

MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT DURING COVID-19



MAY 2020

Public Mental Health and COVID-19: KEY MESSAGES

A lot of attention is focused on mental health and coping with the impact of the pandemic. Some of it helpful, some of it less so. How messages are framed is crucial. Creating the impression that poor mental health is inevitable can lead to increased feelings of distress and hopelessness. Messages of hope and recovery are more likely to lead to people seeking help.

There's never been a better time to promote talking about mental health. Almost everyone is experiencing

the loss of things they may have taken for granted: loss of social interaction; loss of livelihoods; and for some loss of health or loved ones. Key public mental health messages are important: promoting wellbeing, creating new habits, simple things that structure the day, give us a boost or make us feel connected. Practical tips and sharing positive stories will help people do the right things to look after themselves in the coming weeks and months, making them able to cope better and meet the challenges ahead.

Psychological First Aid Training

NES have developed an online training module (available on TURAS) designed to support anyone to deliver psychological first aid (PFA) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. PFA is a humane, supportive and flexible response to people who are in distress or

suffering during or after crises or emergencies.

Find out more here:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28063/coronavirus-covid-19/psychosocial-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-staff>

Psychological services public helpline for Covid-19 distress: 01698 687 567

NHS Lanarkshire psychological services are running a helpline for members of the public experiencing difficulties with anxiety, low mood and other distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. The helpline provides a combination of information and signposting, plus a call-back service for people who

are experiencing more severe distress.

The lines are open from 10am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

For more information:

<https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/novel-corona-virus-covid-19/psychological-wellbeing/>

Supporting Staff

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our staff is a priority and we have been working alongside psychological services, salus and the wider partnership on how best to do this and to ensure helpful resources such as Mind To Listen, Elament, Self-Care and Stress Management leaflets, posters, wallet cards etc are freely available. We have managed to deliver some socially distanced suicide

prevention training to call handlers on the Practical Partnership Helplines and are exploring online options for further delivery. Wobble rooms, relaxations spaces and on-site psychological first aid have been prioritised on all clinical sites (acute and off-site), and further work is developing on similar support for community based staff across health and social care.

Directory of Community Supports

Alongside colleagues, we have pulled together a list of local and national support services across a wide range of issues from: COVID-19 specific supports; bereavement; older adults and dementia; children and young people; domestic violence;

addiction and recovery; autism; advocacy and financial support; carers and general wellbeing. The Directory has been uploaded to the staff support and wellbeing page on First Port and is continually updated.

Suicide Prevention

Formally recorded national statistics on suicides are reported a year retrospectively. In Lanarkshire, details of suicides are collected live time through close working with the police, so that where possible we can look for trends and act promptly to prevent deaths. Whilst it's difficult and potentially unhelpful to extrapolate trends from local data, the data we are collecting suggest fewer suicides across Lanarkshire (around 37% reduction) compared the same period this time last year. The reasons for this and its relation to the COVID-19 pandemic are unclear.

Health Scotland have currently suspended all formal suicide prevention training (due to social distancing), although the Suicide Prevention

Animations (Informed Level) are still available to all staff via TURAS. We are also exploring the quality of alternative online training options.

The Samaritans have produced a helpful briefing regarding the media reporting of suicide. Linking the current situation with suicide can lead to increased feelings of distress and hopelessness. Research shows that positive stories of coping and recovery can encourage people to seek help and are associated with fewer suicides.

A Suicide Prevention Lanarkshire Summit is being planned for September 2020. This is likely to be an online event with keynotes and workshops being streamed live.

Care to Share

Stigma Free Lanarkshire have launched a Care to Share Campaign and are seeking stories of coping with lockdown, quarantine and isolation in recognition that positive stories can inspire others and help promote conversations about mental health.

For leaflets, further information or to send a photo and/or quote to the team.

Contact #CareToShare,
email: sfl@lanarkshirelinks.org.uk
or on social media @SFLanarkshire

Online Stress Control

Stress Control has gone online!
Stress Control is being live streamed two sessions a week on YouTube. Each session will repeat four times. For dates and times, see the timetable on the website. The sessions will be led by Dr Jim White, consultant clinical psychologist, who created the

class and has taught most of the trainers working across Lanarkshire.

Find out more here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjUJQqRfZgE>

Or visit the stress control website:

www.stresscontrol.org

Clear Your Head

A national campaign to help people cope with the COVID-19 pandemic was launched by the Scottish Government on the 21st April along with an interactive website: www.clearyourhead.scot

The campaign highlights the practical things we can do to help us feel better whilst continuing to stay at home, including: Keeping to a routine;

Moving more. Staying active to boost your mood;
Taking a break; Limit your access to social media if you feel things are getting on top of you;
Making time for yourself; Keeping in touch. The interactive website and resources are evidenced based ways of looking after yourself and staying resilient.

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