



Liverpool University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

A large graphic on the left side of the page. It features a thick purple curved band that forms a partial circle. To the left of this band are two overlapping triangles: a red one on top and an orange one on the bottom. From the bottom vertex of the orange triangle, a thick green curved band extends downwards and to the right. The text 'Wellbeing Support' is centered within the white space of the purple band.

Wellbeing Support



27 January 2021

Dear Colleague,

I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do through the COVID-19 pandemic.

When we first started to prepare for this in March 2020, I expressed the view to all our colleagues that this was likely to be the greatest challenge that we would face in our careers. Everything we have experienced so far bears this out. Not for one moment do I underestimate the considerable impact that COVID-19 has had and is having on both your professional and personal lives with the challenges you face and the sacrifices you make. To see how you continue to pull together to provide such great care for our patients and their families and to support each other is truly inspiring.

Sadly, it is now clear that we are in the midst of a National third wave of COVID-19 and as such we are expecting to see the number of seriously unwell patients admitted with the disease to increase significantly over the next week, with numbers already exceeding the scale that we witnessed back in November 2020. This requires us to, once again, escalate our preparedness and again look to adopt some of the measures that we had to take during the last two waves. Therefore, I wanted to keep you updated on the actions we are taking to support you, and how you can help support our frontline work to care for COVID-19 patients as well as support each other through this challenging time.

Unfortunately 24-hour care for the expected patient surge cannot be met by our current ward and critical care staff and redeployment is required to meet the challenges to support overstretched areas. Decisions on redeployment of staff have not been taken lightly, but they are necessary to ensure that we are able to support colleagues working in those most pressured areas.

I know from previous waves that this is a daunting request and I do not underestimate the challenge that it poses to many of you. Over the last year I have seen first-hand the incredible care that you have been able to provide our patients and families, often in the most difficult circumstances imaginable. I have no doubt that you will continue to do everything you can to do the very best for the communities we serve.

Plans are rapidly being developed by the Senior Nursing Team to review how ward areas will be supported through this wave and how this will be overseen. This will include reviewing what tasks can be stopped during the period and what tasks (both clinical and administrative) can be picked up by other teams in the interim, releasing time for ward staff to provide more direct care to patients. This will include reviewing the latest guidance on support and buddies for critical care areas.

Operational teams are working hard with partner agencies to reduce bed occupancy as much as possible and medical teams are reviewing admission and discharge thresholds to support this. The Senior Nursing Teams will be looking at ways to support discharge processes over the coming days to support this.

Nurse Recruitment

We are also working hard to increase our staff numbers from a variety of sources and will do everything we can to ensure as much as possible that we have enough staff to meet the demand, including our ongoing international recruitment campaigns. This has also been supported by the NMC through the register for nurse returners and the extension of the temporary register for overseas nurses.

Swabbing Teams

A dedicated Covid Swabbing Team is being established to undertake regular patient swabs. Ward Support teams are also being identified who will support areas in a variety of non-clinical tasks including ward based administration, answering telephones and patient liaison. Both of these developments will hopefully help reduce some of the burden of additional tasks that you are currently facing.

Professional Standards

I want to strongly reiterate to you that professional indemnity is provided by the Trust to you all to support your professional registration and that you have my personal commitment that all staff will be supported in your professional practice when you are working in unfamiliar clinical areas and scenarios.

I would also want to draw your attention to a recent joint statement released through the NMC where the Chief Nursing Officers for the UK reiterated their commitment to ensuring that all staff feel supported and able to discuss and raise concerns, particularly when working outside of their normal roles or places or work. They also reminded all nursing and midwifery professionals that they must continue to adhere to the core principles of nursing and midwifery practice, always practising in line with the NMC code and using professional judgement, taking account of the realities of an abnormal emergency situation. It is important to remember that the NMC Code is here to support us and, even in the most difficult of circumstances, it is a valuable tool to help guide practice.

The vaccination programme continues at pace and our aim is still that all staff should be able to receive their first dose of the vaccine as soon as possible. I would like to take this opportunity to strongly emphasise that it is the professional duty of all clinical staff to ensure that they receive this vaccine. There appears to be some misunderstanding around when staff can be vaccinated if they have had COVID-19; the guidance is clear that it is safe to receive a COVID-19 vaccine 28 days after you have had a positive test or after the onset of symptoms. Lateral flow testing remains in place for all front line staff and I would like to remind all staff of the need to report back their test results at the required intervals. Both of these programs are a vital part of our efforts to protect both our staff and patients from the risks posed by nosocomial infections.

My absolute priorities as Chief Nurse are the safe care of our patients and the safety and wellbeing of you and all our colleagues, and this will underpin everything that we put in place in the coming days and weeks.

My primary ask of you is to always do your best to practice safely and to act in the best interests of patients and to **always escalate** any concerns that you may have so that we are able to respond and support you appropriately.

My senior nursing team will ensure that they are providing highly visible leadership across all wards across all sites for each day. We are keen to ensure that you feel supported at all times and have clear routes to escalate concerns and worries that you may have. Whilst I would always encourage you to try and resolve concerns with your Matrons and Divisional Nurses in the first instance, I want you to feel that you are safe to escalate unresolved concerns up to the Senior Nursing Team.

