

Who cares for the carers?

You're working under extreme conditions helping others – but it is so important to look after yourself too, says **Ursula James**

When you are dealing with stressed or sick, grieving or scared people every day it is easy to forget that the first person you need to look after is yourself. Let me put it another way – it is one of the principal rules in aircraft safety to put on your own mask first before helping others put on theirs.

And when you are working in frontline services, or trying to support those who do, it is vitally important that self-care becomes a part

of your daily routine – for self-preservation, if nothing else.

This is why I created HypnoSOS, a series of free, weekly podcasts containing mini-hypnosis sessions to produce immediate relief from the huge, mental and emotional pressures of working through this pandemic.

The podcast is a 10-minute hypnosis audio for key-workers and anyone who is struggling with the effects of the pandemic. It can be used at work or in emergency circumstances – just to get away from the madness and recharge. Some people lock themselves in the loo, or just sit in a corner of the break-out space with a DO NOT DISTURB sign on their lap. Others listen when they get home as a way of demarcating the self they are at work and who they are at home or listen when they are in bed so they can actually get a night's sleep without taking disturbing images into their dreams.

HypnoSOS provides a safe, quick and simple way of creating a safe space to recharge. It gives you permission to stop and rest, and helps you remember that you, above all, need to look after yourself. The topics covered in the podcasts range from better sleep, loneliness, dealing with stress, anger-management, anxiety, grieving, boosting your own immune system, feeling more positive and more.

Is it safe for everyone?

Each podcast starts with an introduction which tells you how to make the most of it, and what not to do while listening (such as driving). Any adult can benefit, as the suggestions are gentle and focus around helping you to feel better and be more in control, regardless of your own situation. To be clear, they are not therapy. For me, one of the best forms of therapy is a good friend and a good brew – even if we have to make that tea ourselves and chat via the internet. Do not underestimate the power of Tea (and yes, I do think it deserves a capital letter!). I'm from Yorkshire – we take tea very seriously, and so should you!

Contact

You can get in touch with me at ursula@ursulajames.com, or find me via the QR code.

How can you get access to the podcasts?

Use the QR code printed here on your phone or device:



Professor Ursula James is a Visiting Teaching Fellow at Oxford University Medical School.

