



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Restoring and Maintaining Wellbeing in COVID-19 Pandemic

Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP)

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This document is organized in following sections and will be continuously updated and will be made available for download through official website of Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP).
Link: <http://iacp.in>

- **Section-I:** Background
- **Section-II:** Mental and Behavioral Reactions
- **Section-III:** Preventive Measures for Mental Health Crisis
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SECTION-I: BACKGROUND

The sudden epidemic of this severity may overpower normal human reactions. It is much needed to understand normal reactions to such calamities and differentiate it from abnormal reactions. The document is prepared by task force on COVID 19 especially to address the psychological reactions and providing strategy to combat these adverse reactions. It was felt essential to consider and provide strategies to handle the stress in such a situation. Psychological health is of paramount importance and this can be maintained by following simple steps. Human nature is primarily social and during the epidemic of COVID 19 social distancing is the tool to prevent spread of disease. Hence this tool itself should become power to sustain in such a crisis. The strategies are also required to be followed during lock down phase. Psychological well being and health are required to be maintained in this crisis.

In an epidemic as posed by COVID-19 outbreak, the reactions of stress, anxiety, panic and depression may commonly be seen. Along with medical care and treatment of affected and at risk individuals, we may have to actively consider and address emotional and behavioral reactions which may specifically include:

- Fear of getting infected
- Fear of dying
- Approaching health services due to panic
- Fear of losing occupation
- Fear of painful health condition
- Fear of being socially excluded
- Fear of being in quarantine
- Avoidance of health screening despite flue like symptoms
- Concealing health condition when a medical examination is indicated
- Losing hope when infected
- Intolerance of quarantine or staying at home
- Feeling helplessness, pessimistic, loneliness, and depression during isolation
- Getting panicky when there are physical symptoms of other conditions
- Hyper-vigilance of body sensations and changes in body

Consolidated and co-ordinated efforts will be required to respond to the mental health needs of the affected individuals which can be done through following modalities:

- Generating public awareness through media, online support and tele-support
- Developing flyers and written materials in regional languages and wide dissemination of the same
- Empanelment of Institutes/Centers in the country for specialized support
- 24x7 support availability by mental health professionals.

COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH CHECKLIST

NORMAL REACTIONS

TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT FAMILY

CONCERN ABOUT HEALTH AND SELF-CARE

TO BE BOTHERED ABOUT UNCERTAINTY

BOREDOM

SEEKING INFORMATION

ABNORMAL REACTIONS

PRE-OCCUPATION WITH DISEASE

DIFFICULTIES WITH SLEEP

CONCENTRATION DIFFICULTIES

PANIC REACTIONS

OBSESSION WITH MEDIA

Section-II: Mental and Behavioral Reactions:

The COVID-19 pandemic is enormously stressful. It has impacted the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone in some way or the other. It is normal for people to experience wide range of stress reactions, where some may experience mild stress reactions while others may experience severe anxiety, depression, panic or worsening of physical or mental health conditions. The preliminary findings on a survey shows that 60% of adults report feeling 'extremely anxious' in the current scenario (Singh S. ongoing study in U.P., India).

Persons who are impacted strongly by outbreak of COVID-19:

A person's response to the outbreak depends on age, background, community, personality and support system available. People who may show severe reactions to the stress or a crisis mostly include:

- Responders to COVID-19
- Who have been strictly quarantined due to high risk
- Older people
- People with chronic diseases having higher risk for COVID-19
- People with preexisting mental health problems
- Doctors and other health care providers who are directly helping those with COVID-19
- Police
- Those with substance use problems
- Care givers

The common mental and behavioral reactions to outbreak of COVID-19 are

Common mental/emotional reactions:

- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Racing thoughts about your own health and that of loved ones
- Sadness, low mood
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble relaxing
- Worsening of ongoing mental health problems

Common Behavioral Reactions:

- Increased heart rate
- Restlessness or agitation
- Stomach upset
- Fatigue, or other vague/ uncomfortable sensations
- Changes in eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other substances

Warning signs which show that one needs help of a Mental Health Professional:

Certain signs that may suggest that the personal resources are no longer sufficient to manage the stress reaction are as follows:

Psychological and emotional warning signs

- Feeling very low/ sad
- Severe anxiety/ overwhelming fear
- Suicidal ideas
- Feeling panicked when you hear talk of the virus
- Negative pervasive thoughts
- Being hopeless
- Loss of pleasure and interest in activities that you usually enjoy

