

Psychosocial support

KSCF CU Patrons and associates training.
Nyandarua, Naivasha and Nakuru regions

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Self reflection

Tell us

- One thing you, your colleagues or students are struggling with due to the COVID 19 pandemic

- What do you think has changed in your life, colleagues and students life since March 13th?

Expected outcomes

- To identify who requires psychosocial Support
- To know how to identify a person in need of this support
- To know the entry points to the life of this person
- To understand the key Dos and Don'ts during such sessions
- To discuss how to integrate psychosocial support within a school/CU

What is psychosocial support?

- The term '**psychosocial**' refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person.
- The *psychological* dimension includes the **internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions**, and the *social* dimension includes **relationships, family and community network, social values and cultural practices**.
- 'Psychosocial support' refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities.
- (*Psychosocial interventions. A Handbook, page 25.*)

What is psychosocial well-being?

- The World Health Organisation defines health as **“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”** and not merely **“the absence of disease or infirmity”**.
- Therefore, psychosocial wellbeing is a state of being complete (Psychologically) and socially

What has affected our psychological wellbeing lately?

New realities of

- Staying home,
- Prolonged closure of schools,
- Home-schooling of children,
- Lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues,

It is important that we look after our mental, as well as our physical, health and that of our children

What could the impact of the COVID-19 crisis be on children's mental health?

- This is indeed an unprecedented time for all children who face an enormous disruption to their lives.
- Children are likely to be experiencing **worry, anxiety** and **fear**.
- This include the types of fears that are very similar to those experienced by adults, such as a **fear of dying**, a fear of **their relatives dying**, or a fear of what it means to **receive medical treatment**.
- Since schools have closed as part of necessary measures, then children no longer have that **sense of structure and stimulation** that is provided by that environment,
- They have **less opportunity to be with their friends** and get that social support that is essential for good mental well-being.

What could the impact of the COVID-19 crisis be on children's mental health?

- Being at home place some children at increased risk of, or increased exposure to, **child protection incidents** or make them witness to **interpersonal violence** if their home are not a safe place.
- Although all children are perceptive to change, young children find the changes that have taken place difficult to understand, and both young and older children may express **irritability** and **anger**.
- Children find that they want to be closer to their parents, make more demands on them, and, in turn, some **parents or caregivers may be under undue pressure** themselves.

Risk of increase in suicide cases

- Different life experiences affect a person's risk for suicide.
- For example, suicide risk is higher among people who have experienced **violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence. Feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and other emotional or financial stresses** are known to raise the risk for suicide.
- People may be more likely to experience these feelings during a crisis like a pandemic.
- However, there are ways to protect against suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- For example, **support from family and community, or feeling connected, and having access to in-person or virtual counseling or therapy** can help with suicidal thoughts and behavior, particularly during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who needs psychosocial support?

- Anyone who has gone through a traumatizing experience.

How do you identify one in need of psychosocial support?

- Through listening to them as they tell their story, you pick up areas of need
- Through their writings and paintings or drawings
- Through the games they play
- From their physical appearance and behaviour
- Their emotional disposition (bounds of tears, intense anger, insulting, shouting, extreme fear, prayerlessness, hopelessness etc)

Psychological
and social
issues
include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Coping Skills
- Social Support
- Giving Up
- Smoking
- Insomnia
- Memory difficulties
- Other Cognitive Difficulties

What are the entry points to the life of one in need of support?

- Establishing friendships
- By giving unconditional positive regard, ie accepting and loving them for being human
- Being non-judgmental.
- Being real, genuine and congruent
- Being available
- By showing genuine concern

What are the key do's during counselling sessions

- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Respect people's right to make their own decisions.
- Be aware of and set aside your own biases and prejudices.
- Make it clear to people that even if they refuse help now, they can still access help in the future.
- Respect privacy and keep the person's story confidential, if this is appropriate.

What are the key do's during counselling sessions

- Behave appropriately by considering the person's culture, age and gender.
- Be warm in your conversation (posture, tone etc)
- Listen to hear what is not being said
- Walk with them through their issues
- Include creativity and humor
- Organize for follow up sessions

What are the key don'ts during counselling sessions .

- Don't exploit your relationship as a helper eg asking the person for favor for helping them.
- Don't make false promises or give false information.
- Don't exaggerate your skills.
- Don't force help on people, and don't be intrusive or pushy.
- Don't pressure people to tell you their story.
- Don't share the person's story with others.
- Don't judge the person for their actions or feelings.

What are the key don'ts during counselling sessions .

- Don't show surprise or excitement or shock, just remain flat.
- Don't abandon the client (eg while crying)
- Don't interfere with moments of silence, allow it since silence is a therapy by itself
- Don't start a session if time is not adequate to go through it. This hurts the client

How to integrate psychosocial support within a C.U/School

- Train a team of Christian peer counsellors.
- Provision of need based support groups.
- Prepare and use relevant bible study materials.
- Mainstream C.U programs to meet the need of the students (summons)
- Pray with and for the students
- Group support,
- Education
- Mental health counseling,
- Relapse prevention.

Psychological support

- These services are usually provided by mental health professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, **counselors**, specialized nurses, **clergy**, **pastoral counselors**, and others.
- These professionals might also refer client to other sources if they identify other needs.

Reference

- <https://papyrus-project.org/what-is-psychosocial-support/>
- <https://www.naminh.org/education/recovery-from-mental-illness/psychosocial-treatments/>
- <https://www.nationaljewish.org/conditions/psychological-social/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>