



Workplace Wellbeing during COVID-19

Guidance pack

#thankyouNHS

Respecting everyone
Embracing change
Recognising success
Working together
Our hospitals.



Guide to support your well being at work

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Our wellbeing during COVID 19

Respecting everyone
Embracing change
Recognising success
Working together
Our hospitals.

This guide is for you, to outline the support available during this challenging time.

Why is COVID-19 relevant to our mental health?

COVID-19 (or Coronavirus) is being talked about everywhere. It is **completely normal to feel stressed and anxious**, and is in no way a sign of weakness. But in this time, it is crucial that we make conscious efforts to **prioritise our mental health** as well as our physical health.

What are we stressed about?

There will be various reasons and we are all different, but there are common worries colleagues may currently have are:

- 1. Uncertainty around rise in workload*
- 2. Fear of the unknown – feeling a threat to self and loved ones*
- 3. Challenging and distressing situations in the workplace.*

These are highly common thoughts and are very normal. But you may have very different worries, which is also ok.

This guide has ideas and suggestions to support you to keep yourself mentally well during this time.



1. Going home checklist at the end of your shift

Take 5 minutes at the end of your shift to go through the checklist:

- Please stop and take a moment to think about today
- Be proud of the care you gave
- Acknowledge one thing that was difficult on your shift: let it go
- If it is difficult to let it go: Remember, your senior team are here to listen and support you, consider what you can do when back tomorrow, but try not to take it home with you
- Consider one things that went well
- Check on your colleagues before you leave - are they OK?
- Now switch your attention to home: **Rest and Recharge**



2. Try to switch off from work when you go home

It is essential to our wellbeing that when we physically leave work, we **mentally** leave work too. That means that we allow ourselves to try not to think about work whilst we are not there. This is a hard thing for a lot of people to do, particularly when they may be anticipating what a shift may be like the next day, or thinking back over things that happened that day.

It can be very helpful to have something you do to help you 'switch off' from work.

- This might be making sure you change clothes or have a shower as soon as you get in.
- Perhaps deciding not to spend too much time talking about work with people you may live with.
- Doing something for **you**, whether it is a physical activity like yoga, or watching a film, having a bath, cooking a nice meal etc.

Whatever it is, find your own way to help you to 'turn off' your work brain, and focus on doing other things.



3. Bring your mind and attention to the present

When we get anxious we tend to spend a lot of time thinking about the future and worrying about things that have not and may not even happen. This worrying can make us feel much worse.

Whilst it is completely normal to worry in times of uncertainty, and to want to try to plan things, it can be unhelpful to our mental wellbeing.

A quick and effective way to manage your worries is to focus on bringing your attention (i.e. what you are focussing on) back into the present moment. What that means is, focussing on what is actually happening right now in each moment, **being in the present moment** if you can.

One way to do this is by using your 5 senses. Follow the steps below when you feel yourself getting stressed or anxious.

Step 1	Take a seat, or stand comfortable. Take a deep breath and then...
Step 2	See - Look around you and name out loud 5 things you can see.
Step 3	Feel - Pay attention to your body and name 4 things you can physically feel e.g. the chair I am sitting on, my feet on the floor.
Step 4	Listen - Listen for 3 sounds and name them out loud.
Step 5	Smell - Name out loud 2 things you can smell (or favourite, safe smells if you can't detect any where you are).
Step 6	Taste - Name out loud 1 thing you can taste (or favourite, safe taste if you can't taste anything right now).

4. Try to limit how much you are checking media and social media

When we are anxious about something unknown, it is perfectly natural to want to find out more.

This is totally fine to a point and it is helpful to stay up to date with governmental advice.

However, anxiety can make us want to *keep* checking, and keep seeking out information to a point where it can stop being helpful and actually be harmful to our mental health.

Limit the amount of time you spend reading or watching things which aren't making you feel better. Perhaps decide on a specific time to check in with the news.

Tip: 'Mute' group conversations on social platforms which are causing you anxiety.

Tip: There is a lot of misinformation and opinion pieces being circulated - stay informed by **sticking to trusted sources** of information such as government and NHS websites.



5. Try to stay active, no matter what it is

Some of you will have very active roles where you are on your feet all day. Others will have desk-based roles.

Either way, doing some activity each day can be really good for our mental wellbeing for many different reasons.

You don't need to run a marathon, but keeping physically active is known to be excellent for our **mental** wellbeing.

Whether it's setting an alarm on your phone to remind you to stand up, stretch, change what you are doing, take a drink etc.

