


Mental health and wellbeing training 


Care Home Managers

Session 2
Responding to staff who are struggling
During Covid-19

2021

Managers Role 

- Being visible, available and supportive in words and actions
- Set boundaries, not being constantly on tap? Not there to sort everything out in an employees life?
- Accept 'mistakes' will happen (yours and theirs), more tolerance, flexibility
- Evaluate workload & be honest with people
- Look for positives and give staff (and self) feedback on what they are achieving
- Talk/Share – it's a critical step
- Focus on what you can control and support staff to do this too
- Model looking after yourself as well as your team
- Use the Tools & Resources available to you: EAP, Occy Health, MHFA, Memberships etc



Self-care tree for all staff
Managing prolonged stress at work and at home during the COVID-19 pandemic





Breaks
Don't let those slip. Take a moment to yourself and intentionally seek to briefly disconnect from work. Do remember to eat! If it's possible that your mind will be racing or problem-solving and that's ok. Spend a few minutes focusing on something that is not work. Being intentional with 2 goes back.

Supervision
Make the best of your supervision. It is your time to make sure you're feeling supported in your work. Ask questions, clarify and seek support from your supervisor. No one is perfect – supervision helps to practice safety.

Limit-setting
Set your limits and be clear of your responsibilities. Seek help and ask questions if you feel uncomfortable or out of your depth. Do your best to leave work at work.

Stick to the facts
Information that you report, hear or watch will affect how you feel. Make sure that you stick to the facts and disengage yourself from speculation and exaggerations. It is an emotionally challenging time – inaccurate information can result in unnecessary distress.

Physical distancing
Observe a recommended distance when at work. This applies to meetings and other gatherings such as lunch breaks, non-work and MDT meetings. Meet remotely as much as possible.

Basics
Washing hands and covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing is essential. Remember your basics.

Communication
Lack of clarity and uncertainty are one of the major sources of stress in organisations, especially during the times of crisis or increased demands. Remember to communicate regularly and clearly with your team through handovers, supervision, line management, team briefs, email, posters and team meetings.


Share how you feel
We are all in this together. Unexpressed fears tend to grow, keeping the anxiety up. Share your feelings and thoughts – your colleagues are a valuable source of support.

With thanks to Dr Jorge Pinheiro, Psychologist

Wellbeing for life



Some basic mental health awareness.....

What do we mean by 'mental health'? 


We all have 'mental health'!

Mental health is about how we: **think** and **feel** about ourselves and others and **how we interpret events**.

Our **mental health influences** how we cope, our relationships with others and our self-esteem

Our **mental health and physical health** are linked together. Both fluctuate, both can be optimised or undermined

5

The Continuum of Mental Health 

Self-care and social support		Professional care	
HEALTHY Usual functioning	REACTING Common stress/distress	IMPACTED Significant impact on functioning	'ILL' Clinically recognised, severe impact on functioning
Normal mood swings. Sleep OK. Can take things in their stride. OK domestic, work, social performance. Ok level of confidence	Irritable, impatient. Forgetful, putting things off. Anxious, sad more than usual. Difficulty sleeping. Worrying. Reduced socialising.	Lingering sadness, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness. Frequent anxiety. Interferes with day-to-day functioning and performance. Significant sleep problems	Extremes of emotions and thinking difficulties. Significant impact on functioning. Affects body's functioning. Risk e.g. suicide

6

The impact of Covid-19 for Care Home staff, residents and their families e.g.



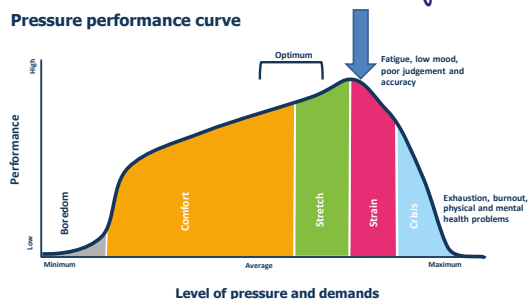
- Working very differently; how to work safely; loss of usual 'human' contact
- Access to resources to fully care for residents safely, reduced staffing levels
- Fear of becoming ill, implications for everyone
- Feeling abandoned and unappreciated
- Supporting residents, witnessing their pain and at times, deterioration
- Watching some residents give up on life and fade away
- Losing residents before their time, bereavement and grieving
- Supporting traumatised and grieving relatives
- Challenges in personal , home life

7

Pressure v Stress



Pressure performance curve



Anxiety in an age of Covid-19: work and home life



- Ongoing feeling of unease, worry or fear
- Feeling constantly on edge, unable to relax
- Needing frequent reassurance
- Worrying about a wide range of situations and issues
- Fearing the worst
- Ruminating over situations after they've happened
- Difficulty sleeping, eating, self-care
- 'Fight, Flight, Freeze' responses, feeling of panic
- Trauma, grief responses, strain of adjusting to what is happening

Possible Warning Signs in the workplace



- Changes in interaction with colleagues, residents, family, friends e.g. irritable, over-sensitive, quiet, tearful, withdrawn, isolating
- Reliability – punctuality, taking time off, covering too many shifts, not taking time for breaks
- Changes in the way they work, motivation levels and focus., not completing tasks, being forgetful, seeking reassurance?
- Struggling to make decisions, get organised and find solutions to problems
- Appearing/feeling tired or withdrawn and/or losing interest, on a short fuse, distracted, worrying
- Physical changes – weight fluctuation/aches & pains/appearance; complaining of feeling unwell, headaches, stomach problems, sleep problems etc.

