

## **Health Welfare and Well-being**

### **Week 1 - Focus on Mental Health**

#### **Video Transcript:**

Hello Brethren, my name is WBro Kevin Mackie, your Provincial Grand Almoner for the Province of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire and I welcome you to this Video Blog (or VLOG as the techies call it). Over the coming weeks we will be looking at various aspects of our health, welfare and well-being and for this first VLOG I will be thinking about mental health.

Mental health is one of those things that still carries a stigma, especially amongst groups of men. We think we need to keep it all together and not show any signs of weakness. Recently, there has been a big media spotlight on mental health with some notable celebrities and Royalty sharing their experiences.

We all suffer changes in mood as we transition through the various chapters of our life, but Covid-19 has had a particular influence over the past year and you might find yourself feeling more vulnerable and fragile than ever before. It can be difficult to admit your innermost feelings to your Almoner or friends and family, which is why the Masonic Charitable Foundation offers a free Counselling Careline. This is a confidential and free service open to anyone in the Masonic family experiencing low mood, symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress or other conditions affecting their mental wellbeing. The service is run by an independent team of professional counsellors and therapists who are registered and accredited by the UK Council for Psychotherapy. After an initial telephone assessment, counselling sessions may be available either over the phone or face-to-face (subject to Covid risk assessment). Additional support such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy may also be offered if standard counselling sessions are deemed inappropriate. Phone 0800 035 60 90 or email: [help@mcf.org](mailto:help@mcf.org), say that you want to access the Counselling Careline, and your enquiry will be dealt with confidentially and sympathetically

In addition, there are a number of self-help and charitable organisations that offer free and impartial help. MIND and The Mental Health Foundation offer excellent advice and support, and whilst the links you will find in the resources section of the website will take you to Covid-related pages, you will also be able to navigate the sites to find a wealth of other information and support. The MCF also offers help on their website.

Please don't stick your head in the sand and hope things will get better on their own. If we have a physical illness we go to our GP and ask for treatment, if you think you need support with your mental health the same applies, speaking to someone is often the first step to recovery. Remember the PGA team is here to support you, speak to us and we will listen and help in any way that we can.

#### **Links:**

MIND: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

The Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>

MCF: <https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/freemasons-and-families/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>.