



# You Matter

Festive edition 2020

A practical guide to looking  
after your wellbeing and  
others through Covid-19

Reflect, recharge, feel better



**You matter**

Wellbeing and emotional support for staff

# Contents:

.....Page

## Looking after yourself

- a message of hope from Medical Director Alyson O'Donnell .....3

## Getting help

for emotional and mental health.....4

## Manage your stress bucket.....5

## Looking after your wellbeing

- breathing exercises to help you calm and relax.....6 and 7

## Mindful scribbling and colouring in

- try this to help you relax .....8 and 9

## Distraction techniques .....10

## Play this: global food crossword .....11

**Support your colleagues:**  
tips and ideas.....12

**How being civil to one another saves lives**.....13

**Random acts of kindness**.....13



## Other forms of support

- voicing your concerns when you're not being listened to, spiritual care and support for those working from home .....14

**Leading teams through Covid**.....15

**Jar of hope** .....15

## Closing comments:

get involved in our advent calendar and tell us what you think .....15



# Looking after yourself - message of hope and support

Dear all

Covid-19 is impacting so many of us across the world right now, so if you're feeling overwhelmed or frustrated, please know - you are not alone.

It's so important during this time to take care of your mind as well as your body. Everyone will be reacting in their own way. You might be stressed, lonely, concerned about your finances, your health or safety of your family. You may also be feeling down, worried or anxious.

It is okay to feel like this. These are normal reactions to uncertainty and to challenging events both at home and at work.

Covid has impacted on many of the normal coping strategies we use to deal with stress, such as taking holidays, going to the gym or seeing our friends.

On top of this, the festive period can also be a difficult time for some with the loss of loved ones and also financial difficulties. Many of us are also working when others are celebrating.

During this time, we may need to be more imaginative and thoughtful about how we look after ourselves. This booklet contains practical information about things you can do now to look after your emotional health and wellbeing, and how you can support others.

I want you to know it's okay to ask for help. Sometimes it's simply about voicing your feelings to your peers or team, but further support is there, so please ask for it and point it out to your colleagues and friends. We are all in this together.

I also want you to know that myself and the rest of the senior leadership team, really do recognise the impact that this year has had on you. Thank you to each and every one of you for showing huge resilience and courage in such challenging times. We really do value you - you all matter.

Please hold on to hope. Keep the big picture in mind. The crisis will end, and we will get through this.

**Alyson O'Donnell,**  
Medical Director, UHD



# Getting help when you're feeling overwhelmed

Asking for help is a **positive and sometimes brave step** towards receiving what we need and is vital for maintaining good emotional and mental health or recovering from a period of mental ill-health.

**Emotional support and mental health support**, including access to individual counselling, is available at all our hospitals for all our staff.

To access this service simply complete a self-referral form or a management-referral form found here <https://intranet.rbch.nhs.uk/index.php/occupational-health/forms>.

This confidential service can be reached by emailing **occupation-al.health@uhd.nhs.uk**.

Advisors are available for support Monday-Friday between 9am-4.30pm.

## You can also speak to:

**The Samaritans** have reintroduced a support line for NHS staff, available 7 days a week on **0800 069 62227** or text **FRONTLINE** to **82528**.

**Able Futures** delivers mental health support. Apply online or by calling **0800 321 3137** to get advice and guidance from a mental health specialist. [www.able-futures.co.uk](http://www.able-futures.co.uk)

## Additional national support

**NHS national support:** Text **FRONTLINE** to **82528**.

**Filipino helpline:** available seven days a week between 7am and 11pm on **0300 303 1115** or 24 hours via text by texting Front-line to **82528**.

**CareFirst** - Our employee assistance programme has trained counsellors available to offer support for a range of issues including psychological support. Call **0800174319** or go to [www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk](http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk) and use the username 'RBCH' or username 'Poole' with the password wellbeing. Open 24/7.

# Manage your stress bucket: find your energy source

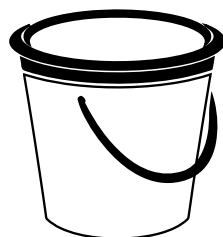
Stress is a part of everyday life. It can help us take action and work productively. But if our stress bucket becomes full it can also overwhelm us and impact negatively on our mental energy and our overall wellbeing. Everyday stressors including work, money and family flow into that stress bucket. But we also have ways of coping or ways of rejuvenating ourselves that allow this stress to flow out, like holes in the bucket. But right now;

- Our stress bucket might be getting fuller - it's raining more due to Covid-19.
- Some of our normal ways of coping, recharging or rejuvenating (the holes in our stress bucket) might be unavailable due to the current situation.
- We might need to re-think how we cope with stress and the next few pages give you some ideas of how you can look after your wellbeing during Covid-19.



