

Our Ref: Pastoral Care Support for Front Line Staff

Your Ref:

28th April 2020

The Managers  
All Somerset Nursing and Residential Homes

Wynford House  
Lufton Way  
Lufton  
Yeovil  
Somerset  
BA22 8HR

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Dear Manager,

### **Pastoral Support for Care Home Staff**

Firstly, please accept our wholehearted gratitude for all that you are doing under difficult circumstances to continue caring for your residents, whom we know are vulnerable. Thank you; you are making a real difference to people's lives.

I am writing to ensure that you are aware of the support currently available to you and your staff. I would also like to assure you that, over the next days and weeks, we are working hard with our partners to provide you with the best local support when needed.

I know that you will be having tough times personally with difficult conversations and, sometimes, distressing circumstances should any of those people that you care for sadly die. The Oxford [resource](#) on contacting relatives by phone to communicate death of a patient may help when you have to break difficult news if you need any support.

Also, as caring staff, you will each be going through your own reactions of grief to these circumstances as you cope with the four phases of loss (see reference below) and we recognize that you may also need support.

This poster from NHS Scotland presents a good summary of how we all cope in challenging times, and where we can find support presenting key messages. I suggest that you could print one out and put it on a wall for colleagues to see:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28409/quality-improvement-zone/learning-programmes/scottish-quality-and-safety-sqs-fellowship-programme/stress-coping-and-resilience-poster>

St. Margaret's Hospice has a support and advice line which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that all care home staff can access. The number to ring is **01823 333822** or **01935 709480**. St. Margaret's advice line staff will listen to any concerns that you or your teams might have. Residents that you are worried or concerned about do not need to be known to St Margaret's for you to call.

The St. Margaret's Hospice website has a wealth of easy to use training and support resources that you can access directly. Please visit their website and click on the 'what we do' tab <https://www.st-margarets-hospice.org.uk>.

You can also sign up and join the care home ECHO community by emailing [ECHO@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](mailto:ECHO@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk). This will enable you to link and chat via Zoom with many other care homes in Somerset to share learning, case studies and have a specialist on hand to talk through specific subjects that you would like to cover

With regard to support for the whole system, the Somerset LARCH (Listening and Responding to Care Homes) Collaborative Team is making welfare calls twice a week to residential homes (and once a week to the LDA homes) but they are also happy to be contacted by email or telephone any time. This is applicable for Nursing Homes also. You can reach them between 9am and 5pm (including at weekends when one of them will be covering). An email will go out every Friday to all the homes to inform them who will be covering over the weekend. A list of contacts is enclosed.

Finally, I want you to know that what you do is always valued. What you are doing now is above and beyond, and you are being challenged beyond your expectations. On a pastoral support level, please do access [www.people.nhs.uk/help](http://www.people.nhs.uk/help) and share with all of your colleagues. Please do connect with friends and colleagues – and please do not suffer in silence.

With best wishes and heartfelt thanks on behalf of Somerset CCG,

**Dr. Andrew Tresidder**

**Somerset CCG Clinical Lead on Pastoral Care for Frontline Staff**

[Andrew.tresidder@nhs.net](mailto:Andrew.tresidder@nhs.net)

07514067252

#### **Reference:**

##### **1. The Four Phases of Loss**

- Phase 1 - Recognising Loss
- Phase 2 - Trying to Prevent Loss
- Phase 3 - Trying to Recover Loss
- Phase 4 - Letting Go of Loss

The emotions we all feel during this process, as well as possible frustrations and fears, are:

1. Shock and denial
2. Anger and guilt
3. Bargaining and depression
4. Acceptance

During this process, we question ourselves; what we could have done differently, what we would wish to change, or how we can get back what we have lost. This is part of the normal grieving process which ends with acceptance of the outcome. Kindness and forgiveness are vital; both towards others – and particularly towards ourselves. We all struggle at times, so it's important to talk through our worries and concerns. At times of distress, we may feel very alone, a very human feeling which many people experience. Connecting to other people and reaching out for support is shown to help.

There is more information about this process in Health and Self Care for Professionals, free to download from [www.healthandself.care](http://www.healthandself.care) pp. 99-103 and 115-125.

Although fear, shock and distress can freeze us, this is only a temporary phase – we can all move on from the adrenaline response to danger to a calmer state. Just taking three slow regular, rhythmic, abdominal breaths can help us to feel calmer. And, of course, everyone finds that support from colleagues, and professional conversations essential. Pg 42 [www.healthandself.care](http://www.healthandself.care)

## 5. System Support – LARCH

The West Team (Taunton, West Somerset and Sedgemoor):

- Heulwen Thornton Grimes, Senior Care Home In Reach Practitioner, [Heulwen.Thornton-Grimes@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:Heulwen.Thornton-Grimes@tst.nhs.uk) Mobile: 07880433633
- Hana Kennerley Senior Care Home In Reach Practitioner, [Hana.Kennerley@YDH.NHS.UK](mailto:Hana.Kennerley@YDH.NHS.UK) also at [Hana.Kennerley@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:Hana.Kennerley@tst.nhs.uk) Mobile: 07787895240
- Sharon Barnes Senior Care Home In Reach Practitioner [Sharon.barnes@ydh.nhs.uk](mailto:Sharon.barnes@ydh.nhs.uk) Mobile: 07748584534
- Amy Bristow Care Home In Reach Practitioner, [Amy.Bristow@tst.nhs.uk](mailto:Amy.Bristow@tst.nhs.uk)

The East Team (Chard, Ilminster, Langport, South Somerset and Mendip):

- (Lead Nurse LARCH team) Julie Fussell, Senior Care Home In Reach Practitioner , email [Julie.Fussell@YDH.NHS.UK](mailto:Julie.Fussell@YDH.NHS.UK) Mobile: 07976886834
- Tracey Pamplin, Senior Care Home In Reach Practitioner, email [Tracey.Pamplin@ydh.nhs.uk](mailto:Tracey.Pamplin@ydh.nhs.uk) Mobile: 07787 895004
- Judith Glide, Care Home In Reach Practitioner Lead for RESTORE2 training, email [Judith.Glide@YDH.NHS.UK](mailto:Judith.Glide@YDH.NHS.UK) Mobile: 07748580997

On behalf of Nursing Home Support Service – please contact:

- Michelle Bell (Lead), email [michelle.bell9@nhs.net](mailto:michelle.bell9@nhs.net) Mobile: 07880171088

Encs: NHS Scotland Staff Wellbeing Poster, Oxford Resources on Breaking Bad News

## APPENDIX

Oxford Resources on Breaking Bad News –



Oxford Breaking Bad  
News Resource.pdf

NHS Scotland Staff Wellbeing Poster –



NHS Scotland  
Support Poster.pdf