

COVID-19: Psychological impact and solution

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major pandemic that is a matter of concern all over the world. In the face of the current complex and dangerous situation, living with and coping with the pandemic is essential to sustaining the economy and other foundations. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only impacted physical health, but also psychological health. Protecting yourself and your family's well-being is the top priority for helping the people around you to cope with and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. This report will introduce some methods of treating COVID-19 with mental therapy in order to maintain the spirit of living together and facing the pandemic more effectively.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, coronavirus, psychological

1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic is a concern, endangering people and hindering many social activities in many countries. Since the first case was detected, the number of infections has exceeded 185 million cases and 4 million deaths [1], a number that has put the whole world in crisis. Coronavirus is spread from person to person through coughs or sneezes, from saliva droplets and nasal secretions of an infected person. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will develop mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without special treatment. Older adults and people with underlying medical problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illnesses. Common symptoms that need attention are fever, dry cough, and fatigue [2]. With the current situation, everyone must take measures to prevent, cope, and live with the pandemic safely. This review will give each individual a guide to some ways of overcoming the pandemic no matter who they are, whether

they be healthcare workers, members of rapid response forces, essential providers or ordinary citizens. This material can help yourself or assist others in some cases to overcome current difficulties.

2. HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 has impacted physical health, mental health, the economy, and society [3-7] overall. Efforts to limit the spread of the virus such as social distancing or quarantine are necessary but they reduce interpersonal relationships that make us susceptible to stress [8]. Recent studies show that COVID-19 is associated with mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, stress, and substance use [9-15]. Long-term exposure to COVID-19 stress may affect psychological development or exacerbate mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety [10, 16]. Therefore, we need to both protect our physical health and improve our mental health.

3. HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGY OF YOURSELF

Taking care of yourself and those around you to

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cope with the COVID-19 pandemic is not an arduous thing - it is the responsibility of each individual. Each person also contributes to the fight against the pandemic in the general community when having good health and a stable mental state. To be mentally and physically stable, you are faced with getting used to many new situations[17]:

- Working longer hours due to insufficient resources or protection
- Responding to stigma and discrimination related to COVID-19
- Fear for the safety and health of yourself and your loved ones
- Being confronted with illness, suffering, or death
- Having to take care of a loved one or self-quarantine
- Being influenced by other people's stories after helping or listening to them.
- Being affected by the economic needs of themselves or their families.

Faced with many problems encountered when being affected by the pandemic, many people will feel exhausted, tired, stressed, and have no hope to gain strength in the fight against the pandemic. Besides that, there are also stressful situations that reduce our psyche [17]. Physical symptoms include headaches, trouble sleeping, and loss of appetite. Behavioral symptoms include low/less motivation to work, increased consumption of stimulants, unwillingness to commit to normal customs/religions. Emotional symptoms include sadness, fear, depression, and anger.

If chronic stress prevents you from performing your daily activities, you should seek professional help. You need to pay attention to your health and spirit which are the greatest weapons of each individual. You should not harbor negative thoughts no matter what situation you are experiencing during the pandemic because fear will affect your way of thinking and cause much distress to you personally while also increasing your anxiety

level. Take care of your loved ones as well as those around you. Everyone needs to live positively and spread the message of pandemic prevention to create community strength and bring life back to normal.

The things that you can do include caring for ourselves to improve our physical and mental health and everyday things that can simply be done at home which is also a great contribution to the community at large [17]. Stay up-to-date with accurate COVID-19 information and follow safety measures to prevent COVID-19 infection. Take "breaks" from COVID-19 media when needed. Eat well, get enough sleep and exercise physically each day. Try to do an activity that you enjoy or find meaningful whenever you have the opportunity. Take five minutes out of your day to talk to a friend, family member, or other trusted person about how you are feeling. Talk to your manager, supervisor, or colleagues about your well-being at your workplace, particularly if you are worried about working as part of the COVID-19 response. Establish daily routines and stick to them. Minimize alcohol and stimulants as these substances can have short-term effects but they can make your mood worse, causing anxiety, sleep problems and even increase anger levels after their effect wears off. If you're consuming too much of these substances, you can cut back by reducing the number of products available at home and finding other ways to deal with stress. At the end of each day, make a shortlist (in your head or on paper) of things you have done or things that have helped others. Be realistic about the things you can and cannot control. Draw circles of control to define what you can do. Try a relaxing activity - see what works for you. Chances are you had an experiment that stopped earlier; now let's continue it. Or you can also try physical activities indoors or out. Implement the measures to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic as set out by the government. Doing these things is not too

difficult for each individual but they are really necessary for the complicated pandemic situation both to protect health and to contribute to repelling the disease. Besides

improved mental stability, the work is convenient, making life more enjoyable and comfortable for both yourself and your family and friends.