**Take a moment to reflect - draw your own stress bucket. What are some of the rain clouds, but also what are the holes? Are there any new ways you can recharge to help the stress to flow out?**

- 1 What activity, object, person or place gives you energy or makes you feel recharged, relaxed or rejuvenated? Make a note of it.
- 2 What are you currently doing to recharge or rejuvenate?
- 3 What else could you do? How can you fit this into your daily routine?
- 4 What are your energy traps? Take a moment to reflect when you notice your energy draining; it could be watching the news, being involved in certain conversations, eating certain foods.
- 5 What could you do to limit these energy traps?



# Looking after your wellbeing: breathing exercises for relaxation

**Diaphragmatic Breathing**, or deep breathing, is breathing that is done by contracting the diaphragm, a muscle located horizontally between the tho-racic cavity and abdominal cavity. Air enters the lungs and the chest rises and the belly expands during this type of breathing.

## Diaphragmatic Breathing How to do it:



1

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach

2

Breathe in and allow your stomach to swell. The tummy-hand should feel a pronounced rise and fall whereas the chest hand should move very little, if at all. Imagine you have four lungs: two in your chest and two in your stomach area. Imagine the 'lungs' in your stomach are fill-ing with air

3

Slowly breathe out. Imagine the 'lungs' in your stomach are deflating

4

Repeat this to a regular rhythm.

# Calm down with take 5 breathing

This is a sensory-tactile way to soothe yourself quickly, helping to override all those unhelpful thought cycles that are making you anxious.

- Stretch your hand out like a star and turn your palm to your face.
- Trace the edges of one hand with your opposite hand's pointer finger.
- **Breathe in for 4 seconds** as you trace up toward the tip of your finger, pause at the top for a few breaths
- Trace down your finger as you **breathe out for 6 seconds** and pause again at the bottom.
- Breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth
- Repeat until you have traced all your fingers on one hand.



# Mindful scribbling:

## Draw your hands

Sound silly? When you're in feeling stressed or anxious, drawing for just 15 minutes may help lift your spirits. So if you've had a bad day, pick up a pencil and draw something that makes you happy or try to sketch what you're thinking. You don't have to be creative and it doesn't need to be anything unusual it could literally be something right in front of you - like your hands or your feet.



# Mindful colouring: a way to unwind

Working with your hands is one of the best ways to soothe anxiety and eliminate stress. This sheet offers a practical exercise in mindfulness that draws on your creativity and hones your focus. Take a few minutes out of your day, wherever you are, and colour your way to peace and calm.



# Distraction

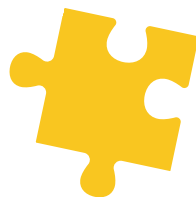
Thinking about unpleasant things will tend to make them worse. This can cause a 'fear of fear' cycle by provoking further symptoms as well as pre-venting existing ones from disappearing.

It is difficult to turn your attention away from unpleasant feelings. To do so, two things are necessary.

- 1** Be determined not to think about or dwell on symptoms
- 2** Fill your mind with other things: Distract yourself

## Distraction Techniques

**Mental games:** Puzzles, crosswords, word games, reciting poems, singing along to a song and counting backwards are all useful distraction exercises. The important thing is that it takes your attention away from worrying thoughts.



**Environmental focus:** Concentrating on a specific detail of the world around you, e.g. making words out of car number plates or watching the birds outside of your window. Focussing on the outside world can prevent thinking about what is going on inside you.

### Using a bridging object:

This could be a photo or souvenir from a happy time. Looking at the object can generate positive anxiety-reducing thoughts.

