

Better Solutions Help in a Hand's Distance Kollam district, Kerala, India

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Abstract: *The project is an online counseling and therapy service focused on Health workers as the primary beneficiary. It is developed in the context of COVID - 19 Pandemic with the core area of mental health and better solutions to mental health disorders.*

Keywords: Community work, Counselling and Therapy Services

1. Introduction

The community targeted is health workers in general and particularly nurses, hospital assistants, doctors, ambulance drivers, health inspectors, lab workers and other assistants in hospitals and PHC's. The participant's work environment is vulnerable to getting infected with COVID - 19. The participants are not wealthy and are likely to suffer mental issues like depression, anxiety and sleeplessness due to dangerous work environment and the social isolation faced due to their proximity to COVID - 19 patients and suspects. The purpose of the project is to provide free online counseling and therapy service to these people to improve their mental health and better wellbeing. This community is the one working in the field during the lockdown and COVID - 19 pandemic to prevent spread and to provide treatment for the patients. Thus, there is continuous interaction or chances for interaction with suspects and COVID - 19 patients. This risk - taking job can also put the life of the health worker as well as that of the families in danger. The strength of the participants is that they are presently engaging in a social service action amid the risk of life where there is support from the society as a whole and from the authorities. The weakness of the community is lack of mental support, anxiety and depression of putting theirs as well as their family's life in danger and low wage.

2. Background of the Project

The project is trying to address the mental health problem faced by health workers and the financial issue that prevents this community from approaching treatment for mental health disorders. The reason for choosing the project is the understanding that social workers who are professionally trained to treat mental health issues and therapies can effectively provide mental health benefits to health workers who are working in the frontline to suppress COVID - 19. Latest reports from all over India shows that more than 1500 health workers tested positive for COVID - 19 and is likely to increase in the future. Thus, giving mental support to such people who deliberately put their life at risk to save the society from the pandemic is the responsibility of social workers.

Source of Information

- **Primary Source:** The primary source of information is from meetings with health workers, Family visits and Online sample surveys.
- **Secondary Source:** This is from various literature reviews related to online counseling and therapies as well as the ethical guidelines and standards prescribed by professionals. Newspaper articles and government reports were also analysed.

Community Details

The location for the study is Kollam district of Kerala, India. The population taken is the residents of the district who works in the field of Health and Health care. The economic background of the target group is middle and below class. The participants will be decided based on the prior online survey questionnaire and both sexes are included for the project. The literacy rate of the district is 94.09% and the participant's religion and caste are not an inclusive criterion. Women at work are given more importance and the proximity to areas vulnerable to COVID - 19. The infrastructure is well built in the area but the transportation facilities are limited due to the lockdown. Schools, Library and recreational centres are not available for entertainment and relaxation. The proper running area of infrastructure are government offices, Hospitals, post offices and shops.

About the Organization

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Kalamassery, Kochi, Kerala.
Third Semester Post - Graduation (MSW) student
Specialization in Macro - Community Development
Interested in Community work, Counselling and Therapy Services

Goals/Objectives

- To provide Online counselling to health workers to improve their mental health
- To provide online therapy and counselling to health workers.
 - To improve the mental health of the participants.
 - To develop a framework for online counselling and therapy services in future.
 - To boost the morale of the health workers in dealing with COVID - 19 responses.

Project Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be a health worker who participates in the online counselling service. The selection criteria will be the mental health condition and financial condition of the group. The selection process will be actualized through the tool of online survey questionnaire. The indirect beneficiaries will be the family

members of the health workers, colleagues, COVID - 19 patients and broader society. The project manager will directly involve in the online counselling process with the participants. The expected inputs will be technical facilities, internet connection, time and trained knowledge of the counsellor.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Analysis Matrix				
Stakeholder		Stakeholder Interest (s) in the project (+/-)	Assessment of Impact (+/-)	Potential Strategies for Obtaining Support or Reducing obstacles
Primary Stakeholder	Health Workers	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing mental and moral support for the participation. Deciding the right participants for the initial stage.
	Better Solutions Project Team	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre assessment for the right participants. Following the ethical guidelines and principles for the online counselling method.
Secondary Stakeholders	Families of the Participants	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking participants to explain about their role in the project. Using professional treatment therapies with the participants to show positive changes within the family.
	Kollam Health Department	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with officials Explaining the possible outcome from the project for the community.

Activities of the Project

- 1) Online Survey Questionnaire to assess the mental health of health workers.
- 2) Virtual therapy and counselling Services for the participants
- 3) Follow - ups
- 4) Outcome Analysis
- 5) Implementation at a larger scale and more target groups.

Payment for professional social workers - 50000

Office Room Rent - 20000

Electricity Charge - 10000

Additional Expenses - 3000

Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will be initially monitored by the project manager through online platform and proper data collection. The data will be analysed and results will be used for future implications. The feedbacks will be properly taken and assessment will be done at each phase of the project. The process of continuous evaluation will be done. Evaluation and monitoring system will be established with more care and importance.

Strategy for Implementation

The project starts with online survey questionnaire aimed at identifying participants who are having mental distress or likely to have such issues. After identifying 10 such participants working in the field of health services, their consent will be taken and prior assessment will be done. After that, free online counselling services will be provided by the social work trainee with intervention based on each client's problem and needs. Dates will be provided for all the participants for the online therapies and this initial implementation part will take about 4 weeks. The evaluation and termination phase will determine the impact and outcome. Follow up of the participants will be done in the coming weeks. The overall results will be analysed and if the project is having positive outcome, it will be implemented on a larger scale with a greater number of participants and therapy service providers.

Outcomes

- Improved mental health of the health workers with no money loss
- Better chances for the effective use of online counselling and therapy in future.
- Training in the field on Online therapy for Professional social workers
- Further research based on the results and larger implementation of the project with wider community.

Budget/Cost Plan

The budget for the project is very limited. The online facilities of the participants will be analysed and if the participant is requiring support from the project, technical support for the online counselling and therapy services will be provided temporarily. The cost is thus under 100000 Rupees for the internet facilities and power supply.

Sustainability

The project is an evaluation on the effectiveness of online therapy for better mental health. If the results are positive, there is better chance for the project to sustain in the community through increased participants form various communities and effective interventions and results. Another reason for the possibility of sustenance is the change of lifestyle of the people to a virtual reality forming a new normal. Thus, there is more chance for the project to sustain than in the past.

Itemised Budget

Gadgets (Mobile Phone/Laptop) - 10000

Modem and Internet Connection - 5000

Transportation - 2000

3. Conclusion

The ultimate result expectation of the project is the betterment of mental health of the community in general and health workers in particular through the professional counselling and therapy services provided virtually. The successful treatment of mental health disorders will be the main aspect of the project. It is unique in the context of COVID - 19 pandemic as there is new normal standard developing in the society giving more importance to virtual availability and service.

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