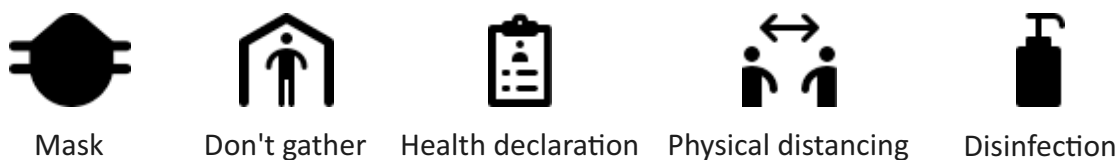


Figure 1. 5K measures of the Vietnamese government



Figure 2. Indoor activities that can be entertained during quarantine to reduce stress

4. SUPPORT COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION METHODS

The COVID-19 pandemic causes a lot of stress and will negatively impact everyone. Daily interactions can help and support those around you spiritually. The form of daily communication is divided into face-to-face interaction with safety measures and interaction through the media. The way you present yourself can affect others. To be able to

support others, first let them feel comfortable with you. There are some things you should do to make them feel more comfortable[17].

Words or body language are equally important, which will help others feel that you really care about their problem and need your help while making them more comfortable. You need to make sure you speak and behave appropriately and respectfully, depending on the culture,

age, gender, and religion of the other person. The most important thing when supporting others is listening. Instead of giving advice right away, listen to what the other person has to say to understand their situation or needs, help them feel comfortable, and be able to support them in the most useful way. Active listening is a technique that helps you to listen well and to be able to communicate better. It involves 3 steps [17]:

- Listen attentively
 - Try to understand the other person's point of view and feelings
 - Let them talk, but remain quiet until they have finished
 - Ignore distractions
 - The expression that you are still listening to them
- Repeat
 - Repeat important information about the other party's problem
 - Ask questions that you don't understand or don't hear

- Finally, summarize what you understood
 - Acknowledge the key points from their sharing, so that they feel you are listening to them and also make sure you understand their problem correctly

With direct interaction, you can observe how they express themselves visually and can feel the details. You also understand and handle it in the best way. In the pandemic situation, besides helping people around to stabilize their psychology and share difficulties, they still have to interact safely and ensure pandemic prevention regulations, protecting themselves and those interacting safely with you too. With the form of interaction through the media, you can safely communicate via forms of media as well as interact face-to-face as you listen to and feel your shared difficulties. Support and help every day through listening and sharing can both help people around you to be more comfortable and empathize with them about themselves while also helping to maintain the spirit of fighting the pandemic effectively.

Table 1. Some actions to take to make others feel comfortable talking to you [17]

Do	Don't
Maintain a comfortable, relaxed posture	No arms crossed, too serious
Look at the opposite person	Don't look elsewhere
Making eye contact makes the other person feel comfortable and heard	Don't stare or glare at the opposite person
Introduce yourself clearly	Don't assume that the person knows who you are or what your role is in the response
Voice just enough to hear	Don't shout or speak very quickly
Make sure they feel comfortable talking to you	Don't assume that the person is comfortable speaking to you
Maintain distance to reduce the spread of COVID-19	Don't put yourself or others at risk of contracting COVID-19 by not following social distancing rules

5. OFFERING PRACTICAL SUPPORT

People affected by the COVID-19 pandemic may have needs such as [17]: Information related to COVID-19. Resupply of food, other

essential goods, and services due to social distancing and loss of income. Funeral rites for the death of a loved one. How to ensure dependents are cared for when a primary

caregiver is hospitalized or isolated.

Providing information[17]:

- Misinformation often appears during a pandemic to confuse others.
- When providing information, it is necessary to have reliable sources such as the government, the World Health Organization, etc.
- Use clear, concise, easy-to-understand language and avoid using overly technical jargon.
- Try to have documents written in the appropriate language with visual representations that are easy for others to understand.
- If you don't know something, don't speculate, be honest about it.