Even if it's just star jumps in your kitchen, or shaking out your arms or legs as if you are warming up for a race, exercise helps get the adrenaline which can add to feeling anxious **out** of your system. Here are some links you may find helpful:

- [Occupational Health guidance and video:](https://www.apohs.nhs.uk/services/physical-wellbeing/)
<https://www.apohs.nhs.uk/services/physical-wellbeing/>
- [Buzzer Challenge:](http://connect/StaffAndLineManagersInfo/HealthandSafety/Pages/TheBuzzerChallenge.aspx)
<http://connect/StaffAndLineManagersInfo/HealthandSafety/Pages/TheBuzzerChallenge.aspx>

6. Keep contact with people

Socialising is not just a nice thing in life; we need it to stay mentally well.

It is important that we still prioritise communication with friends, and find new ways to make sure it happens. We can socialise with friends and loved ones by phone, messages, or other methods like video-calls.



Setting specific times to virtually ‘meet’ like you would with physical meet-ups can help to make this happen as regularly as we need.

7. Sleeping well

Our sleep is hugely important to our wellbeing, and we need to be making sure that we are rested and refreshed when we wake. This is certainly not always easy. There can be real challenges such as health conditions, sleep disorders, worries that keep us awake, and bad habits like checking phones or watching TV in bed. There is a guide you can access on Sleep; either by holding your phone camera up to this QR code:



Or by going on Connect, [Wellbeing pages](#).

[‘Sleepio’](#) also have some excellent articles and guides to help support positive sleep behaviours:

- <https://www.sleepio.com/articles/>

8. Try to take your breaks

Remember to **take your breaks**. Create a few minutes to step away from the unit, take a breath and relax. Outside of work allow enough “down time” where you can switch off. There are various spaces around the hospital, (BRI B402, BHOC 4th floor



by reception, BRHC E405, STMH Level C near pharmacy), and the Level 9 restaurant where you can go to take some time to replenish before returning to work. This is not a luxury or something we should feel guilty about; **it is a necessity**. It has been shown that people are more productive and feel an improvement when they take regular short breaks.

9. Team working

In periods of stress our emotions can run high, and we can sometimes start to treat each other in ways that we normally wouldn't.

Many people recognise that when stressed or under pressure they can become snappier, or have less patience with others.

As challenging as the workplace can be, remember one of our key values of 'respecting everyone'.

If someone is short with you or speaks in an unacceptable way, try to let them know in a polite and respectful way how they have made you feel.

The Trust has just launched new resources to help, as this does not always feel an easy thing to do.

You can access a guide on the 'Bullying & Harassment' page on Connect, or new e-learning through Kallidus.



What support is available?

- **24/7 support:** We are in the process of appointing **Care First** to provide independent and confidential advice to **all colleagues**. Topics include 24/7 counselling, financial advice, housing, bereavement, benefits, relationships, health, legal, immigration enquiries, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and more. **Please look on the COVID-19 page on Connect for further updates.**
- **Self-help guides:** guides to help with sleep, work/life balance, negative thoughts, bereavement, traumatic incidents and being in the moment can all be found on Connect, or contact wellbeing@uhbristol.nhs.uk
- **Your own team:** if you can, have huddles with your team at the beginning and end of the shift/day. Talk to each other and look after each other.
- **Trust Chaplains:** offer a confidential listening service and for those who require it they also offer religious (faith based) support.
- **Occupational Health Services:** www.apohs.nhs.uk local community mental health services or other accredited counselling and wellbeing support service.
- **Wellbeing drop ins:** there will be various drop in bases around the Trust. Please check on Connect for further details, or email wellbeing@uhbristol.nhs.uk
- **Psychological Health Services** are happy to offer staff support for any team working directly with COVID-19 patients. If you think your team could benefit from access to some additional support please contact Psychological Health Services (Monday-Friday) on 0117 342 8168 and ask to speak to Sadie Thomas-Unsworth about staff support.



Useful resources:

- World Health Organisation: COVID guidance
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- MIND: COVID guidance
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- Every Mind Matters: Wellbeing guidance
<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
- 'Cruse' bereavement support: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

If you have any difficulty accessing this guide, or understanding the content, please contact wellbeing@uhbristol.nhs.uk



Thank you to all of our staff for your ongoing efforts and contributions.

Your work and efforts mean everything.