To that end, from week commencing the 18th January, a Nursing Control Centre has been re-established to retain oversight of key staffing issues and escalated concerns. This has clear procedures and Executive oversight to ensure a dynamic response to the operational demands that we will face.

There are two main ways to escalate concerns to the Nursing Control Centre:

You can call 07896 186 748 between the hours of 08:00 and 20:00 hrs.


You can email: Chief.Nurse@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

The Senior Nursing Team will aim to respond to any escalated concerns within 24 hours and I will have sight of all of issues raised.

In the current pressures we are all working under, it is important that you retain a focus on your own mental health, and I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you that Staff Wellbeing Hubs remain open on the Royal and Aintree Sites. These are staffed by a psychological first aider who can provide immediate comfort, as well as being able to support access to a wealth of additional services and resources that are available to you. Full details of the hubs can be accessed via the COVID-19 hub (<https://www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub/>) on the Trust intranet. The supply of free food and hydration to red ward areas will also be recommencing.

Finally I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to you for all your ongoing support, commitment, and professionalism and I remain extremely proud of and grateful to you all. Please look after yourselves and your families and above all keep safe.

Yours sincerely,



Dianne Brown
Chief Nurse
Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust





Wellbeing during COVID-19: A guide to looking after yourself and others

Introduction

This wellbeing pack contains some of the practical information about things you can do to look after your health and wellbeing, and how you can support others. It also gives you contact details on how to find further help, and links you to a wide range of resources available on the COVID-19 Hub.

Daily routines to support yourself and your colleagues

The best form of support for colleagues in difficult times is received from the people they are working alongside. As your colleagues can change on a regular basis, due to shift patterns and staff being redeployed from other areas, it is good practice to implement the following in your work area:

- ✓ Check in
- ✓ Buddy System
- ✓ Check out
- ✓ Rapid Induction

You will find full information on the above within this pack. These should be done on a voluntary basis, rather than people being forced to do them. They have all been proven to be extremely useful, and will be beneficial to you and your colleagues.

Where to find more help – Struggling to cope?

It's important to recognise that some people will feel so overwhelmed they need professional support. You are not alone. If you are really struggling to cope, or feel overwhelmed by difficult feelings, then reach out for help. It's available and it's OK to ask for more support to see you through this difficult time. **Please do not hesitate to seek additional support.**

- ✓ Share your feelings with your line manager, a colleague, a good friend or a relative.



If you feel you need urgent help or are at risk, please call:
NHS 111 • 999 for emergency services • Samaritans on 116 123

Accessing the Trust COVID-19 Hub

The COVID-19 Hub is available on the Trust intranet. This gives additional information for all staff about health and wellbeing support that has been put in place by the Trust, along with details of national and local help that is available to you.

The hub can be accessed either on your Trust Desktop, or you can add the hub to the home screen of your personal iOS or Android device – so that the information is easily accessed at any time.

Here are details on how to access the Trust COVID HUB:



The COVID Hub has been added to all desktops and can be accessed by clicking on the hub icon.

On your mobile device:



If you would prefer, you can also add the COVID Hub to the Home Screen on your personal iOS or Android device by following the below instructions.

If you have an iOS device (iPhone / iPad)

- 1 Use the QR code above to navigate to the COVID hub by scanning the image via your camera or by using a free QR code reader from Apps; or open your internet browser (Safari) and navigate to the following URL: <https://www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub>
- 2 When the page has loaded, click the Share icon (square box with upwards arrow at bottom of screen)
- 3 Next scroll down and select Add to Home Screen
- 4 Finally, click Add

If you have an Android device (Phone / Tablet)

- 1 Use the QR code above to navigate to the COVID hub by scanning the image via your camera or by using a free QR code reader from GooglePlay; or open your internet browser and navigate to the following URL: <https://www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub>
- 2 When the page has loaded, click the menu icon (horizontal lines sometimes in bottom corner)
- 3 Click + Add page to
- 4 Select Home screen



FACE COVID

The 'FACE COVID' acronym sets out some practical steps that you can use to respond effectively to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This includes exercises that help you to focus on what you can control, and anchor you in the here and now to help weather the storm. It also suggests ways to help you manage your thoughts and feelings, as well as engage with others.

Practicing all of the steps regularly, particularly the FACE stages (takes 2 – 3 minutes), will help you to cope and respond effectively.

Fear and anxiety are perfectly natural responses to the challenges and uncertainty we are facing at this time. What is not useful or helpful is to get lost in worry, for example, about what might happen in the future or how the virus may affect you or your loved ones.

For more details watch this video by Dr. Russ Harris:

▶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM

F**Focus on what's in your control**

We can't magically control our feelings but we can control what we do. It's good to start with control of our behaviour, right here and now – use the ACE formula that follows and repeat 2-3 times.

**A****Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings**

Silently, and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you – thoughts, feelings emotions, memories, sensations - be curious, observe like a scientist and don't judge.

**C****Come back into your body**

Come back into and connect with your physical body. You can do this in a number of ways e.g.

