

# FAMILY COUNSELING

The sixth periodic magazine — Issued by Family Counseling Development & Foundation

## Coronavirus.. A More Psychological Danger Than Physical

Coronavirus Pandemic and Its Psychological Consequences



Women  
between Two Pandemics



Children...

The Weakest Link in front of Coronavirus



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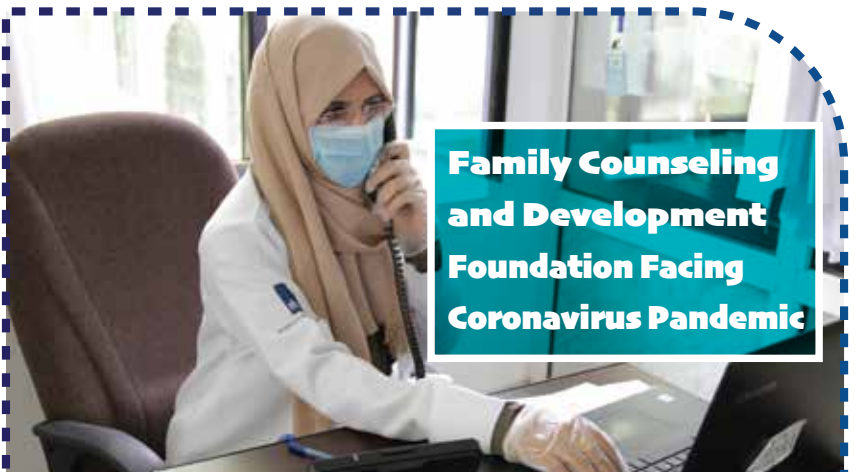


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Dr. BILQIS M. JUBARI (Ph.D)  
Founder & Chairperson

## “The Cornerstone” Of Facing the Pandemic

**T**he -7month-old COVID19- pandemic continues to claim hundreds of thousands of lives around the world without stopping while the world is still unable to find a vaccine to eliminate the virus.

With the rapid spread of the virus without a vaccine, the world remains pinning its hopes on the "immune system" in the face of the virus.

However, the psychological, social and economic repercussions and fear of COVID19- infection have weakened the immunity of many people to resist the virus.

Because "immune system" of people is still the only means for the world to cope with the virus, WHO and the health sectors in countries have found it necessary to work to strengthen people's immunity by addressing these psychological and social repercussions with preventive psychological awareness at the same pace with health awareness.

This experience has shown the world how important mental and psychological health is, and has proved that the stable psychological state is the cornerstone to face the pandemic and other crises. Thus, mental health is indispensable and is as important as other basic needs.

Until a vaccine is discovered, the role of mental health professionals around the world in promoting immunity with psychological awareness and support remains the only and most effective way to counter the virus.

The leading, in mental and psychological health, Family Counseling and Development Foundation recognized the importance its role from the very first moments of the outbreak. FCDF has worked to address mental and psychological health locally by focusing its efforts on conducting awareness campaigns with all means and possibilities available both in the media and through the free psychosocial helpline ,136, through which psychological, social, family and preventive psychological awareness are granted.



# Family Counseling and Development Foundation Facing Coronavirus Pandemic

FAMILY COUNSELING Report

With the global and local spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, FCDF has found itself facing a national and humanitarian duty and has played its awareness role to contribute in reducing the spread of the pandemic in Yemen as a humanitarian NGO.

Family Counseling Magazine highlights the Foundation's campaign to prevent the Coronavirus Pandemic and has written

the following report:

Since the mid of March, FCDF has launched a campaign to raise awareness about the threat of COVID-19 and prevent it.

The campaign targeted all the foundation's staff in its both centers in Sana'a and Aden, as well as the cases visiting the center to receive psychological treatment, the audience and followers of the foundation's social media websites.

The Foundation used different methods in the outreach process through visual, audio, and reading media, as follows: organizing awareness lectures about the proper methods of preventing coronavirus for more than 112 employees and staff of the foundation, hanging of awareness signs on the foundation's buildings, which contained awareness sentences and images on the prevention of the Coronavirus pandemic, and targeting 60 cases per day received by the Foundation. During the campaign, FCDF also posted two to three awareness posts about the prevention of the virus on the foundation's social media platforms on a daily basis containing images of awareness instructions, as well as awareness videos to

that reached more than 13,000 followers.

The posts were based on the guidance and recommendations issued by the World Health Organization and other official Yemeni sources.

#### TV and Radio Awareness

The campaign also included awareness ads at the radio and television level. The Foundation sponsored radio and television episodes to host psychotherapists from the Foundation's staff on local radio and TV channels to talk about the psychological repercussions of the spread of the Coronavirus and ways to cope with those repercussions.

#### Providing Preventions

The Foundation also provided all means of prevention and sanitization, such as detergents, sterilizers and masks, to all facilities of the foundation, including equipment to check cases and visitors received by the Centers upon entry as well as employees.

#### Application of Official Circulars

In addition to these procedures implemented by FCDF during the

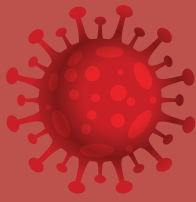
campaign, the Foundation also worked on implementing the necessary preventive procedures in accordance with the circulars issued by the competent official authorities. Dr. Najla Jubari (Executive Director of FCDF) confirmed that the foundation has reduced the number of employees present at work place by 50%, and the rest of them are to work from home.

