

Promoting wellbeing:

Structure

- ✚ Develop a timetable for the person's day. Start with their morning routine. The remainder of the day might be structured by a mixture of activities of daily living (e.g. morning and bedtime routines, domestic activities — cooking, cleaning, leisure — arts and crafts, books/magazines). The same activities can be used for each day.
- ✚ Some people have particular sensory needs. If you know what their needs are, try to build some sensory activities into their day such as movement and exercise at home, walking around the garden area, kicking a ball, hand massage, playing with materials or soft toys — hand music, sensory box, and so on.
- ✚ Introduce a hand-washing routine. Demonstrate and place visual reminders above sinks.
- ✚ If the person is not self-isolating (and health and levels of support allow), include a walk in their timetable. Consider how you will communicate the 2 metre rule to the person (e.g. pictorial reminder)
- ✚ The person may no longer be able to purchase preferred items at the shop. It may be helpful to organise for shopping to be delivered.

If the person has a communication aid such as a visual timetable, use this to support them to understand what is happening in their day, or if they can read, write a list (



Responding to episodes of distress: Stages

Stage 1

Try to remain calm and model calmness in your own behaviour or communication. This can be difficult to do when you are experiencing a level of stress yourself. Slow down your movements and speech.

Maintain their current routine as much as possible.

Reduce verbal interaction to key words.

Stage 2

Limit verbal communication with the individual. Do not try to reason with them, as their understanding will be significantly impaired.

Say the person's name to gain their attention before directing them to a calming activity (something they enjoy that is not going to be too stimulating or exciting).

Some people need space; others like to be close to their carers. This is individual to the person you are supporting.

For people that can tolerate close contact, it can help to sit down with the person and listen to them. You do not need to provide responses. This may be an opportunity to use 'scripts' or go over a social story.

Some people may respond to consistent use of positive phrases such as "David is safe", "David is okay", "David will feel better soon".

If the person has a history of picking up/throwing items/hitting out, make sure the environment is safe e.g. cooker off, ornaments/sharp objects tidied away, direct other service users or the person you are supporting to a different area of the house.

If the person is prescribed 'as required' medication, it is helpful

Self-care for carers

Caring for someone with a learning disability who is experiencing episodes of distress can have an impact on your own mental and physical wellbeing.

Particularly at this current time, as you may also have a range of other stressors in your life — e.g. worries about the wellbeing of your own or other family members, finances, etc.

There is some information on the [NHS inform website](#) and other online resources on tips for self-care at this difficult time.

You can find a list of mental health apps recommended by the NHS [here](#).

Advice on psychosocial, mental health and wellbeing for staff is available [here](#). This also includes a link to our e-module on Psychological First Aid, which is recommended as the principles for supporting people in stress and distress in the face of an emergency or crisis, such as during the COVID-19 outbreak.

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