This information is for anyone who may be experiencing unwanted thoughts and feelings about coronavirus. Please read on for a brief overview of common thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours that may be experienced by staff members during this difficult time. Some self-help strategies to help with letting go of that which is out of our control have also been included.

### Thoughts

- “I need to find out more information” e.g. social media, news
- Worst case scenarios
- Over estimating the negative impact of a situation
- Thinking of the same thing over and over and over...
- Trying to predict the future

**Practical strategies**

- Don’t try to stop yourself having these thoughts, the struggle of trying to “JUST STOP THINKING” can make things worse.
- Mindfulness. Focus in on what is happening here and now. Download the Headspace app for free.
- Set aside a strict 10 minutes in the day to focus on the things you are concerned about.
- Consider how would you help a friend who thought this? How would they say it?
- Make time to “get out of your head” and speak to others.

### Emotions

- Worry, Sadness, Fear, Frustration, Disgust, Guilt

It is important to recognise that we experience all emotions on a continuum and that we can experience more than one emotion at a time. This is completely normal, especially when we are trying to process a lot of information.

**Practical strategies**

- Name your feelings. Try to recognise and give a label to your feeling. This can be out loud or in your own mind.
- Notice how your emotions, no matter what, will come and go. Do you feel the same as you did 30 minutes ago? The same as you did 10 days ago?
- Take time to imagine your feelings as a shape. Imagine the colour and the texture. Play with this shape in your mind. What happens if you let the shape drift off?
- Don’t try to fight against your feelings. Just like thoughts, they are there to try and keep us safe.

### Physical Sensations

- Tight chest, heart beating faster, feeling shaky, muscles aching, tense shoulders, poor sleep, feeling ‘hyper-aware’ of potential symptoms

**Practical Strategies**

- Notice the feelings in your body! Give yourself a time to ‘check in’ with your body
- Take a deep breath. In through the nose, hold the breath, and out through the mouth. Allow your body to soothe
- Roll your shoulders up, back and down, and give your upper body a shake to relieve the tension.
- Try to ensure you are as comfortable as possible during your shift. Before you start, have a drink, something to eat, and go to the toilet. Going to the toilet in PPE is hard work!
- Think about your sleep routine; try and wind down before bed, avoid caffeine later in the day / your shift, avoid screens and news before bed, drink a warm milky (non-caffeinated) drink.

### Behaviours

- Compulsively seek information e.g. social media, news
- Neglecting our usual downtime activities
- Self-checking e.g. symptoms, temperature
- Drinking excess alcohol, eating excessive comforting or sugary food

**Practical Strategies**

- Limit access to social media and news sources (for example, only going on social media twice a day for 15 minutes).
- Ensure your information comes from good quality sources
- Engage in meaningful activity that can distract you (try a new hobby or learn a new skill, FaceTime a friend or relative, play a game or watch a film)
- As far as you possibly can, eat a well-balanced and healthy diet. But don’t worry when this doesn’t go to plan!