Mental Support During COVID-19.

UN, JMS
1st April, 2020
Triggers of Psychological Stress during an infectious disease outbreak...

- Fear, worry and some form of stress are normal during a crisis like COVID-19; and some of the triggers may include:
  - Worry about one’s health (and significant others)
  - Fear of death
  - Fear that the health systems may fail us
  - Uncertain future
  - Instability due to change of routine
  - Feeling of being confined or ‘caged’ in homes
  - Predicted hard economic times
Signs of increased level of stress include...

- **Physical challenges** (like fatigue, insomnia, headaches and severity of existing health conditions etc.)
- **Emotional Problems** (e.g. Anxiety, sadness, anger, depression etc.)
- **Cognitive difficulty** (e.g. poor concentration, doubting your ability etc.)
- **Behavioral** (e.g. withdrawing from family, addictions)
- **Spiritual** (e.g. weakened religious beliefs/ strengthened spiritual practices)
Other stressors in need of management during the COVID-19 include...
Disruption of ‘Normal’ Support structures like...

- Having a drink with a friend
- Partying/clubs
- Visiting a friend in their home for tea or a meal
- Going to Gym
- Attending women’s or men’s group
- Fellowship with other faithful’s in church, mosque or other religious settings
- Connecting with a friend during your children’s school activities
- Meeting your colleagues in the office
- Family gatherings with extended family members
Stress and pressure may lead to increased conflicts...

- Relationship Conflicts may occur between:
  - Partners/married couples;
  - Parent(s) and adolescents;
  - Amongst children and adolescents;
  - Or even with domestic workers

- Unmanaged conflict may result in:
  - Increased Psychological stress
  - Domestic violence
  - Increased intake of alcohol or substance abuse
Children stress may mean ‘different’ Behavior from the ‘norm’…

- Home confinement for both children and adolescents, amongst other factors, is likely to trigger stress amongst them;

- As a result, their behavior is likely to change from the norm, which sometimes may be interpreted as ‘defiance’

- If stress in children is not recognized, the result may be emotional, psychological or physical abuse for children, in the name of ‘discipline’.
Not managing the stress, may lead to...

- Addictions: alcohol, Pornography etc.
- Broken Relationships
- Physical health challenges
- Anxiety/Panic/Depression/suicidal
Healthy Coping Mechanisms...

- **Support Structures:**
  - Deliberate, intentional planned ‘dates’ with significant others; it could be those buddies you hang-out with, your spiritual or family support or your colleagues; Consider the option of having an on-line date to catch up using platforms like zoom or other group chats
  
  - Remember it is important to share you are feeling and your concerns

- **Reducing Conflicts:**
  - Be deliberate and plan for a time to connect with your family
  - Give each other permission to talk freely about how each person feels.
Conti...

- **Self-Awareness**
  - Looking inwardly and assessing where you are
  - Being aware of your own feelings
  - Courage to look for emotional support when needed
Listen to children and adolescents to understand their fears, concerns and worries;

Look for fun activities you can do together, and set time aside for that;

Minimize on media consumption

Take care of you body: exercise, eat healthy, drink a lot of water and incorporate breathing exercises
Remember to avoid ‘lies’ that we sometimes tell ourselves…

- I am fine/ I am just tired;
- I will get over this;
- I am strong; I can handle this;
- There is nothing I can do about it;
- This too will pass.
Self- Care means...

- Planning on meeting on how you will meet Your:
  - Social Needs
  - Emotional Needs
  - Mental Needs
  - Physical Needs
For more support, you can reach us at...

- **Staff counsellor:** Ext. 24703

- Other online services are available by arrangement:
  - **Staff counselor:** Cell: +254 728961939
  - **JMS Emergency line:** +254 724255378