Behavioral symptoms warning signs

- Major sleep problems
- Significantly reduced appetite, possibly associated with weight loss
- Low energy and pronounced fatigue
- Suicidal acts
- Difficulty in carrying out daily tasks
- Completely avoiding interactions
- Obsessively monitoring physical symptoms
- Frequent crying
- Pronounced irritability and aggression
- Conflict with other members of the household
- Inability to concentrate
- Alcohol, drug and medication abuse

IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT IF ONE OBSERVES ABOVE REACTIONS IN ONESELF OR ANY OTHER PERSON PERSISTING FOR MORE THAN 2-3 WEEKS, ONE SHOULD CONTACT A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.

AND ALSO, ONE SHOULD NOT WAIT FOR 2-3 WEEKS IF SYMPTOMS ARE VERY SEVERE.

Key Points:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone. The stress reactions to this crisis may range from mild worry to severe anxiety, depression, panic or worsening of physical/ mental health conditions.
- Persons who are impacted strongly by outbreak of COVID-19 are responders to COVID-19, those strictly quarantined due to high risk, older people, people with chronic diseases having higher risk for COVID-19, those with preexisting mental health conditions, health care providers, police and care givers.
- The common mental and behavioral reactions to outbreak of COVID-19 are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, anxious or worried, sad, low mood, panic, fatigue, or other vague/ uncomfortable sensations, changes in eating patterns, difficulty sleeping or concentrating.

Warning signs which indicate that one needs immediate help of a Mental Health Professional are Feeling very low/ sad, severe anxiety/ overwhelming fear, suicidal ideas or acts, hopeless, feeling panicked when you hear talk of the virus, negative pervasive thoughts, loss of pleasure and interest,

frequent crying, major sleep problems, significantly reduced appetite, weight loss, low energy, difficulty in carrying out daily tasks, alcohol, drug and medication abuse.

It is strongly recommended that if one observes above mentioned reactions in oneself or any other person, persisting for more than 2-3 weeks, one should contact a mental health professional. Also, one should not wait for 2-3 weeks if symptoms are severe

SECTION-III: PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- COVID-19 is a World Disaster. In a pandemic situation like this it is normal to feel anxious, sad, worried, confused, scared or angry, heaviness of breath, having restless sleep. People might be hyper-vigilant, may ask for frequent reassurance.
- Probably who so ever are having some information about the outbreak, all of them will have some of these experiences if not all. These are all normal reactions to an undesirable and less understood stress.
- There might be individual differences in terms of frequency, intensity and duration of emotional and behavioral reactions, but may be evident even in younger children, adolescents, elderly, persons with developmental disabilities (like, autism, intellectual disability etc.), persons with minor and major mental illnesses.
- Presence of stress reactions is NOT a sign of weakness, but of being human.
- However, some people might be more concerned about their emotion and behavior or unpleasant reactions are continuing over 2-3 weeks or it becomes difficult to function at home or at job. For them it is necessary to take mental health support immediately.

Stress Reactions can be observed in:

1. Who are directly affected by COVID-19
2. Who are indirectly affected by COVID-19 (e.g. Family members, friends, relatives)
3. Who are identified as at Risk (Travel from foreign countries, came in contact with affected person etc.)
4. Who are remotely affected by COVID-19 (All citizens through media and other sources)
5. Health Care Professionals dealing with affected
6. Health Care Professionals not dealing with affected population but visiting hospitals
7. Humanitarian Workers (Police, Cleaning team etc.)

How to Minimize Stress Reactions:

1. Identify normal reactions of abnormal event. Presence of some of the stress reactions does not make you more vulnerable for mental health concern. Just accept "I am stressed as the situation is like this".
2. For information related to the outbreak, only rely on World Health Organization, Government of India and respective state government. Try to avoid social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp etc.) information to gather knowledge. Restrain yourself and others to forward information.
3. Be in touch with your friends and families over phone, video call etc. to share information about how did you spend the day, how did you feel to be with your family members during lockdown, how was the food today, what new things you or some of your family members did.
4. During lockdown, take this as an opportunity to explore your forgotten hobbies or wishes or memories. Would you like to try out a new recipe or new music or experimental photography or a poem? Is there a scope to play a family indoor game?

Do you enjoy card magic or origami? Just learn some new tricks through youtube and create a fun opportunity for your family.

