Keeping it together
These tips about mental health and resilience are for

co-workers
teams
team leaders

working in healthcare during the COVID-19 crisis

They come from the Dutch initiative ‘COVID-19 extra handen voor de zorg (COVID-19 extra hands on deck)’
Work your shift together

As a group, your collective knowledge and endurance are greater than that of an individual.

+ Today we will take care of people.
  We will lose people.
  We will make people well again.
+ We do the best we can and that’s all we can do.
Check-in with each other at the beginning of your shift

Arrive first, then start.

+ We take the time to ‘land’ before we hit the ground running.
+ Everyone takes turns to speak. Use short sentences.
+ Be quiet for a few seconds between turns.
+ Make eye contact.
+ Each person:
  - my name is …
  - I am responsible for …
  - Together with you, I will contribute with all that I can, all that I know and everything I have in me.
  - What I also want to say is …
Lead together

Clear roles provide safety and give confidence.

+ Everyone is clear about their role.
+ Everyone has a buddy, including the leader.
+ Regardless of your role:
  - indicate what you need
  - indicate anything you don't know or don't dare to do
  - indicate when you reach your limit
Taking care of each other together

In the interest of the bigger picture, our own (mental) health comes first.

+ I take timely toilet breaks. I eat and rest on time. I help my buddy do this too.
+ We are available for each other, with all we can be, all we know and all we can do.
+ I am familiar with the folder from the World Health Organization “Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak”
Check out together at
the end of a shift
Stop first, then take leave.

+ Today we took care of people. We lost people. We made people well again.
+ We take the time to pause and think before we leave.
+ For example, imagine cutting the invisible rope that connected you to everyone during this shift.
+ Everyone takes turns to speak. Use short sentences.
+ Take some time to be quiet between turns.
+ Make eye contact.
+ Each person:
  - my name is ...
  - what I want to say about this shift is ...
  - I cut the invisible rope
  - what I will do now to take care of myself...
Be a leader

+ Do you observe or feel emotions rising? Allow room for everything.
+ Allow everyone to respond in their own way, no matter what that looks like or sounds like.
+ Summarise and verify what you see and hear.
+ Make eye contact. Speak in short sentences. Leave room for silence.
+ Actively keep in touch by calling, passing by, or sending a WhatsApp.
+ Be clear, indicate what you do not know, and dare to ask for help yourself.
Things to avoid as a leader

+ Avoid telling others what they should feel or think.
+ Avoid providing solutions or suggestions that have not been asked for.
+ Avoid forcing someone - even subtly - to talk about emotions.
+ Avoid assuming that everything is fine if you don't get feedback.
+ Avoid presuming you should know everything and always be strong.
Unpredictability as reality

In times of crisis, adaptation and development are necessary.

+ Yesterday we did the best we could do based on what we knew yesterday.
+ Today we take the best approach based on what we know best today.
+ Tomorrow we will know what is best for tomorrow.
+ In every crisis, we learn new things about ourselves and each other.
  - What have you learned today?
  - What does that mean for tomorrow?
  - What are you thankful for?