Dr. Najla said that employees were working to redouble their efforts to help people overcome the psychological complications the Coronavirus pandemic had on them.

Dr. Jubari added that they worked to intensify the training courses in order to adapt the field of work of the foundation and the services provided and to help in preventing of Coronavirus spread.

She also pointed out that they focused their efforts during the campaign on the most important means of preventing the virus, which is to raise awareness and work on social distancing as it is the only solution that has proved to be effective globally, especially since no vaccine for Covid-19 has yet been discovered.





# Coronavirus...

## A More Psychological Danger Than Physical

**O** vernight, -34year-old Mohammed Ali found himself unemployed after losing his only source of income, which was his only way of supporting his family, following the authorities' decision to close wedding halls in Sana'a in March as a precautionary procedure to prevent the outbreak of the "Coronavirus" pandemic that has engulfed the world.

The loss of his only job brought him into an extreme depression, frustration and despair, especially since the decision came at the same time as the holy month of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr approached.

According to Mohammed, the sudden decision was like a thunder-strike, and he was very traumatized.

Mohammed and dozens of others like him were caused psychological traumas by the "Coronavirus" pandemic. The loss of their sources of income, the social distancing and the quarantine that has been imposed to reduce the spread of the epidemic had affected their psychological state.

"Family Counseling" magazine highlights the psychological effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and presents the following report: When infectious epidemic diseases appear to be rapidly spreading,

symptoms of anxiety and depression increase faster than at any other time.

While many are only monitoring the numbers of those infected and dead from the widespread pandemic, there is countless more serious number of those who are psychologically affected by the pandemic.

### **A Large Spread**

The magnitude of the impact and prevalence of COVID19- pandemic on mental health has been monitored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations, which said they had detected a "significant spread of mental disorder diseases" due to the Coronavirus pandemic, particularly among health-care workers and children.

According to WHO's summary, during the pandemic, %47 of health-care workers in Canada reported the need for psychological

support, %50 of health-care workers in China reported depression, and %42 of health-care workers in Pakistan reported moderate psychological distress and %26 with severe psychological disorder. In Italy and Spain, parents reported that while in social isolation and quarantine during the outbreak of Coronavirus, %77 of children found it difficult to concentrate, %39 were anxious and confused, %38 suffered from nervousness, and %31 suffered from loneliness, according to the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

Moreover, briefly reported, a study on young people with a history of mental health needs in the UK found that %32 reported that the pandemic "made their mental health much worse".

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), recently pointed out that the impact of the pandemic on





people's mental health is already extremely concerning. He stressed that, "Social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment."

"It is now crystal clear that mental health needs must be treated as a core element of our response to and recovery from the COVID19-pandemic," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "This is a collective responsibility of governments and civil society, with the support of the whole United Nations System. A failure to take people's emotional well-being seriously will lead to long-term social and economic costs to society."

The WHO summary called for the widespread provision of emergency mental health services and psychosocial support and recommended investing in remote mental health interventions, ensuring uninterrupted personal care for severe mental health conditions, and ensuring that mental health is part of universal health coverage, among other recommendations.

### **Causes of the Outbreak**

Dr. Amr Sadeq - a practicing psychiatrist at Family Counseling and

Development Foundation - explains that the high incidence of psychological disorders during the period of the spread of the Corona virus is the result of the disease and the fear that the Coronaviruse pandemic has brought to infect one or one of their family members. Quarantine also causes people to feel lonely, stressed and anxious, especially since the human being is a social being by nature and naturally unqualified to live with the social isolation procedures imposed by the spread of the coronavirus.

He added in a statement to Family Counseling Magazine that the psychological effects of this pandemic appear in several categories, from those at the most risk of being infected to the ones recovered. However, those most psychologically affected by the coronavirus, he said, are those who have lost their jobs as a cause of the pandemic.

Dr. Sadeq ensured that paying attention to mental health in such difficult times was crucial, as action must be taken to maintain the mental health of the coronavirus-affected communities. Concerns about the transmission of the disease from one person to another can affect social cohesion.

### **Profound Impacts**

Psychologists, in turn, have warned of the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on mental health now and in the future.

It seems that anxiety and stress rates are not the only ones that will rise during the pandemic. According to researchers, there will also be an increase in the numbers of depressed and suicidal people.

The researchers based their predictions on suicide rates, which increased by 30% during 2003 when the SARS epidemic spread in several countries, because measures taken at the time to reduce the spread of the epidemic had serious effects on mental health, such as increasing unemployment rate, the sense of financial insecurity and poverty.

The researchers said that the priority should be to monitor rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide and other psychological diseases.

The University of Glasgow's Rory O'Connor, Professor of Health Psychology at the Institute of Health and Wellbeing and a joint first author of a paper, published in The Lancet Psychiatry, described increased social isolation, loneliness, health anxiety, stress and an economic downturn as "a perfect storm to harm people's mental health and wellbeing."



# CORONAVIRUS

## Women between

**FAMILY COUNSELING**  
Report

**S**ince countries around the world had to impose home quarantine as a kind of measure to reduce the coronavirus pandemic, homes have become unsafe for women.

Quarantine and curfews due to Coronavirus spread have led to an increase in domestic violence in all countries around the world, including Arab countries.