5. You might be having many interesting stories since your childhood. Even others in the family including kids are having many stories too. Share the stories.
6. Physical exercise is stress reliever even if you do it for 10 minutes in a day. More is better (30-40 minutes) though. At home you may do simple stretching exercise or yoga. Motivate others too.
7. Breathing Exercise is a simple thing with wonderful effect on stress reactions. Make it a MUST at least for next 3 weeks and more to get sustained benefit. Ten minutes practice in the morning and 10 in the evening will provide the best result. To practice it, sit comfortably on a chair or sofa with both the feet touching the floor (can sit on bed or floor with folded legs too) and hands on the lap. Make the body as relax as possible. Now take a slow deep breath in a way as if you are smelling your favourite flower or perfume. Inhale slowly for around 5 seconds, wait for 3-5 seconds and then allow the breath to go out more slowly (5-6 sec) to make your body more relaxed. Be relaxed for 3-4 sec and inhale again and continue till 10 minutes. In 10 mins there would be around 30-40 breathing cycles. While inhaling just be aware that your belly will expand more than your chest and your shoulders should be relaxed.
8. If you are having sleeping difficulties as negative thoughts or worries about Coronavirus are disturbing you a lot, the same breathing exercise in lying posture can be practiced during bed time too.
9. In addition, five to ten breathing exercise can be practiced at anytime of the day, wherever you are in whatever posture, if you feel much anxious or distressed.
10. Restrict your COVID-19 related news reading and listening time. Get the updates only in the morning and evening time. Excess news creates unnecessary anxiety.
11. Follow the normal routine as far as possible and eat healthy.
12. For health care professionals and humanitarian workers, self care is utmost important. Take food at proper time and share your responsibilities with other co-workers. And remember to practice the breathing exercise and physical exercise. If you are already under some medications, remember to take them at appropriate time.
13. Some neighbors might not be following appropriate social distancing. You may just make them aware about the need but it is not in your hand whether others would follow this. Stay calm by telling yourself "I did my job and I can't convince everybody as everyone's judgment is different".
14. If you or your family members are becoming too anxious, that means they are catastrophizing the fact. In such situation ask yourself or others "Am I making it out of proportion?" "Do I have enough evidences to call it that negative?" "Do I have the belief that Government machinery and doctors are doing nothing to protect?"
15. These are the situations when people do smoke more or consume more alcohol or use sleeping pills without prescriptions. These can make the situation more hazardous. Remember, these things do not reduce the stress. Use the techniques that are discussed above to help yourself.

How to Help Children and Disabled to reduce the Stress:

1. Children and Persons with mental disabilities are more vulnerable to stress reaction. Give them proper information about the outbreak without catastrophizing it. Avoid giving your own interpretation of the fact.
2. If children are sharing any information regarding the outbreak, ask them the source of the information. Tell them that only Government information to be trusted and reassure them that you are with them to protect.
3. Engage the children in enjoyable activities and creative works.
4. If they do not show any emotional reactions that does not mean that they are not suffering. Ask them directly if they are anxious or fearful etc. Reassure them.
5. If your child is too anxious, try to understand the thought behind that. Reassure him or her by discarding the thought.
6. Teach them the breathing exercise as coping. For them you may say “Blow your belly like a balloon and let the air go away”
7. Encourage children to take some initiative in the family during lockdown. They also may be encouraged to express their anxiety through drawing or writing.
8. Prepare a Survival Kit for the children and disabled in written or drawing format. This Kit will include information regarding How to Cope with Distress. May include some of the points that are discussed above.

Survival Kit to Deal With Stress:

- ✓ **Remember, stress reactions are Normal Reaction to Abnormal Situation**
- ✓ **Being stressed is not a sign of weakness**
- ✓ **Physical Exercise for 10 to 20 to 30 minutes**
- ✓ **Deep Breathing Exercise for 20 minutes**
- ✓ **Restrict news time**
- ✓ **Eat healthy**
- ✓ **Focus on yourself, it is not in your hands what other say or do.**
- ✓ **Follow normal routine**
- ✓ **Communicate if you feel anxious or worried**
- ✓ **Take this as an opportunity to revive your hobbies and memories**
- ✓ **Look at the positive aspect of the outbreak and lockdown: More contact with families, less pollution, inculcating good health habit, more birds around**

SECTION-IV: MEASURES FOR MITIGATION

A. Psychological mitigation for people in isolation.

Conversation with others by professionals should adopt active listening, paraphrasing or reflective communication skills throughout the session.

