

## **Top tips for homeworking during the national epidemic**

*With thanks to ICS North East & North Cumbria*

### **The space where you work...**

- Create a space for the work that you can tidy away or close off so work isn't around you all the time.
- Find somewhere where you can maintain confidentiality and concentration.
- Get a headset or use earphones when making calls.
- Make time to get familiar with other IT options such as video calls.
- Prioritise your internet access.
- Think about your posture, the chair you use
- Make sure you have enough light.

### **Boundaries and connections....**

- Let people know if you are in isolation and what times you are available and an alternative contact in an emergency.
- Sound off to colleagues about the strains, find practical solutions, be tolerant and use humour.
- Check in on your own stress levels and ask for help if you need it.
- If you are having a good day, then offer support to others.
- Encourage teams to have communication groups (group text chat – which includes all staff)
- Need to work flexibly but keep to limits
- Keep supervision slots in place, phone in if working from home and regular check ins
- Try to give oneself breaks between calls, especially those that are high threat

### **For managers....**

- Daily Huddles to include conference call option for those working in isolation
- Make sure staff at home are contacted informally by others. Basic compassionate connection may prevent added stress or a referral on for support.
- Allocate a Staff responder to support others but swap regularly
- Recognise that there will be a number of difficulties for staff – swift changing of roles, parenting, work etc – colleagues will be adapting ways to work that they have not experienced before
- Watch out for signs that someone is struggling.
- Accept that some staff may react in ways that you would not but that should not automatically be pathologised.

### **The basics....**

- Get dressed for the day
- Try and create a routine – especially if children are home. It may not be realistic to be able to work 9-5.
- Agree your working schedules with other adults at home.
- Regular drinks but not too much tea and coffee (caffeine)!
- Don't forget meal times and breaks!
- Move about/ stretch – make use of online exercise or meditation programmes, sing or go and walk the dog
- Check in with family and friends, especially those alone or more at risk.
- Find activities that help distract from news, anxiety and work.

### **The household balance....**

- Agree a homeworking / schooling structure with family
- Accepting more 'screen time' may need to be allowed for children
- Be kind to self especially if you can't live up to your expectations
- Be aware of own limits
- Take breaks so you and your children / partner/ friends know what's happening and you get time together (and apart)
- Getting out of the house if you are not self-isolating (remember social distancing)
- Finding time on own
- Check in with work colleagues verbally – be mindful of those who may not have any social contact at home.
- Be mindful that people might be more reactive and not behave in their usual way, try to not take it personally.
- Avoid watching too much news or getting regular news updates where possible, try to limit or set times.
- Talk about something different than work
- Self-care has never been so important – what can you do that you enjoy
- Recovery college online has lots of resources and information for us and our communities <https://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/>
- Find ways of managing the household tension.
- If there are relational difficulties (or domestic abuse) at home, then try to seek help for this
- Have things around you that help you when you feel stressed or overwhelmed
- Be mindful of alcohol use

**Remember that these times are unprecedented, reactions may be unpredictable... connect, forgive and use your own and others' strengths.**