Team Support (8)

Tips for communicating around Covid-19

As managers, from time to time, you may notice increased anxiety in staff members, and you may be concerned about how to support staff around work based distress, loss and broader coping.

This document is part of a series of resources for managers, put together by the PSU, offering tips and tools to support you to support your colleagues. Some of these may also be useful for you to think about yourself too – **your wellbeing is paramount as you care for others**.

We've got this – we're making a difference

Tips for communicating around Covid-19

It's natural to pick up language from social media and other sources, but sometimes this can be unhelpful.

When discussing Covid-19

Avoid discussing this in the context of ethnicity, or nationality or words that may be stigmatising e.g. instead of "COVID-19 cases", "victims" "COVID-19 families" or "diseased"

It's more helpful to say:

> **"people who have COVID-19"**
>
> **"people who are being treated for COVID- 19"**
>
> **"people who are recovering from COVID-19" and**
>
> **"after recovering from COVID-19"**

A few tips:

> It's useful to avoid describing individuals as survivors as this implies that they may have died from the virus and may increase fear within them and others around possible effects.
>
> Some individuals may come from countries where there is stigma around the virus and so it's especially important that conversations reassure that they have not done anything wrong, are weak etc. and they deserve our support, compassion and kindness.

Welcoming back colleagues

Remember that staff coming back to work after self-isolating **may feel anxious** about how colleagues will respond. It's tempting to use humour around having 'taken time off' or to stay away for fear of contagion but this may affect their **confidence** and **sense of being part of the team**. Do remind colleagues of the **importance of welcoming colleagues back during huddles.**

Adapted from resources developed by the Staff Wellbeing Psychology Team

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Your own wellbeing as a manager

You are doing **extra-ordinary** work supporting colleagues and patients.

> Over the next few months, there will be times when the stress will be intense and there may be a sense of pressure to appear strong in the face of this crisis but it is really important to remember that 'it is ok not to be ok'.
>
> It's common to focus on the wellbeing of others first but as managers we must look after ourselves and each other as best we can, so that you can be well resourced to support others. As the saying goes 'We need to put our own oxygen masks on before helping others'.

Support and resources available to all (including you as a manager):

A selection of open access, supportive, resources and tools, including playlists, resources and tools available for download

https://psu.walesdeanery.org/support-services/resource-locator

https://leadershipportal.heiw.wales/playlists/view/c0abd55e-92ee-44d2-bcd1-33dd0221d1e3/en/1?options=oHXU%252BPmvHPR07%252FdPJVyiI5sWo5wWqGQ3R4ZWrZU%252B9vn1fRQkuIHkJS3aCF%252F5pPA4NRIUrRdtEhtlc1jVmauiYg%253D%253D

Wellbeing Resources from Health Boards and Trusts across NHS Wales:
https://leadershipportal.heiw.wales/go/cp92la -

Health for Healthcare Professionals: https://www.hhpwales.co.uk/ or call **0800 058 2738** or email - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

BMA Doctors-for-Doctors: available to all UK medical students and doctors, regardless of membership, 24/7 and free of charge http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/doctors-well-being/about-doctors-for-doctors or **call 08459 200 169 (landline: 01455 254 189)** - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The BMA's Wellbeing support services are open to spouses, partners and children of those doctors and medical students. Confidential counselling and peer support is offered.

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The resources in this series:

1: Supporting staff: 5 levels of care

2: Psychological safety: How managers can help foster this key area

3: Psychological first aid: How to respond to distress in your colleagues

4: How to support staff with acute anxiety or panic – a brief grounding exercise

5: 3 Step team procedure (including STOP for 15)

6: Team / peer to peer psychological debriefing

7: Other tips for supporting your team

8: Tips for communicating around COVID-19