- Slowly push your feet hard into the floor
- Slowly straighten your spine to stand up straight or sit up straight and lean forward in your chair
- Slowly press your fingertips together
- Slowly stretch your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders
- Slowly breathing

**E****Engage in what you're doing**

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. What can you see, hear, smell or taste, what are you doing right now?

**C****Committed Action**

Using FACE gets you ready to act – do all the fundamental things we need to protect ourselves and others such as hand washing. Act in ways to support yourself and others, connect and stay well. What can you do right now, however small?

**O****Opening up**

Open up to difficult feelings, make room for them, acknowledge they are normal in this current crisis, and be kind to yourself as this is essential to support you to cope well. Think about how you would treat a loved one and do that for yourself.

**V****Values**

Connect to your core values and live them, these are important to you and will drive your actions. These might include love, respect, humour, patience, courage, honesty, caring, openness, kindness.

**I****Identify Resources**

Identify resources for your support, for information (reliable and trustworthy), help and advice. This could be friends, family, colleagues, community, health professionals. Find ways to keep in touch and use these for your own action plan. There are some resources to help you available on the Trust's online COVID hub at: www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub/supporting-our-staff/health-and-wellbeing/

**D****Disinfect and distance physically**

Regular practice of disinfecting hands and social distancing as much as possible.



Wellbeing Hub

Your wellbeing hubs are available as a quiet space to recover and find out about support on offer

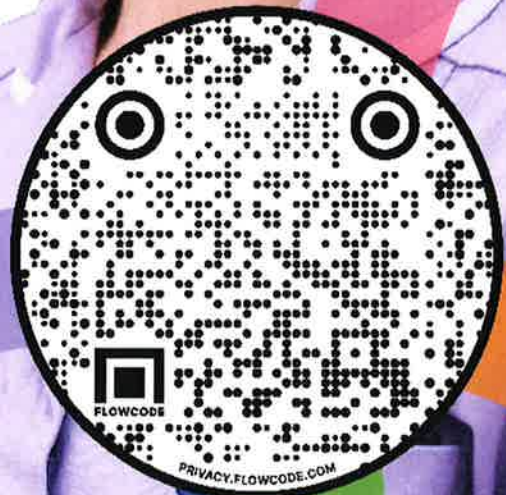
- **Aintree:** Old DVT clinic (opposite AMU) - ground floor
- **Royal:** Old Bank, Mezzanine - 1st floor
- **Broadgreen:** In development

Staff helpers will also be on hand Monday to Friday as a drop-in service providing a compassionate, supportive and confidential listening ear.

For details on times, please scan the QR code below to access the staff COVID-19 Hub.

Helpers are trained in psychological first aid and can provide immediate comfort. They can also signpost you to a wealth of additional services and resources that are currently available for all colleagues.


When accessing the hubs, please remember to observe social distancing guidelines.



Wellbeing Support

Available for all staff as and when you need it

Liverpool University Hospitals' Support


 **Wellbeing Hubs**
Hubs are staffed by a psychological first aider most days, for information on times please visit the health and wellbeing section of the COVID-19 hub by scanning the QR code below.

 **Staff Support Service**
24/7 Confidential Staff Support and access to counselling 0151 330 8103.

 **Psychological Support**
Staff have quick access to a trained psychologist. Details of this service can be found on the COVID-19 Staff Hub.

