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# The Role of Mindfulness for NHS Staff during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Mindfulness-based therapy is effective, but it is not a “quick fix” and is not suitable for use as a crisis intervention. However, it could be used for staff who have already done an 8-week course, as Mindfulness booster sessions could be immediately helpful in this situation.

There are a range of interventions currently being considered to support staff currently under stress because of the Covid-19 pandemic. For this group at present, we would recommend approaches designed to lower acute anxiety, for example, applied relaxation training, or safety and stabilisation techniques. Mindfulness will be most effective when the acute stress episode has passed.

Mindfulness-based therapy is now used widely in the NHS for patients with problems such as recurrent depression, anxiety and chronic pain. For example, it is typically offered to someone who has recovered from a recent episode of depression, in order to reduce the chances of a future episode. As a non-clinical intervention, it is also used with staff and the general public as a way of helping people deal with the stresses of everyday life. In both settings, mindfulness is taught in a format consisting of 8 weekly sessions, which enables participants to develop an overall grounding in the approach, which they can then use in an ongoing way to improve their mental and physical well-being. It is not designed to be used a one-off crisis intervention for people with acute stress. For people with mild stress, mindfulness apps such as Headspace can be helpful.

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