Covid-19 – What can I do to support myself and others?

Self and peer-support

Look after yourself and colleagues: -

○ Prioritise time for yourself when possible, even for a moment

○ Have you eaten, drunk and rested enough? Have your peers?

○ Use calming strategies when stress levels are high (e.g. mindfulness, meditation, walks in nature)

Peer support chats: -

○ Offer basic resources (food, water, breaks…)

○ Check in and really listen (more than once)

○ Be approachable, authentic and non-judgemental

○ Give recognition; praise and give positive feedback

○ Respect individuality, and seek opportunities to reframe negatives and boost wellbeing

Be NEUTRAL, CURIOUS and COMPASSIONATE

Teams

• Begin shifts with introductions so new/temporary members feel welcomed; invite them to ask for help and support; ensure continuity in staff allocation to individual patients (where possible)

• Use a buddying system with more experienced staff each shift (especially for new/temporary staff)

• Ensure you have a welcoming comfortable space for staff breaks

• Include optional wellbeing check-ins before, during and after shifts: signpost to more support if needed

• Hold regular meetings to problem-solve issues depleting wellbeing; be NEUTRAL, CURIOUS and COMPASSIONATE

• Create opportunities for staff to meet in psychologically safe spaces (remotely if necessary) to reflect on the impact of work on their wellbeing

Managers/Leaders

• Communicate regularly: be visible, present and approachable; invite feedback (including anonymously); listen and act on feedback; be NEUTRAL, CURIOUS and COMPASSIONATE

• Reinforce priority of staff wellbeing: consider appointing organisational lead for C-19 staff psychological health; mandate/monitor work breaks; ensure proactive informal support available (psychologists, chaplains etc); provide welcoming staff break areas etc

Provide training: -

○ About traumatic situations staff may encounter (especially new/redeployed staff)

○ Mental health first aid training

• Consider your own needs for safe spaces to discuss difficult decisions

• Systematically monitor staff psychological health and be alert to symptoms of deteriorating wellbeing. Have safety plans for staff known to be at risk psychologically

• Workforce planning: shorter working shifts/support flexible schedules; ensure recovery time and family contact; remove non-urgent business to alleviate staff burden; rotate staff from high to low stress functions where possible; ensure continuity of team and patient allocation (especially for re-deployed staff)

• Ensure access to managerial support out of hours

• Actively monitor whether staff essential needs are being met (e.g. PPE, childcare, staff sickness, testing, parking etc)

• Plan ahead for long term recovery