**Information for health professionals**

**Enhancing psychosocial resilience and providing psychological interventions for people affected by Covid-19**

We are all affected, directly or indirectly, by the covid-19 crisis. People who have not been directly affected are still experiencing social isolation, loss of support networks, financial impacts, and ongoing uncertainty about the future.

Effective psychosocial support can help people to adjust and cope with the impact of Covid-19, and potentially prevent the development of mental health problems. Most people will not require formal psychosocial intervention but will likely benefit from practical, pragmatic support provided in an empathic manner following the principles of psychological first aid. Some guidance on providing psychological first aid can be found here:

[Skills for psychological recovery following disasters guide](http://www.psid.org.au/Assets/Files/ACPMH-Quick-Guide-SPR.pdf)

Important interventions include:

* Talking to people about the types of feelings that they are experiencing. For most people, these feelings will gradually reduce as their natural recovery occurs, and they start to adjust to what they have experienced. Therefore, empathic normalisation and reassurance is really important at this stage. It can also be important to provide information to people about looking after their wellbeing during this time:
* [Mind guidance on coronavirus and your wellbeing](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/);
* [Public Health Wales guidance on 'Staying Well at home'.](https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/staying-well-at-home/)
* Some people may want to talk in detail about stressful and traumatic events, others won’t. Either is fine – you don’t need to encourage or discourage this at this stage.
* Covid-19 may be associated with a range of stressors for people. These may include financial and work problems, and loss of social support networks. Helping people to address these, by facilitating problem-solving, and signposting to support organisations, can be very beneficial
* <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/> ;
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>
* Relationships and social support are protective factors following stressful and traumatic events. Helping people to establish or re-establish relationships through the use of technology can be very helpful. Some people, including older adults, may require support and advice to use new technologies.
* [PHW guidance on how to stay connected with others during social isolation;](https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/staying-well-at-home/staying-connected/)
* [age UK 'check in and chat' support service for older adults](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/information-advice/age-cymru-advice/check-in-and-chat/)
* It can be important for people to re-establish a routine, although this will need to be adapted for people socially isolating. A routine, with a balance of self-care, achievement, (virtual) social activities and physical exercise helps to gain a sense of normality, helps to improve mood and reduce the risk of depression;
* [PHW guidance on keeping active during social isolation](file://localhost/%28https/%3A%3Aphw.nhs.wales%3Atopics%3Alatest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19%3Astaying-well-at-home%3Akeeping-physical%29)
* If people are experiencing sleep problems, supporting them to develop good sleep hygiene can be very useful.
* [NCMH guidance on sleep problems](https://www.ncmh.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sleep-booklet-A5-leaflet-WEB.pdf)
* [NHS 'Every Mind Matters' sleep advice](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/)
* It is common to experience a range of strong and overwhelming feelings, although other people may be feeling numb and cut-off from their emotions. High levels of uncertainty can make people feel very worried and anxious. They might find it helpful to use grounding and relaxation tools, or use other self-help resources. Advice on how to manage social media use may also be helpful.
* [PHW guidance 'how are you feeling?'](https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/staying-well-at-home/how-are-you-feeling/);
* [CBT tips on coping with anxiety during coronavirus](http://letstalkaboutcbt.libsyn.com/coping-with-anxiety-about-coronavirus)
* Some people may develop particular difficulties. People likely to be most affected by the Covid-19 crisis include frontline workers and people who have experienced loss of loved ones, or who have themselves been seriously unwell and may have required critical care. Another high risk group will be those who have experienced financial difficulty and/or are unable to work.
* [NCMH covid-19 guidance: who is most at risk of developing mental health problems? (Jon Bisson talking head).](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=silfVPil7Mo&feature=youtu.be)
* [BPS guidelines on meeting psychological needs of people severely affected by covid](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Meeting%20the%20psychological%20needs%20of%20people%20recovering%20from%20severe%20coronavirus.pdf)
* Following shocking and traumatic events, people may experience symptoms of low mood and depression ( [NCMH information leaflet on depression](http://www.ncmh.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Depression.pdf) ) and/or a range of anxiety problems such as traumatic stress symptoms including PTSD, ([NCMH information leaflet on PTSD](http://www.ncmh.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Post-traumatic-stress-disorder.pdf) ) ; generalised or health anxiety and panic ( [NCMH information leaflet on anxiety and panic](https://www.ncmh.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Anxiety-and-panic-disorders.pdf) ); or concerns about contamination ( [OCDUK - OCD and coronavirus survival tips](https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/) ).
* Many people are likely to benefit from psychoeducation and signposting to self-help and support, and these interventions may be sufficient to help people cope with these problems. However, some people may develop psychological or mental health difficulties that will require further intervention. More information about types of mental health problems can be found here:
* [RCP information about different types of mental health problems](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders)
* Where possible, actively monitor people who have been directly affected, especially those exhibiting mental health symptoms, whilst encouraging their psychosocial coping skills.
* People may also be experiencing loss and grief, either to a previous loss, or due to losses related to Covid-19. Guidance for supporting people with loss can be found in these links below:
* [Cruse information about grieving and isolation during covid](https://www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus/grieving-and-isolation);
* [BPS guidance on dealing with loss and grief during covid.](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Supporting%20yourself%20and%20others.pdf)
* If individuals are experiencing significant traumatic stress symptoms, including nightmares or flashbacks, after one month, then the evidence suggests that they may benefit from trauma-focused therapy. This can be trauma-focused CBT, either face-to-face; remotely (through video-conferencing); by telephone; or through an internet-based guided self-help intervention. (link to webpage *‘guidelines for working remotely’*). EMDR should also be offered if the person has a preference for this.
* <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng116>.
* Front-line workers may be particularly likely to experience stress and overwhelming feelings in response to their experiences at work. Useful information about supporting their psychosocial resilience can be found in these links.
* [Mind guidance on 'Coping as a key worker' during covid-19](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coping-as-a-key-worker/)
* [NCMH information about the HHP (Help for Health Professionals) support service](https://www.ncmh.info/2020/04/16/mental-health-support-scheme-wales/);
* [BPS guidance on responding to the psychological needs of healthcare staff](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/News/News%20-%20Files/Psychological%20needs%20of%20healthcare%20staff.pdf)
* Some people may have pre-existing psychological vulnerabilities or traumatic experiences. These people may be more likely to develop psychological difficulties, including PTSD and complex PTSD, from Covid-19, and may experience less benefit from trauma-focused therapies. These people may require more specialist psychological or pharmacological interventions [UKPTS statement on complex PTSD](http://www.ukpts.co.uk/links_6_2920929231.pdf)
* Other helpful resources for professionals can be found here
* <https://www.traumagroup.org/>
* <https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19/>
* [**http://www.wales.nhs.uk/easc/nhswalesmhcc**](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/easc/nhswalesmhcc)
* [**https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-on-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-in-emergency-settings**](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-on-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-in-emergency-settings)