

PHE Support and Advice – Wellbeing for AHPs

Looking after ourselves and our colleagues

The impact of COVID-19 will have taken its toll on all of us in some way. Many allied health professionals have been working extra hours, either responding to COVID-19 directly or backfilling to enable others to do so. Some will have been unable to respond because of health conditions, place of work or other personal circumstances and this has been stressful too; I've heard AHPs expressing feelings of guilt related to not being able to help.

As we prepare for what could be a difficult winter, now is the time to focus on looking after ourselves and our colleagues.

What steps can we take now to build resilience for the coming months?

I've collated six ways we can focus on health and wellbeing. It is not an exhaustive list and you could take some time with your colleagues to think about what else might help you as individuals or as a team.

1. Think about when you'll take time to rest. Plan in some time off work now for the months ahead to make sure that you can take a break to re-charge your batteries. Schedule breaks during the day when you can.
2. Flu vaccination will be even more important this year to protect ourselves, our families and our patients: don't forget to book yours.
3. Look after your mental wellbeing and that of your colleagues. It's normal to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation, especially if you are over-tired. Share your concerns with others you trust; doing so may help them too. Notice how your colleagues are and take time to talk.
4. In a crisis, we do our best with the information and resources we have available. The pace of work combined with virtual working environments can impact on working relationships so it's important to remember everyone is doing their best and avoid putting unnecessary pressure on yourself and your colleagues. Don't be afraid to accept help if offered and ask for help if needed
5. Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly.
6. Check out [Every Mind Matters](#) for useful information about managing stress, improving sleep and protecting your mental wellbeing.

Thank you for everything you are doing for others. Your role has been – and will be – invaluable. However, you can only continue to help others if you look after yourself, so consider this part of your professional duty and not just a 'nice to do'.