

# Wellbeing initiatives

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It goes without saying that, since its emergence, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and resultant COVID-19 pandemic has further heightened levels of stress and difficulties within the workplace. The risk of burnout and so-called 'COVID fatigue' is rife amongst healthcare professionals. With the advent of a second wave and increasing workplace pressures, the need to protect and support staff and public wellbeing is as crucial as ever.

This is easier said than done. There are multiple factors that influence workplace morale, and with such ongoing uncertainty, it makes it difficult to plan ahead. In the hospital setting, the next question then is: who does this responsibility fall on? Senior management? Administrative staff? Appointed wellbeing leads?

The obvious truth is to say that all of us have a role; whether it be from guiding change from the top down or bottom up, junior healthcare professionals can bear an important positive impact on staff wellbeing.

If you are reading this and wondering: what can I do to help my team? You have come to the right place, as the purpose of this piece is to highlight simple interventions from our own junior-led wellbeing initiative that could feasibly be implemented into most care settings.

During the first wave, we set up a wellbeing board at the main entrance to the hospital. This was updated regularly to display various motivational, educational and inspiring quotes which were broadcasted on

the trust's social media platforms (@bchcdental and @HWBroyalsurrey). Staff were seen to reflect on the quotes, interact with the board, suggest new ones, and share them widely amongst friends and family. This is by no means a novel idea, but is a simple initiative that received overwhelmingly positive feedback and could be easily set up on other trusts.

Currently, a lot of healthcare is focused on learning from errors in order to learn from our mistakes, often reported via DATix, which can foster a 'blame culture' within teams. As an alternative, GREATix is an online tool that can be used to highlight staff excellence and promote positivity. Staff can nominate teams or one another in recognition of excellent care. While its use is growing, many healthcare professionals and management remain unaware of the concept, and efforts can be made to increase its uptake. In this manner, we can learn from excellence and build with each other rather than denigrate each other.

Many wellbeing strategies promote the need to talk to one another; this can be done formally with groups such as Balint groups, or informally after work. However, COVID-19 social distancing makes this difficult to achieve safely. Many healthcare teams have migrated online as a means to sidestep this and we have seen the creation of monthly pub quiz-themed socials, huddles, or games nights, much of which has also been junior-led.

A socially distanced 'end-of-year' awards ceremony can also be used to create a sense of unity and camaraderie within a team. A team of juniors did just this at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, where healthcare



The photo depicts Sunmeet's twin and a colleague with a wellbeing board; they carried out the same initiative at the Royal Surrey County Hospital.

professionals nominated each other for various light-hearted and wholesome categories to mark the end of the year and celebrate their time together. This idea could be scaled down to a ward level or replicated in other groups of trainees.

Overall, we are living in uncertain and unprecedented times, and with no clear end in sight, it is imperative that we look towards supporting one another wherever and however we can. This need not be complicated. Indeed, simple things, done right, can be as effective. The aim of sharing this article was to highlight a few ideas that anyone could implement in order to promote wellbeing in their workplace. If you would like to hear more about any of the initiatives, advice on implementing at your own level, or access to the wellbeing quote bank we created to set up your own board, then feel free to contact me via S.Kandhari@nhs.net.

See also <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41415-021-2639-2>.

## Psychological advice published for dental teams

The Faculty of General Dental Practice UK (FGDP) and College of General Dentistry (CGDent) have published *Dentistry during COVID-19: psychological advice for dental teams, policy makers, and communicators* (<https://bit.ly/2YviQnh>).

Developed by psychologists from the British Psychological Society (BPS) Division of Health Psychology, it offers straightforward suggestions to address

common challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in dental practices, and lists resources and organisations which can support dental professionals' mental wellbeing.

It has been published as an adjunct to *Implications of COVID-19 for the safe management of general dental practice* (<https://bit.ly/36vLjOp>), the CGDent-FGDP guidance on dentistry during the pandemic, which recommends that dental practices

appoint a wellbeing lead and are able to signpost to mental wellbeing services.

The new advice was written by Dr Koula Asimakopoulou of King's College London and Dr Heather Buchanan of the University of Nottingham, and was supported by the BPS COVID-19 Behavioural Science and Disease Prevention Taskforce. It is available at <https://www.fgdp.org.uk/guidance-standards>.