

## Optimising staff preparedness, wellbeing, and functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic response

Pandemic Stage	Technical Capacity	Staff Challenges	Staff Own Actions	Interventions for Staff	Corporate Actions Senior Execs/Managers
<b>Preparation for Covid-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and anticipating</li> <li>• Gaining insights and information</li> <li>• Practical Preparation ie PPE and fit testing</li> <li>• Encourage simulation (“dry runs”) of safety protocols and procedures, to facilitate embedding knowledge to increase safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipatory anxiety vs. possible denial - potential for conflict</li> <li>• If PPE/fit testing delayed &gt; more stress</li> <li>• May feel overwhelmed at prospect</li> <li>• Physical/emotional signs of tension</li> <li>• Information overload vs. lack information</li> <li>• Realisation reduced/absence agreed leave</li> <li>• Reasonable identification of limits to practice</li> <li>• Potential fear of reprisal relating difficult decisions</li> <li>• May already be struggling due to work or unrelated issue</li> <li>• Be aware of the <i>Stress Response Curve</i>*</li> <li>• Concern over transmission to vulnerable relatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimise ‘Personal batteries’</li> <li>• Make <i>Personal Wellbeing Plan</i>*</li> <li>• Home contingency planning</li> <li>• Self-isolation planning</li> <li>• Work within own competencies but learn new skills to help others</li> <li>• Focus on what can be reasonably undertaken</li> <li>• Try to anticipate likely individual challenges both professional and personal.</li> <li>• Make a <i>Safety Plan</i>* - See <a href="http://StayingSafe.net">StayingSafe.net</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage self-care</li> <li>• Good advice regarding COVID-19 safety protocols</li> <li>• Start regular supportive meetings with colleagues</li> <li>• Commence <i>End of Shift huddles</i>* and regular supportive <i>Team Review Meetings</i>*</li> <li>• (see full details below)</li> <li>• Optional 1:1 Coaching for senior staff</li> <li>• Ensure staff are aware of range of support options available including occupational health.</li> <li>• May need counselling support – by telephone/videolink (avoid over-medicalisation)</li> <li>• “Marathon not a sprint”: maximise regular rostered short periods of leave and annual leave whenever possible</li> <li>• Clear communication channels with clear escalation if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop regular communication channels e.g. daily emails at same time: use same wording format</li> <li>• FAQs updated daily with option to feed into process</li> <li>• Develop Media Plan: focus on certainty, transparent, honest</li> <li>• Remove non-urgent business-as-usual tasks ASAP and extend deadlines (e.g. non-essential mandatory training, job planning, appraisals, KPI)</li> <li>• Ensure active monitoring of staff wellbeing and PPE availability are standing agenda items in COVID-19 Management Meetings</li> <li>• Managers need support and coaching to avoid inadvertent overbearing approach.</li> <li>• Harness/accept pro-bono offers of coaching</li> <li>• ‘Open door’ policy in person/remotely</li> <li>• Senior staff highly ‘visible’ and approachable</li> <li>• Involve chaplaincy services</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Early phase</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single/small number of cases</li> <li>• Potential for fast shifting caseloads (empty ITU suddenly filling)</li> <li>• Full technical capacity</li> <li>• Vigilance regarding sufficient resources</li> <li>• Some ethical dilemmas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipatory anxiety heightened</li> <li>• Increased psychosomatic symptoms</li> <li>• Increased awareness of own symptoms</li> <li>• May feel overwhelmed by responsibilities</li> <li>• Possible denial/some on overdrive</li> <li>• Most will be coping with the 'new normal'</li> <li>• Potential fear of reprisal relating to difficult decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build new teams</li> <li>• Learn new self-care strategies</li> <li>• Actively use <i>Personal Wellbeing Plan*</i></li> <li>• Work within own competencies, but learning new skills to help others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal peer-support</li> <li>• Create 'buddy' support</li> <li>• Pair up experienced with inexperienced staff</li> <li>• Start support forums (in-person and on-line)</li> <li>• Consider real time &amp; regular weekly support</li> <li>• <i>End of shift huddles*</i>,</li> <li>• Regular supportive <i>Team Review Meetings*</i></li> <li>• May be able to access Liaison/psychology</li> <li>• Home-based tasks when staff well and self-isolating to support sense of being useful</li> </ul> <p>THIS SECTION WILL BE EXPANDED SHORTLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular communication channels and consistent Media Plan as above</li> <li>• Encourage home-based tasks when staff well and self-isolating, to support sense of being useful</li> <li>• Provide increased levels of supervision and ensure no one is pressured into a role that provokes overwhelming anxiety and stress</li> <li>• Active monitoring of staff wellbeing and PPE availability standing agenda item COVID-19 Management Meetings</li> <li>• Managers need support and coaching to avoid inadvertent overbearing approach</li> <li>• Remember 'marathon not a sprint'</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mid-phase</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many new cases daily</li> <li>• Strain in technical capacity due to insufficient equipment and staff sickness, covering for colleagues, redeployment anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distress and worry increase</li> <li>• Some staff not coping and already overwhelmed</li> <li>• Many habituated to 'new normal'</li> <li>• Some on 'overdrive'</li> <li>• Starting to deplete personal reserves:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on 'circle of influence'</li> <li>• Focus on supportive teamwork</li> <li>• Practice developing psychological and cognitive strategies</li> <li>• Conscious attempts to establish a routine for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise drinks/food/rest/sleep</li> <li>• Strategic comfort breaks and rest periods (and avoid