

Psychological Resilience during COVID-19

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Abstract: *The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has brought about great turmoil in every life in this world. It has not only stricken fatality and infectivity but has a universal psychosocial impact, by causing mass hysteria, economic burden, and financial losses. While many are affected by the coronavirus, in the same proportion people are affected by different types of mental distresses. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. When the global focus has mostly been on testing, finding a cure and preventing transmission; people are going through a myriad of psychological problems in adjusting to the current lifestyles like working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, and fear of the disease. Providentially, we can look after our mental health and help others who may need some extra support and care in many different ways such as take breaks from the news, treadmill your daily life, avoid alcohol and drug use, maintain linkup, generate worry drop, compassionate to others and support health worker, recognize mental health problem in your near and dear one and stay calm. Eventually, there is only one explanation for solving this situation, show compassion, and care by maintaining adequate social distancing. Unload the negative side and upload the positive side to maintain a healthy life both physical and mental.*

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The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has brought about great turmoil in every life in this world. It has not only stricken fatality and infectivity but has a universal psychosocial impact, by causing mass hysteria, economic burden, and financial losses. While many are affected by the coronavirus, in the same proportion people are affected by different types of mental distresses. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

When the global focus has mostly been on testing, finding a cure and preventing transmission; people are going through a myriad of psychological problems in adjusting to the current lifestyles like working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, and fear of the disease.

An online survey (FEEL-COVID) was conducted using principles of snowballing and by invitation through text messages to participants. The survey collected data on socio-demographic and clinical variables related to COVID-19 (based on the current knowledge); along with measuring psychological impact with the help of the Impact of Event-revised (IES-R) scale. There were a total of 1106 responses from around 64 cities in the country. Overall approximately one-third of respondents had a significant psychological impact (IES-R score > 24). The higher psychological impact was predicted with younger age, female gender and comorbid physical illness. The presence of physical symptoms and contact history predicted higher psychological impact but did not reach statistical significance. According to this survey during the initial stages of COVID-19 in India, almost one-third of respondents had a significant psychological impact.

Stressful situations are handled differently by all. The way you respond to stress during the COVID-19 pandemic can depend on your background, your social support from family or friends, your financial situation, your health and emotional background, the community you live in, and many other factors. The changes that can happen because of the

COVID-19 pandemic and the ways we try to contain the spread of the virus can affect anyone.

A review had been undertaken to define the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 from the search engines Pubmed and Google Scholar and few newspaper reports related to COVID-19 and psychosocial impacts. The result of the review was that the disease itself multiplied by forced quarantine to combat COVID-19 applied by nationwide lockdowns can produce acute panic, anxiety, obsessive behaviors, hoarding, paranoia, and depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the long run. These have been fueled by an "infodemic" spread via different platforms of social media. Outbursts of racism, stigmatization, and xenophobia against particular communities are also being widely reported. Nevertheless, frontline healthcare workers are at higher risk of contracting the disease as well as experiencing adverse psychological outcomes in form of burnout, anxiety, fear of transmitting infection, feeling of incompatibility, depression, increased substance-dependence, and PTSD. Community-based mitigation programs to combat COVID-19 will disrupt children's usual lifestyle and may cause florid mental distress. The psychosocial aspects of older people, their caregivers, psychiatric patients and marginalized communities are affected by this pandemic in different ways and need special attention.

A comprehensive review of current literature about the impact of COVID-19 infection on mental health in the general population. The psychological impact of quarantine related to COVID-19 infection has been additionally documented together with the most relevant psychological reactions in the general population related to the COVID-19 outbreak. The role of risk and protective factors against the potential to develop psychiatric disorders in vulnerable individuals has been addressed as well. The main implications of the review were that the psychological reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic may vary from a panic behavior or collective hysteria to pervasive feelings of hopelessness and desperation which are associated with negative outcomes including suicidal behavior. Importantly,

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other health measures may be compromised by abnormally elevated anxiety. The protective factors suggested attenuating the psychological and psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak after the review was resilience, social support, and specific preventive strategies at the community level such as implementing effective communication and providing adequate psychological services along with health education through online platform.

In public mental health terms, the main psychological impact to date is elevated rates of stress or anxiety. But as new measures and impacts are introduced, especially quarantine and its effects on many people's usual activities, routines or livelihoods-levels of loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour are also expected to rise.

An assessment was done among 1004 US adults, during the first weeks of the nation-wide lockdown efforts, to identify factors that may contribute to greater psychological resilience. The assessments of resilience, mental health, and daily behaviors and relationships were done. The assessment showed that average resilience was lower than published norms, but was greater among those who tended to get outside more often, exercise more, perceive more social support from family, friends, and significant others, sleep better and pray more often. Psychological resilience in the face of the pandemic is related to modifiable factors.