Workplace wellbeing menu during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

Advice, Information & Counselling Service 24/7

We are in the process of appointing **Care First** to provide independent and confidential advice to **ALL COLLEAGUES**

Topics include counselling, financial advice, housing, bereavement, benefits, relationships, health, legal, immigration enquiries, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and many more

Please look on the COVID-19 page on Connect for further updates

Occupational Health

Avon Partnership Occupational Health Service offers a range of health & wellbeing services

They provide support to UH Bristol staff and their managers on a wide range of Health at Work issues which include:

- Counselling
- Physiotherapy

Mon-Fri phone line:
0117 342 3400

Email: occupationalhealth@uhbristol.nhs.uk

www.apohs.nhs.uk/about

Chaplaincy: Pastoral & Spiritual Support

The sanctuaries are open 24/7 for use as a quiet space or place for meditation and prayer

Communal acts of prayer and worship are currently suspended

- BRI (B402)
- BHOC (4th floor by reception)
- BRHC (E405)
- STMH (Level C near pharmacy)

0117 342 6799

Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

Information on Connect

Connect has a dedicated page [here](#) containing a summary of the national guidance available for the public and clinicians around COVID-19.

There is also information on some UH Bristol specific processes and procedures.

Please click here for answers to [HR-related FAQs](#).

You can also contact the Employee Services team for queries about policies, pay and other work related matters.

EmployeeServices@UH Bristol.nhs.uk

Self-care tips during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

Psychological Wellbeing

- Acknowledge your anxiety and stress – its normal to feel this way
- Tell yourself it is okay to prioritise self-care
- Practice deep breathing exercises
- Take a media break - try to keep things in perspective

Physical Wellbeing

- Take care of your basic needs and ensure rest and respite during work/between shifts
- Drink water regularly to stay hydrated
- Eat sufficient and nutritious food
- Engage in physical activity – keep active

Healthy Lifestyle

- Wash your hands with soap and water
- Sleep at regular times
- Remember to take normal medication
- Stay connected with friends and family
- Avoid over-indulging on tobacco, over-eating, alcohol or other drugs

Positive mental health during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

COVID-19 is causing a lot of uncertainty, and the constant news can feel relentless. This, coupled with our workload can impact on mental health, particularly if we already experience anxiety (1 in 4 of us)

It is **normal** to be feeling stress in this situation. Stress and the feelings associated with it do not mean that you cannot do your job or that you are weak. But **self-care needs focus**

What you can do:

- Remind yourself it is ok to prioritise self-care
- Ensure the basics: breaks, food, drink, sleep, social contact via phone
- Ensure you rest and recharge when not in work
- Access available [self help guides](#) on sleep, work-life balance, relaxation etc.
- Limit access to news and social media updates

Available support:

- Work together and share within your teams
- Seek opportunities to have a short debrief at the end of each shift
- Access wellbeing drop in sessions (tbc)
- Contact Occupational Health: (0117) 3423400
- Contact Chaplaincy team: (0117) 3426799

Preparing for self-isolation during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

The NHS states to self-isolate by

- Staying at home and away from visitors and vulnerable people
- Not going to work, school or public places
- Not using public transport or taxis
- Having friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off shopping outside

Health & Wellbeing tips

- Regularly wash hands
- Drink plenty of water
- Take painkillers to ease symptoms
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Open a window for ventilation
- Sleep alone if possible

Activity Ideas...

- Look after your mental wellbeing ([NHS advice](#))
- Cooking
- Reading
- Free online learning
- watching films
- Organise the home!
- If you feel well enough, take part in light exercise within your home or garden

Coping with bereavement during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work



University Hospitals Bristol
NHS Foundation Trust

Most people experience grief when they lose someone important to them. If these feelings are affecting your life, there are things you can try that may help

Support is also available if you're finding it hard to cope with stress, anxiety or depression

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms

Common symptoms:

- shock & numbness (being in a daze)
- overwhelming sadness
- tiredness or exhaustion
- anger – towards the person you've lost or reason for your loss
- guilt about feeling angry, something you said, or not being able to stop a loved one dying

NHS 111 can tell you the right place to get help if you need to see someone: visit [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or [call: 111](tel:111)

See a GP if:

- you're struggling to cope with stress, anxiety or low mood
- you've had a low mood for 2 weeks+
- things you're already trying yourself are not helping

