

INTERVENTION 6:

Community MHPSS messages during the COVID-19 outbreak

The messages below focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing in communities affected by COVID-19.

MESSAGES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR DEALING WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

- It is normal to feel sad, distressed, worried, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
- Talk to people you trust. Contact your friends and family.
- If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle (including a proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contact with loved ones at home). Keep in touch with family and friends through email, phone calls and making use of social media platforms.
- Don't use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to cope with your emotions.
- If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker, social worker, similar professional, or another trusted person in your community (e.g., religious leader or community elder).
- Have a plan where to go and seek help for physical and mental health and psychosocial needs, if required.
- Get the facts about your risk and how to take precautions. Use credible sources to get information, such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.
- Decrease the time you and your family spending watching or listening to upsetting media coverage.
- Draw on skills that you have used in the past during difficult times to manage your emotions during this outbreak.

Source: WHO. *Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak (Handout)*. WHO: Geneva, 2020.