Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth's

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"FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19"

"Mental Health and Psychosocial Concerns &Well Being during and after COVID-19 outbreak"

In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated that there is a high risk of COVID-19 spreading to other countries around the world. In March 2020, WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. The considerations presented in this document have been developed on the behalf of Global Business School & Research Centre, focusing on the substance use as a series of messages that can be used in communications to manage stress, support mental health and psychosocial well-being in different target groups during the outbreak.

About Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19):

It is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome, resulting in the ongoing 2019-20 Corona Virus pandemic. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include fatigue, muscle pain, diarrhea, sore throat, loss of smell, and abdominal pain. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days, but may range from two to fourteen days.

The virus is mainly spread between people during close contact, often via small droplets produced during coughing, sneezing, or talking. People may also become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their face. The virus can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours. It is most contagious during the

firstthree days after onset of symptoms, although spread may be possible before symptomsappearandinlaterstagesofthedisease.

Recommended measures to preventinfection:

- Frequenthandwashingandhandsanitizing- Usesoapandwatertowash hands.
- Useahandsanitizerthatcontainsatleast60%alcohol.Coverallsurfacesof yourhandsandrubthemtogetheruntiltheyfeeldry.
- Avoidtouchingyoureyes,nose,andmouthwithunwashedhands.
- Maintaining Social distance from others(especially from those with symptoms).
- Coveringcoughsandsneezeswithatissueorinnerelbow.
- Theuseofmasksarehighlyrecommendedwhenyougooutofyourhouses, crowdedplacesonlyforessentialactivities.
- Stayhomeasmuchaspossible.
- Also, visit your nearby health service center or hospital, if any frequent symptoms can beseen.
- Download AarogyaSetu App and use it frequently to self-test and monitor risk.

Importance of coping and resilience in the time of a pandemic

COVID-19 – Importance of coping and resilience in the time of a pandemic

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. – Viktor Frankl

Last few weeks brought about major changes in our lives, Covid-19 brought our lives to a standstill, it made us keel over, making us feel helpless and at times insignificant. Especially, the healthcare sector is going through tremendous pressure to keep its system intact and its employees functional. It's a double whammy for the workers in healthcare, they are even more responsible now to keep themselves and the patients dependent on them healthy, not to mention their families. The ongoing threat of the spreading virus, apparent in the increasing numbers has made us vulnerable to an overall decrease in the quality of our lives.

WHO warns us about the long drawn out fight ahead of us and how institutions should focus on longer-term occupational capacity rather than repeated short-term crisis responses. (1)

In the case of SARS, about **10% of the healthcare providers** had experienced high levels of

posttraumatic stress symptoms since the outbreak in 2003. (2)

The significant rise in rates of burnouts and stress-related disorders including substance abuse has led to the need for pro-active steps in the management of stress at both individual and institutional level.

Go corona go:

Wishful thinking for the pandemic to go away and hoping this never happened to us is a knee-jerk reaction to a potentially life changing event. This line of thought leads to denial and stops us from facing the reality. On the other hand, acknowledging the situation can throw us into a phase of despair and hopelessness. In times like this, it's advisable to make small but definitive changes to our routines so we can feel more in control of the situation. That brings us to the most important part of managing stress and avoiding burnouts.

Self-care:

The strain of facing a pandemic can drain our energy resources, both physically and mentally.

1. Physical energy:

- Diet - At least three wholesome meals with vitamin C supplements
- Exercise - Mild-moderate exercise 3-4 times/week
- Sleep hygiene – Maintain a sleep routine, that includes going to sleep at the same time every day, 6-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
- Creating a schedule and sticking to it
- Cutting down on caffeine, nicotine and alcohol intake
- Taking intermittent breaks during work hours for a short walk or a chat with a colleague

2. Mental Stamina:

- Fact checking to avoid or reduce panic caused by news media
- 1-minute mindfulness exercises – yawn and stretch for 10 seconds every year, three deep breaths, eating a snack mindfully
- Slashing down time spent on news media and social media exposure to only once or twice per day helps keep away from potentially anxiety-provoking material
- Time-outs: Taking time away from arguments with spouse or other family members to gather thoughts and practice breathing exercises.

3. Managing moments of panic:

- Taking a moment to acknowledging and naming the difficult feeling we are going through helps us manage it better.
- Deep breathing exercise when overwhelmed or restless
- Understanding and making a note of actions which are under our control and which aren't.