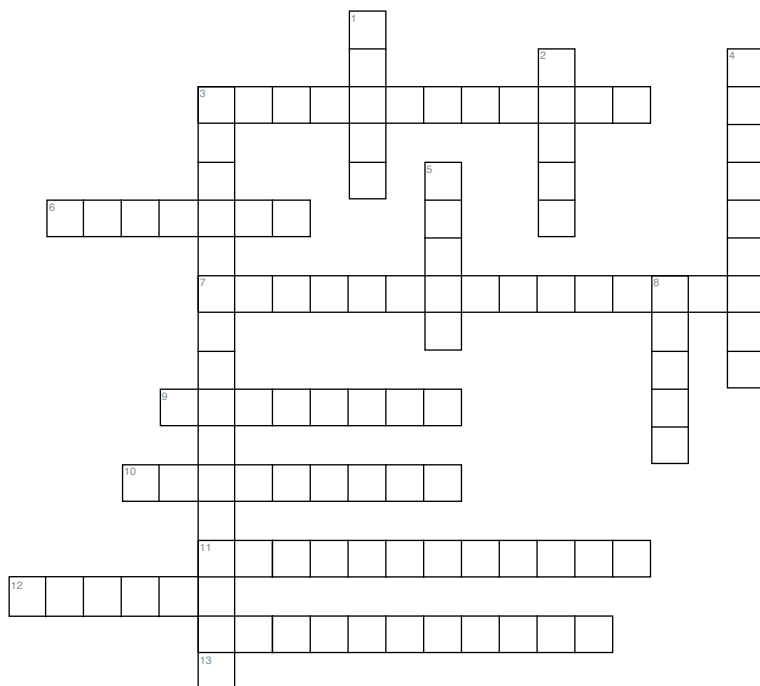


Distraction can be useful when you want to switch off from worrying thoughts as well as when you are out in an anxiety provoking situation.

# Play this: Crossword

## Food from around the world:

Answer the clues to complete the crossword.



### Across

- 3** Chinese rice, fried.
- 6** Like spaghetti, but from China.
- 7** Potato omelette from Spain.
- 9** Tea with cake and cream.
- 10** Italian noodles.
- 11** England's most famous meal.
- 12** Seafood and rice from Spain.
- 13** Crispy rolls with vegetables and and meat inside.

### Down

- 1** Spicy food from India (gali in China).
- 2** Round bread cooked in the oven with tomato and cheese.
- 3** A breakfast with sausages, bacon and eggs.
- 4** A flat bread to eat with curry.
- 5** Raw fish and rice.
- 8** Crispy, folded and filled with tasty food from Mexico.

Across: 3 EGG FRIED RICE 6 NOODLES 7 SPANISH OMELETTE 9 CREAM TEA 10 SPAGHETTI 11 FISH AND CHIPS 12 PAELLA 13 SPRING ROLLS Down: 1 CURRY 2 PIZZA 3 ENGLISH BREAKFAST 4 NAAN BREAD 5 SUSHI 8 TACOS

# Support your colleagues

**In the absence of face to face contact it's more important than ever to find other ways to check-in, to keep contact and to offer support to those around us.**

Sometimes the best way to support our teammates is to actively listen to them so they feel included

If they are struggling, you may want to signpost them to some of the helplines on page 4, or simply share this booklet with them and encourage them to take care of their wellbeing.

## Show your appreciation

It's a good feeling when someone says thank you. Giving thanks is motivating and encouraging; it makes us feel better, more willing to help others and able to put our best into work. These feelings are even more important through Covid when keeping going can feel harder.

Showing your appreciation for others is easy. People shouldn't have to work 'above and beyond' to be thanked. Sometimes its giving thanks for the small everyday things that counts. Who can you give thanks today?



## Reward compassionate behaviour

In the Cardiology Directorate, teammates showed how much they valued kindness and compassion for each other through Covid, more than any other value, by nominating each other for a 'I'm a big heart in Cardiology' award. The idea helped boost morale and lift team spirit. Could your team do something similar?

## Stay connected

Staff working remotely may be feeling distant and removed from their teams and normal working lives. Please use every opportunity to keep in touch with them. Tell them they're missed and make time to connect, and make sure they're updated on what's happening. Or, why not send them a card to cheer them up?

## If you're working from home

When you are working from home the trust has the same health and safety responsibilities for you when you are working from home. The official HR guidance on homeworking can be found on the wellbeing pages of the intranet. These pages also include various other videos, tools and resources to help you with your home working environment, scheduling, routine, diet and exercise.

# Civility saves lives

how treating each other with respect can protect wellbeing and provide better care

Did you know, when someone is rude, 80% of recipients lose time worrying about the rudeness, 38% reduce the quality of their work, 48% reduce their time at work and 25% take it out on someone else? Less effective clinicians provide poorer care. In fact, treating people in an uncivil way can lead to a 20% drop in performance and 50% decrease in peoples' willingness to help others.

