Looking after yourself during COVID-19: advice for healthcare workers

It is normal to feel under pressure in the current situation. It doesn't mean you can't do your job or that you are weak.

You may feel stressed for many reasons such as

- the amount of work
- being uncertain about the future
- having to make difficult decisions about patients' care
- worrying about taking the virus home with you and infecting others
- less contact with family and friends

Stress can lead to

- feeling overwhelmed
- finding it difficult to think clearly
- feeling exhausted
- tension in working relationships

This is a marathon and not a sprint. To make it to the finish line you need to look after both your physical and mental health. You can't look after your patients unless you look after yourself. So…

Take care of yourself

- Take regular breaks and find time to unwind between shifts
- Get enough sleep
- Eat enough healthy food
- Exercise regularly

Be kind to yourself

- Make room for your feelings - feeling upset or worried is not a sign of weakness
- Think about how you usually cope at times of stress and use these strategies
- Recognise and give yourself credit for all that you are doing

Stay connected

- Keep in touch with family and friends – by phone or social media if necessary
- Check how your colleagues are doing and support each other
- Recognise that different people will cope in different ways

Manage information

- Too much information can be overwhelming. Keep work-related COVID updates to key times. Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news
- Obtain information from trusted sources and focus on facts not speculation

Avoid using tobacco, alcohol and drugs to cope

Make use of available support

Information about local support services here

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