



RCN UK Joint Reps Conference, October 2026

Your mental health and signposts to support

As RCN reps, you will be hearing and dealing with distressing, traumatic and difficult conversations daily. Reflecting the challenges faced by nursing staff across the UK, the joint reps conference will often include sensitive topics on the programme and during Q&A which may be difficult and emotionally charged for some.

Your wellbeing is important, please do seek help any time you need it.

This guidance offers practical advice on dealing with difficult emotions and feelings in the moment. It also details how you can access the RCN counselling service if needed. There are signposts to more specialist support and organisations, some of which also provide emotional or counselling support, along with others that offer advice and advocacy.

Who can help if I am struggling with difficult feelings and emotions?

- In the first instance speak to someone you can trust, a colleague, friend, or loved one.
- If you need support at the conference, visit the registration desk – staff there will be able to signpost you to assistance. This includes access to Mental Health First Aiders at the conference if you need a listening ear. They will have a green spot on their badges and staff on the registration desk can help you find them.

How can I calm myself if needed?

- **Stop whatever you are doing** - don't act immediately, wait.
- **Take a breath** - slowly breath in and out a couple of times.
- **Scan your body** - for tension, breath into the tension while allowing your muscles to relax
- **Observe** - What am I thinking about? What am I reacting to? What am I feeling in my body?
- **Pull back** - put in some perspective, see the bigger picture. Is this fact or opinion? How would someone else see this?
- **Practise what works** - What's the best thing to do for me, for others, for this situation?

Where can I access counselling if needed?

As a member of the RCN, you are entitled to Single Session or Brief Therapy providing you haven't had a course of counselling with us in the last 6 months. And if you did, then we would still be happy to assess your situation and explore your options to access talking therapy elsewhere if appropriate.

To request this, please send an email to counselling@rcn.org.uk and quote 'RCN UK Reps Conference' in the subject and tell us in a few words what you would like support for.

RCN mental health and wellbeing resources

Working with stressed and distressed members can be one of the most difficult parts of the rep role. For you to be able to support members and represent their best interests you need to be aware of your own stress levels and take care of your own needs, accessing support as necessary.

Sometimes as a rep it can be easy to become focussed on your members' issues and challenges at the expense of your own self-care. Taking the time to think about how you are doing, and what support you might need in your role, can be time well spent.

There is a collection of resources on the RCN website to support you with your mental health and wellbeing:

[Stress resource for reps | Royal College of Nursing](#)

[Managing stress | Royal College of Nursing](#)

[Counselling service | Royal College of Nursing](#)

Specialist support and organisations

Listed below are signposts to other specialist support and organisations, some of which provide emotional or counselling support, along with others that offer advice and advocacy

The Survivors Trust

Free, confidential helpline for any survivor of sexual abuse anywhere in the UK or Ireland

Tel: 08088 010 818

Text Service: 07860 022 956

Email: helpline@thesurvivorstrust.org

Website: thesurvivorstrust.org



Service	Area covered	Contact Tel
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Helps those bereaved by suicide to support each other	England, Wales and Scotland	0300 111 5065
Cruse Bereavement Support	England, Wales, and Northern Ireland	0808 808 1677
	Scotland	0808 802 6161
	Isle of Man	01624 668191
Guernsey Bereavement Service	Guernsey	01481 257778
Community Bereavement Service	Jersey	01534 285144.

Domestic Abuse

Women's Aid - [Home - Women's Aid](#)

Support for Men - [Support for men - Refuge](#)

Racism and hate crime

The following organisations do not directly provide emotional or counselling support, but can offer advice, advocacy and signposting to further help.

[Equality Advisory and Support Service](#) (EASS) advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights across England, Scotland and Wales.

Phone: 0808 800 0082

[The Monitoring Group](#) is a UK organisation that provides support to victims of race and religious hate crime through the provision of information, advice, advocacy, and representation.

Stop Hate UK provides independent and confidential support to people affected by hate crime and discrimination based on identity.

[Homepage - Stop Hate UK](#)

Mind provides advice and support on a range of topics including types of mental health problems, legislation and details of local help and support in England and Wales.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (weekdays 9am - 6pm)

[Racism and mental health | Tips for everyday living | Mind](#)

Liberate is an organisation providing a safe and inclusive space for people to meet across the Channel Islands, services include provision of mental health and wellbeing support.

[Liberate | Equality, diversity and inclusion across the Channel Islands](#)

Who should I contact if I need more immediate support?

If you or someone is at immediate risk of harm:



- Call 999

- Go to or ask someone to take you to your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E)
- Call your GP to set up an emergency appointment, when booking an appointment, you must advise the surgery that you are feeling suicidal.
- Also contact someone you trust once you have taken one of the above steps, if possible don't suffer on your own.

For non-emergency situations:

- Speak to your GP
- England, Wales and Scotland can also call NHS 111
- Northern Ireland call Lifeline 0808 808 8000
- Jersey: [Mental health](#)
- Guernsey: [Mental Health - States of Guernsey](#)
- Alderney: [Mental Health – Island Medical Centre](#)
- Isle of Man: [Isle of Man Government - Mental Health Service](#)
- For emotional support call the Samaritans on freephone 116 123 available 24/7

Who can I turn to if I was a victim of a crime and/or if I am unsure about reporting it?

Contact Victim Support who are dedicated to support people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

- England and Wales: [Home - Victim Support](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Victim Support NI | Supporting People Affected By Crime](#)
- Scotland: [Get support as a victim of crime | Victim Support Scotland](#)
- Guernsey: [Victim Support and Witness Service | Empower Justice Today - Get Support](#)
- Jersey: [Victims First Jersey](#)
- Isle of Man: [Victim Support Isle of Man](#)

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