"With the disruptive effects of COVID-19 – including social distancing – currently dominating our daily lives, it is important that we check on each other, call and video chat, and are mindful of and sensitive to the unique mental health needs of those we care for. Our anxiety and fears should be acknowledged and not be ignored, but better understood and addressed by individuals, communities and governments," Dr. Hans Kluge noted at a press briefing held on 26 March 2020, together with Dr. Aiysha Malik, Technical Officer, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, WHO Headquarters.

A need for a more systematic and longitudinal assessment of the psychological needs of the population, which can help the government in formulating holistic interventions for affected individuals. But priorly it is important to prevent such a situation so that psychological wellbeing can be maintained to overcome covid 19 with perfect mental health. Psychological well-being is attained by achieving a state of balance affected by both challenging and rewarding life events.

Providentially, we can look after our mental health and help others who may need some extra support and care in many different ways.

1) Take breaks from the news

Try to reduce how much you watch, read, or listen to news that makes you feel anxious or distressed. Seek the latest information at specific times of the day, once or twice a day if needed. Follow trusted news channels, such as local and national TV and radio, and keep up-to-date with the latest news from @WHO on social media. After a certain point, it can be more upsetting than informational. Make sure the

information you do get is from reputable and non-sensationalist sources.

2) Treadmill your daily life

Keep up with daily routines as far as possible

- Get up and go to bed at similar times every day.
- Keep up with personal hygiene.
- Eat healthy meals at regular times.
- Exercise regularly.
- Allocate time for working and time for resting.
- Make time for doing things you enjoy.

Despite the current situation, maybe you're able to spend more time with your kids, or reading a book you've been meaning to get to or learning how to cook.

Try to do some other activities you enjoy to return some normalcy to your life as much as possible. Make time to unwind and remind yourself that these strong feelings will fade. This will help boost your immunity — and your resilience.

Keep things as consistent as possible and focus on what you can control in terms of disease prevention and more broadly.

3) Avoid Alcohol and drug use

Limit the amount of alcohol you drink or don't drink alcohol at all. Don't start drinking alcohol if you have not drunk alcohol before. Avoid using alcohol and drugs as a way of dealing with fear, anxiety, boredom, and social isolation.

There is no evidence of any protective effect of drinking alcohol for viral or other infections. The opposite is true as the harmful use of alcohol is associated with increased risk of infections and worse treatment outcomes.

And be aware that alcohol and drug use may prevent you from taking sufficient precautions to protect yourself again infection, such as compliance with hand hygiene.

4) Maintain Linkup

Loneliness is one of the biggest concerns of the lockdown. Social distancing does not mean social isolation. Keep in regular contact with people close to you by telephone and online channels.

Create new traditions for connecting regularly with friends, family, and peers via messaging apps, etc. Check-in with your people. Call a family member, friend, or co-worker. Send a text message, direct message, or email. Use FaceTime or other video formats to communicate. Be part of social media community groups. Some groups screen live stream events on Youtube and social media platforms.

So even though we may all be keeping physical social distance, we can still connect online in virtual spaces.

5) Generate a "worry drop"

Write out all of your fears in a journal until your anxiety has dropped by half. Make a daily list of what is going well, and remember the things that are going well. Journal your thoughts and see what are the things you can change and

what are those you can't. For example, we can't confront every person who doesn't cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, but we can walk away from them and keep a safe distance.

6) Be compassionate to others and support health workers

If you can, offer support to people in your community who may need it, such as helping them with food shopping. Take opportunities online or through your community to thank your country's health-care workers and all those working to respond to COVID-19.

Don't discriminate

Fear is a normal reaction in situations of uncertainty. But sometimes fear is expressed in ways which are hurtful to other people. Remember:

- Be kind. Don't discriminate against people because of your fears of the spread of COVID-19.
- Don't discriminate against people who you think may have a coronavirus.
- Don't discriminate against health workers. Health workers deserve our respect and gratitude.
- COVID-19 has affected people from many countries. Don't attribute it to any specific group.

7) Recognize mental health problems in your near and dear ones

Just as you can recognize your mental health problems, be sensitive to such problems in your near and dear ones, which may include:

- 1) Changes in sleep patterns
- 2) Difficulty in sleeping and concentrating
- 3) Worsening of health problems
- 4) Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs

Be supportive of them. If the problems persist, please contact the state helpline or contact your doctor or mental health professional.

8) Stay calm

Learning and practicing simple relaxation techniques (like breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, mindfulness meditation) can all be very helpful in alleviating bodily and mental distress. I also try and acknowledge upsetting thoughts when they occur and discuss them with the people around me. They are likely to have them too and we may be better able to find solutions collectively. Try to stay positive.

Eventually, there is only one explanation for solving this situation, show compassion, and care by maintaining adequate social distancing. Unload the negative side and upload the positive side to maintain a healthy life both physical and mental.

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