

AFTER THE STORM: LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF FOLLOWING THE INITIAL CRISIS PHASE OF THE PANDEMIC

The first wave is over but life has yet to return to normal. Many of us are now beginning to take stock of what has happened to us over the last several months and to reflect on the personal and professional impact it has had.

Now is a particularly important time to pay attention to our own wellbeing. Sometimes we may need to make little adjustments in the way we cope. There are many resources that can help us do that – many of these are listed in the daily Pause Button emails. [Here](#) is a link to all the Pause Buttons so that you can look for things that might help.

Recognising when we need extra help

Sometimes we may need extra help. For some, things that we were coping with before the pandemic have bubbled over. For others, we still need to come to terms with what has happened. Below is a list of signs that you might benefit from some extra support just now:

- Withdrawing from social contacts/isolating yourself
- Lack of enjoyment in normal activities (or lack of motivation to find new ones)
- Feeling persistently low in mood and unhappy
- Drinking more alcohol than you usually would or using recreational drugs
- Feeling anxious to the extent that it affects your daily functioning
- Feeling unusually jumpy or irritable.
- Being more self-critical about yourself at work, or feeling less confident about work
- Strong and persistent feelings of guilt, shame or inadequacy
- Feeling 'cut-off' or unable to empathise with patients
- Sleep difficulties or nightmares
- Being distressed by memories or images that have stuck with you and you can't seem to shake off
- Overwhelming fear of a second wave, or of getting or transmitting COVID-19
- Being preoccupied with 'what ifs'

Asking yourself whether any of these are true for you may help you think about whether it would be useful to access some help. The following are options for support:

Accessing support

Employee Assistance Programme

- Unlimited Freephone access 24 hours a day, every day of the year for personal and work related issues.
- Short term counselling and support by telephone and face to face
- Support and referral for longer term issues.
- Information services for any practical and day-to-day issues.
- Management support and referral services.
- On-line counselling, supporting articles and wellbeing advice.

Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Service is provided by a fully trained experienced qualified professional team which includes physicians, specialist nurse practitioners, nurse advisors, clinical support workers, managers and administrative assistants. The service also has access to advice from psychiatrists, psychologists, counselling and physiotherapy. Each element of service will be provided by the most appropriate professional for the task.

Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service

The service offers a range of support from self-help videos and courses to individual therapy. The website can be found [here](#)