- Distract yourself with play with your children, watching comedy, helping your spouse with household chores, watering plants or starting or rediscovering a hobby.
- Quick video-call with a parent, spouse or friends helps take our mind of the disturbing thoughts
- Reaching out to mental health professionals to gain better perspective of the situation

Care of others:

In times like this, though self-care is of paramount importance, what worries us even more is the health of our family members, especially the elderly.

- Checking on the family members for the symptoms of Covid-19
- Taking necessary precautions like changing and taking bath before interacting with family members after a day's work
- Putting aside time to spend quality time with children and engaging them in household activities followed by praise
- Being patient especially with children and elderly, as they might find it difficult to follow with the norms of social-distancing
- Spending quality time with elderly individuals while maintaining rules of social distancing as these are potentially isolating times for them
- Helping the spouse whenever possible and agreeing on potentially triggering topics to avoid friction in the relationship.
- Keeping an eye out for the mental well-being of family members: **red-flag** signs include decreased interaction, changes in sleep and diet, tearfulness, irritability and decreased interest to carry out day-to-day activities. Encouraging them to seek out help with a professional.

Dynamic of meaning making:

This might seem a bit abstract and unnecessary especially in times like this when we are looking for concrete advice. But the more we try, at both individual and institutional level to make our experience of the current pandemic a story of hope, the more likely we are of overcoming this present hardship and look forward to a brighter future. It makes the present bearable and instils in us a sense of purpose. Also, asking ourse

Mental Health and Stress Management during COVID-19 outbreak:

Dr.D.Y.Patil Medical College, Hospital & Research Centre,

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

KEEP YOUR MIND RIGHT AND SIT TIGHT! A mental health guide to help you overcome this PANDEMIC.

Novel Corona Virus Infection, also called as COVID- 19 is a kind of flu caused by a virus named coronavirus. The infection in humans shows symptoms like cough, fever, shortness of breath. It has affected countries throughout the world and hence has been declared as a Pandemic.

How is this a source of Stress?

The situation worldwide is a stress for many people:

- **The fear of the unknown-** Most people don't have the required knowledge about what the world is facing.

•**Change of routine-** Lockdown and Quarantine; the two words which have taken a toll on human mind.

- **Empty mind is a Devil's workshop-** Most people are confined to home away from their busy schedule which invites negative.

•**Social Media-** A lot of rumours and false information is being spread throughout which spurs the fear among people.

•**Financial Crisis-** The economy worldwide is in rags with people losing their jobs; daily wagers not getting enough to run their homes.

How does it affect the Mental Health then?

Any kind of stress or derangement from the routine causes the mind to act in various ways:

•**Anxiety and Panic**: People have the fear of contacting infection, either themselves or in their loved ones which causes a significant panic.

- **Depression**: The change of routine, staying confined within homes 24x7; a few away from their loved ones and the fear hovering around have caused a gloom in the environment and in the minds of people.

•**Sleep Disturbance:** With increasing stress and the constant presence of negativity around combined with the lack of physical exertion causes sleep disturbances.

•**Substance misuse:** With a lot of free time around alongwith a stressful mind, people fall back upon substances either for pleasure seeking or to run away from stress.

How to overcome the stress and emerge victorious?

It is rightly said that Half of the :battle is won with a healthy mind! Everyone should follow these simple steps for that:

1. **Stay Positive:**

•No matter whatever be the situation, always keep one thing in mind- THIS TOO SHALL PASS!
•Start your day with a positive thought in mind and follow up with that throughout the day.
•Read things that motivate you.
•Stop the chain of negative thoughts or information.

2. **Family Time:**
   - This is the best time and the only time you will get with your family. So have the most of it.
   - Open up to your family about your stress and fears and try to bond with them like never before.
   - Spend time with your parents, siblings or children. Be together and fight out this global issue.

3. **Exercise daily:**

•Most people see this as an opportunity to laze out and stay immobile.
•Rather spend this time in staying healthy and exercise atleast for 1 hour daily as the mind will stay healthy only if the body is.
•Also it will divert your mind from all the negativity around and even help you sleep better.

4. **Take care of your children:**

- Children would be affected as it is difficult for a child to stay confined to a place for long.
- Be calm and generous in dealing with them, explain them the issue which the world is facing.
- Do something productive with them making it a fun activity at the same time.
- Be available to their fears without getting angry over them.