Providing basic items or services:

- You may be able to offer basic items or services yourself, like food, water, or going shopping for others.
- However, don't feel that you have to provide all these. Be aware of what is possible for you.




If you can't support that person alone, join more people to support that person[17]:

- To effectively connect with other service providers, it's a good idea to make a list of all the organizations that operate locally and how to contact them.
- Make sure the reception support organizations connect the people who need it at the right time.
- You should also check back with the people you've helped to see if there's anything you can do to help further.

Helping others to help themselves[17]:

- The best way to help others is to help them so that they can help themselves and regain control of their own lives.
- It also leaves you with more energy to be able to help others.
- The STOP-THINK-GO method can be used to support others to manage their problems.

Table 2. The STOP-THINK-GO method [17]

<p>STOP</p> 	<p>Help others stop, and review the most urgent problem. Help the user identify a problem they can handle.</p>
<p>THINK</p> 	<p>Encourage the person to think of ways to solve the problem You can ask some questions to help them think of solutions such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you know anyone who has experienced a problem like this, how did they overcome it? - What have you tried doing?
<p>GO</p> 	<p>Help the person choose a reasonable way to handle the problem and try it that way. If it doesn't work, encourage it and try another way.</p>

6. SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO ARE TOO STRESSED, STIMULATED

In the complicated pandemic situation impacting normal life processes, pressure from many worries such as work, finances, etc., some people are at higher risk of becoming stressed, tired and over-stimulated emotionally which affects their mental health.

Stress is a natural human response that is evident through emotions, behaviors even physical including [17]: Emotional reactions: sad, angry, scared. Behavioral reactions: decreased or lost motivation, avoidance of activities, violent behavior. Physical reactions: headache, muscle pain, back pain, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite.

When a person is under excessive stress that will lead to irritation, they need support in order to release the stress. You need to find some measures to overcome this situation. Communication skills can be well-suited to providing psychological support to someone who is stressed, but also encourages individuals to do what they can, something like [17]:

- List the things you are grateful for so far.
- Suggest doing some activities that are personally enjoyable or meaningful.

- Exercise, jogging, yoga at home.
- Experiment with your own creations and hone your skills in areas such as painting, singing, crafting, writing poetry.
- Listen to music, listen to the radio.
- Talking, sharing, listening, playing, relaxing with family and this is also the time for families to have the opportunity to be closer together.
- Read a book or watch TV.

Try a relaxing activity, slow breathing can help.



Figure 3. Slow breathing activity to relax more [17]

Indeed, when in a difficult situation there are many things to take care of and business or work activities become more challenging thus the heightened stress in many people is inevitable. Supporting people who are stressed must ensure that they are free from the pandemic. You can support them by listening and sharing with them. Besides suggesting some stress-reduction measures you can do

with them via video call, sometimes it's more active than just asking them to do it themselves. In some cases, people who are under excessive stress become stimulated and cannot accept stress-reducing activities. You can help by listening too as, at this time, it may become necessary to seek professional help. Some conditions that manifest as excessive stress lead to irritation such as:

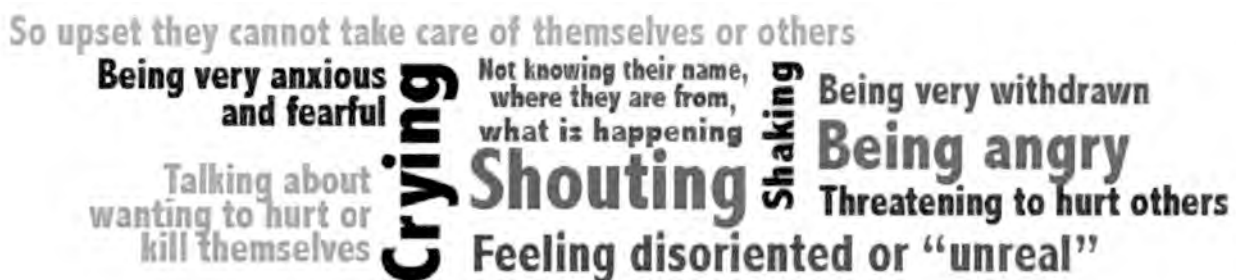


Figure 4. Manifestations of excessive stress [17]

Here are some things you can do when you meet someone who is under extreme stress[17]:

