

Health and Wellbeing Toolkit Covid-19

A Guide for healthcare students at Keele and Staffordshire Universities

We acknowledge that as healthcare workers you face stressors and difficulties at the best of times, but in these times of Covid19, these feelings may be heightened by worries over uncertainty and the unknown. These feelings are perfectly normal and a healthy reaction to a very abnormal situation.

We have devised a toolkit to help you to look after your mental health and wellbeing whilst out on placement, which is particularly important during these unprecedented times and challenges. We have also included a guide so you know where and how to get the best support.

To protect your mental health and wellbeing it's recommended that you adhere to the following guidance:

1. Make sure you get enough good quality sleep (*adequate sleep improves concentration, refreshes the body and restores energy*)
2. Eat regular healthy meals (*A balanced diet improves immunity and makes you feel healthy*)
3. Drink plenty of fluids (*it's important to stay hydrated to regulate body temperature, keep joints lubricated, prevent infections, deliver nutrients to cells, and keep organs functioning properly. **Being well-hydrated** also improves sleep quality, cognition, and mood.*)
4. Exercise (*important for physical and mental health*)
5. Connect with family and friends regularly.
6. Make time to relax between shifts. (*Watch a film, read a book, colouring*)
7. Have regular breaks away from the ward during shifts. (*The hospital should have designated rest rooms, find out where these are*)
8. Check in with your personal tutor (*use your protected learning time but anytime you feel you need to*)

9. Don't be afraid to reach out and talk to someone if you are struggling (*talk to family, friends, personal tutor, placement supervisor/mentor or anyone else you feel you can trust.*)
10. Practice Self Compassion - It's Okay not to feel Okay, #BeKind to yourself.

What support is available to you?

The UK government have approached all NHS hospitals nationally to request that they support all staff during the pandemic using the 3 Pillars of Health and Wellbeing i.e. Social, Physical and Emotional. Therefore all hospitals across the country have specific plans and resources in place to provide a coordinated approach to supporting staff. You as students should be able to access the same support as members of staff at the hospital trusts where you will be placed.

The learning you have undertaken on your programme to date, will have equipped you with the necessary skills and knowledge required practically and emotionally, to enable you to work in a safe and competent manner.

However these are unprecedented times so no one, including staff with years of experience are fully prepared for what is happening.

- If you are concerned at all about your own mental health or someone else's, in the first instance, talk to your **Personal Tutor**. You might also want to speak to your **Mentor/Supervisor** if you feel you have a good relationship with them.
- Check out the [RCN website](#) for advice and guidance during the pandemic.
- **Download APPS** on to your phone, the following are currently **available to NHS staff for free until December 31st 2020**. (You might need to use an NHS email, speak to your mentor/placement lead) The **RCN** suggests [Headspace](#), [Unmind](#), [Sleepio](#), [Daylight](#)
- Counselling is **not** advisable for mental health difficulties caused by immediate traumatic or distressing experiences within the current ward environments. **Psychological First Aid and Stress Management Interventions and Techniques and other resources** are being utilised widely within hospital trusts so it would be advisable for you to find out what is available at your hospital when you are out on placement. You can find this information via the **Hospital Intranet**. Also [A Guide to living with worry and anxiety amid global uncertainty](#) is a great resource!!
- Both Keele and Staffordshire University are working in partnership to ensure that healthcare students are well supported. So, with this in mind we have set up a joint arrangement for students to access support from Mental Health Practitioners/

Wellbeing Advisors and/or Counsellors, in the form of a **Therapeutic Listening Service**. Within these current circumstances you may need someone to talk to and share concerns, experiences, feelings and benefit from someone with therapeutic listening skills. **The hours of availability will be 7pm – 10:30pm and 9am-11am, seven days a week apart from Bank Holidays.** To access the **Listening Service** you can email: nhsstudent@staffs.ac.uk -. Please leave your name, and telephone contact details so that a Mental Health and Wellbeing professional can contact you.

- If you do feel that you would benefit from counselling because your symptoms are more severe and related to other ongoing difficulties, it has been suggested that the **Hospital Staff Support and Counselling Services** rather than Student Counselling Services should be approached in the first instance because they will be better equipped to provide counselling and support to healthcare staff during the pandemic. They also offer counselling over a **24 hour period** which provides flexibility around shift patterns. However, the **Student Counselling and Mental Health Services** also continue to provide remote support if you would prefer this. The hospitals you are working in will have contact details to their services on the **Staff intranet**. You can access university services via the usual methods on the university websites.
- **NHS Staff FRONTLINE phone and text line** is also available for mental health support for NHS staff. Phone lines are open between 7am and 11pm every day, alongside a 24/7 text service. Phone **0300 131 7000** or text **FRONTLINE** to **85258**.

Finally, make your own wellbeing a priority, reach out if you are struggling with your mental health, be as kind to yourself as you would be to others and remember you're human not superhuman!