Dear Colleague,

Probing Stress in Dentistry is a group of dental professionals in Northern Ireland working with the Public Health Agency, BDA, BDA Benevolent Fund, NIMDTA and the HSCB, to raise awareness in mental health well-being. Anxiety, stress and burnout are prevalent within dentistry today with 50% of GDPs and almost a third of Community Dentists showing worrying signs of stress and burnout. The aetiology is multifactorial; we know from recent BDA research that the leading dental causes are fear of complaint and/or GDC investigation, pressures of regulation and financial concerns. Modern technology and work pressures can lead to increasing isolation in a profession that is already prone to isolation. This is in the context of a profession which is highly valued by our patients and delivers a consistently high compliance with regulatory bodies such as RQIA.

The dental profession’s most valuable resource is a workforce that is healthy and happy. The consequences of a profession which is stressed and anxious can be devastating for the dental professional, their families and colleagues. Probing Stress in Dentistry has been working to improve mental health well-being within dentistry in Northern Ireland by developing and maintaining a mental health training framework.

Attached is the most recent framework, which is for the use of all dental professionals to access help and training. Do try to find five minutes to read the document as it may be the first step to improving your, or a colleague’s, mental health and wellbeing.

If you have any inkling to train in mental health, please do not hesitate to try one of the resources mentioned in the document or contact one of the names mentioned in the document for further information.

Yours truly,

_____________________
Roz McMullan
Chair, Probing Stress in Dentistry

Lifeline
0808 808 8000

If you or someone you know is in distress of despair, call the 24/7 counselling helpline FREE on 0808 808 8000. For more information visit www.lifelinehelpline.info
Probing Stress in Dentistry

Training Framework

Training for Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention

December 2018
Introduction
The British Dental Association, Northern Ireland, (BDA (NI) represents and supports dentists and their teams in all branches of dentistry in Northern Ireland. Emotional health and wellbeing of this target audience in Northern Ireland, irrespective of membership of the BDA, is a priority strategy of the BDA. We are fortunate in NI in that a great deal of awareness training has been previously carried out by NIMDTA in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA), and many dentists, either as representatives of sister organisations or other strategic bodies, have given support to dentists and their teams.

Aim of the framework
The aim of this document is to develop a framework to describe how all dentists and their teams in partnership with NIMDTA can be supported by resilience and skills based training, to act as a point of contact and as sign posts for dentists concerned about their emotional health and wellbeing. The framework is supported by the Public Health Agency.

Principles
The training delivered through the framework will reflect the following principles
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing is everyone’s business
- Person Centred Approach
- Supportive structures to accommodate the emotional and mental health and wellbeing needs of the dental profession
- Communication of Training opportunities to be open and transparent and made available to all working in dentistry within Northern Ireland.

Target Audience
The training framework for emotional health and wellbeing is for dental professionals, in a paid or voluntary capacity working across the dental provision in Northern Ireland. As part of the induction process, new team members to attend and participate in an emotional health and wellbeing course as offered through this framework.
**Framework Outcomes**

The emotional health and wellbeing training framework will

- Provide a guided approach to enhancing knowledge and skills in emotional mental health and wellbeing and suicide prevention.
- A support structure for Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) within dentistry.
- A clearly communicated structure to support person(s) experiencing emotional mental illness/distress
- SafeTALK trained team members to identify signs of suicidal ideation
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) trained team members to be referred to if a member of the team is having thoughts of suicide.

