Self-care and supporting your colleagues; tips for healthcare workers

The COVID-19 crisis is difficult for all of us; it is more important than ever to work together, support each other and be kind to ourselves.

It is changing the way we work and we can't always do everything we want to, especially in end-of-life care. Here are some tips you may find useful to support yourself and your colleagues at this challenging time:

- Take your rest breaks, and don't feel guilty about doing it. **We need to nourish ourselves to flourish** and self-care is a necessity during these times.

- Don't be afraid to seek help from your colleagues, even if you're the one in charge.

- Some hospitals are providing a 'wobble room' for staff to go to and have a breather if they need it. They can have a quick nap and some refreshments.

- Acknowledge these times are not normal and that this is very difficult for all of us.

- Supporting people to die well at this time is an enormous challenge. Remember, it is often the small things that matter the most.

- Appreciate and show gratitude when you see acts of kindness: '*thank you for being there*'. '*The way you spoke to that person was so tender and gentle*'.

- A lot of people will be feeling uneasy and worry about doing or saying the wrong things. Getting positive feedback is rewarding and helps us all to validate that we are doing our best. Remember your actions and words count.

- It is important to be kind to yourself and others. Working as a team and appreciating we need to support each other to be able to do this will help.

- Invest in taking the time for self-care activities, and offer support to your colleagues where you can. Remember in all of this; we are never alone, always together.

- At the time of a patient's death, pausing together for a moment in silence at the bedside is a simple but poignant way to honour the person. This would be particularly symbolic where family members were not permitted to be there. It also helps staff to honour the patient's death and acknowledge the profound event that has just happened.

When we feel like we have nothing more to give, we need to look inside ourselves and give what we have there – our time, our kindness, our love. Allow our humanity to be the connection we share with others.

IF YOU WANT TO...
TAKE CARE
OF SOMEONE
TAKE CARE
OF YOURSELF
FIRST

Message taken from a sign in Galway University Hospital with thanks to Nicholas Grundy and GUH Arts Trust