Psycho-education focusing but not limited to the following;

- a) Differentiating facts from rumours regarding course of illness, reactions, prognosis, factors of key prognosis in general and etc.
 - b) Providing appropriate source to collect information like
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/> <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
<https://www.epi-win.com/>
<https://www.mygov.in/covid-19>
 - c) Importance of regular healthy diets, sleep and other safety hygiene/etiquettes.
- Staying connected and appropriate social network: Even if there is mandatory and rightful physical isolation with outer world, its important to connect with others in terms of conversation with family members or friends via phone, social networking sites or etc by staying indoors. Video chats are encouraged with members with whom you are comfortable.
 - Behavioral activation:
 - Even in isolation it is recommended to plan out the days to restore a sense of purpose and control to your daily life but by being as practical as possible. Obviously tailored made. Try to balance leisure with some work of professional importance by staying indoors. Few instances of possible activities, but not limited, may be being creative, watching scheduled time of youtube/online videos, listening to reliable news update, writing journals or etc.
 - Picking any previously neglected activity which one always have thought to do but not have done justice can be initiated for few minutes or hours keeping logistics of isolation in mind.
 - Engaging some time on activities in scheduled nature on down's religious faith or belief can be carried out.
 - Verbal or written catharsis: Try to record your feelings, fear and experience in written or recorded formats.
 - Keeping a worry time: Worry in initial phase it's difficult to completely suppress but can be managed by keeping a scheduled "Worry time" for example twice a day by learning to postpone worrying, or put it 'on hold' until a more convenient time.
 - Cognitive challenging and Role reversal: Encourage yourself to think in lines that if you were a health provider or elder what could you have advised to others in such situation.
 - Ask yourself few questions like; a) is the mortality rate is as high as I think? b) Am I getting ahead of myself, assuming something bad will happen when I really don't know the outcome? c) Am I overestimating how bad the consequences will be? d) Am I underestimating my ability to cope?
 - Try to counter your negative thoughts in terms of information received in psychoeducation and reliable source.
 - Avoid doomsday discussion and limit negative media intake: Stay informed about the situation via reliable sources, but limit your news and social media intake to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Overall research have provided traditional media provides more reliable information than social media. In addition one may listen some news of COVID 19 survivors.

- It's better to have information about necessary contact numbers beforehand. If you know or confident then only assist them any such numbers.

B. Psychological mitigation for elderly people:

All the above points from 1-7 are applicable to these sections too, but behavioural activation has to be made more tailor made as per their strengths.

In addition to above, Selection Optimization Compensation (SOC) model, a simple but highly efficient Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) model specific to this population can be applied.

SOC Model

SOC model of CBT is focused on helping a person actively manage to reduce potential limitations imposed by age-related changes in functioning.

Selection often means a reduction in own's behavioural repertoire in order to maximise functioning. Like presently selecting an activity/role/hobby they have previously given up or not done enough as they have wished.

Optimization is the principle of 'practice makes perfect' of the selected activity; here the individual strives for optimal levels of functioning by focussing on various resources on achieving the selected activity.

Compensation is where an individual confronted with a loss, takes account of limitations and engages in alternative means of achieving the highest possible level of functioning. The use of SOC requires creativity and collaboration on the part of the therapist and patient.

C. Psychological mitigation for care takers of elderly people:

- Isolated elderly people may be more prone to anxious, angry, stressed, agitated, and withdrawn during the outbreak/while in quarantine.
- Provide practical and emotional support through family members and seek health professionals immediately when you need so.
- Assist them for adopting SOC and behavioral activation as mentioned in above.
- Share facts in simplified manner about the current scenario and give clear information about how to reduce risk of infection.
- Repeat the information whenever necessary in a clear, concise and respectful manner.
- Better demonstrate the safety hygiene methods rather verbal instructions only.
- It may also be helpful for information to be displayed in writing or pictures.

D. Psychological mitigation for health care workers

- Feelings and experience of stress is quite normal in the current situation and it's not indicative of individual weakness.
- One need to employ previously or new adaptive helpful coping strategies. Few instances like sharing your experience and daily activities to other healthy loved ones, written catharsis, some minute leisure time in between work schedules like music, keeping in touch with loved one over phone and informing them about your 'healthy status' and ask them about their well being, taking some rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engaging in physical activity and etc.
- Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs and etc.