The United Nations considers that the pandemic has spurred the growing phenomenon of violence against women. The latest reports show a 30% increase in violence against women due to quarantine in Europe alone.

If this increase in violence is in the countries that have drafted laws to protect women and promised to reduce the rate of violence to almost zero, then how will the situation of women be during the period of quarantine in countries classified as the most dangerous for women's lives, such as our country and some other countries?

FAMILY COUNSELING magazine highlights this topic and has the following report:





# AND VIOLENCE...

## Two Pandemics

The Coronavirus pandemic crisis has begun to cast a shadow over families by imposing the quarantine that has exacerbated domestic violence.

***Many indicators point to numerous violence acts against women during the quarantine period.***

Dr. Seif Eddin Al-Miri, a consultant psychiatrist at Family Counseling and Development Foundation, says that the deterioration of men's financial conditions while having to stay home is often the main and real reason behind the increase in domestic violence during quarantine.

He added that the man having to stay home during the quarantine in a difficult financial situation, that does not enable him to provide for the basic needs of his family, causes his psychological disorder and makes him anxious, nervous and constantly irritated as a result of his obsession and negative thinking controlling him most of the time. Dr. Al-Miri explained in a statement to "Family Counseling" that the man then falls easy prey to those negative thinking and obsessions, which makes him constantly agitated, loses his nerves quickly and finds no way in front of him to express his emotion and tension but his wife and family.

He pointed out that a man resorts to violence against his wife and family when they ask him to

provide any needs or even for other minor reasons that are not worthy of violence.

### **Yemen Under the Radar**

With the recent rise in cases of domestic violence in the world due to quarantine, attention is turning to our country, which is ranked among the most dangerous countries for women's lives. Some civil society organizations, led by Family Counseling and Development Foundation, have expressed concerns about the growing domestic violence in our country due to quarantine and limited roaming.

### **Expectations of Increasing Violence**

On the other side, the extent of the prevalence of domestic violence caused by domestic quarantine is still unknown and limited to expectations. Psychologist and family specialist at the helpline in FCDF, Ahlam Fadhil, is expecting violence against women in our country to rise significantly with the limited roaming that the country is experiencing as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Ahlam said that obtaining statistics and figures on domestic violence is extremely difficult at the moment for in most cases victims are unable to report the unsub.

She added that the number of calls to the helpline should be more

than it is now; however, men remaining at home most of the time and prevent them from being able to contact for psychological and family support and counseling. She also pointed that women exposed to violence could continue to benefit from the helpline service and social and psychological counseling.

Fadhil advised women who are subjected to violence to communicate with women's organizations and with people who trust their ability to help during times of need.

Demanding the relevant authorities to develop an emergency plan for women who are subjected to violence and, more importantly, to how to ensure the necessary protection.

### **A Warning of Worsening Violence**

Human rights activists, for their part, warned of the worsening of domestic violence in our country as families have to live for a long time in a closed space.

Human rights activist, Abdul Razzaq Al-Azazi, warned of the worsening of domestic violence during the period of quarantine in our country and said that men who were raised to control women needed longer periods to accept limiting their power over women. He added that respect for women's rights and protection from violence is essential to the success of plans to confront the coronavirus.

# Psychologically and Physically

## Children...

## The Weakest Link in front of Coronavirus

**FAMILY COUNSELING**  
**Report**

Apparently adult men and women are not the only ones vulnerable to the psychological effects of the Coronavirus pandemic as children are also not immune to these psychological effects.

But how much psychological damage do children suffer from? How can they be treated properly in such circumstances?

At a time when the Coronavirus pandemic has left adults with fear, panic and anxiety, children find themselves the most psychologically vulnerable link to deal with the situation, that even adults fear and know nothing about. Children need to turn to adults to understand what is going on around them and seek reassurance.

Adult panic is reflected in children whose feelings are expressed differently according to their age.

This six—year—old child, Ritaj, knows only about the Coronavirus pandemic that it scares her parents, and she is afraid to be infected.

### **Symptoms of Psychological Effects on Children**

There are certain symptoms through which to know whether children have psychological effects or not. These symptoms are explained by the psychotherapist, Samah Ya'eesh, at the children's clinic at Family Counseling and Development Foundation. The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic can affect the psychological state of children making them more nervous and weak and distracting their concentration and attention as well as affecting their behavior by increasing or decreasing movement. It also reduces their desire to play and suffer from sleep disturbance, and frequent nibbling on their nails.



### **Ways to Deal with Children**

When children are affected by such psychological effects caused by the panic of the Coronavirus pandemic, they must be dealt with in certain ways, through which parents can support their children with their feelings during these times.

UNICEF has summarized these methods in (be calm and proactive, let your children feel their emotions, check in with them about what they're hearing, and monitor your own behavior).

The organization also recommends that parents engage in their children's loving activities, stick to routine and continue to live as normal as possible to distract children from feelings of fear and anxiety and to mitigate the changes they are going through.

### **Challenges Faced by Parents**

There are also other impacts that have been left on children by the pandemic, such as school shut-down in order to reduce the spread of Coronavirus outbreak. These effects have left parents with the challenge of completing their children's education whether by distance learning or in any other way, in which children also need parental love and support more than ever.

Parents also have difficulty persuading children to stay at home and making them aware of the dangers of COVID19- as well as applying preventive measures and organizing their daily activities so that they do not get bored while staying at home.