**Training Pathway**

A supported co-ordinated approach is provided in training for DCPs according to their role within the service. The stepped pathway of training is detailed further below:

1. • Stress Awareness Raising Tool
2. • *Mental Health First Aid
3. • SafeTALK
4. • *ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

*Identified team members only will participate in this training
### Training Pathway courses for identified team members

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<tr>
<th>Team members</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Delivered by</th>
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| All staff | BDA Stress Awareness Raising Tool | Stress Awareness is designed to give you an overview of stress awareness at work. The course will take you through;  
- why stress occurs and how it can manifest itself physically and psychologically;  
- offer practical hints and tips on how to cope with the ever-increasing demands of the modern workplace. | Online  
| Do not specify | **BDA Managing Stress and Conflict** | Managing Stress and Conflict looks in detail at how these two subjects are interlinked. The course explores;  
- obligations of the organisation in minimising stress levels  
- examine the role that managers have in controlling stress and conflict within their teams. | |
| Dentists, Local Dental Committee | *Mental Health First Aid* (2 days) | Mental Health First Aid will help participants to recognise the symptoms of some of the main mental health problems, how to provide initial help to someone with a developing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis, and how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help. | HSC Trusts |
| Dentists, Dental Receptionists, Hygienists, Dental Nurses, Dental Technicians, Local Dental | SafeTALK (3.5 hrs) | safeTALK helps participants become alert to suicide. Suicide-alert people are better prepared to connect persons with thoughts of suicide with life-affirming help. Over the course of their training, safeTALK participants will learn to:  
- Notice and respond to situations where suicide thoughts may be present  
- Recognize that invitations for help are often overlooked,  
- Move beyond the common tendency to miss, dismiss, and | NIMDTA |
| Committee Non dantally qualified HSCB staff | avoid suicide,  
• Apply the TALK steps: Tell, Ask, Listen, KeepSafe,  
• Know community resources and how to connect someone with thoughts of suicide to them for further suicide-safer help. | HSC Trusts |
| Dentists Local Dental Committees | *ASIST (2 days) | ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)  
Paticipants learn to intervene and help prevent the immediate risk of suicide.  
ASIST 11 uses a model called Pathway for Assisting Life (or PAL for short) which is a Safety Framework that integrates the literature on risk with the emerging literature on safety. ASIST 11 helpers using PAL will have an ease with letting a person at risk talk about suicide, a knack for helping a person at risk discover life connections and a talent for turning those connections into reasons for working on safety-for-now.  
ASIST 11 is a positive, transparent focus upon creating safety for now along with both more clarity and more flexibility in how to achieve it. | Other Mental and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention Training programmes will be made available through this framework as the need arises |

*Identified team members only will participate in this training. If interested please enquire further by contacting a member below:

Roslyn McMullan: roz.mcmullan@btinternet.com;  
Philip Henderson: psd.henderson@btinternet.com  
Martin Curran: martin@currandental.co.uk;  
Kiri McLaughlin: kiri.mclaughlin@hscni.net or Amanda Jackson: amanda.jackson@hscni.net from NIMDTA
Support Structures

A care pathway is in place for dental staff to be aware of the processes to be followed if a person displays signs/symptoms of a mental illness or suicidal tendencies.

This includes

**Internal structures**

- A point of contact (e.g. Mental Health First Aider/SafeTALK trained person) for a team member to contact if they wish to discuss their concerns of themselves or another team member. A list of staff trained in safeTALK is available from NIMDTA by contacting Amanda Jackson [Amanda.jackson@hscni.net](mailto:Amanda.jackson@hscni.net) Kiri McLaughlin. [kiri.mclaughlin@hscni.net](mailto:kiri.mclaughlin@hscni.net)

**External structures**

- Lifeline – 24/7 suicide helpline (0808 808 8000)
- An external agency e.g. Samaritans (Tel: 116 123) available to call 24/7 to discuss any mental health e.g. depression/stress/anxiety or suicidal tendencies they may be experiencing

This framework of training will be reviewed in October 2019.
Emotional Health & Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention
Care pathway

Have you been presented with an emotional health and wellbeing issue?

If able to do so - connect, listen and talk with the person

Ask: Are you thinking about suicide

NO

Help and support is needed for any emotional mental health issues or self-harm

Contact your MHFA trained first aider

YES

Phone Lifeline 0808 808 8000

If preferred contact a safeTALK trained member of staff