- Safety first. Make sure you and that person and others are safe. If you feel unsafe, leave and get help. If the person can hurt themselves, get help. Take COVID-19 infection prevention measures, don't put yourself at risk.
- Introduce yourself to them clearly and respectfully, asking for their name to address them appropriately.
- Stay calm, don't raise your voice to the person or control or force them.
- Listen, don't pressure the person to talk, be patient and reassure them that you are there to help them.
- Create comfort and provide the necessary information, it is best to find a quiet place where the person can talk and offer a drink to make them feel more comfortable. Ask them what they need, don't think you already know their needs.
- Help the person regain control of themselves. If they are anxious, help them relax with some anxiety-reducing actions like deep breathing.
- Provide clear, reliable information that helps the person understand what problems can be solved right now. Make sure the person can understand, and ask if they understand or have any questions.
- Stay with the person, try not to leave them alone. If you can't be with them ask someone else to be with them while you find support or they feel calmer. If you are on the phone or communicating remotely, try to stay in touch with the person.
- Get professional support. Don't go beyond what you know, leave it to the experts.

7. HELP AND SUPPORT IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Make sure that people in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations are not overlooked. Some people are easily marginalized due to barriers

of prejudice and discrimination related to a certain personal trait of theirs. People in vulnerable situations need special attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. People who may be vulnerable or marginalized include[17]: People at risk and currently experiencing violence or discrimination (people experiencing violence due to restrictions on movement during the pandemic, ethnic minorities, LGBT). Elderly people, especially forgetful people. Pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions need access to health care services. People with disabilities. Children and adolescents. People living in crowded places (prisoners, refugees in refugee camps, etc.) and homeless people. People who live alone have difficulty leaving home. People who may have difficulty accessing services. Not all vulnerabilities will be visible, so it is important to respond in a caring and empathetic way to everyone you encounter.

Supporting those living in care homes[17]:

- Care facilities may experience some distinct problems such as a higher chance of infection and rapid spread, or they may experience increased anxiety and stress.
- In unusual situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, the body causes human rights and dignity issues. Staff may feel guilty or helpless and may request information necessary to protect the rights and dignity of everyone in the protected facility.

Women and girls affected by COVID-19[17]:

- Like other emergencies, COVID-19 has exposed women and girls to higher levels of vulnerability, such as increasing the responsibilities of girls and young women in caring for family members. Elderly family members or siblings who are absent from school.
- They are at high risk of experiencing domestic violence and are unable to access protective services.

- Some women and girls may have reduced access to health, sexual and reproductive services, as well as maternal, newborn, and child health services.
 - In both the short and long term, they may experience greater economic hardship which can increase the risk of exploitation, abuse, and participation in high-risk occupations.
 - It is important to pay attention to the specific needs of women and girls in all aspects of the pandemic response - including in the workplace, community, and residence.
- Supporting those who are grieving [17]:
- The death of a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic is a particularly difficult situation.
 - People may not be able to use conventional stress relievers.
 - They may feel their loss is insignificant because so many people have died from COVID-19 and they can carry out funeral procedures as usual.
 - COVID-19 prevention workers may see more deaths and grief than usual.
- Supporting the homeless and refugees [17]:
- The specific challenges for the homeless and refugees are the inability to access basic needs such as food, shelter, and drinking water, and the inability to comply with infection prevention due to the lack of protective conditions.