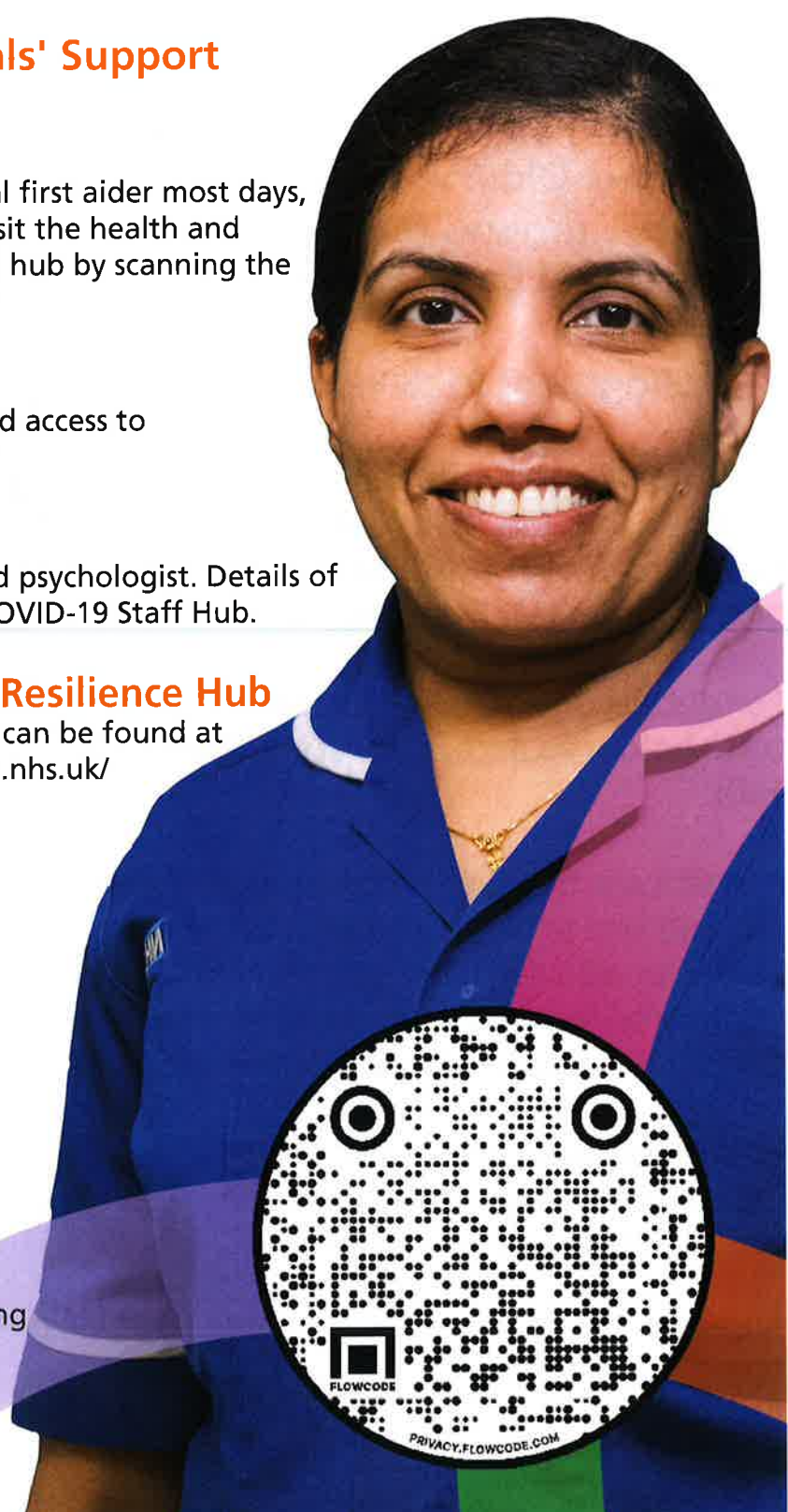
 **Cheshire and Merseyside Resilience Hub**
Helpful resources from the region can be found at www.cheshiremerseyresiliencehub.nhs.uk/

National Support

 **Call 0300 131 7000**
7am-11pm seven days a week emotional support and onward signposting to specialist financial advice, bereavement care and coaching.

 **people.nhs.uk**
Helping you manage your own health and wellbeing whilst looking after others

 **24/7 text support**
Text 'frontline' to 85258





Check in/check out framework

Use this within your team as 'opt in' to regular, short gatherings for wellbeing.

Use our daily check-in as a reminder to:

- Maintain and boost health in body, mind and spirit in expert teams, in a time of exceptionally sustained work and uncertainty
- Practical daily team check-in for protecting our wellbeing
- The check list can also be used for self check-in and buddy check-in

Daily team wellbeing check-in

1

CHECK IN

Do this with your colleagues during handover or at the start of a new task

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING – LOOKING FORWARD (GLOWS)

- ✓ Goals – what are they? (team and individual)
- ✓ Learning outcomes from previous episode e.g. pre-packing PPE
- ✓ Worries and concerns
- ✓ Specific support e.g. PPE mask supply, drinking water availability, time out chat with buddy

2

CHECK OUT

Do this with your colleagues at the end of handover or once the task has been completed

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING – LOOKING BACK (SLICK)

- ✓ Successes e.g. can you share any best practice?
- ✓ Learning e.g. learnt COVID ALS, pass this on
- ✓ I (self) – did I eat a meal, have enough rest?
- ✓ Concerns – what/who can solve it e.g. is there enough PPE
- ✓ Kindness – Say thank you!

3

TUNE OUT

Time to switch off and recharge

TRY AND ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING (WARM)

- ✓ Wind down – e.g. go for a walk, listen to music
- ✓ Aims for home – e.g. read with your child
- ✓ Rest and relaxation
- ✓ Mechanisms for coping – e.g. chat with partner or family



COVID Redeployment – Buddy System

A basic buddy system is about staff supporting each other, strengthening relationships and learning from each other. It involves teaming people up to help make them more efficient.

The term was originally used in hazardous situations to increase safety, but has now extended to many workplaces to help with settling in new starters more informally, quickly and effectively.

Why have a Buddy System?

- ✔ It provides a chance for new starters to get on board with local ways of working much faster.
- ✔ Buddies can act as a trusted point of contact to be supportive, and allow for new starters to have their questions answered, even if they seem 'silly'.

The Benefits of Buddying

- ✔ Welcomes new employees: Partnering new starters with someone who has a wealth of experience can help them feel more at ease, helping them learn the systems and processes more quickly.
- ✔ Boosts confidence: A buddy system provides a supportive network where new staff members can informally discuss their experiences and get constructive feedback.
- ✔ Increases productivity: A buddy relationship works well when its interactions are friendly. This will encourage better communication and collaboration, essential when people are in unfamiliar situations.
- ✔ Offers informal learning: It allows new starters to develop their skills through social interaction and informal learning.

