

# Guidance on Staff Wellbeing during Covid-19

This is a guide for leaders and managers of Leeds Community Healthcare who will need to consider the wellbeing needs of all healthcare staff (clinical and non-clinical) as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak.

Some of the things here are already being done and need to continue, whilst other recommendations will need to be considered in different phases of the pandemic. These recommendations are based on The British Psychological Societies working group on staff wellbeing to the response to Covid-19.

Please look out for updates on the health and wellbeing page of the Covid-19 intranet.

## Principles of responding well in the active phase for staff wellbeing

Leaders and managers, this is how staff need you to act now, with clear leadership, clear information, and physical and psychological resources.

### 1 Visible leadership

- Most importantly be visible, be available, and be supportive.
- Where you can, guide staff to the resources they need, however basic (e.g. to rest, to speak with family): LOOK-LISTEN-LINK.
- You do not need to have all the solutions all the time.
- You will need to tolerate and manage uncertainty for yourself and your staff.
- Your wellbeing is important too, be compassionate towards yourself.
- You are best-placed to create a protective environment for your staff.



### 2 Having a communications strategy

- Communicate to staff regularly and frequently in simple clear ways.
- Use video and written means.
- Actively encourage expression of concerns and fears. Listen with patience and compassion.



### 3 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.
- Visit the LCH Covid-19 Intranet wellbeing page to access resources and updates on the support available.



### 4 Ensure human connection and methods of pre-existing peer support

- Establish explicit peer support mechanisms e.g. daily buddying including explicit permission to 'look out for your buddy'.
- Access to protected spaces for staff to be together even for limited periods.



## 5 Providing psychological care to patients and families is key to staff wellbeing



- Create systems of communication between (1) relatives/loved ones and clinical staff; and (2) between relatives/loved ones and the patient (this will require innovation but examples already show that a little goes a long way).
- Offer guidance/protocols for care in the context of treatment limitations and acknowledge organisational responsibility.
- Create a way for staff to manage end-of-life care in a dignified manner, with family involvement (if desired).
- Practitioner psychologists can help you to consider how you and your team can manage patient and family fears and concerns.

## 6 Normalise psychological responses



- 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.
- Give staff permission to step back and ensure breaks and rest.
- Do not mandate direct psychological interventions, these are not helpful to everyone in the midst of crisis (e.g. see the top of the pyramid of possible interventions), but allow psychological support to be available in different ways – speak to your practitioner psychologists.

## 7 Deliver formal psychological care in stepped ways



- Follow the principles in the figure opposite: physical needs, information and peer support, and psychological first aid are first line, with psychological interventions being utilised for those who require it, and can make effective use of it during crisis periods.
- Further information and support is available and this will be updated on regular basis as needs arise so keep an eye on the health and wellbeing page.
- Do not forget to support those supporting others.
- Come back to your core NHS, organisational and professional values in making decisions.
- Take care of yourself and pace yourself – this is a marathon, not a sprint.

