

## Staff Wellbeing & Risk

Personal and workplace issues can result in staff members experiencing stress, difficulties with wellbeing, or burnout. Some staff members may experience mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety. These difficulties can manifest in poor performance at work. The following may be warning signs that staff are struggling with their wellbeing or mental health, especially if this is a change from their usual behaviour:

- Not achieving agreed tasks
- Appearing detached; not engaging with patients and colleagues
- Appearing hopeless; using patient-blaming or dehumanising language.
- Avoidant of patients, relatives, their manager, or of particular tasks.
- Appearing to have a 'short fuse' with clients and colleagues
- Over-reacting or under-reacting to risk issues.

If staff are presenting with any of the above, the first step should be a supportive conversation with their manager. They will benefit from practical support during their working hours (e.g. with difficult work tasks; encouragement to have a rest or meal break) and signposting to assistance around practical issues (e.g. finances). They should be encouraged to use their existing networks for support (e.g. colleagues, manager, families).

### Further Support

However, some staff may need more support. The highest quality, quickly available and completely free Psychological Therapies are available in every borough from 'IAPT' if staff persistently experience the following:

- feeling upset or fearful most of the time
- feeling jumpy most of the time
- nightmares
- frequent memories of a traumatic event intruding on day-to-day life
- problems managing day-to-day responsibilities, such as going to work or caring for family
- high levels of anger/aggressive impulses
- thoughts about harming self or others
- increase in alcohol consumption/recreational drug use

*Please see the Resources leaflet for more information on IAPT and how to refer.*

If staff are experiencing other difficulties and need help with housing, domestic violence, or immigration issues please see the signposting document.

### Difficult Conversations

If you are concerned about whether someone might harm themselves or someone else, it is really important to talk to them. *Remember that talking about suicide (or other difficult topics) does not make the situation worse or more likely to happen.*

When talking to staff about how they are doing, don't accept "I'm fine" as an answer. Be gentle but persistent. Keep talking and find out how they are really doing.

### Risk

If you are concerned about a staff member and whether there is a suicide risk, the following protocol should be used:

- Ask if they have any thoughts of suicide. It may be easier to say things like "wanting to end it all", "wishing you weren't alive".
- Ask if the staff member has a plan or method in mind. As well as check to see if they feel as though they can keep themselves safe.
- If the staff member has a plan or method in mind, and/or states that they cannot keep themselves safe then ask them to promise to stay safe until you or a friend can accompany them to attend A&E.
- If they are not going to harm themselves immediately, then agree with them how they will keep themselves safe until you can follow up with them eg. throw away any pills or knives. Be transparent: *"I'm worried about you and want to help you keep yourself safe and make sure we can get in contact with you later on"*.
- If they are not in immediate risk and can keep themselves safe, ask if they know how to get help quickly (999) and whether they would reach out for help when feeling suicidal.
- Finally provide them with information on how they can get help (see Resources leaflet).