Implementing a Buddy System

- ✔ Pick employees who know how things work in your area, and who won't teach new starters bad habits!
- ✔ Make sure buddies will be accessible, so that new starters can quickly and easily ask questions.
- ✔ A core skill for any buddy is the ability to teach new staff; to be able to explain procedures patiently and do so in a way that is easy for them to learn. This approach will allow a new starter to ask questions without feeling like they are being silly or lacking in skills.
- ✔ Managers should check in with existing staff so they do not become resentful of having to be a 'buddy', to be overloaded with work or to feel like any new staff member's performance will reflect on them. Managers should be available for new starters to speak with if their relationship with their buddy is problematic in any way.



If you are redeployed and you feel under pressure or ill at work, please speak to your buddy or the person in charge



Rapid Team Building – Helping new teams perform under pressure

Establish team membership

Who is in the team?

- ✓ Who is the team leader?
- ✓ Greet and welcome new team members – is anyone missing?
- ✓ Each person to introduce themselves and confirm their name and role in the team – include brief background experience
- ✓ Identify strengths and development areas of each team member
- ✓ Clarify contact details of team members – how will you keep in touch?

Clarify the team operating principles

- ✓ These are important for building psychological safety
- ✓ Team leader to discuss with the team the importance of awareness of your own emotional needs as these can impact the team. Important for team to articulate how they are feeling if able, and check in/out
- ✓ Agree how the team will behave and communicate – how to be with each other, such as showing compassion and care to each other, plus what we won't do
- ✓ Remain curious, ask questions, reflect observations, acknowledge own errors, listen well

Know your team purpose

- ✓ As a team agree what the aim is for today
- ✓ Acknowledge that we are facing challenges and commit to listening to each other
- ✓ Agree how frequently we need to check in to reprioritise objectives
- ✓ Agree what quality and safety looks like with what we are working with
- ✓ Being clear on who is doing what and by when
- ✓ Identifying what support the team members need

Benefits of team-based working Aston University

(NHS-based research, 2006)

- ✓ Increased effectiveness and well-being of team members
- ✓ Higher quality patient care amongst MDTs
- ✓ Reduced error rates and increased innovation
- ✓ Reduced turnover and sickness absence
- ✓ Lower patient mortality/reduced hospitalisation and costs

Teaming* – Teamwork 'on the fly'

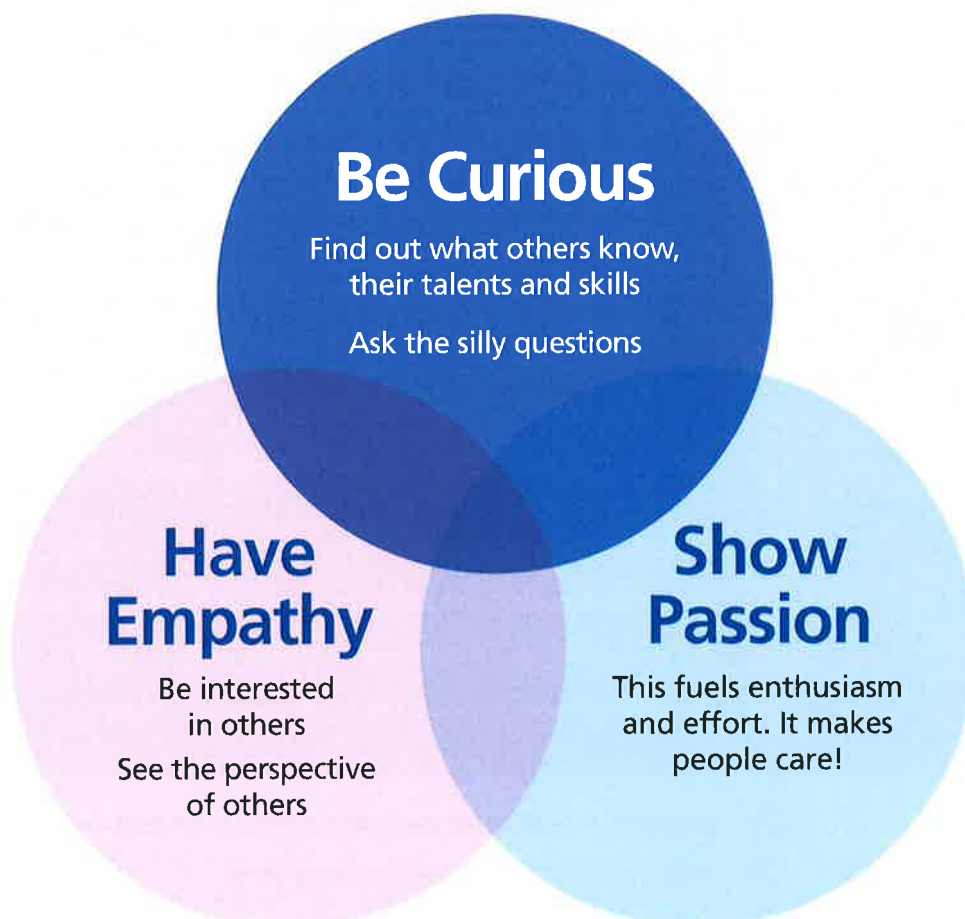
Not all team work can be done in stable teams. Teaming is when we coordinate and communicate with staff of all kinds and across many boundaries to get the work done.

