

I will venture that a massive number of NHS staff who have been 'vaccinated' have done so not out of belief in the 'vaccine', but due to unrelenting coercion and the desperate need for a job.

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References

1. Hancocks S. I worry. *Br Dent J* 2022; **232**: 65.
2. Clewett J. Dental workers' vaccination. *Br Dent J* 2022; **232**: 69.

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Mental health and wellbeing

Wellbeing guide for dental teams

Sir, three years ago, I woke up crying and couldn't stop. Not just a sniffle or two, but full-on ugly crying that lasted all day. I could blame the pressure of working at a national level in a stressful role, or the fact that both my parents had died a few months earlier, but the truth was that I had reached a point I couldn't function anymore.

I phoned a 'bereavement hotline' and spoke to a very nice lady who quite rightly said 'have you spoken to your GP?' Well, of course I hadn't spoken to my GP! We are trained as dental professionals to cope, to be resilient. We look after our patients, our staff, we manage complex problems and have to stay at the top of our game at all times so we don't fall foul of regulation or failure or complaints. The last thing I wanted to do was visit my GP and say I was finding it hard to cope...

So I went to see my GP. 'No drugs, or any of that talking therapy stuff, and I can't take time off work' was how I started the consultation. My GP sat back in his chair and listened (good GP). I had two weeks off work at home. I didn't open my laptop or take any work calls. My boss was kind and shared a similar personal story. I had been ashamed to tell him that I needed time off.

I have watched closely over the last few years how colleagues struggle. Capable, resilient, resourceful professionals that

just feel they can't go on. Some with tragic consequences.

I was part of the team who developed the *Wellbeing guide for dental teams* which was launched in January 2021. This January marked its first birthday anniversary.¹ It has had 10,000 page views and over 4,000 downloads: <https://www.supportfordentalteams.org/>.

A guide can't mend sadness, but it signposts some excellent evidence-based help and peer support. It's a start.

COVID-19 has taught us all that we need to look after ourselves. We need to look after our family and friends, and we need to look after all of those who are around us.

Here's hoping 2022 will bring us all some moments of joy in our lives.

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Reference

1. BDJ News. Banish Blue Monday blues with wellbeing support. *Br Dent J* 2022; **232**: 7.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-4054-8>