In order to face such difficulties, the psychotherapist says, the child

must be taught according to his age that 'there is an exceptional circumstance and microbes and viruses outside the home, and that this might infect them; they would be sick if they leave.'

Psychotherapist Ya'eesh also noted the need to stay away from abusing or too much asking children as this could harm their mental health. On the other hand, parents could push them to engage in house chores in innovative ways in order to generate a sense of belonging to their home. Samah Ya'eesh said that parents should reassure children by reminding them that there are many meaningful things that can be done to stay safe in this circumstances, such as repeating hand washing, not touching the face, and applying social distancing.

# Psychiatrist Amani

“anxiety caused by coronavirus pandemic is abnormal

“social and physical pressures caused by the pandemic have led to a high rate of depression and anxiety”

FAMILY COUNSELING Interview

Not only does COVID-19 pandemic cause physical damages, but also it causes mental and psychological ones.

But when are the psychological damages abnormal and dangerous to people? What kind of psychological effects could the pandemic cause? How can these psychological effects be prevented?

To answer these and other questions, FAMILY COUNSELING magazine meets with Dr. Amani Al-Sharabi, a psychiatrist at the Family Counseling and Development Foundation:

## When can the anxiety and stress caused by the pandemic be dangerous and abnormal?

It is difficult not to feel anxious and frightened when reading or hearing about the infection of the coronavirus that is spreading rapidly in the world; anxiety is normal in this case. However, this anxiety becomes abnormal if it becomes a disorder affecting a person's life and shows symptoms of anxiety disorder such as nervousness, feeling constant tension and fear of everything surrounding like door handles or someone passing by, etc. The unmanageable constant thinking of the disease and infection and the approach of death can lead to poor concentration and eating or sleep disorder. When the idea of sterilization and cleaning becomes an obsession, it becomes abnormal.

## What are the most significant psychological effects of the Coronavirus pandemic?

Doctors and psychotherapists have warned of the profound effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on mental health in present and future. Closing schools, universities and entertainment venues, preventing gatherings, reducing working hours in some working places or laying off employees in some private companies were taken to alleviate the spread of the pandemic. In addition, home quarantine that has reduced meetings between family and friends,

that previously were a breathing space for many people, has led to a high percentage of depression and anxiety that leads to stress and nervousness, which in turn leads to domestic violence in many families.

## How much damage can these psychological effects have on cases?

The above-mentioned psychological effects may lead to higher rates of domestic violence, which leads to the relapse of cases that already suffer from psychological problems, and the incidence of anxiety, depression, self-harm or suicide may increase. Domestic violence may also have a negative impact on children's mental health in long terms. Unemployment also results in financial insolvency, which in turn results in the inability to follow a doctor or to continue to purchase medicines, which plays a significant role in the high rate of relapse.

## What are the proper methods of avoiding exposure to those psychological effects of the Coronavirus pandemic?

There are many methods that a person is able to do to avoid many negative effects, including:

- . Maintaining peace of mind through auxiliary activities such as meditation and prayer.
- . Tracking positive news about the pandemic from reliable sources such as

the number of recoveries and the actual decrease in the number of cases recorded daily in some countries that have followed preventive measures.

- . Staying on social contact with family and friends by phone and the Internet.
- . Practicing physical activities and exercises to eliminate the boredom of staying at home.
- . Occupying the same hobbies such as reading, sewing, embroidery...etc.

## Are you currently receiving cases that are psychologically affected by the pandemic? How many are there? And how do you deal with them?

At the Foundation level, we receive follow-up cases that have suffered from psychological problems and recovered, and now they have relapsed as a result of the outbreak of the pandemic and may reach seven to ten cases per week. We expect these cases to increase later since some have the fear these days to go out, and they are willing to be patient with their suffering for the sake of greater fear. This worries us even more as they will not come to us until their cases have worsened further. The Foundation has taken precautionary measures to regulate the reception of new cases to prevent crowding and reduce the spread of coronavirus. Psychological support for cases is provided by explaining the symptoms of the disease and how to deal with it, preventive measures, reassuring the



# Al-Sharabi to FAMILY COUNSELING:

if it becomes a disorder that affects a person's life”

“peace of mind, tracking positive news and exercising help to avoid psychological damage from the pandemic”



They should follow the above-mentioned methods to avoid the psychological effects of the pandemic, including domestic violence. Also, they have to try not to make staying home feels like a punishment for the family, as they can still do a lot of activities and have fun as a family while staying at home.

**Do you expect an increase in the number of cases psychologically affected by the pandemic or quarantine? Do you think that there are affected cases that have not been able to come for one reason or another for treatment and psychological support?**

As I mentioned earlier, there is a possibility of a high number of cases affected,

cases that the disease can be recovered from, with examples of recovery conditions worldwide, as well as the religious aspect which plays an important role to reassure cases.

**What about GBV cases caused by quarantine, have you received such cases? How many? And what kind of psychological support do you give them?**

Yes, we receive such cases, but the numbers we receive have decreased this

period due to the quarantine. The reasons of this decreasing might be that the GBV cases are unable to go out because of the quarantine, the fear of infection, or because of men who sometimes prevent them from going out.

