



COVID -19 AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.

INTRODUCTION

In January, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

Since then, millions of infections have been recorded.

This has significantly impacted the lives of people around the world.

COVID-19 has clear implications on our health both physical and mental, it is easy to ignore the impact on mental health.

We must make an effort to preserve our mental health because mental health and physical health are inextricably linked.

There is no health without mental health.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

- **Restrictions on movement**
- **Non-essential Businesses closed**
- **Social Distancing**
- **Bans on Public gatherings**
- **Working from home**
- **Schooling from home**

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

MENTAL HEALTH is defined by the World Health Organization as:

“a state of well being in which a person realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

Our mental health influences our ability to cope with change.

The state of our mental health is determined by genetic factors (nature), how we were raised (nurture) , life’s experiences (stresses and relationships) and our coping methods.

THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

**MAXIMUM
MENTAL
HEALTH**

Diagnosis for a serious illness but copes well and has positive mental health.

No illness or disorder and positive mental health.

**MAXIMUM
MENTAL
DISORDER**

**MINIMAL
MENTAL
DISORDER**

Diagnosis for a serious illness and poor mental health.

No illness or disorder but has a poor mental health.

**MINIMUM
MENTAL
HEALTH**

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH

- **Fear (Of loss- Life, Livelihood etc.)**
 - **Anxiety (About ourselves, about others e.g. family and about the future)**
 - **Feelings of stress**
 - **Loneliness (Social Vs Physical distancing)**
 - **Sadness**
- Worsening of pre-existing mental health issues such as Anxiety, Depression, Schizophrenia, Eating Disorders etc.**

PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

It is normal to feel sad, stressed or confused during a crisis.

Are we really powerless in the face of the pandemic?

The way we think affects the way we feel.

The way we feel affects the way we behave.

The way we behave determines what we get out of life.

Perspective is everything.

We can influence our own thoughts and behavior.

COPING DURING THE PANDEMIC

1. Have you successfully dealt with adversity in the past? (How ?)

2. Can you re-access those coping strategies?

3. STAY INFORMED.

4. Arm yourself with facts. We feel more in control when we are informed.

5. Stick to trusted news sources.

6. Fake news breeds unnecessary fear and worry.

7. Regulate your use of social media.

8. Take control of your news-feed.

COPING STRATEGIES

- **Positive reframing**
- **Has any good come out of this situation?
(Rest from a hectic routine, bonding with family)**
- **Can any good come out of this situation? (How?)**
- **Focus on the things you can control
(Internal locus Vs External Locus of control)**
- **SMART Goal setting
(Achieving goals fosters a sense of purpose)**
- **Create and stick to routines**
- **Stay connected to loved ones
(Phone and video calls, Chat apps etc.)**
- **Who are you talking with? What are you talking about?**
- **Stay away from toxic conversations**

SELF CARE AND CARING FOR OTHERS

- **Periodically accessing comfort improves our overall sense of wellbeing.**
- **Prioritize adequate rest and sleep.**
- **Make healthy food and drink choices (Cut down on caffeine).**
- **Stay physically active.**
- **Make time for things you enjoy.**
- **Practice self compassion (Don't be too hard on your self).**
- **Make time for faith based activities if you are so inclined.**
- **Be kind - Helping others in times of need not only helps the recipient, it promotes your wellbeing too.**
- **Is there a way to help others around you?**

HOW CAN I HELP OTHERS?

- Discourage the spread of false information about COVID-19.
- Discourage the stigmatization of anyone who has had the virus.
- Discourage the stigmatization of frontline health care workers and other essential workers.
- Reach out and offer help to others whenever you can.
- Adhere to the recommended infection control and prevention measures.

UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

- Excessive intake of alcohol
- Drug misuse
- Over-eating
- Over-sleeping
- Over-dependence on others
- Over-working
- Denial
- Disengagement

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has changed the way we live and work.

Worry and Fear are natural responses to crises.

We have to choose to manage our thoughts and emotions if we are to make the best of an already difficult situation.

Prioritizing self care is a key way to improve our well being and our ability to cope in a healthy manner.

Only after we look after ourselves can we be in a position to look after others.

Protecting our mental health is as important as protecting our physical health, there is no health without mental health.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>