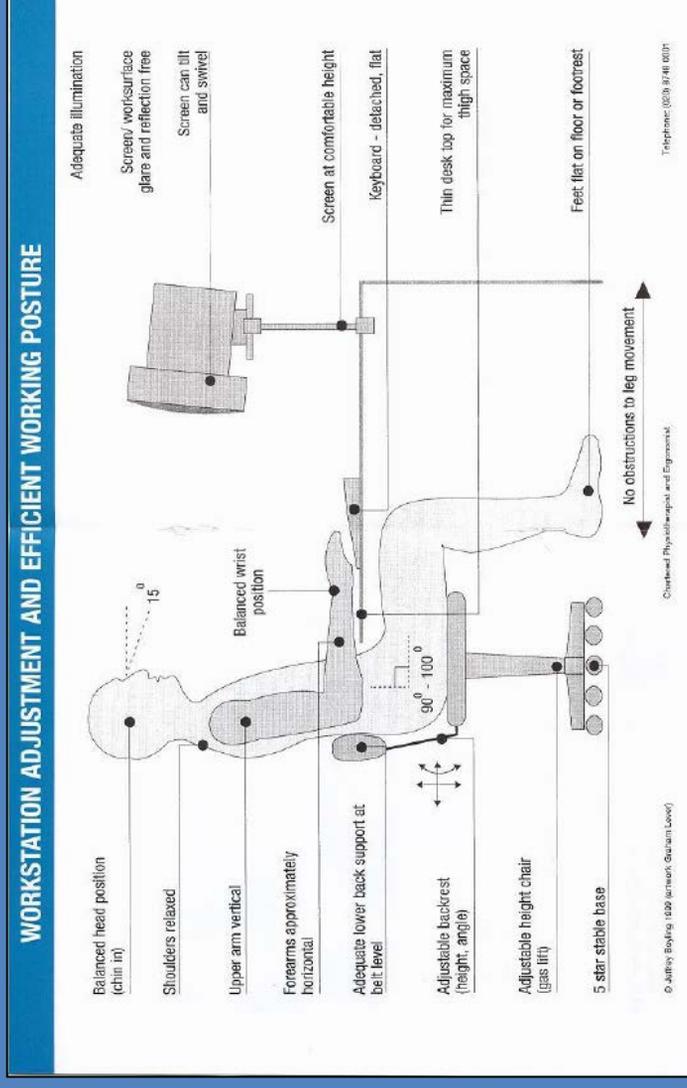
Home working during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

Workstation Set-Up

- Consider the best location within your home in which to work:
- desk / table
 - suitable chair with supportive back rest
 - Situate within a good Wi-Fi area
 - comfortable temperature
 - windows are free from reflections or have adjustable blinds

Understanding Optimal Posture



Home working during COVID-19

Staff guidance for supporting wellbeing at work

Use of Laptops & Mobile Devices

- Raise laptop so monitor is at eye level
- Use a separate keyboard and mouse and a stylus with touch screen devices, rotate screen to maximise viewing area
- Get up and move at least every 50mins
- Reduce visual fatigue: every 20mins look 20 feet (6m) away for 20 seconds



Further Information

- Why not try the [Buzzer Challenge](#)
 - Complete regular [exercises](#) to reduce postural strain
 - Read the [Home Worker Policy](#)
 - Complete a [self assessment](#) of your home office
- Contact the Safety team should you have difficulty in accessing the above information:
manualhandlingreferrals@uhbristol.nhs.uk

Daily Going Home Checklist

These are unprecedented times for all of us and looking after ourselves and each other enables us to look after our patients. Taking time to reflect on your day is really very important for your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your team.

Take 5 minutes at the end of your shift to go through the checklist with a colleague or as a team.

- Please stop and take a moment to think about today
- Be proud of the care you gave
- Consider three things that went well
- Acknowledge one thing that was difficult on your shift: let it go
- If it is difficult to let it go, remember, your senior team are here to listen and support you
- Check on your colleagues before you leave - are they OK?
- Now switch your attention to home: **rest and recharge**

You can visit the Wellbeing pages on HRWeb for guidance and resources

The background of the central section is a grey, textured surface resembling stone or concrete. Overlaid on this are two large, overlapping silhouettes of human heads in profile, facing left. The front silhouette is blue, and the back silhouette is dark red. The text is centered over the overlapping area.

Challenges between
colleagues:
what we can all do

Respecting everyone:
Respecting each other

Respecting everyone
Embracing change
Recognising success
Working together
Our hospitals.

Respecting everyone: Respecting each other

Everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect, and that certainly includes colleagues at UH Bristol and Weston. We all have a **responsibility** and the **ability** to set a positive example by treating each other with respect.

We all know this, and yet things can happen in the workplace where people are left feeling like they are being treated negatively.

This is **not** something to ignore, but instead something we all need to address.

Good working relationships are important to creating a culture of dignity and respect. We should all be committed to encouraging good, honest, open communication at all levels in work teams. Poor working relationships can contribute to workplace stress. You can find more information about the support available to staff suffering from workplace stress on the [Work Related Stress](#) page on Connect.

Negative behaviour can have a devastating effect on people at work, often causing anxiety and loss of confidence which can result in ill health and absence from work. It can also have a damaging effect on the working environment, creating tensions in the workplace which can lead to low morale.