**What should families in such circumstances do to avoid domestic violence, stress and anxiety that the pandemic may cause?**

particularly those of anxiety and depression. Domestic violence will be compounded by the distress of the whole family caused by the quarantine and further worsened economic conditions. Thus, there may be affected cases that have not been able to come to the center for certain reasons, but the toll-free helpline service allows us to provide psychological support to most of the affected cases that communicate with us through the toll-free line 136.

# ***CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES***

Dr.BILOIS M. JUBARI (Ph.D)  
Founder & Chairperson

**H**umanity has never faced as many complex cosmic challenges and dilemmas as it does now in the history of mankind. 2020 is the darkest year, if not the worst nightmare, for most of the world. Violent environmental changes, floods, fires and droughts, as well as major financial and economic crises has been affecting nations, communities and individuals to varying degrees, but the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic around the world has been the most damaging and influential.



This delicate and invisible virus continues to threaten the lives of millions of people and has spread terror and panic in every continent, nation, home and family. Humanity has been unable even to prevent the spread of this virus and to find a cure or a vaccine to stave off its danger, which have made individuals terrified and anxious about being able to control it. In our own case in Yemen, the breakdown of the health infrastructure and the lack of the most basic medicines have heightened the anxiety and fear among society.

In response to this deficit and anxiety, countries closed their borders, airports stopped receiving passengers, factories and shops stopped working, and tens of millions of people lost their jobs and lost their sources of income, which undermined their sense of security and stability. Yet the most serious thing that this pandemic has done is that it has isolated people from each other, deprived them of the most important characteristics of social and psychological existence, which are love and desire to communicate and even contact one's family, loved ones and friends. This is an important characteristic of normal human behavior due to putting the whole world in a terrible quarantine.

There is no doubt that quarantine and social isolation, which is widely practiced today as a necessity to protect individuals, families and societies from the spread of this disease, have stripped the human being of the most important elements of their psychological and social balance and imposed a state of depression and anxiety at varying levels depending on the different resilience available.

Some reports point that many people have entered different situations of mental disorders as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.



While the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) stressed that the most feared consequences of this pandemic is the prevalence of mental disorders due to quarantine and social isolation imposed by this pandemic on all, and that mental disorders will be the most difficult to treat.

This dreaded virus has not excluded a country or a nation, but it has infiltrated almost all countries of the world, including our beloved country — Yemen. It did not take into account that Yemen is living in many concurrent situations, most notably: the comprehensive and unjust blockade, the devastating and brutal war, the spread of epidemics, floods, famine, poverty and unemployment, all of which can destroy the psychological balance of any human being no matter how hard it may be. In contrary, it insisted on joining these great disasters to strip many Yemenis of their remaining resilience in the face of existing disasters. Preliminary data indicates a rise in cases of psychological distress for individuals and an escalation of domestic violence in Yemen as a result of all those problems. Intervention and psychological counseling in the face of today's Coronavirus pandemic has become one of the most important tasks and the first priorities for which Family Counseling and Development Foundation devotes its energies, expertise and activities. We, at FCDF, are certain that the psychological intervention we are now doing in the face of this pandemic is an integral part of the efforts of the Yemeni Government and international and local organizations to save lives and help restore individuals, families and groups to a minimum of psychological balance so that they can live in peace and harmony. The methods and tools used by FCDF in psychological intervention, counseling and psychotherapy to help people face psychological disorders imposed on them by the Coronavirus pandemic are many and varied depending on the characteristics and nature of these

disorders from one person to another and according to the response of individuals to the psychological pressures generated by them as well as the environment and the socio-economic conditions of each individual.

One of the most prominent of these methods and tools used by the Foundation are the various knowledge profiles, brochures and posts aimed at creating the public awareness required to understand the coronavirus, Covid19-, its characteristics, the nature of its work, the mechanism of its spread, and ways to avoid its psychological effects. This type of intervention undoubtedly targets a particular social segment with the ability to read and understand awareness publications. The Foundation has also broadcast audio-awareness flashes on various radio stations to reach its awareness service to the uneducated as well. The Foundation's psychological and psychiatric clinics are the tools of the Foundation in these professional psychological interventions. The Foundation uses one of its most important professional and effective arms in this task, the free psychological and social counseling help-line (136), which receives calls 12 hours a day, six days a week, and psychologists answer callers' inquiries.

It should be noted that individuals' response to stress caused by fear of Covid19- infection is varied:

**Anxiety:** is the most common feeling of an individual and associated with stress. Anxiety disorders occur when people are in imminent danger or have bad consequences, which is the case with the Corona virus pandemic.

**Hypochondria:** People's awareness of the dangers of this virus generates contradictory attitudes related to the level of awareness of these individuals and their psychological characteristics and surroundings. Some have a sharply low sense of security; others have a high level of suspicion that they are infected with the virus when any side effects such as accidental cough or sneezing are observed.

Some reach the level of extreme anxiety, using excessive sanitizers and refraining from leaving the house.

**Fear:** A psychological condition that expresses one's feelings of panic and inability to face an imminent danger. The Corona virus pandemic, which has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, has terrorized many because they are unable to protect themselves and their loved ones from this danger.

