Take care of yourself at this time

Your employer has a responsibility to protect your health, safety and wellbeing at work. Given the extraordinary situation in dealing with the COVID-19 emergency, below are some tips for looking after your own self-care during these times.

Tips

Maintaining your energy levels and personal reserves is a major factor in helping you cope and preventing exhaustion during the current crisis.

Physical Wellbeing

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: keep hydrated, eat and sleep well, and exercise
- It is important that you take ‘at work’ breaks
- Don’t feel guilty about taking your days off
- Avoid negative coping strategies – excess alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.
- If you are coming off a long shift and do feel too exhausted to drive take a rest before driving and follow the advice of the RSA: pull over in a safe place, sip coffee and sleep for 15 minutes.

Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing

- Your stress levels and psychosocial wellbeing are as important as your physical health
- Remember it is normal to feel sad, stressed, anxious or overwhelmed during a crisis. These feelings are no reflection on your ability to do your job.
- Watch out for signs of stress
- Use strategies that have worked for you in the past to manage stress rather than learning new ones.
- Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious or distressed.

Social Wellbeing

- The support and contact with family, friends and colleagues at this time is vital.
- Some nurses and midwives may have to minimise direct contact with family and friends. If possible, staying connected with your loved ones, for example using video messaging.
- Remember to plan and enjoy contact with family and friends (even if it is virtual).

Support

- Talk to someone you trust or seek assistance from a counsellor
- If you feel you require further support. You can contact the INMO Members 24 Hour Counselling Helpline 1850 670407 or 01 8818047.
- Support is also available from the HSE Employee Assistance and Counselling Services https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/

PPE

- Staff should have the protective and medical equipment they require to do their jobs safely and professionally. If you are experiencing any issues around PPE, please contact the INMO’s PPE freephone hotline on 1800 320 087, or text 087 719 7188.