Brief Outline of the Structured Approach to One-on-One Consultation
To Healthcare Staff:

The Acute Stress Intervention

- Open the one-on-one consultation session
  - Introduce yourself
  - Ask about the individual
    - “Are there any details about your personal or professional situation that would be helpful for me to know? Again, this information is confidential.”
  - Outline what the structure of the session will be:
    - Review of current situation and areas of difficulty
    - Review of range of common symptoms/experiences individuals can have in highly distressing situations
    - Identify strategies to turn the volume down on those reactions/symptoms

- Check in
  - Ask/explore with the individual how they’re doing in general
  - Ask what their areas of greatest difficulty are

- Provide brief psycho-education on impact of high levels of stress
  - Review of goal of starting with psychoeducation:
    - Understanding the impact of high levels of stress on minds and bodies helps to:
      - Identify best strategies for addressing stress reactions
      - Bring stress reactions under greater control
  - Provide brief psychoeducation:
    - High stress levels lead to:
    - Higher levels of physical symptoms
    - Reduction of ability to use thinking as a way to calm ourselves and take control
    - Changes in the way we’re feeling in our bodies and thoughts
    - Magnifies our sense of loss of control and helplessness.

- Introduce and administer the Acute Stress Disorder Scale (or the ASDS)
  - Goal:
    - To help the individual to:
      - Find words/clearly describe details of their experience of symptoms
      - Increase self-observing capacity of their own reactions
      - Re-establish a process of ordering their thinking
      - Identify/target specific symptoms that might benefit from coping strategies (i.e. somatic symptoms, thoughts, emotions, behaviors)
After completing the ASD scale, notice the following:

- Are there symptoms that cluster together?
- (i.e. do intrusive thoughts impact issues with sleep?)
- Are there symptoms that are happening very frequently?
- What are the different broad areas of functioning that are most impacted by symptoms (at work, at home, sleeping, relationships, etc.)?

Next steps:

- Focus in on symptoms that were endorsed in the ASDS that are most frequent or most impactful
- Introduce specific coping strategies that would specifically help to decrease these symptoms/reactions

Discuss routines of daily life (Review with all individuals. Reviewing routines of daily life is a first place to start because they can have a significant impact more broadly, in terms of vulnerability to specific symptoms that individuals may be endorsing.)

- Goal:
  - To re-assert order and predictability in daily life in order to help begin the process of taking greater control of stress reactions
- Assess specific ways in which previous routines in daily life have been disrupted/changed
- Review how establishing/re-establishing daily routines can help increase sense of control
- Review of ways to create a sense of routine during this time
- Where possible, establish approximate blocks of times on a daily basis for:
  - Meal time
  - Bed time
  - Family/friend time (whether in person or virtually)
  - Decompression time / taking as full a break as possible; “checking out”

Discuss Basics of Sleep Hygiene (review if sleep issues were endorsed)

- Goal:
  - Sleep routines help to:
    - Re-set the body clock
    - Help ensure better sleep
    - Reduce vulnerability to stress reactions
    - Interrupt cycle of stress reactions
- Review basics of sleep hygiene
• Introduce coping strategies
  o Goal:
    ▪ **Focus in on symptoms that were endorsed in the ASDS that are most frequent or most impactful**
    ▪ **Introduce and review specific coping strategies that will specifically help to decrease these symptoms/reactions**
  o Example coping strategies
    • **Focused Breathing**
      o Examples of symptoms that focused breathing is a useful strategy for:
        ▪ Physical symptoms (i.e. heart pounding, shallow breathing)
        ▪ Feelings of anxiety
    • **Guided Imagery**
      o Examples of symptoms that guided imagery is a useful strategy to:
        ▪ Address intrusive, repetitive disturbing thoughts and images
    • **Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts**
      o Self-critical thoughts
      o Thinking too far ahead, imagining the worst thoughts
    • **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**
    • **Social Connectedness and Helpful Considerations**

• **Arrange for Follow-Up Session**
  o Predict structure of follow up session
  o Schedule an appointment in one week to review levels of stress reactions endorsed by the individual.
  o Indicate your availability for contact earlier in the week if the individual continue to experience high levels of distress