5. **Maintain a healthy sleep hygiene:**

•Go to bed daily at your regular time rather than spending time on television or mobile.
•Go to bed only when sleepy and not otherwise.
•Avoid daytime sleep or keep it to a minimum.
•Avoid caffeine or nicotine atleast 4-5 hours prior to sleep.

6. **Hobby Time:**

- Indulge yourself in your hobbies and do things which you always wanted to do.
- Spend your day in doing something productive and things you would love to do to kill all the negativity around you.

7.**Eat Healthy:**

•A good immunity is a shield to this virus.
•In this era full of junk foods, try to eat healthy and make your body capable enough to fight this disease out.
•A good herd immunity will help fight the pandemic like nothing else.

8. **Social media:**

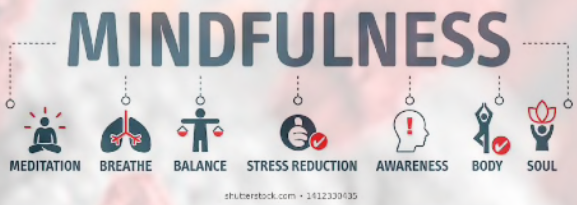
- Alongwith social distancing, practice **"Selective Social Media Distancing."**
- Stay away from all the rumours and fake news streaming around the internet and stick to reliable source of information.
- Rather than checking the statistics every hourly, check it only once or twice a day.
- Spend the rest of the time on internet learning something new or doing something productive.
- Connect with your loved ones in different corners of the world which you wont usually in a busy schedule.

9. **Stay away from addictions:**

- Dont fall for substances in order to seek pleasure or get rid of the stress.
- Do something creative and productive to keep your mind busy.
- Alcohol, cigarettes etc will hamper your immunity and make you fall sick when you need it the least.

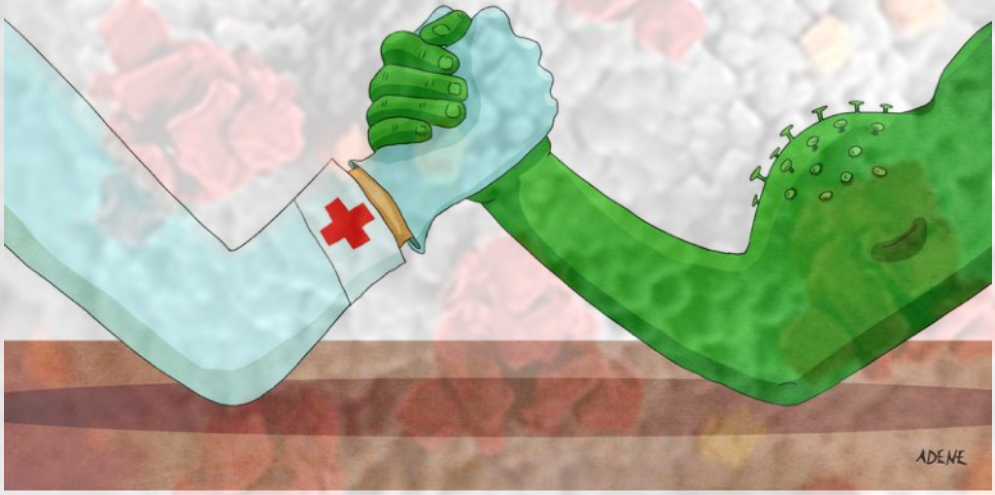
10. **<u>Help those in need:</u>**
    - Many people are not able to meet their ends because of the shutdown.
    - This is the time to join hands and help those in need by easing their survival in such crucial times.
    - Labourers, cleaners, vendors all work during these tough times so be kind to them and offer them the required help.

11. **<u>Be spiritual:</u>**
    - Indulge in spiritual activities which keeps your mind healthy and clear.
    - Practice yoga and meditation daily to keep your mind calm and sound



12. **<u>Seek help:</u>**
    - If this issue is taking a toll of your mental health, never hesitate to seek professional help. It is okay to succumb to your fears. Keep your mind healthy to keep the rest of your body healthy.

Practice these things and try to inculcate it in your routine life after the crisis is over to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is a temporary situation and we must hold hands together and fight it out.



Feel free to Contact our Health Counselor for any kind of problems faced related to Mental Health, Psychological Concerns and Well Being during and After COVID-19.

NEED HELP? FOR ANY GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL Helpline Number : 020-72805941

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