

# Supporting Staff - Quick Guide for Managers

COVID-19 has generated unprecedented additional pressures and uncertainties for health and social care services. Many of you will be tasked with forming and leading newly grouped 'teams'. The following suggestions may be helpful in supporting staff through this time.

## What can I do?

### **Staffing -**

'This is a marathon, not a sprint'. While this situation is undoubtedly a crisis, it is unlikely to be short-term. It may be helpful to focus on longer term occupational capacity rather than repeated short-term crisis responses. Rotate exposure to the most challenging tasks and pair more experienced people with those who more recently qualified or newly arrived.

### **Promote Breaks -**

breaks are essential and may require your initiation and support. If possible, find a space where staff can go to for a short rest when needed.

### **Hydration and Nutrition -**

Consider how this can be facilitated. Are there any specific changes that could be made to the work environment to facilitate opportunities for hydration and nutrition?

### **Flexible Working -**

Implement flexible schedules for workers where this is possible (e.g. working from home, perhaps on rotational basis).

### **Support Connections -**

Bringing the team together for updates and check-ins (using online facilities such as Lync, Zoom or Microsoft Teams) to help people feel connected even if working remotely and enable you to have a sense of how people are doing.

## Highlight Supports -

Ensure staff are aware of where they can access support services (e.g. helplines, drop-ins, staff wellbeing websites, counselling services).

# What is important for teams in times of difficulty?

## 1. Psychological Safety

*Clear direction and leadership* can help with containment of anxiety. Be open and honest. You don't need to be an expert.

## 2. Belonging

Demonstrating a sense of empathy with your staff helps people feel understood and valued. Make sure you are able to reach everyone. This may involve the use of different forms of communication but will be appreciated by those you reach.

## 3. Purpose (Mattering)

With people working above and beyond usual levels, it is important for people to feel connected with a sense of purpose. Remind your staff of the importance of the work they are doing and the contribution they are making to our wider community at a time of significant challenge.

## 4. Don't forget your own wellbeing

What is good for staff is also good for managers. Remember to take care of your own wellbeing as you lead others.

## Points to consider

- What do we already have in place that helps support, nurture or reinforce the team?
- Is there something else we could do?
- What would need to happen for this to be possible?