**Camp Fires, Cave Time, Coffee Breaks**

United we stand, alone we fall. Trapped (by the computer that needs feeding) in our rooms, we may become professionally isolated

Life can be busy – often frantic – and we can so easily empty the personal fuel tank without realising. We can become EMIS Task-Driven Human Doings, buzzing on Sympathetic Nervous Overdrive, forgetting that our essence is to be Human Beings enjoying the journey of life

Humans have always gathered together around the camp fire, in the cave, or in the coffee room, to share time, chat and recharge batteries – in a SAFE place – to rest, digest, tend and befriend, recharge and repair

We all need supportive networks (tend and befriend) – people who understand us, and who ‘have our backs’. This can be in our workplace, with immediate colleagues, at home, or elsewhere. As professionals, it’s good to have a safe supportive ‘go-to’ friend or friends

Cave Time is where we feel safe and can spend time with the tribe. Cave Time enables us to tend, befriend, rest, digest, chill and repair – and refuel our own tanks. Cave Time needs scheduling into our day. Without Cave Time, we ***will*** end up on sympathetic alert, with empty fuel tanks (and sympathetic drive with adrenaline makes us first excited, then irritable, then anxious, lastly exhausted)

So…. For GPs, nurse practitioners, paramedics and others – what’s your colleague support network? Here are possibilities – you are allowed daily, weekly and monthly ones!

* In practice (huddles, coffee room, scheduled breaks – remember those?)
* First Five groups
* Trainers groups
* CPD groups of colleagues friends who trained together, were non-principals together, or other
* Appraisers groups
* Balint groups
* Tuesday groups, Monday groups, Wednesday groups etc
* Check in with one specific colleague regularly

A monthly check in outside your immediate work team can be almost life-saving – now we have Zoom and Teams, there’s almost no excuse!

An aspiration for Somerset – EVERY Primary Care Clinician to be part of a supportive group, meeting at least monthly….

Who’s got your back?