To do 'teaming' well, team leaders need to promote these three behaviours in their team and support others to develop them. This often takes a conscious effort to do, as any usual defensive routines need to change.

Team leaders need to:

- ✓ Ask questions and listen well
- ✓ Be respectful to all staff
- ✓ Encourage reflection

This approach helps encourage psychological safety, where we all feel able to speak more freely and openly.



*After Amy Edmundson, Harvard University for the evidence base on 'Teaming'



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Freedom to Speak Up Service

We have entered another very challenging period, during which it is all the more important to work together to ensure that our concerns are resolved quickly for the safety of our staff and patients. Nothing is too big or too small to talk about. If it's not out in the open, it can't improve.

Please make use of any resource available to you to:

- ✓ Speak up about a patient or staff safety concern, or to make a suggestion as to a solution to a problem
- ✓ Regularly ask your staff and teams for feedback about what is going well, what problems they are experiencing and what could be done differently to make simple improvements
- ✓ Ensure you have ways to feedback to staff about any actions taken to resolve concerns or issues

As ever, in the first instance, your line manager, or the person responsible for the area will be the most appropriate person to speak up to. There are many other resources to use. To name a few:

- ✓ Datix
- ✓ Safety Huddles
- ✓ Patient Safety Officers
- ✓ Guardian of Safe Working Hours
- ✓ Health and Safety Teams
- ✓ Senior Leaders
- ✓ Team Meetings

Further information can be found in the intranet or COVID Hub

We know that it is through listening to you that we can make sure that our care of staff and patients is safe.

If you are unsure about how to speak up and who to, need support to speak up in a safe way, have spoken up but are worried that nothing has happened, or are struggling to find the space to ask about or listen to staff concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Freedom to Speak Up Team for confidential advice and support:

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP GUARDIAN:

Lorraine Heaton: lorraine.heaton@liverpoolft.nhs.uk • 07794071021

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP CHAMPIONS:

Alice Wood: alice.wood@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Anita Nasser: anita.nasser@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Debbie McGowan: debbie.mcgowan@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Jo Marinas: jo.marinas@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Maggie Johnstone: margaret.johnstone@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Phil Alton: philalton@doctors.org.uk





Selfcare is often summarised as:

A

Awareness of your own responses and how this might be varying from your usual

Most responses to stress are normal human reactions to abnormal events, but the below image is useful to indicate when you might benefit from additional support

B

Balance

This is trying to get some time away from high pressure roles and time completely away from your role. In that time, being able to engage in your usual routines for managing stress

i.e. going for a walk/run, spending time outdoors or engaged in other activities.

C

Connection

Evidence suggests that social connectedness is our best buffer against stress. The current situation means we need to think creatively about how to maintain social connectedness, but take opportunities to connect with colleagues, your social networks and your organisational supports.

It's really important to check in with yourself and check if **Am I Okay?**

1

Do you regularly feel **Disconnected** from the relationship of caring for the patient, family and colleagues?



2

Do you regularly feel **Emotionally Exhausted** like you have nothing left to give?



3

Do you regularly feel **A lack of feeling of accomplishment** or **feeling ineffective** in what you do?



IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ALL THREE, CONSIDER TALKING TO YOUR LINE MANAGER OR SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT THE IMPACT OF YOUR WORK.



Liverpool University Hospitals
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My Self Care Plan

Taking care of ourselves is more important than ever at this time, for all of us. Making a self care plan that is unique to you will help give you the tools you need in times of crisis. Even if you don't feel like you need it now, making a plan when you feel well will help you know how to respond when things get tough.

Carry your plan with you, perhaps in the notes section of your phone.

Writing down these notes to yourself is a powerful motivator and will help you take care of yourself.

For further guidance and resources to help you complete your plan, visit the Health and Wellbeing pages of the COVID Hub:

<https://www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub/supporting-our-staff/health-and-wellbeing>

How can I get through this right now?

There are some simple physical strategies that can help us to get through the most difficult moments more calmly. What is helpful to you? You may want to consider breathing exercises, meditation, or using wellbeing apps to help.

How can I look after my body?

Consider how you can treat your body kindly. How can you ensure a healthy diet? How can you improve your sleep? Can you find ways to keep active? What activities are accessible to you? What activities help you feel better?



Tips for winding down

In challenging times it's normal to find it hard to switch off, or to start mentally thinking about work sooner than necessary.

This is largely because stressful, highly demanding and unpredictable circumstances instil in us a sense of threat. This brings with it a high level of physiological arousal, which does not simply switch off when we leave the work environment. Winding down is not like switching off the lights, but more like moving down through the gears of a car. It takes time and intermediate steps.