- When distributing work routines between other members of your team try to think in win win scenarios but not affecting other.
- If you find some fault in co worker try not to put blame but suggest what possible changes can bring better result and ask their feedback on your thinking or ideas.
- Rotate workers from high-stress to lower-stress functions. Partner inexperienced workers with their more experiences colleagues.
- If you are a team leader/manager ensure staffs are aware of source of nearby mental health services.
- Share information with empathy and optimism: Being aware that uncertainty and anxiety in people are common it is essential that information like such as a business closure or extra duty can bring more negative emotions hence the information shared as to be done on **empathic and optimistic manner by attaching the larger perspective** or advantage behind any such orders.
- Leader must be the mirror of control and responsibility: A loss of control in leader can contribute to a sense of helplessness. If you are leader try to adopt policy of “you do what I do” rather “you do what I say”, possibly former would bring more cooperativeness.
- Encourage feedback from co-workers and if leader motivate other for suggestions too and ask others about their opinion.
- Try not to shout and enforce a smile on your face socially.
- Be honest and transparent also while delivering disappointing news. Leaders who don't share all the facts quickly become less credible, and it may lead to more panic and overreaction.
- Ensure that outreach personnel to enter the community in pairs. Have plans for work breaks and adopt flexible schedules, as much as possible, for workers who are directly impacted or have a ill family member.
- One need to identify possible volunteers in orient responders, including nurses, teachers, community leaders and other workers in quarantine sites, on how to provide basic emotional and practical support to affected people using **psychological first aid**.

Key Points

- Seek information from reliable source and limit sensation media time.
- Maintain healthy diets, hygiene etiquettes, sleep and ensure adequate rest.
- Stay connected digitally.
- Maintain a balance of leisure, professional and other activities to restore a sense of purpose and control in daily life.
- Schedule ‘worry time’ (two or very few) in a day to avoid over worrying.
- Counter and challenge your apprehensions and fears with reliable source of information;
- Selection, optimization and compensation principle for elderly people.
- Demonstrate safety hygiene practices to elderly and children.
- Do catharsis of your fear and concern in written or digitally recorded way.
- Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs and etc.
- Its normal to be stressed in this situation.
- Share information with empathic and optimistic manner by attaching the larger perspective.
- Be role model; Honest and transparent in delivering disappointing news.
- Learn, apply and find volunteers who can share the basic principles of psychological first aid.
- Seek additional help if necessary; prefer online mode.

SECTION-V: ENHANCEMENT OF WELL BEING

Wellbeing can be described as 'a state of being content, comfortable, happy and healthy. It has multiple dimensions, such as physical, mental and social wellbeing. It also extends to our activities and choices that extend to achieve the above as well as personal goals and fulfillment. The synonyms usually associated with wellbeing are, happiness, connectedness, wellness and satisfaction.

Few of the most common components of wellbeing are

- more positive affect
- less negative affect
- having autonomy and control in one's life
- having a purpose
- personal development
- self-acceptance
- better social relationships

Given this, if an individual is not able to fulfill majority of the above conditions, and/or if any situation thwarts the attainment or maintaining of the above components, either in short term or long term, an individual can be said to be in a state of 'not having well-being'.

Natural disasters as well as pandemics such as COVID-19, can create multiple situations that affects the persons mental health and wellbeing, in different ways such as financial, occupational, familial and social factors apart from physical. In addition, various factors such as being quarantined, when one is affected by the virus, when a family member is affected by the virus, when there is loss of life of near and dear ones also affects the mental health and wellbeing.

Below are some of the things that can be done to develop and maintain wellbeing.

About the virus spread:

- Equip yourself with appropriate information about the condition, such as the preventive measures, transmitting mechanism, symptoms, illness duration, and possible treatment.
- Trust only the scientifically valid information, which is usually from government, WHO, etc.
- Be aware about the local conditions, such as government orders, rules and regulations.
- Do not get too preoccupied with the virus. Limit media exposure. Reduce and restrict your time reading / watching / listening about the virus. It may be half an hour to one hour a day, which can be divided to twice in a day. However, it depends on how you are functioning. If everything is fine then this time limit can vary.

About your thoughts and beliefs

- Evaluate your fears and concerns about its appropriateness. Check whether you are reacting inappropriately. For example, if you are taking all precautions about preventive measures, and staying quarantined at home with family members and decided to stay so for few days, your chance of affecting will be very limited or almost nil.
- Similarly evaluate your family members concern. Address their concern.
- Children will be looking at you for consolation. You have to be a model for them. If you are stressed, they will be too. Let them express all of their apprehension, feelings and thoughts. Address their concern. Be as honest as possible and give age appropriate information.