**Depression:** Depression is clearly shown in low morale, negative pessimism, isolation, helplessness, despair and loss of motivation for life, to the point of thinking of suicide in severe cases. Its manifestations include: grief and despair, loss of interest and pleasure in everything, inability to feel happy, feeling very tired, low morale, difficulty concentrating or thinking. Staying at home for a long time, moving away from professional and social activities, as a result of social isolation and quarantine, has affected a large number of people with varying levels of depression.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:** is to think repeatedly about the things related to the pandemic. And whenever an individual wants to get rid of it, it becomes more difficult to control. The exaggeration of hygiene and sterilization is also overstated to the extent that it is too much of a person's time, making him unable to work or relax, feel calm and live his life normally.

**Anger:** is the feeling when a person feels frustrated or threatened, accompanied by aggressive behavior towards others when they reach critical limits. The spread of the Corona virus pandemic today in Yemen is one of the biggest sources of threat and frustration among many, which has led some to vent negative anger, harm and violence against innocent people. The increase in domestic violence is also one of the repercussions of the corona virus pandemic, with international reports indicating that one in three women in the workforce today is experiencing violence.



## Behavioral Changes Caused by the Pandemic:

Stress is usually accompanied by reactions that vary between positive and negative depending on the strength and nature of these pressures, at which point the individual follows either negative or positive compensatory behaviors. Positive ones make the individual feel good and comfortable such as: learning a certain skill, exercising, doing some maintenance work inside the house, reading a book, doing joint activities between the family. Negative compensatory behaviors cause individuals immediate comfort, but in the long run they feel more frustrated, which is most common with the pandemic: staying up for long hours at night and sleeping during the day, spending long hours in front of TV and watching programs and series, spending long hours on social media, following news channels all the time, eating too much, engaging in some sedatives, psychoactive substances or alcohol, starting to chew Qat or chewing for more days and hours than before. For Children, the start an addiction to video games.

**Blind optimism:** Moderate optimism is a necessary feeling to confront this pandemic, but some exaggerate the state of optimism because they are immune to the virus infection because of a number of preventive measures, while others believe that the pandemic is only a rumor or deception or that they are immune to false beliefs, and they do not take any preventive action at all.

Unrealistic optimism will not only reduce people's caution, but it will also increase the risk of them and others being infected and become a source of contagion and a serious threat to themselves, their family and their community.

## Guidelines to Overcome the Crisis:

### **First, understanding your psychological reactions correctly.**

All infectious diseases usually generate a sense of fear of infection, but it should not amount to panic. We have to admit that there are feelings that have been changed by the outbreak of this disease, but we also have to accept it as a reality with caution to live a normal life until science reaches radical solutions for its treatment and prevention.

### **Second, dealing appropriately with information about the pandemic.**

It is important to remain aware of what is going on with the pandemic. This requires us to watch television programs that are raising our knowledge of the virus, follow up on media and scientific reports and medical publications on the emerging corona virus, to better understand the nature of the virus, avoid rumors, and to be confident and committed to government prevention and control measures.

**Third, communicating positively with close people.** Staying behind closed doors makes us feel lonely that generates depression and frustration that in turn weakens our body's resistance to the virus. That is why we need to communicate more with family and friends by different means such as phones and the Internet, to seek to exchange positive thoughts and feelings, to promote psychological support, and to all that makes us feel that we are not alone and enable us to build a psychological alliance to face the pandemic, which generates a state of satisfaction and happiness.

**Fourth, maintaining a stable and healthy lifestyle.** Although the scope of activities has become limited, we must strive as much as possible to practice our lives as usual, such as waking up early, eating on time and at regular hours, practicing sports

activities that enhance the immunity of our bodies, and other positive behaviors and activities that maintain the rhythm of our previous lives. Regularity and a sense of control are good drugs to deal with anxiety and panic.

### **Fifth, positive connectivity.**

Meditation and positive thinking are help tools for control and relaxation. Spending 15-10 minutes a day in meditation and positive thinking is an effective activity to focus on positive connectivity. Meditation, thinking about some positive things and relaxation help improve our psyche, and it has been shown to improve a person's immunity. Thus, it is recommended a person spend 15-10 minutes in one or two meditation sessions each day to focus on positive connectivity. In these moments, we can recall the most beautiful moments of our lives, as well as reflect on the blessings we still have despite this crisis.

### **Sixth, expressing feelings correctly.**

Suppressing feelings is a harmful practice to health, which is why it is necessary for us to express our feelings in a healthy and multiple way, such as talking to close friends, writing diaries, or using drawing or music for those who can do so.

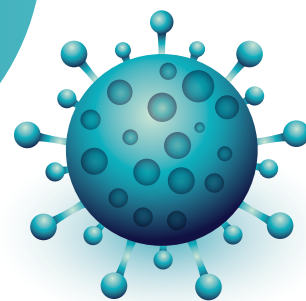
### **Seventh, cognitive modification.**

One is often trapped in a cycle of negative thoughts because of the pressures and emotions of the pandemic. For example, predicting a single outcome of many things is often negative or may exaggerates the likelihood of negative consequences or underestimating what it can do to cope with a pandemic, which makes the person thinks in the opposite direction.

### **Eighth, doing meaningful things.**

Our meaningful activities and actions are constructive means of combating anxiety and strengthening our inner strength and sense of control over our lives. Like helping and caring for others, and doing constructive work no matter how simple it is, it generates comfort, a sense of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During the COVID-19 outbreak



## FAMILY COUNSELING

In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease, COVID19-, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated that there is a high risk of COVID19- spreading to other countries around the world. In March 2020, WHO made the assessment that COVID19- can be characterized as a pandemic. WHO and public health authorities around the world are acting to contain the COVID19- outbreak. However, this time of crisis is generating stress throughout the population. The considerations presented in this document have been developed by the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Use as a series of messages that can be used in communications to support mental and psychosocial well-being in different target groups during the outbreak.