The following ideas might help:



- 1 Find something completely different to focus on before or after work – a good book or movie, a relaxed phone or video call with someone who makes you smile, creating something or going for a walk



- 2 Focus on the physical experience of where you are, rather than on thoughts of past or possible future events at work. For example, feeling the water of your shower on your skin, rather than letting your mind race to the day ahead



- 3 Reduce physiological arousal with mindfulness, slow breathing or gentle yoga. Try <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/media/Breathing-Space/Rebecca-Crane-3-Minute-Breathing-Space.mp3> for a short mindfulness practice



- 4 Build a sense of safety and security; try hugging family members or pets, or by curling up somewhere cosy, with a soothing hot drink and no reminders of work around



- 5 Take two minutes at the end of your shift to acknowledge (mentally or on paper), something that went well today and something that's still playing on your mind. If you can do this with a colleague – even better



- 6 Make the transition at the end of your shift as conscious and deliberate as possible. For example, you might make a point of noting to yourself I'm taking off my uniform now... I'm bagging it up... I'm leaving the unit... I'm leaving the hospital... I'm going home



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Five Ways to Wellbeing



Connect

Talk and listen, be there, feel connected

Evidence shows that connecting with people promotes wellbeing. Connect with the people around you or remotely using phones, WhatsApp, Zoom, Facetime or Skype to speak to someone.



Keep Learning

Embrace new experiences, see opportunities, surprise yourself

Learning improves our self-esteem. Try something new, this could be different ways of connecting or listen to a podcast.



Give

Talk and listen, be there, feel connected

Acts of giving provide us with a sense of purpose and self-worth. Do something nice for a colleagues, use Thank You Thursdays or make someone a cup of tea.



Be active

Do what you can, enjoy what you do, move your mood

Being active improves our mood and overall mental wellbeing and decreases stress, depression and anxiety. Use your daily exercise to go for a walk or a run. Get outside and enjoy the fresh air.



Take notice

Remember the simple things that give you joy

Paying attention to the present moment can boost our wellbeing. Remark on the usual. Notice the changing seasons. Hear birdsong. Plan to look up at the night sky.



Fatigue

It is important to remember the impact fatigue can have on you and your wellbeing. This is particularly true if you are undertaking new working patterns.

Here are some top tips for combating fatigue:



Relax

- ✔ Use techniques to help you unwind daily. These free apps might help when trying to reduce the impact of stress: <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/stress-anxiety-companion> and <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/catch-it>
- ✔ Check in with news/social media on a limited basis, avoid it before bed or if you should wake during a rest period; this avoids information overload.



Sleep

- ✔ Relaxation and mindfulness strategies can help you to get back to sleep, especially if you have made them part of a routine before going to bed
- ✔ A free app to help with developing a good core sleep routine can be found at: <https://www.sleepio.com>
- ✔ For more tips on sleep visit the Health and Wellbeing resources section of the COVID hub at: <https://www.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/covid-19-hub/supporting-our-staff/health-and-wellbeing/>



Hydration

- ✓ Drink more water
- ✓ Drink less alcohol, especially before bed time. Whilst it might help you get to sleep, alcohol negatively impacts your sleep quality.
- ✓ Gradually cut out caffeine; too much caffeine can worsen feelings of tiredness. The best way to do this is over a three week period.



Rest

- ✓ Dealing with the impact of a pandemic is like running a marathon not a sprint. It is essential to pace yourself.
- ✓ Regular days away from work are essential to keep you mentally and physically healthy, and to ensure you continue to contribute to the best of your ability – whatever your role.
- ✓ Within shifts, regular breaks are important to keep you functioning at your best, allowing you to 'recharge'.



Nutrition

- ✓ Keep your energy up by eating regular meals and healthy snacks every 3 to 4 hours, rather than large meals infrequently. Eat easily digestible foods e.g. pasta, rice, bread, salad, fruit, vegetables, milk products. Fatty or spicy meals are more difficult to digest, and may also disturb your sleep. Sugary foods, e.g. chocolate, may provide a short-term energy boost, but this will be followed by a dip in energy levels.
- ✓ A free app listing some top tips for healthy meals can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/apps/>



Other tips

- ✓ When coming off a night shift, have a short nap and go to bed earlier the next night.
- ✓ Plan to do more stimulating work at the times when you may feel drowsy, and keep in regular contact with co-workers. Get up and walk around during breaks.
- ✓ Talking therapies such as Counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) may help fight fatigue caused by stress, anxiety or low mood. Some helpful apps for this can be found at: <https://www.wysa.io> and <https://home.unmind.com>



Soothing breathing exercise

This exercise will introduce a practice called soothing rhythm breathing. It involves slowing down our bodies and minds by working with the breath and can help you feel calmer.

Specifically, slowing down the breath, and focusing our minds on the sensations of slowing.

1

- ✔ Sit in an upright posture, with both feet flat on the floor and perhaps folding the hands in the lap. The head is held in an upright, dignified but relaxed posture.
- ✔ As you gain experience with the practice, you'll be able to use it in all sorts of situations and body postures, but we'll start like this, with a nice, comfortable, upright posture.
- ✔ If you like, allow your eyes to close and bring your attention to the sensation of your breath entering and leaving your body. Just notice this sensation of breathing.

2

- ✔ Now you're going to slow down the breath.
- ✔ Allow your rate of breathing to slow, taking four to five seconds on the in-breath, pausing for a moment, and then taking four to five seconds on the out-breath.
- ✔ Breathing in deeply ---1---2---3---4.
- ✔ (Pause for a moment).
- ✔ Then slowly breathing out ---1---2---3---4.