caffeinated drinks prior to shift) to optimise comfort whilst conserving stocks of PPE</li> <li>• Consolidate supportive meetings</li> <li>• Ensure regular 'offload'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active monitoring of staff wellbeing and PPE availability standing agenda item COVID-19 Management Meetings</li> <li>• Regular communication channels and consistent Media Plan as above</li> <li>• Ensure successes are shared, no matter how small</li> <li>• Vigilant to monitoring resources adequate</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenging ethical decisions will need support process from regulatory organisations, professional bodies and senior staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Running on empty' and starting to burnout</li> <li>'Staying strong' for patients</li> <li>Potential fear of reprisal relating difficult to decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relaxation/sleep hygiene</li> <li>Avoid excess caffeine/alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal 'buddy' each shift</li> <li>May need intensive support</li> <li>Clear communication channels with clear escalation if needed</li> </ul> <p>THIS SECTION WILL BE EXPANDED SHORTLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider additional practical support for staff to allow to stay at work</li> <li>Redeploy some staff to support staff caring for COVID-19 patients</li> <li>Managers need support and coaching to avoid inadvertent overbearing approach.</li> <li>Remember 'marathon not a sprint'</li> </ul>
<b>Peak-phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case overload ++++</li> <li>Insufficient Capacity due to patient numbers</li> <li>May need national review of boundaries of individual scope of practice</li> <li>Challenging ethical decisions will need support process by senior staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distressed due personal impact</li> <li>Likely to have affected family/friends</li> <li>'Altruistic Distress'</li> <li>Feeling overwhelmed +++</li> <li>May feel unable to cope ++</li> <li>Staff 'running on empty' &amp; burnout ++</li> <li>Potential work conflict due to excess stress</li> <li>Potential fear of reprisal relating difficult decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on 'circle of influence'</li> <li>Focus on supportive teamwork</li> <li>Use psychological, cognitive and self-compassion strategies constantly</li> <li>Conscious attempts relax/sleep hygiene</li> <li>Avoid 'overdrive'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise drinks/food/rest/sleep</li> <li>Strategic comfort breaks and rest periods (and avoid caffeinated drinks prior to shift) to optimise comfort whilst conserving stocks of PPE</li> <li>Compassionate management</li> <li>'Buddy system' every shift</li> <li>Opportunistic support</li> <li>Regular supportive <i>Team Review Meetings*</i></li> <li>Support 'off load' time built into shift</li> <li>May need 1:1 or small group support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active monitoring of staff wellbeing and PPE availability standing agenda item COVID-19 Management Meetings</li> <li>Regular communication channels and consistent Media Plan as above</li> <li>Ensure successes are shared, no matter how small</li> <li>Consider additional practical support for staff to allow to stay at work</li> <li>Redeploy some staff to support staff caring for COVID-19 patients</li> <li>Liaise with external bodies as required</li> <li>Managers need support and coaching to avoid inadvertent overbearing approach.</li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communication channels with clear escalation if needed</li> </ul>	
<b>Tail off phase</b>  <b>NB timeline is not yet unknown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical capacity OK</li> <li>• Minor ethical dilemmas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff ‘running on empty’</li> <li>• Many with burnout</li> <li>• Potential retrospective guilt</li> <li>• Potential fear of reprisal relating difficult decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on supporting self and others</li> <li>• Use psychological and cognitive strategies when required</li> <li>• Focus on compassion self and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassionate management</li> <li>• Regular supportive <i>Team Review Meetings*</i></li> <li>• Watch and wait and refer/Occupational Health</li> <li>• More formal psychological help if and when required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active monitoring of staff wellbeing and PPE availability standing agenda item COVID-19 Management Meetings</li> <li>• Regular communication channels and consistent Media Plan as above</li> <li>• Ensure share successes, no matter how small</li> <li>• Liaise with external bodies as required</li> <li>• ‘Open door’ policy in person/remotely</li> </ul>
<b>Post COVID-19</b>  <b>NB timeline is not yet unknown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full technical capacity</li> <li>• Still reduced staff functioning/reduced numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect a delayed response</li> <li>• Potential retrospective guilt</li> <li>• Mitigate staff distress and/or burnout</li> <li>• Fear reprisal for difficult decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on supporting self and others</li> <li>• Use psychological and cognitive strategies if required</li> <li>• Focus on compassion self and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassionate management</li> <li>• Prioritise annual/study leave</li> <li>• Watch and wait and refer/Occ Health</li> <li>• More formal psychological help if and when required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers need support and coaching to avoid inadvertent overbearing approach.</li> <li>• Open door on offer as needed</li> <li>• Plan team building activities</li> </ul>

### IMPORTANT

- This is an unprecedented situation that none of us have previously had to contend with.
- We must remember that all of us, however junior or senior, may be feeling out of our depth, which is an entirely normal and reasonable response.
- However, with planning and preparation and working as a collective we can support each other to do our very best.
- We will need to be creative, pool resources and also consider harnessing non-NHS people for support tasks and tasks to optimise our performance.