About your feelings

- Check your reactions to the scenario. whether you are anxious, sad, and feeling depressed. It can be a normal reaction to feel bored and lonely when quarantined and when isolated from the surroundings. However, you cannot get that feeling onto you. You have to be proactive to stay mentally healthy and have wellbeing.

- Check whether your feeling anxious, sad and depressed is the result of your inappropriate and faulty thoughts and beliefs. Many times, if we correct our faulty thoughts our anxiety and sadness will come down. For example, if we think that I am going to die in this pandemic, then usually it can lead to sad and depressed feelings.
- On the other hand, check whether you are being irritable and angry. Many times, when we are stressed or tensed, we will be irritable towards friends, family members or others. In these situations, you need to relax and destress yourself.

About your behavior

- Often in situations like this, where our regular schedule is disrupted it is easy to lose focus on our behavior. For almost everybody alive now, this situation is unique and nobody has experienced it before.
- Given this different people can behave differently. Some might just give up, some might take up to drinking excessively, some might continue to do what they used to do earlier as much as possible and some might use this opportunity to do something different, something new and productive.

The most important thing to remember is that, this is a pandemic which has caused and causing major upsets the world around. However, we should also know that this is going to be for short while and that humans have amazing ability to adapt to circumstances. As this is a collective phenomenon that affects the society as a whole, each of us have to individually and collectively overcome the difficulties.

Apart from the above few of the things that can be done.

Distraction:

- If anxiety and worry is more than usual, try distraction techniques, that are given below, such as keeping busy, playing, learning new things, being in touch with social networks and so on.
- Keeping busy
- Have a schedule. Plan for the day. If you had a schedule earlier and if it is possible, continue doing it.
- Help in things at home. Help your spouse, parents and children.
- Learn and do new things at home, such as cooking, carpentry, crafts and so on.
- Pets can be great company
- Don't postpone the work if it can be done.
- If continuous activity or work is not possible. Keep a separate time / schedule for it and work. For example, one hour in the morning and one afternoon you will work on your assignments.
- If anyone activity is not possible to do, then it is good to alternate between few or more activities. For example, working on the assignment for two hours and then doing some gardening for half an hour and again working on assignment.

Social connections

- Several researches have shown that being connected to family, friends and people around you help you live longer. It also has immense benefits for wellbeing.
- We are all social animals. It is aptly said that 'happiness doubles and sorrow halve when shared with others'
- Be in touch with friends, relatives. Call them as often as possible. Message them to ask how are they doing.
- This can be the time to catch up with lost or forgotten friendship. It can also be good excuse to mend that broken relationship.

Relaxation

- Do whatever that relaxes you, in a healthy way. Such as listening to music, dancing, yoga, tai chi, and deep breathing. For some people, routine chores relaxes them, such as sweeping, mopping, cooking.
- Pick a hobby. Though you might not have time to master it, you can try something new. Like learning to draw a portrait, learning keyboard, etc.

Play

- Play is a great stress booster and play can invigorate anybody.
- Play for fun and not solely for competition.
- When quarantined, it is usually indoor play activities. However, what one can play is limited only by one's imagination.
- One can play using board games and indoor sports activities. You can play with children, partners, and parents or with anybody available.

Have a purpose in life

- Before this pandemic all of us had some purpose in life. Be it studying to become somebody, providing safe future for your kids, building that dream home. Therefore, remember those purpose, and (unless you are seriously affected by the virus) realize that things have not changed much and usually you can still continue on your pursuit of your purpose.
- For those of you whose life has been affected by this pandemic, please take professional help is required.

Share your thoughts and feelings:

- If any of the above is not helping then it is good to share your thoughts and feeling with others. It can be friends and family members who listen to you.
- On the other hand, you can reach out to any of the available helpline of covid-19. Alternatively, you can also contact mental health care professionals.

CONCLUSION:

To summarize psychological health challenges of COVID 19 epidemic are real and this may be handled by following few coping strategies of enhancing mental health .Prevention always plays an important role. This cannot be overemphasized that it is crucial to be connected and stay healthy .It is well said social distancing is a tool to connect to self and significant others. Let all of us stay positive and connected.