3

- ✔ Take a couple of minutes to breathe in this way.
- ✔ As you do, focus your attention on the sense of slowing – slowing down the body, slowing down the mind.
- ✔ If this rate of breathing is too slow, see if you can find a rate that is comfortable and soothing for you. The idea is to breathe in a way that is slowing and soothing.
- ✔ Aim for 2 minutes, you can start with 30 seconds and increase as you feel comfortable.

4

- ✔ When you're ready, allow your breath to return to its normal rate, and gently allow your eyes to open.



How to get to sleep

During times of prolonged worry it's very normal for people to experience sleep disruption.

These suggestions might help you to get a better night's sleep.



1 A good night's sleep starts in the day

There is a lot you can do during the day to help your sleep - making your bed in the morning, doing physical exercise, and getting some sunlight can all help. Daytime naps should be limited to 30 minutes maximum. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and rich foods in the evenings.



2 Protect your sleep space

Try to make your sleep space as calm and uncluttered as you can. It also helps if your bedroom is dark and cool. Your bed should be used for sleep only, keep other activities such as working from home out of the bedroom wherever possible.



3 Switch it off

Looking at mobile phones and other electronic devices at night disrupts sleep, particularly during times of high anxiety and increased news. Try to stay off your phone for at least one hour before bed, and use functions such as 'do not disturb' to minimise night time disruption.



4 Write down the worries

If you're finding that particular worries are keeping you up at night, it can be helpful to set aside 'worry time' to deal with your anxieties. Write down your worries in a notebook by the bed and agree that you'll make time to think about them in the morning instead - things tend to feel a lot less scary in daylight.



5 Relax your mind

Holding on to frustration and tension will not help you sleep. Try practicing deep breathing and mindfulness exercises to help your mind switch off ('Body scan' and 'Leaves on a stream' are great exercises to start with and are widely available online).



6 Practice kindness

During times like these, we all need some extra love and support. Focusing on feelings of love and compassion can help to trigger your body's relaxation processes, so be kind to your mind, and send love to those around you.



7 Get into a bedtime routine

Try to establish a regular bedtime and a nightly relaxation routine. This could include having a warm bath or shower, doing some gentle stretches, reading a soothing book, or practicing a relaxation or mindfulness exercise. Try to avoid upsetting conversations or news during your relaxation period.



Using imagery to boost resilience

This is an excellent method to help achieve a relaxed state of body and mind. Fix your mind's eye on one of your favourite relaxing places, this can be real or imaginary.

- 1** Find a quiet place where you are unlikely to be disturbed. If possible, reduce the level of lighting.
- 2** Find a comfortable position and lie down or sit quietly.
- 3** Close your eyes and picture one of your favourite relaxing places. For example, relaxing on a beach or in the countryside, in a park, or taking a bath etc.
- 4** Focus on the colours in your relaxing place.
- 5** Focus on one colour in particular.
- 6** Focus on the sounds or silence in your relaxing place.
- 7** Imagine touching something in your relaxing place, the sand, the grass, water etc.
- 8** Focus on any aromas or smells in your relaxing place.
- 9** In your own time, open your eyes.





Useful Apps

The following apps are available for most smartphones and can be helpful in maintaining your health and wellbeing.



Wysa is a smartphone app that offers an artificially intelligent smartbot to anonymously chat with and coach you to better cope with daily stresses. It is designed to help with a variety of behavioural health issues.



Unmind is a mental health app which offers tools and training for use in the workplace. The digital platform includes bite-sized exercises for everyday wellbeing, personalised assessments and customised programmes for improving areas such as stress, focus and sleep.



Self Help for Anxiety Management might be perfect for you if you're interested in self-help, but meditation isn't your thing. Users are prompted to build their own 24-hour anxiety toolkit that allows you to track anxious thoughts and behaviour over time, and learn 25 different self-help techniques. You can also use SAM's "Social Cloud" feature to confidentially connect with other users in an online community for additional support.



Happify. Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain as if it were a muscle, to overcome negative thoughts.



The Headspace app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day. You gain access to hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to sleep and focus. The app also has a handy "get some headspace" reminder to encourage you to keep practicing each day.



Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music. This app is truly universal; whether you've never tried meditation before or regularly practice, you'll find the perfect program for you.



Chill Panda Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing with Chill Panda. The app measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind. Tasks include simple breathing techniques and light exercises to take your mind off your worries.



Couch to 5k Get off the couch and running 5K in just 9 weeks. Grab your trainers and follow the step-by-step audio instructions.



Easy Meals More than 150 delicious, easy, healthier recipes just a tap away. Search by mealtime and save shopping lists for later.



Calm Harm An app designed to help people resist or manage the urge to self-harm. It's private and password protected.



Catch it (CBT) Learn to look at problems differently, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental wellbeing.



Stress and Anxiety breathing exercises, relaxing music and games made to help calm the mind, and handle stress and anxiety on the go.



Sleepio is a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based programme which can be accessed via smartphone or web. It works by helping people to resolve their persistent sleep problems by discovering their ideal personal sleep pattern.



Daylight is a CBT based programme and its focus is to assist people back to good mental health. Its main line of focus is on combating worry and anxiety.