Looking after yourself during COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease is an unprecedented situation and it is normal given the current situation to feel worried, stressed and anxious. Positive self-care at this time is important for NHS staff in order to sustain positive mental wellbeing as well as your physical wellbeing. It’s also important to be gentle on yourself. Some days you might be feeling scared and that you don’t live up to the image of the “NHS hero”. These feelings of stress and anxiety are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak.

Looking after your mental wellbeing

If you feel that you are struggling adapting to the new working structure or are anxious about having to work in a new area or in the COVID areas, then it is important to talk to someone about these feelings. Please speak to your line manager and your colleagues in the first instance. It is likely that many of your colleagues will be feeling the same way too and have similar worries or concerns.

Seek accurate information from legitimate sources

Limit yourself to reading information only from official sources. These credible sources of information are key to avoid the fear and panic that misinformation may cause.

Limit access to news and social media

Try to avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Constant monitoring of news updates and social media can intensify feelings of worry and distress. Consider turning off automatic notifications and taking a break from the news. Try not to listen to the radio/news on your way home from work. Set clear boundaries to how much news you read, watch or listen will allow you to focus on your life and actions over which you have control.

Maintain a sense of hope

Try and focus on the things that are positive in your life.

Engage in distraction activities

If you find yourself feeling anxious then you should engage in activities that provide a distraction and occupy your mind. Try and make time for activities which you enjoy such as listening to music, reading books, arts and crafts, home exercise DVD’s, playing games, baking, reading your children a story etc.

Reach out to loved ones

It is important to also stay socially connected with friends and family via social media. If you have access to video, then this can help you feel more connected as you will see a friendly face. Keeping in touch with your friends and family may ease the stress caused by COVID-19. Talking through your concerns and feelings may help you find ways of dealing with challenges. Receiving support and care from others can bring a sense of comfort and stability.

Acknowledge your feelings

It is normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, upset, angry or frustrated among a wide range of other emotional reactions, in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you’re feeling.

*www.mhe-sme.org/covid-19/*

Take time to switch-off in order to promote good sleep

It is normal for sleep to be affected when in situations of uncertainty and increased stress. Many people are struggling with their sleep in the current crisis, and as a result you may find that you need some allocated relaxation time to help your mind switch off and put the day to rest. Turn overleaf to find out more about how to access the Headspace and Sleepio app for free meditation exercises to help put your mind to bed and promote a good night sleep.

Download the Headspace app at headspace.com
Free apps for NHS staff

All NHS employees with an nhs.net, nhsemployers.org and nhs.uk email address are eligible to receive full access to the Headspace app and plus library, which houses 1,000+ hours of guided meditations across topics such as stress, sleep, commuting, focus, parenting, kids, and much more, as well as eyes-open exercises, workouts and sleep content.

We are here to care for you during this challenging time.

“Listening Ear Service”
If you are feeling overwhelmed, struggling to switch off after a stressful shift, or perhaps living alone then we are here to support you. Call switchboard and ask them to put you in touch with the ‘On call chaplain’. Switchboard - on 0 or (from home on 01392 411611).
There will also be daily face-face presence in the chaplaincy for anyone that wants a listening ear and a cup of tea.

Telephone Counselling Support
You may feel that you need more structured counselling support during this challenging time, for example if you are working front-line, on the COVID19 wards, or you are a manager.
Please email rde-tr.counselling@nhs.net to access this support.

Tips for Juggling Childcare and Work

Can’t go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money? It is normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed.

Many of us have also had to drastically modify our daily activities to meet the current reality of the situation and focus on what you can accomplish.
You may find at this current point in time that you have had to shift expectations and priorities to focus more on what gives you meaning, purpose, or fulfilment.
Remember you are not alone - Millions of people have the same fears as you. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling. Listen to them. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

Take a well-earned break - make sure you do something for yourself. You deserve it! Don’t be afraid to step back and give yourself small breaks from the stress of the situation.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, then try to be kind to yourself and remind yourself that you are coping as well as you can in difficult circumstances. Try and reframe the situation and remind yourself that this is precious one-one time that you get to spend with your children.

Set aside time to spend with each child - It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.

Ask your child what they would like to do - choosing will help to build their self-confidence.

Give them praise - It’s hard to feel positive when our kids or teenagers are driving us crazy. But try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. It will reassure them that you notice and care.
**HOW TO STAY HEALTHY - WORKING FROM HOME**

There are many musculoskeletal conditions that cause neck and shoulder pain but these can be triggered and aggravated by poor working habits at your desk/table at home. Follow these tips below to stay pain free whilst working from home:

**CHAIR SET-UP**

If you do have a study desk or you can use a kitchen or dining table, you will probably have a chair that is roughly the right height.

If your chair is too low, use *cushions* to raise yourself up and/or support your back. A *footrest (or box)* may be required to support your feet.

**LAPTOP SET-UP**

Aim to get the *screen* roughly at arm’s length and the screen top just below eye level. However, if you are using a small laptop or a tablet, you will probably want to bring it closer.

Sit with your *elbows* level with the top of the work surface and your forearms horizontal. Keep your mouse and keyboard close to the edge of the table.

**LIGHTING**

Place your equipment at right angles to a *window*. Do not sit facing a window unless you have no other option.

Adjust settings to reduce blue light in the evenings or use a filter.