### Messages for the general population

Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID19- that causes you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information only from trusted sources and mainly so that you can take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones. Seek information updates at specific times during the day, once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel worried. Get the facts; not rumors and misinformation. Gather information at regular intervals from the WHO website and local health authority platforms in order to help you distinguish facts from rumors. Facts can help to minimize fears.

Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit both the person receiving support and the helper. For example, check by telephone on neighbors or people in your community who may need some extra assistance. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity in addressing COVID19- together



### Messages for carers of children

Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness. Every child has his or her own way of expressing emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing or drawing can facilitate this process. Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

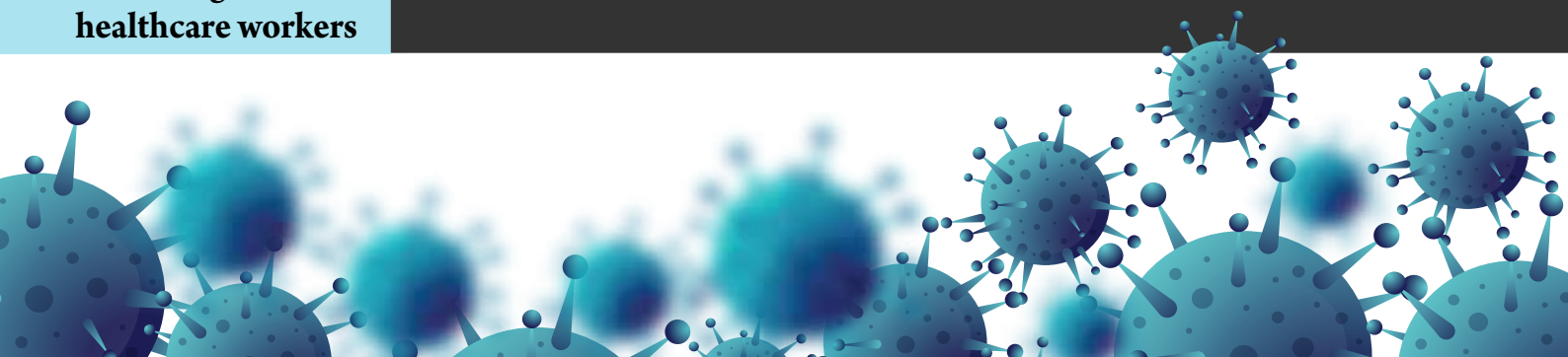
Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe, and avoid separating children and their carers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from his or her primary carer, ensure that appropriate alternative care is provided and that a social worker or equivalent will regularly follow up on the child. Further, ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and carers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled telephone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g. social media).



### Messages for healthcare workers

Feeling under pressure is a likely experience for you and many of your colleagues. It is quite normal to be feeling this way in the current situation. Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak. Managing your mental health and psychosocial well-being during this time is as important as managing your physical health

Know how to provide support to people who are affected by COVID19- and know how to link them with available resources. This is especially important for those who require mental health and psychosocial support. The stigma associated with mental health problems may cause reluctance to seek support for both COVID19- and mental health conditions.





# OTHER VICTIMS OF CORONAVIRUS



Dr. Haitham Ahmed Al-Kholba

While many people follow only the numbers of infected, dead or even those recovering from the CORONAVIRUS, there are other numbers that are very difficult to quantify, and they are rather serious as well, people suffering psychologically because of this pandemic.

The negative consequences of COVID19- spread affect all human beings but at different levels depending on their economic, social and health conditions, and they also affect the most vulnerable segments of society, primarily women.

The pandemic has brought the fear to individuals or their family of being infected, and the quarantine that is experienced by a large part of the world has caused people to feel lonely, stressed, anxious, bewildered and lose control of temper because the human being is a social creature by nature and naturally unqualified to live with the social isolation imposed by the virus. Isolation from family and loved ones, loss of freedom, uncertainty about the development of the disease, boredom, all these factors can cause tragic cases.

Research and statistics confirm that fear and anxiety are the current feelings of everyone regardless of their differences, and that is instinctive; however, we fear that this instinct feeling would push some without thinking towards behaviors that may harm others. Giving in to panic and fear leads to weakening the immune system, and "psychological stress" is the tax to which the body responds involuntarily, which results to a loss of balance in psychological requirements. Therefore, there is a must not to focus on negative thoughts.

Among people psychologically affected by the virus are those who have lost their jobs because of the pandemic as they are expected to lose even their identities, their daily routine, and many of their social connections. In addition, the pandemic has increased the rate of domestic violence, particularly violence against women, because people fear for their security, health and income.

According to the WHO mhGAP "Mental Health Gap" Program Guide, stress and significant losses caused by humanitarian emergencies can generate sadness, fear, guilt and despair, raising the risk of moderate to severe depressive disorder. The first symptoms of trauma usually occur immediately after they happen, but sometimes symptoms occur years later as a result of continuing stressful life situations. Then they are to be dealt with several levels, including psychotherapy and social support.

