

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Support During COVID-19 Outbreak

from the **Philippine Council for Mental Health**

National action, specifically the expanded community quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19 dramatizes the need for every citizen to be part of the solution. What happens to the individual affects his community and what happens to the community affects the individual. This interconnectedness is at the core of the pursuit and promotion of physical health and psychosocial well-being, and the prevention and treatment of ill-health.

Needless to say, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a strain and stresses the individual's health including their mental health. Hence, the Philippine Council for Mental Health (PCMH) calls attention to the vital need to address the mental health and psychosocial consequences of this crisis along with the quest for treatment strategies and intervention for the physical and material consequences of this extreme life experience on individuals and their communities. The suddenness of the impact of this experience and their psychosocial consequences on the daily lives of individuals in their respective communities cannot be ignored. Though expected these consequences can be overwhelming putting individuals to be at risk for mental health conditions. Such strategies recently imposed on every individual in the country such as physical distance, self or community quarantine, school suspensions, working from home, etc. can have short-term and long-term effects on the mental and psychosocial well-being of individuals, families and communities. Community quarantine, magnifies the deficits in opportunities and material deprivation of those who have less in life. In the extreme case, safety from the virus could come face to face with the reality of starvation. In the case of starvation with families with limited wherewithal to bring bread to the table.

Through all these, the PCMH is in agreement with the guidelines set forth by the United Nations Interagency Steering Committee (UN-IASC) for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) in Emergencies. The PCMH aims at providing support programs, to protect and promote psychosocial well-being and to prevent and treat mental health conditions.

**IN THIS REGARD, THE PCMH RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:**



**1**

**Promote psychosocial well-being in everyone.**



**2**

**Promote psychosocial well-being among the team of frontline workers and their supervisors and agencies.**



**3**

**Promote psychosocial well-being in children.**



**4**

**Promote psychosocial well-being of older adults, the elderly.**

**IMPORTANT  
REMINDERS FOR  
EVERYONE:**

## **THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH**

THE WHO states that health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The pursuit of Health for All necessarily involves the pursuit of the physical and psychosocial well-being of the human community during ordinary or extraordinary times. Mental health and psychosocial support is therefore integral to a complete public health response to any crisis or emergency. This crisis has only highlighted what we have known to be true all along – we are all connected as one human community. The virus will only be contained if we ALL ACT AS ONE. By being responsible and taking good care of ourselves, we are also taking care of each other. Strength, determination, cooperation, kindness and prayers will see us through this extraordinary episode in our lifetime.

**Our connectedness with each other, not our differences is what matters now more than ever.**

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