**WORK AREA**

Try to replicate your office setup as far as possible. If you really have to use the sofa, don’t do it for too long. Vary it with other postures. Try not to work in bed!

**EQUIPMENT**

If you are using a *laptop*, ideally you should be using a laptop kit consisting of a separate keyboard, mouse and stand. If you have a separate keyboard, place the laptop on books so it is at eye level.

If this is not available then this makes taking regular micro-breaks to move/change your posture all the more important.

Hold phones/tablets at eye height to avoid neck pain.

**BREAKS**

Take between *30 seconds and up to 2 minutes, every 30 minutes* of computer work to move.

Do simple *stretches*, rest your eyes (see overleaf for more info)

For example: stand up and stretch your arms up towards the ceiling, whilst taking a big breath in. This will help stretch your back, arms and hips.

**KEEP MOVING**

When making telephone/video calls, stand up and move around whenever possible. Movement is key to reducing fatigue and maintaining productivity.

Follow us on twitter @RDEstaffhealth to keep up-to-date
EASY WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE WHEN ISOLATING

We are all adapting to not being able to do the activities we used to, or be outside as much as we would like. But it is so important to keep active, even if self-isolating. This will keep your body AND your mind healthy!

The good news is that there are lots of brilliant home exercises that you and your family can watch on your Smart TV or laptop/PC.

See below from suggested videos links of exercises for all abilities and ages which you can do from your own front room!

How to setup your desk

Click here for a short video showing how to set your desk up for you (and your children) safely at home.

Desk Yoga

Click here for a 6 minute desk yoga routine

NHS Fitness Suite

This website has many different exercise videos from cardio, strength, even pilates and yoga!

https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/

Isolating with your children at home?

Try ‘PE with Joe’! Joe Wicks streams a live PE class 9.30a.m. Monday - Friday whilst schools are closed. Click here.

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WHY ARE BREAKS SO IMPORTANT?

- **Disrupts poor posture** - Lowers risks of aches and pains
- **Avoids mental and physical fatigue** – Studies show a typical Brit has an attention span of just 14 minutes and the average UK worker spends 8.5 hours a day at work. Can you focus on a single task for that long?
- **Gives your brain a rest** - Research shows that ‘unfocus’ – letting your mind drift, is just as important as focusing. The brain operates best when it flips between focus and unfocus. This also allows your brain time to process information into your long term memory.
- **Boosts feelings of positivity**
- **Increases oxygen and blood circulation** – boost your concentration, your energy levels and normal daily functions.
- **Look after your eyes** – Look away from your screen into the distance at least every 20 minutes for around 20 seconds. (20:20 rule)

Click here for ideas of easy desk based exercises to do in your mini breaks.

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STAFF PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE

WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU GET IN CONTACT!

Our Staff Physiotherapists are still doing telephone advice for staff. Contact them if you have any queries or concerns. Email: rde-tr.OccHealthPhysio@nhs.net
PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

**PRIORITY NHS SLOTS AT SUPERMARKETS**

- Sainsbury’s - every day from 7.30am - 8am
- Asda - Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8am – 9am
- Tesco - Every Sunday, priority browsing hour before checkouts open.
- Co-operative - Monday to Saturday, 8am – 9am, Sunday, 10am – 11am.
- Marks and Spencer - Tuesday and Friday – the first hour of opening.
- Morrisons - Monday to Saturday, the first hour of opening.
- Waitrose - No special hours have been announced, but a proportion of hard-to-find items will be set aside for NHS staff (just ask at the welcome reception desk).
- Iceland - Monday to Friday, final hour of trading.
- Aldi - open 30 minutes early on Sundays for NHS, police and fire service.

**HOME DELIVERY**

**J&R Food Services** are providing home delivery of fruit/veg boxes and meat boxes.

**Fresh Fruit & Veg boxes**! This is available for home deliveries & collection. Boxes are £20 or £10.

**Fresh Butchery Meat Boxes**

**Meat Box A** - Suitable for 2-3 people - **£15.00**
- 450gm Mince Steak
- 2 x 180gm Pork Loin Steak
- 6 x Pork Sausages
- 2 x 170gm Chicken Fillets

**Meat Box B** - Suitable for 3-4 people - **£30.00**
- 900gm Mince Steak
- 4 x 180gm Pork Loin Steak
- 12 x Pork Sausages
- 4 x 170gm Chicken Fillets

Please call on **01392 445510** to arrange delivery, there is a minimum order of **£50 or a £5 Delivery Charge**. *They are also offering discounted rates for NHS staff, so make sure you mention this when you open an account*

**Darts Fresh Produce**

Darts Fresh Produce are delivering food boxes across Devon and wider area. They can supply fruit/veg, meat as well as dry goods.

Order online at [https://order.dartfresh.co.uk/](https://order.dartfresh.co.uk/) or call 01392 873036. Free delivery and no minimum spend.

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£5/box discount and FREE delivery for ALL NHS staff: use code NHSFDSO at the checkout. We will make a donation to Hospiscare with each order*. The Meatbox Company: from our farm to your door.

For further details and the full product range please visit: [https://themeatboxcompany.co.uk](https://themeatboxcompany.co.uk)

- Meat delivered to your door – no need to queue
- Non-contact delivery
- Buy online today, meat delivered tomorrow