

#LookingAfterYouToo
Coaching support for all
primary care staff

NHS



Case study



Role and context

The dental practitioner works in a community dental service and has worked there for 8 years. The dental service provides dental care for people who have particular needs or disabilities and are unable to receive treatment in a general dental practice.

Throughout lockdown they worked in both the telephone triage services and treated emergency patients in a community dental hub. COVID-19 meant that some staff members had to shield as per GP or Government advice, but there was "a lot of anxiety among staff about the potential for catching Covid." In the earlier parts of lockdown, the constant updates and lack of clarity in the Government guidelines created "a lot of unknowns and a lot of uncertainty."

Challenge of COVID-19 on own wellbeing

The lockdown had created a back-log of patients and an extensive waiting list, at the time of interview the dental service had recently started seeing patients again, but this involved extensive triaging and patient prioritisation. During this time, they had taken on some elements of leadership and management within the team, so this also required accelerated personal and professional development.

"Finding alternative ways of managing patient expectations through this has been really difficult."

"I wanted some pre-emptive help before I felt the situation became too stressful."

How #LookingAfterYouToo coaching helped

The dental practitioner felt that as a service the team are supportive of each other and a range of wellbeing resources are readily available. However, the #LookingAfterYouToo virtual coaching was appealing. In the first session they discussed with the coach what could be done to improve their effectiveness and impact as a manager and described scenarios where "I can get very wound up." They explained how the coach made them feel very comfortable and "even through the video-conferencing the coach can tell if you are becoming more agitated or relaxed."

The coach was able to contextualise the experiences they were describing and discussed the idea of 'a window of tolerance' that can differ between individuals in stressful situations. The coach provided a range of breathing exercises that could be implemented when they felt the physiological reactions to stress, that would encourage them to pause and regroup.

“The coach was quickly able to see what made me tick and what would be the best approach to take with me.”

“Coaching helps lead you to your own answers and can give you pointers towards resources that can help you cope.”

“Coaching provided me with an efficient way of doing things. I was provided with feedback and options, which is better than wishy-washy fluff you can get in management and HR training.”

They also discussed how the coach provided resources to help with leadership and management – ‘reframing’ was one approach in which situations could be viewed through what is going on presently and how others may be perceiving a situation. They were also introduced to the API model (authority, presence, impact), to help think about colleague interactions and how much of these three values are being used when trying to manage a situation.

Personal impact of the coaching

The dental practitioner had come to the end of their five sessions and reported being able to apply the techniques learnt in a range of situations encountered throughout the day, and that the coaching had been helpful with managing their anxiety. They have recommended the coaching to others in their team and within their network because in comparison to other wellbeing services they found that coaching nudged them to think about how they were reacting, and proactively discuss how this could be changed for the better. They say:

“With the context of Covid and all the related change, I think if I did not have the coaching I would have just got more stressed.”

“If I had not had the coaching, would there have been any behaviour change? The answer to that is most probably no.”

#LookingAfterYouToo is free coaching support available to all primary care staff.

Book your session at a time that suits you.
Sessions are available 7 days a week, either by video or telephone.

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