This guidance is for Health and Social Care Managers. Some of the content has been taken from the guidance produced by the Edinburgh Behavioural Support Unit and adapted for local services in GG&C.

**LOOKING AFTER THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF STAFF**

Taking care of yourself is a priority and should be done before you look after others.

It is important that you look after your health and wellbeing. We are in very challenging times, which could continue for some time yet. As health and social care managers, looking after your own emotional wellbeing during this difficult time means that you will have more capacity to look after your teams in the longer term. In order to do this, some suggestions below might provide some helpful ideas:

- Allowing yourself time for rest and recuperation outside work. Do things that you enjoy doing that you find relaxation and help you to rest.

- It is easy to try and avoid thinking about emotions! However, ignoring them requires a lot of effort! Make sure you are in touch with your emotions throughout the day. Try and notice when you feel tense and where this tension is in your body.

- At times you may feel overwhelmed and unable to manage a situation effectively. Is there someone you can ask for support? Try and keep calm and remember to be kind to yourself and colleagues. When possible take a break or some time out.

- It is important that as a Manager you model taking regular breaks throughout your shift and use helpful ways of coping with ongoing stress. This will help to foster a more positive and protective environment for you team.

- Facilitating a brief 10 minute staff well-being huddle at the end of each shift can help facilitate effective team communication, early identification of difficulties to be addressed and assist staff to leave work behind at the end of their shift, to support rest and recuperation (for information on setting up staff well-being huddles, please see attached).

- Peer support can be incredibly helpful as it is likely other Managers are feeling the same way you are at the moment. Can you create a local support group where you provide both practical and emotional support to one another?

- Routine and structure is really important and can help you feel a sense of
control at a time where things may feel out of control. What is your usual routine? Can you retain some of this at the moment?

- A fantastic, helpful new app has been produced in response to Covid-19 to support care staff. It includes the most up to date Government related policies and research findings. It also provides a forum to share questions and worries in a safe and helpful way. You can download the app here: https://webapp.mobileappco.org/m/COVID19CARE/

- There may be times where trying to look after your emotional wellbeing feels too much. Remember there is Health & Social Care Staff Support Line which can offer telephone support, **Monday-Friday 8am-6pm (0141 303 8968).**

**BACK TO BASICS – GETTING THINGS RIGHT**

Food, rest and feeling safe are basic human needs. Without these it becomes extremely difficult to fulfil your role and duties as a Manager. Making sure you have the basics sorted will enable you to be a more effective Manager, engage with your work more helpfully and efficiently, and to maintain high standards and safety.

- Has all of your team got access to the appropriate level of PPE and training to feel confident about undertaking their duties? The following website has up to date information for health and social care staff: https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings/

- Making sure staff have access to food and drink, especially during busy times when it might not be possible for them to go out and get something to eat or drink, is fundamental for their well-being. Providing snacks and access to water in staff communal areas to help staff hydrated and nourished can be invaluable for a very busy, overwhelmed staff team.

- Remind staff to keep hydrated – maybe put posters up prompting them to drink more water.

- Having a safe space for staff to go and rest is really important. This space needs to be protected for staff. Encourage staff to access these areas when they feel overwhelmed.

- Encourage staff to take regular breaks and if possible to perhaps go outside for fresh air. It is important that staff have enough days off to help them to recuperate and feel physical and emotionally ready for their next shift.
In residential or ward based settings, relatives and friends can often feel helpless during difficult and stressful times. They may be very keen to help but might be unsure of how to at the moment, especially if they are unable to visit. Could you think about setting up an amazon wish list for your team? Talk to staff about what items might be helpful to add to the wish list. These could include things like:

- phone chargers
- mindful colouring in books
- tissues
- stress balls
- snacks/drinks
- comfortable cushions
- or anything else that would help staff to relax.

If relatives or friends wish to donate or make a contribution you could refer to the wish list.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS SUPPORTIVE FOR STAFF

Given you work closely with your staff team every day, you will already have a good idea of how best to support them during Covid-19. Checking with them regularly to see how they are managing their emotions will be vitally important at the moment. This gives staff the feeling of being in a supportive environment, where their emotional needs are of paramount importance. You may already be using really helpful strategies, but here are a few ideas you could consider:

- Use staff well-being huddles at the end of each shift to find out what went well, what did not go as well and what changes would be helpful for the next shift. Having a whiteboard accessible to staff to allow them make suggestions. This could be discussed during the staff well-being huddles.

- Allowing staff time to digest the wealth of information which is available at the moment. Check with staff that they have understood any updates and support them to understand if they are finding this difficult.

- Mistakes are common, especially during busy times and this is okay. It is part of everyday human life. Ensure staff know that they have your support, even when things go wrong. When things settle down, you can reflect with your team about all of the things you have learned during the outbreak.

- Sometimes, it can be reassuring and helpful for less experienced staff to have a more experienced member of staff to turn to for support. Consider buddying up staff, which might help them to feel like someone is really looking out for them.

- Positive feedback is essential and can make staff feel valued for their
contribution during the outbreak. Tell your staff team they are doing an amazing job during very difficult and stressful times.

- Consider putting up a ‘Going home checklist’ to encourage staff to process a shift and go home to properly relax. It is important staff feel they can ‘leave work, at work’. A copy of one is included in the well-being pack.

**EMOTIONAL REACTIONS ARE NORMAL**

Caring is a stressful job at any time but is perhaps much more common at the moment. It is likely that you or a colleague will be feeling worried, anxious and stressed at the moment. This is normal and probably a lot more common amongst your colleagues than you may realise. This does not mean staff are unable to fulfil their duties if they feel this way.

- It can be really helpful for staff to feel their emotions have been validated and they do not feel vulnerable or exposed for expressing them at work.

- Whilst most staff are fairly resilient and will cope well with the increased stress at the moment, it will be important to be mindful of staff who might be struggling and finding it difficult to fulfil their duties. Talk to them about accessing emotional support via the Health & Social Care Staff Support Line.

- Psychological First Aid is a supportive approach which is often used during times of crisis. Being trained in Psychological First Aid might help you feel more confident and better equipped to support to your team. The basic principles of Psychological First Aid can be found here: [https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28064/coronavirus-covid-19/psychosocial-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-staff/psychological-first-aid](https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28064/coronavirus-covid-19/psychosocial-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-staff/psychological-first-aid)

- Print and display throughout staff communal areas the poster “Self-Care Tips for Staff”. Encourage staff to use these strategies on a regular basis to maintain their emotional well-being.

- Have a supply of “Self-Care Tips for Staff” leaflets (included in the Staff Well-Being Pack) in staff communal areas for staff to access.