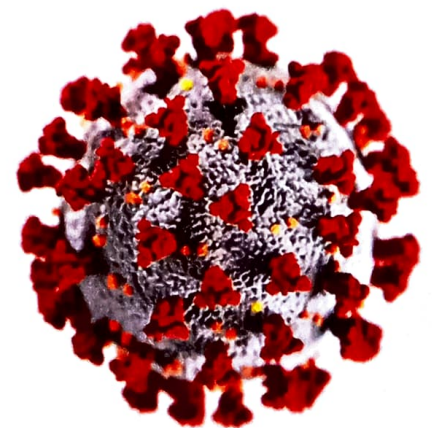2020

Advisory for Protection of Mental Health in COVID-19 Outbreak
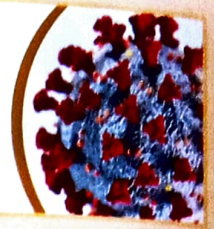
College of Community Science
Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth
Parbhani 431 402 (MS)

Advisory for Protection of Mental Health in COVID-19 Outbreak

An outbreak of novel Coronavirus was first recorded in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December 2019. WHO announced a name for this new Corona virus disease as COVID-19 and declared it as pandemic. A total of 22,41,359 confirmed case and 1,52,551 deaths were documented across the globe as per the COVID -19 situation report of 19 April 2020[1].

Status of COVID-19 in India

In India the first case of the COVID-19 was reported in Kerala on 30 January 2020. As of 19 April 2020, total 16,116 confirmed cases and 519 deaths were reported in the country as per the statistics published by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, India [2]. Government of India declared the national lockdown as the cases of COVID-19 rose in the country having 1.3 billion population. This lockdown was initiated on 25 March and hopefully will end by 3 May 2020. This is considered as the biggest lockdown in the world. For controlling the spread of the infection, the Government and non-government offices, private organizations, schools and higher educational institutes, commercial and private establishments, industrial establishments, all transport services, all places of worship, hospitality services etc have been shut down for the safety of all people. However emergency services in the country have been exempted from the shutdown.

Increment in mental illness in an outbreak of COVID-19

A recent survey conducted by the Indian Psychiatry Society noticed a steep rise (20%)in the number of people suffering from mental illness after the outbreak of novel Corona virus. [3]

Mental ill health in youth

Due to an outbreak of COVID-19 and mega lockdown, the mental health issues of youth also are rising. In light of this, Online research study on Common concerns of youth towards COVID-19 was carried out by the Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science, Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani(MS)[4] . The results of the study indicated that Uncertainty about future (65%), anxiety about examinations (80%), disruption in routine (60%), restrictions on social gatherings (86%), concern for their own and their loved ones' health & safety (87%),collapsing of economic condition of family (75%), spending more time on cellphones (65%) were some of the major reasons contributing to
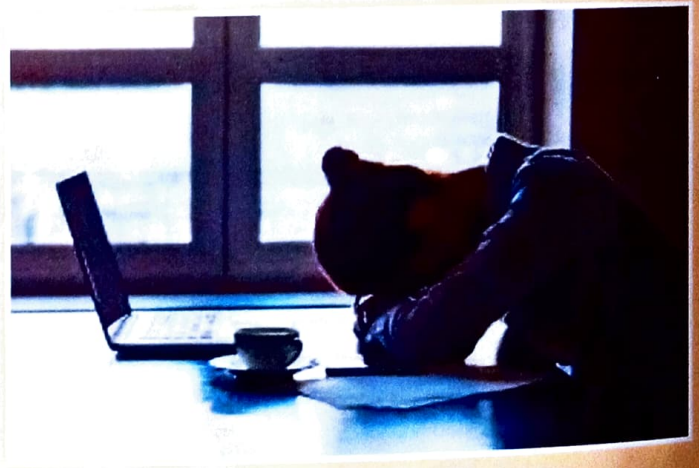
mental health issues in them. Boredom (71%) Fear & anxiety about COVID-19 (66%), difficulty in concentrating on work and studies (63%),mood swings (56%), irritability (57%), reduction in work efficiency (54%), sleep difficulties were found to be the common concerns of the youth in an outbreak of COVID-19. As mental ill health is known to have an adverse effects on immunity and general health status, deliberate efforts need to be taken for protecting mental health to fight against Corona virus pandemic.

Preventive measures for protecting mental health of youth in an outbreak of COVID-19

- ➤ Be aware about COVID-19 and the precautions to be taken to avoid it from reliable sources. Strictly follow all the guidelines given by the Government for protecting from COVID-19
- ➤ Adopt healthy life style
  - ▪ Wake up before sunrise
  - ▪ Do exercises
  - ▪ Practice Yoga and meditation
  - ▪ Have healthy diet
  - ▪ Drink enough water
  - ▪ Follow the healthy routine
  - ▪ Have adequate sleep of at least 7-8 hrs
- ➤ Keep yourself busy in constructive activities that make you feel good. For eg Reading books, doing online courses, learning new skills, polishing old skills etc.
- ➤ Set realistic goals and work hard to achieve them
- ➤ Get involved in household chores
- ➤ Extend help to others who are in need
- ➤ Take care of self and family members
- ➤ Be optimistic
- ➤ Stay connected with close friends and family members
- ➤ Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious.
- ➤ Avoid spending more time on social media.
- ➤ Spare time for your hobbies like drawing & painting, dancing, gardening, cooking etc
- ➤ Spend quality time with your beloved family members
- ➤ Concentrate on studies
- ➤ Stay connected with concerned course professors/trainers and classmates
- ➤ Take time to relax
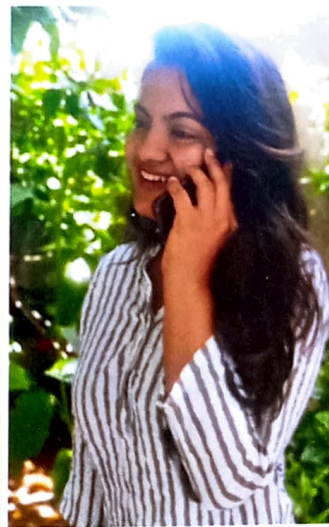
- ➤ Develop tolerance for combating unavoidable stress
- ➤ Read inspirational literature
- ➤ Watch inspirational movies and TV programmes
- ➤ Try to reduce economic pressure of the family
- ➤ Discuss your feelings with the trustworthy person
- ➤ In case of low or depressed feeling, contact a counsellor

References

[1]. COVID-19 Situation Reports-90 World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200419-sitrep-90-covid-19.

[2] The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India, https://www.mohfw.gov.in/19 April 2020

[3] India Today https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/20-per-cent-increase-in-patients-with-mental-illness-since-coronavirus-outbreak-survey-1661584-2020-03-31

[4]] Jaya Bangale (2020) Common concerns of youth towards COVID-19, Dept. of HD & FS, College of Community Science, VNMKV, Parbhani.

Dr. Jaya Bangale
Professor(CAS) & Head
Dept. of Human Development & Family Studies
College of Community Science, VNMKV, Parbhani