To face the psychological repercussions of Coronavirus, we recommend reducing following of news of the pandemic or limit it to certain times of the day, avoiding sites and channels that are not reliable sources, especially those that focus on terrible news because they cause anxiety and stress, seeking information from reliable or official sources, not focusing on negative thoughts and combating domestic violence.

## The Other Face of the Danger "Coronavirus Pandemic"

The world is currently experiencing an outbreak that has been classified as a "pandemic", and this pandemic has negative effects on mental health for almost all segments of society. Some of which are represented in increased rates of anxiety and fear, panic attacks, and some may develop into symptoms similar to those of PTSD, as well as depression which has also been recorded in the general public. A number of studies have shown an increase in suicide attempt rates, an increase in the onset of physical symptoms of psychological origin or what is known as 'physical symptom disorder', and the increase in obsessive-compulsive disorder especially related to hygiene.

Fear sensitivity may seem very necessary to cope with the danger, but it is an unregulated allergy and its importance is essentially related to a particular moment as fear leaves a physiological imprint on the heart rate, regularity of breathing, and blood sugar. Physical and moral fear can be mentioned in three types: fear of death (with virus or its complications), fear of the future, especially if a person has children, and economic fear related to housekeeping, especially with people living on a daily work income.

These symptoms and fears can have very serious psychological effects in the form of anxiety, fear, stress or depression, which negatively affect an individual's mental health especially if it's accompanied by many of the factors that they exacerbates it more, such as watching and trying to know about infection cases, daily deaths and conflicting news whether the exaggerated news or easy ones on social media.

To avoid all this, preventive and health aspects must be introduced in the appropriate form to alleviate anxiety and try to avoid watching and following up on the disturbing news of the pandemic as much as possible.

Finally, it is normal to feel fear in such unusual situations, and it is normal to sometimes feel bored, lazy or even moody. It is also normal to feel afraid of infection; however, you should try to follow the advice we have referred to. Go for medical advice if the symptoms are severe, and receive counseling, support and psychological support from those who are assigned to it, such as calling the Helpline of Family Counseling and Development Foundation (136).



Psychotherapist,  
Abdullah Alba'dani



# Poor Together then Cheated on Her When Rich

**FAMILY COUNSELING**  
success story

"Loyalty can only be met with loyalty," but what happened to 32-year-old Sahar was otherwise. Her husband met her loyalty with treason, which caused her severe psychological trauma.

At the age of 20, Sahar (pseudonym) got married and gave birth to two children. She lived with her husband a life so destitute that some days they could not find what to eat. At the same time, she suffered from his dryness, cruelty and lack of interest in her, but that period, as described, did not lack some mutual respect. One day, her husband asked for her gold to sell it and try to start a project to help them improve their living conditions. Sahar immediately agreed; she sold her whole gold, and gave her husband the money who started a small business. The business succeeded brilliantly, and their living conditions improved. But her husband has changed and treated her even worse since their financial situation improved; not only that, but he also told her openly that he wanted to marry another woman. She stood with her family against his desire, and since then her actions became tense and nervous. She poured her anger on her two sons. In addition, she suffered from sleep disruption due to thinking about bad expectations, fearing that the day would come when her husband would

marry another one.

Sahar's fear of her husband's marriage, prompted her to keep an eye on him and observe him closely. On one occasion, she opened his phone and found that he was having an affair with a girl, and here she began her real suffering. She had no choice but to try to retrieve him and get close to him and take care of him more, but in return he treated her with dryness and cruelty and even criticized her in her form, weight, taste and clothing. Sahar's patience in hiding her knowledge of his affair and told him that she knew about his relationship with that girl, but he replied to her that it was only a "fling" and apologized to her, he did not change and began to care to hide his phone and use it more, though. Her suspicion increased more and more, and the situation was more difficult. She was dominated by the disastrous thoughts of the marriage of her husband and about her unknown fate, and she became confused between staying with him or breaking up with him; thus, her psychological condition deteriorated.

Meanwhile, a friend of hers visited her, who noticed the deterioration of Sahar's psychological state and advised her to visit the Yemeni Center for Family Counseling.

Like a drowning person trying to hold on to a straw to survive, Sahar went to the center in hope of getting rid of her bad psychological state, and at the center she was diagnosed with an

'Adjustment Disorder'.

Sahar started her treatment sessions with breaking up ideas taking control of her head since it was, from her perspective, the best solution. Therefore, she was taught the decision-making and problem-solving methods, which showed her that losses in her divorce are more than the winnings. She started to give alternative solutions to divorce. She was also taught to relax, trained to discover negative ideas and modify them (assumptions - catastrophic ideas). She also learned in the sessions how to improve the way she communicates with her husband, which made her feel the love of her husband and the attention she wished for. Moreover, Sahar raised her self-esteem and started seeing herself beautiful and worthy of happiness in her life. She started repeating: "I did not understand myself, and now I understand myself and I love it and appreciate it", and worked on raising her self-assertion, so she began to freely express her feelings towards her husband. She also became able to ask for whatever she wanted, and asked her husband to compensate her for the gold he took from her. She was trained on the schedule of behavioral activities, pleasant activities, and gradual activities during the therapy sessions.

After these therapy sessions, Sahar's psychological conditions improved, and she described her life saying, "my married life has moved from hell and fire to paradise, bliss and happiness, and I became a strong and optimistic person."