**SELF CARE DURING COVID-19**

These are difficult times and it is ‘okay not to be okay’!

* It is normal to feel anxious, emotional and stressed in the current situation. Feeling this way is no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak.
* Mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing are connected – looking after both is important.

* Take care of your basic needs – stay hydrated, ensure rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, be active even if just for a short walk (especially outdoors) and stay in contact with friends and family. Avoid unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
* Remember you won’t necessarily view things the same way as others – be mindful of their feelings, avoid dramatic language that might panic others and don’t minimise or ridicule their fears.
* Recognise that stress, anxiety or feeling overwhelmed can have an impact on how you make sense of things or process information – be kind to yourself and patient with others.
* Try breathing exercises to help calm a racing mind. Remember your thoughts are just thoughts, not facts. Try not to get too caught up in them. Use coping strategies that you know work for you rather than trying to learn something new.
* If other people’s discussions about the current situation are making you extra anxious, it’s ok to move away and not take part.
* Acknowledge the good things in your life to help reduce constantly focussing on the negative; even recognising the small things like a smile from a stranger, a kind word or a nice cuppa can help.
* The constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel worried. Stick to trusted relevant government websites and if you use Twitter, follow the trusted sites such as Public Health England.
* Some workers may unfortunately experience avoidance by their family or community due to stigma or fear. If possible, staying connected with your loved ones including through digital methods is one way to maintain contact. Turn to your colleagues or team leader for support – your colleagues may be having similar experiences to you.