



## **Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Kozhikode**

### Ensuring continuity of mental health care during COVID 19

For the information of persons with mental illness and their caregivers-

#### **Steps to be taken by persons with mental illness**

1. **Prevention of Covid-19:** Stay at home. Maintain personal hygiene, wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap from time to time. Maintain a distance of one meter from people, and follow the instructions given by the government.
2. Continue medication as advised by your doctor, and avoid changing the dosage or discontinuing the medication without instructions from your doctor.
3. Adjust your routine according to the situations at home. Maintain a time table. With the changing life situations, try to optimize your routine and make sure to follow it every day.
4. Ensure that you're doing exercises at home. Avoid spending too much time on mobile phone or television.
5. Follow a simple and balanced diet that is rich in fiber. Include more leafy vegetables and fruits in your diet. Drink lots of water.
6. Avoid sleeping too much during the day.
7. Persons who are availing mental health services are requested to speak to their therapists and seek their advice. Try to continue therapy through online services.
8. If you're experiencing any new onset difficulties or mental stress, inform your family members and contact the doctor from whom you have been seeking treatment.
9. If you're someone availing rehabilitation services, contact your rehabilitation centers and follow the instructions given to you by them.
10. Since social connections are important in maintaining mental and emotional well-being, try to stay in touch with friends and family through telephone or other online services.
11. Avoid resorting to smoking or the consumption of alcohol to relieve anxiety.
12. Maintain good sleep hygiene, avoid using mobile phones or watching television while lying on the bed.
13. Ensure that you're getting sunlight exposure during the day from the confines of your house. Facilitate this by opening windows, doors and curtains.
14. Reading fake news about Covid-19 disease can only increase panic and anxiety. Hence, ensure that you're relying only on reliable sources to get information.

#### **Steps to be taken by caregivers of individuals with mental illness**

1. Ensure personal hygiene of persons with mental illness. Ensure that the medication is taken on time.
2. Avoid expressing anger, hate, or sadness in unhealthy ways when they act in ways that are different from your expectations.
3. If you notice that the symptoms are getting worse, immediately contact the doctors or the mental health team and take necessary steps.
4. When seeking out help from a new team of health professionals, it is important to provide the treatment history documents, regardless of the type of illness.

If you're experiencing excessive anxiety, fear, or other mental health related problems, seek the telephonic counseling services provided by IMHANS. Persons who are getting treatment from IMHANS can clear their doubts, if any, by contacting the following number- Ph: 9746596677, Time: 10am to 1pm.