We can all impact someone else's mental wellbeing with our poor behaviour. In times of crisis, let's be more mindful of how we treat each other. It will mean teams with higher rates of wellbeing and better performance all round.

**Think: how can you be more civil to your colleagues?**

Facts from [www.civilitysaveslives.com](http://www.civilitysaveslives.com).

## Random Acts of Kindness

Kind things that can really help brighten someone's day.

A bad night's sleep a long list of to-dos, worry and anxiety; there are many everyday stresses that feel too all-consuming when they strike.

In these times, a smile from a stranger, laughing at a joke or taking a walk with a friend, may be all that's needed to release a bit of the built up tension. And these are things that can be done any day of the year.

When we're kind - just to be kind - the reward centre in the brain lights up and leaves us with a warm feeling of satisfaction. So doing small acts of kindness is also a good way to be kind to yourself.

Here are a few things you can do today to help get someone's day back on track:

- Pick one thing you could use more of in your life (support, kind words, gratitude, compliments) and offer that to someone else
- If someone looks like they need a break, ask them to go for a walk with you. A bit of exercise, fresh air and a chat will help to clear their thoughts
- When you pass rubbish on the floor, pick it up and put it in a bin
- Remember that no action is too small; hold a door open for someone or smile at a stranger
- Bake something yummy for your colleagues
- Text a friend or loved one to let them know you're thinking of them when you wake up or before you go to sleep
- Write bad jokes and positive comments onto post-it notes and secretly put them in random places such as, in your staff room, on a door or on a colleagues desk

# Other forms of support...

## Voice your concerns

Sometimes, if we feel we are not being listened to, or our concerns are not being addressed, it can make our own personal wellbeing far worse. We may not be able to sleep from thinking about it or it may impact our ability to be at our best at work.

If this is happening to you, please speak to either of our Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, Helen Martin by contacting her via:  
Email: **freedomtospeakup@poole.nhs.uk**  
ext: **4420** (answerphone only monitored by the Guardian).

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## Confidential spiritual and pastoral care



Poole chaplain Declan McConville



RBCH chaplain Duncan

**Chaplaincy Team.** Pastoral and spiritual support for staff irrespective of faith or belief denomination. RBCH: **01202 303626** for Poole Hospital call **01202 442167** (chaplains' office) or **01202 448153** (chapel)

## Professional resources

- **Royal College of Nursing** has a page dedicated to supporting nurses on COVID. **www.rcn.org.uk**
- **Unison** has dedicated resources to support members. contact Unison Direct on **0800 0857 857**, 6am to midnight Mon-Fri and 9am-4pm Saturday. (textphone **0800 0967 968**) **www.unison.org.uk**
- **The British Medical Association** is also supporting members online **www.bma.org.uk**.

# Leading teams through Covid

Teams are working in exceptional ways in challenging circumstances and so may need **enhanced and bespoke wellbeing support**.

Support can include training in a group setting, on areas including re-silience training and management of change.

It may also include clinical debriefs and immediate support in a range of settings for example, following a traumatic incident.

You can find lots of guidance on **talking to individuals and teams about health and wellbeing topics** from grief and anxiety to coping with pressures at work on the wellbeing pages of the intranet.

Just search: **You Matter: Wellbeing and emotional support.**

# Jar of hope

Things will get better. Use this time to think about all the things you miss and might have taken for granted. Write them down here to look forward to when the crisis is over.



**Look how much you've already managed to adapt to.**

**Look how resilient you've already been.**

**There's no "right" way to respond to this because it's never, ever happened before.**

**Give yourself some credit.**

**There's no one in the whole world who has this figured out yet.**

**So it's absolutely okay if you don't either.**



## **Follow our wellbeing advent calendar!**

This festive season we have been inviting staff to share wellbeing message of hope, support or thanks to colleagues. You can follow all the messages of cheer from your teammates and peers by searching **#TisTheSeasonToCare** on UHD\_NHS Twitter or Facebook.

If its not too late to take part, you can send your message and picture to **julia.bullas@uhd.nhs.uk** to feature.

## **Your views matter**

We are always striving to support your wellbeing in new and fresh ways. If you have any feedback, comments or suggestions, please email **Organisational.Development@uhd.nhs.uk**.

**You can find all this information and more on the wellbeing pages of the intranet. Just search **You Matter: Wellbeing and emotional support**.**

Email **Organisational.Development@uhd.nhs.uk** for more information.