs”** (see page 12)
- Help refocus staff and maintain sense of order
- **Don't rush to use psychological interventions too soon – they may interfere with people's natural coping mechanisms**

### **PROMOTING WELLBEING THROUGH FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE RESOURCING**

- Do identify vulnerable staff members and proactively support them
- Do allow flexibility for staff affected by stressful events
- While many staff can cope, do refer to support services as needed
- Do monitor support needs as the crisis recedes
- Do rotate staff between higher and lower-stress functions



# SUPPORTING OUR NORTHUMBRIA FAMILY

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FREE ACCESS TO APPS:  
Sleepio  
Daylight  
Headspace  
Unmind



NEW STAFF  
WELLBEING  
WEBSITE

[northumbrianhsstaffwellbeing.co.uk](http://northumbrianhsstaffwellbeing.co.uk)



DEDICATED  
QUIET  
SPACES



ETHICAL  
SAVINGS  
AND LOANS  
SCHEME FROM  
NORTHUMBERLAND  
COMMUNITY BANK



FREE  
PARKING



POP-UP  
WELLBEING  
STANDS



FREE  
MEALS IN  
RESTAURANTS

WELLBEING  
BOXES FOR  
TEAMS



Helping you  
to keep families  
connected  
and support  
bereaved  
relatives



GUIDANCE AND INFO  
FOR LEADERS TO HELP  
SUPPORT THEIR TEAMS



## WELLBEING PHONELINE

Welfare checks for those at home and internal support line covering all aspects of your wellbeing.

Open 10am-3pm, Monday-Friday. **01670 623 840**

## SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR YOU

**VIVUP** - offering support to staff experiencing depression, anxiety, stress or relationship issues. Call any time on **03303 800 658**

**NATIONAL HELPLINE FOR NHS STAFF** - support and advice for pressures related to the COVID19 crisis **0300 131 7000** or text **FRONTLINE to 85258**.

**STAFF PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORT FOR TEAMS AND MANAGERS** - including trauma and bereavement support. [StaffPsychology.CounsellingService@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:StaffPsychology.CounsellingService@northumbria.nhs.uk) or call occupational health on **01670 529 213 (ext 33213)**

**SAFEGUARDING TEAM** - if you or anyone you know is at risk of abuse call **0191 293 4212** or email [adultsafeguarding@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:adultsafeguarding@northumbria.nhs.uk)

We know that many people will be at a higher risk of abuse at home whilst isolating during this coronavirus outbreak. If you do see or hear that someone is at risk of abuse at home please: call 999 if you know that they are in immediate danger, or go to our staff health and wellbeing website for more information on local services

[www.northumbrianhsstaffwellbeing.co.uk/your-family](http://www.northumbrianhsstaffwellbeing.co.uk/your-family)

## SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Blake & Bermingham, 2020, *Psychological Wellbeing for Healthcare Workers: Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on Psychological Wellbeing*.

[https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play\\_22794#resume=1](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play_22794#resume=1)

Kings's Fund, 2020, *Leading through Covid-19: supporting health and care leaders in unprecedented times*.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/leading-through-covid-19>

With thanks to North Bristol NHS Trust for sharing their resources and inspiring the development of this pack.

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