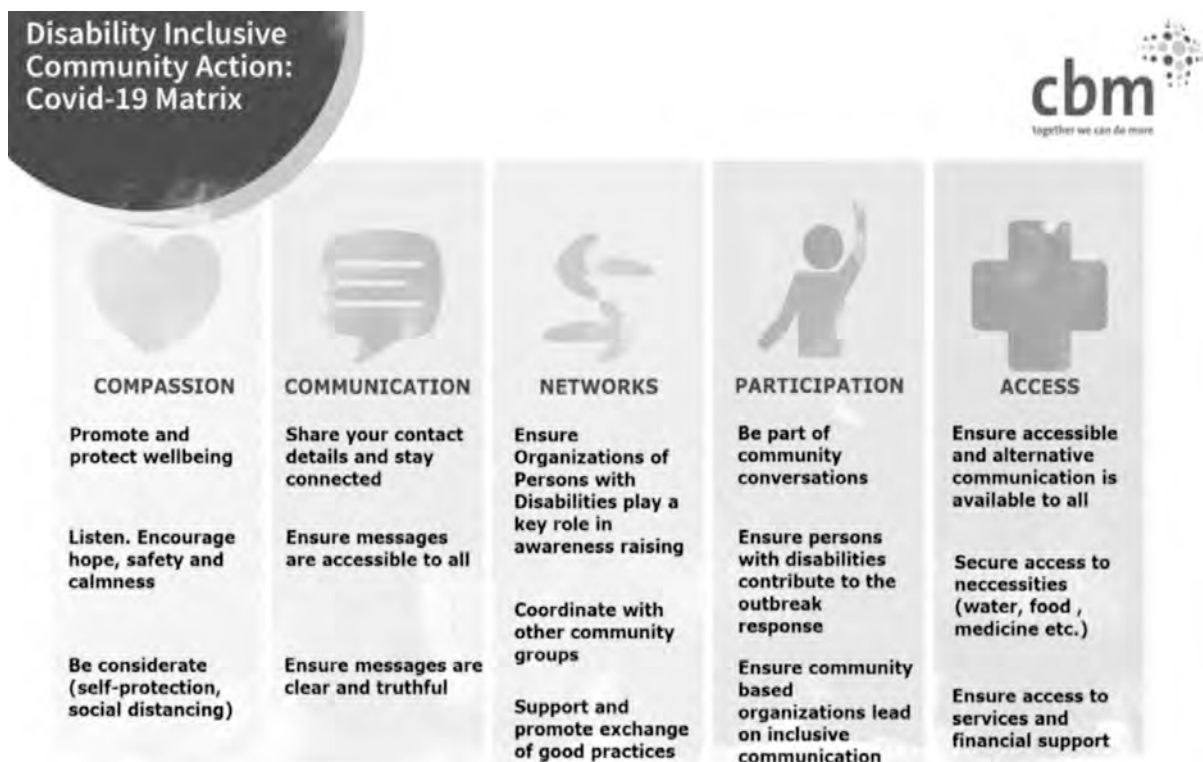


Figure 5. Forms of support for people with disabilities [18]

- Supporting people with disabilities [17, 18]:
- People with disabilities may experience some barriers to accessing specific and essential information regarding COVID-19, its spread, and ways to protect themselves.
 - They are at risk of abuse or neglect and have little access to services and care.
 - As a result, people with disabilities may suffer more during this time of crisis.
- Supporting the elderly [19]:
- The group negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic are the elderly so they should limit their social contact
 - The personal and social needs of elderly

people living alone should be provided by the government.

- Need to provide correct information about the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To prevent the fear of death inherent in old age from increasing in the process, psychological support activities should be extended.

Supporting the child[19]:

- Advise families to create a positive environment for children.
- Let the children show their characteristics such as singing, drawing, etc.
- Children learn a lot from their loved one's behavior through observation. Therefore, everyone in the family is a model for the child's development.
- Educational activities should be carried out in

the online environment to develop children's education.

- Professionals should provide online support for stressed children.

8. CONCLUSION

Pandemic COVID-19 is the major concern for the community, society, and the individual but fear isn't the best way to avert a pandemic but just a powerful way to face them. In this review, the authors outline some of the measures that have been put in place to deal with the pandemic by taking good care of yourself and some psychotherapeutic methods affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides that, there is some knowledge for you to support people and overcome the pandemic together. This compilation is the basic platform for everyone to protect themselves and support others during urgent times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

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COVID-19: Tác động tâm lý và giải pháp

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TÓM TẮT

Đại dịch COVID-19 là một đại dịch lớn đang là vấn đề được quan tâm trên toàn thế giới. Trước tình hình phức tạp và nguy hiểm như hiện nay, việc chung sống và đương đầu với đại dịch là điều cần thiết để duy trì nền kinh tế và các nền tảng khác. Đại dịch COVID-19 không chỉ ảnh hưởng đến sức khỏe thể chất mà còn cả sức khỏe tâm lý. Bảo vệ sức khỏe cho bản thân và gia đình là ưu tiên hàng đầu, giúp những người xung quanh đối phó và vượt qua đại dịch COVID-19. Báo cáo này sẽ giới thiệu một số phương pháp điều trị COVID-19 bằng liệu pháp tinh thần nhằm duy trì tinh thần chung sống và đối mặt với đại dịch một cách hiệu quả hơn.

Từ khóa: COVID-19, đại dịch, coronavirus, tâm lý

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