

Self-Care for Front Line Staff during COVID-19

This is a time of great challenge to all. Each day brings different news, and with that, changes in how you work. The speed at which the current situation has arrived and the volumes of work generated by this, can be difficult to manage. Your role in this crisis is critical in keeping our country operational. It may have an impact on you and your wellbeing so self-care is essential.

As front-line staff, you will be in contact with many people in distress. Here are some things to consider:

- When a person is in distress, it is important to remain calm so as not to absorb their distress. To assist in bringing about calmness, try to slow your breathing down, concentrating on the out-breath.
- Remember, the information that you are giving the person is the best and most up-to-date information available to you
- It is helpful to have a few stock responses such as:
“I am very sorry to hear you are going through all that, this is what I can help you with today” or “I understand what you are saying and can hear how difficult this is for you, so what can I help you with today?”
- It is important to follow DEASP protocols if you encounter aggressive behaviour
- If you are greatly impacted by a call, take a little time out, get some air, some water and speak with your manager. If you need further support there and then, contact your EAO. Alternatively, call the CSEAS after your shift. Individual EAO’s contact details are below.
- REMEMBER you are not responsible for this pandemic, you are doing your best to help each person that contacts you. Acknowledge at the end of each of each working day, the work you have done.

You are working in a very different and challenging environment. Many staff are in new roles, on temporary re-deployment and perhaps still upskilling. This may also be a source of additional stress for both experienced and re-deployed staff. The workplace may at times be a stressful and anxious place – working together can prevent misunderstandings, interpersonal difficulties, miscommunication, misplaced annoyance.

In times like this your self-care is imperative. The following tips may be helpful:

- Take your breaks
- Eat well
- Stay hydrated
- Try to get some fresh air during the day
- Find time for physical exercise – no matter how little
- Allow yourself some reward/treat/you time
- Express your emotions appropriately
- Look to colleagues, family and friends for support
- If you have concerns and worries, talk to somebody about them
- Develop a method to leave work behind you at the end of the day and switch-off
- Practice staying in the moment as much as you can
- Follow HSE guidelines regarding protecting yourself against COVID-19:
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself.html>
- Manage use of social media

You share the concerns and worries of all citizens in our country regarding your own health and that of family, concerns about familial unemployment, financial strains etc... The CSEAS is here to support you and to help you manage your mental health during this very difficult time. If you would like to speak with an Employee Assistance Officer please call us on **Tel: 0761 000 030**, **email: cseas@per.gov.ie** or see www.cseas.per.gov.ie

On-duty Employee Assistance Officer available at 0761 000 030

Monday - Friday: 9am to 8pm

Saturday / Sunday: 12pm to 4pm

Email: cseas@per.gov.ie

www.cseas.per.gov.ie

www.cseas.per.gov.ie/coronavirus-covid19-support



Employee Assistance Officer Contact Details:

| <u>EAO</u> | <u>Areas covered</u> | <u>Mobile number</u> |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Margaret Fagan | Dublin & Wicklow | 087 2529709 |
| Ann Duffy | Wexford | 086 7852751 |
| Antoinette Mahon | Sligo, Donegal & Leitrim | 086 7852782 |
| Bernie Moran | Longford & Westmeath | 087 2604517 |
| Claire Murphy | Carlow, Kilkenny, Offaly & Laois | 086 7514489 |
| Deirdre Farrell | Cavan & Monaghan | 086 8384358 |
| Derek Hollingsworth | Kildare | 086 7777657 |
| Donna Casey | Galway, Mayo, Roscommon | 085 2541708 |
| Claire Delahunt | Tipperary | 086 7514433 |
| Fiona Mortell | Cork & Waterford | 086 8528723 |
| Fran Scott | Meath | 086 8384349 |
| Geraldine Carey | Limerick, Clare, East Galway, Listowel & Tralee | 087 2425136 |
| Rosemary Branagan | Louth | 086 8384355 |
| Philip O'Callaghan | West Cork, South Kerry | 086 8384359 |

On-duty Employee Assistance Officer available at 0761 000 030

Monday - Friday: 9am to 8pm

Saturday / Sunday: 12pm to 4pm

Email: cseas@per.gov.ie

www.cseas.per.gov.ie

www.cseas.per.gov.ie/coronavirus-covid19-support