Thoughts

“How dare they treat me like that!”
“This isn’t fair.”
“I’m so embarrassed.”
“The situation is hopeless.”
“I hate this place.”
“I don’t understand what I’ve done to deserve this.”

Emotions

Scared
Embarrassed
Alone
Angry
Frustrated
Confused
Anxious

Physical feelings

Tension
Muscle aching
Nauseous/sick
Upset stomach
Headaches
Sweating
Shaking
Change in appetite
Tired

Behaviours

Pushing ourselves to work harder to try and please that person.
Avoiding the person; changing shifts, avoiding certain locations, or by being less sociable at work.
Seeking reassurance from other colleagues; to try and understand what is going on.
Not speaking to anyone about it because we feel ashamed.



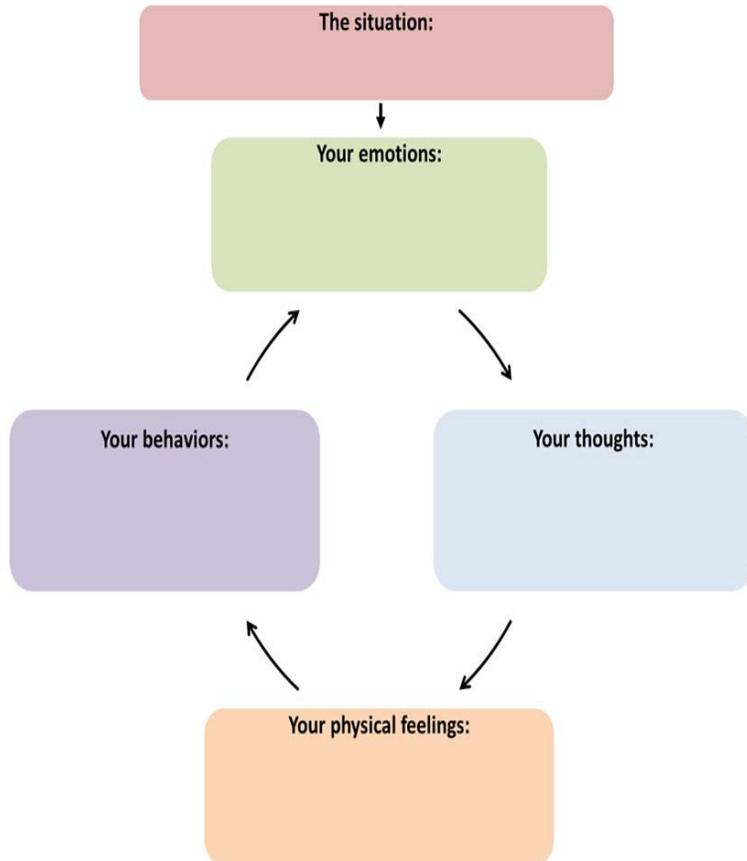
Challenges between colleagues: What we can all do.

Seeking resolution: 'talk to me'

It is best to deal with any issues as soon as possible, as early resolution gives those involved opportunities to reach a mutually agreed solution. It also means that the matter can be resolved as soon as possible and is more likely to result in normal working relationships continuing.

If you think that someone is behaving in a way which is not acceptable and you feel that you can talk to them about it, explain to them how they are making you feel and ask them to stop, speaking in a way which will encourage positive behaviours. Sometimes individuals don't realise the effect their behaviour is having on other people, so this direct approach might make them stop and think.

Talk to your manager or colleague about how you are feeling and to support you taking next steps in your conversation.



How do I have the conversation?

It might be helpful to write a few notes to help think through what you want to say:

- What happened?
- How did it make you feel?
- What would be better in future?

Please use the 'Nipping it in the bud' worksheet to frame your conversation, you can find this on the Bullying & Harassment pages of HRWeb.

How do I start?

- "Have you got a moment? I'd like to talk about what happened yesterday".
- "Can we talk about earlier on?"
- "Do you remember when you said that? It made me feel..."

Where can I get help?

We now have self help guides available on HRWeb and you can access online training via Kallidus.

Freedom to Speak up Guardian and advocates

0117342888

Raising concerns@uhbristol.nhs.uk

Occupational Health

011793423400

Employee Services

011793425000 (option2)

employeeservices@uhbristol.nhs.uk

Additional resources:

Chaplaincy team - Whatever your faith, belief or absence of belief, the Trust Chaplains can provide a listening ear and help to reflect on important life issues. Contact Chaplaincy@UHBristol.nhs.uk or phone (011734)26799.

The Trust has a **Dignity at Work Policy** which says that we should show positive behaviours to each other. It also describes the informal and formal opportunities for resolution.