Having a Conversation



The setting & approach



- Use informal contact to gauge how the person is doing
- Ask for a private 'how are you' catch up , reassure that they are 'not in trouble' just wanting to check-in with them.
- Plan it - consider when and where and also what feedback you want to give ie anything that has concerned you etc
- Consider your own state of mind, how stressed are you?
- Give yourself plenty of time - its important you don't appear to be in a hurry, 10 minutes may be enough but if you need longer then go ahead or arrange another meet up
- You don't want to be disturbed so turn your phone off or onto silent. Silence your email notifications.

Opening up a mental health and well-being conversation



- *I've noticed that...*
- *It sounds like...*
- *You seem as if...*
- *I'm wondering about...*
- *What might help?*

How to listen



- How to improve our listening skills 5 mins.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6-MleRr1e8>
- Trying to be empathetic, accepting, warm, respectful
- Give the person your full focus and listen without interrupting. Reflective listening
- Listen to their words, tone of voice and gauge body language e.g. eye movement, touching face, head in hands, tears etc



Helpful questions



- Keep the chat positive and supportive, exploring the issues and how you may be able to help
- Keep your pitch & tone of voice open and non-confrontational
- Be empathetic and take them seriously
- Do not offer glib advice such as, "cheer up" or "we are all in the same boat"

Useful questions to ask:

- "How are you feeling at the moment?"
- "How long have you felt like this – is it an ongoing issue?"
- "Who do you feel you can go to for support?"
- "Are there any work-related factors which are contributing to how you are feeling?"
- "Is there anything I/we can do to help?"

The Three 'A's of Supportive Conversations



Assess	Listen and be prepared to take the time to fully understand. Watch out for your own assumptions and pre-judgements, and don't jump in to 'fix' the problem.
Assist	If possible, help the person come to their own conclusion about what steps to take. If you are unsure it's okay to re-visit/ask a colleague for assistance.
Agree	What are the next steps? What will you do and by when? What is it reasonable and realistic to expect from the person you are supporting. Be honest and transparent about outcomes & further steps

Supporting a grieving staff member



- Remember, responses to loss are individual, there is no one-way of grieving, need to be flexible

Main tips:

1. Acknowledge the loss and what it means to them
2. Be empathetic; ask how they are feeling, don't try and fix it, OK to be feeling the loss
3. Do they need leave?
4. Signpost to support e.g. Cruise, out of hours support
5. Do they need work load or tasks adjusting temporarily
6. Wellness Plan, what do they need? what can they do? What can the workplace (reasonably) do?

Wellness Action Plans

www.mind.org.uk/wellnessactionplans



During a pandemic crisis maybe we could all benefit from our own Wellness Action Plan!

Key areas for WAPs focus on:

- What the person can do to look after their mental wellbeing (and/or physical wellbeing)
- Early signs they may be struggling
- Workplace triggers?
- What support from their manager or others
- Positive actions both can take to support wellbeing or to respond to difficulties

Local NHS Funded
psychological therapy services (IAPT)



- **Self-referral 'talking therapies' service for 16 yrs upwards** or via GP, no diagnosis needed **FREE**
- **Access to services** requires a telephone assessment with a therapist
- **Stress and Mood Management courses** building resilience and wellbeing. Mainly online course or can be group **NB not** a support or therapy group. Resilience courses related to Covid
- **'Reading Well' scheme** NHS recommended self-help books in all libraries, can be supported by regular telephone contact with therapist
- **1:1 'Talking' therapies:** face to face; telephone or online. Mainly Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), counselling also offered in line with NICE guidance. 6-8 sessions for mild to moderate difficulties (mainly online) or 12 and sometimes more for complex issues (always face to face).
- **Other courses: e.g.** Building Self Esteem; Mood Management etc.
- **Interventions for mild, moderate, severe:** anxiety problems; depression; PTSD; OCD; thoughts of suicide etc

Out of hours support local examples



- **Our Frontline** is for care workers offers **round-the-clock one-to-one support, by call or text**, plus **resources, tips and ideas to look after your mental health.** text **FRONTLINE to 85258** call **0300 131 7000**
- **The Samaritans** 24/7 support for anyone in emotional distress. Helpline, text & email support.
- **Shout** 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.
- **Self Injury Support** National out of hours support and resources for girls and women who self harm.
- **kooth.com** young person's online counselling and support service available each day of the year up to 10 pm www.kooth.com
- **ChildLine** Telephone, email, text support and advice for children and young people 24 hours / 7 days a week
- **Silver Line** 24hr helpline for older people who are isolated

Remember...



- Your personal, physical, mental and emotional health is far more important than anything else right now
- Be kind to yourself - try not to judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping
- Avoid trying to compensate for perceived lost productivity by working longer hours
- Your team's success will not be measured the same way it was before the virus
- You are NOT 'working from home', you are 'at home, trying to work remotely during a global crisis'
- Use your strengths - believe in yourself

Support/Resources



- **National Mind** <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- **FREE Coaching for Care staff during Covid** <https://coachingthroughcovid.org/>
- **Mental Health at Work** - <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/>
- **MHFA England** - <https://mhfaengland.org/>
- **GOV.UK Mental Health Support** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-advice-to-support-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- **Mental Health Foundation** - <https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>
- **Heads Together** - <https://www.headstogether.org.uk/coronavirus-and-your-mental-health/>
- **City Mental health Alliance UK** - <http://citymha.org.uk/>
- **Young Minds** - <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>
- **CMI** <https://www.managers.org.uk/insights/leading-through-uncertainty>
- **CIPD** <https://www.cipd.co.uk/membership/benefits/wellbeing-helpline-services>