

# Living with COVID 19 : A Psychological Approach

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## *ABSTRACT*

Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease. WHO declared COVID 19 outbreak a global Pandemic. COVID 19 induced Lockdown caused temporary closure of everything except grocery shop, medical shop and hospitals. Lockdown is a big shock for everyone. Great number of people has lost their employment. This pandemic and Lockdown have forced entire human being to live in new normal world which is full of restriction, stress and anxiety. People go outside in Mask and with sanitizer. Students are attending their online classes from their home. Doctors are giving tele-consultation. Business is taking form of e commerce. In COVID 19 new normal people are adopting naturopathy for treating minor health problems. Stress affects not only physical health but also mental health. Psychiatric problems like Coronaphobia, Depression, Anxiety, Hypochondriasis, insomnia, panic attack, Screen and game addiction etc. are increasing during COVID 19 period. Masses are adopting Yoga, Meditation, relaxation, Cognitive restructuring, activity scheduling and AYUSH Guidelines to keep themselves fit.

**Key word:** *COVID 19, Lockdown, Psychiatric problem, Cognitive restructuring and AYUSH.*

## **Introduction:**

Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID 19 was first reported in Wuhan, China. China stopped its spread by using Lockdown in Wuhan. Very soon it covered many countries. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared the novel Corona virus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. In india, first case of COVID 19 was reported on 27th January, 2020, at Thrissur district of Kerala, the patient was a student studying in Wuhan University, China and returned to India. Common sign and symptoms of COVID 19 are fever, Cough, tiredness, shortness of breath or difficulties in breathing, sore throat, loss of taste and smell. It is highly infectious disease. Though we have

developed its vaccination, but till now we are without its treatment. We are helpless but not hopeless. Helpless because we are without its medicine. We are hopeful because globally scientists are working hard to develop its medicine. To stop COVID 19 Spread, WHO has proposed certain measures like, such as maintaining physical distancing, wearing a face mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. One can get infected, if he / she come into contact with infected person. It spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets that come out from nose or mouth of an infected person, when he or she coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are relatively heavier, so does not travel far and quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets

from a person infected with the virus. This is why it is important to stay at least 1 meter away from others. These droplets can land on objects and surfaces around the person such as tables, doorknobs and handrails. People can become infected-by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. So it's important to practice respiratory etiquette for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow or put cloth over your mouth and nose when one coughs or sneezes. People should wash their hands regularly with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based Sanitizer. The risks of getting COVID-19 are higher in crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. WHO says to Avoid 3Cs – spaces that are closed, crowded or involve close contact. In its advisory WHO also says that one should seek medical attention immediately if one develops fever, cough and difficulty in breathing. WHO says that one should stay at home and self-isolate, if one develops even minor symptoms like headache, mild fever etc. Anybody can get infected with the COVID 19. But, elderly people, children below 10 and person with medical problems like diabetes, Cardio Vascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory disease and Cancer, Health Care Workers like Doctors and nurses and person with poor immune system are in high risk zone.

Indian government announced Lockdown to slow its speed. COVID 19 induced Lockdown caused temporary closure of the Industry, big business houses and all economical and commercial activities. During lockdown period Social gatherings, for example marriage ceremony or funeral rites were allowed on specific terms and condition. Limited number of persons was allowed to be present in such ceremony. Lockdown is a big shock for those who runs petty businesses and who are self

employed person like, daily laborer, small farmers, Rickshaw puller and Vendor Vala. Great number of people has lost their employment. They managed to sustain their family anyhow. School, Colleges, Coaching Institutes also remained closed. Examinations were delayed.

The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy (abbreviated as AYUSH) AYUSH has recommended certain measures for enhancing immunity. It says drink warm water, practice Yogasana, and Pranayama and meditation and use spices like Haldi ( turmeric), Jeera (cumin), Dhaniya ( coriander) and Lahsun (garlic) in cooking. Ayurvedic immunity boosting measures are take chawanprash (10gm) in the morning, drink herbal tea or decoction (Kadha) made from Tulsi ( Basil), dalchini (Cinnamon), Kalimirch (Black Pepper), Shunthi (dry Ginger) and Munakka (Rasin).

#### **Life In New Normal World:**

Lockdown has completely changed our life. This new normal world emphasized on online activities, It focuses upon minimal contact of person. People stay at home. They do not go outside if it is not urgent/emergency. People do not visit family, friends or go to market, Park, Restaurant, School, College, office, Theater. At home, they are trying to improve their Quality of Life by doing productive work from home. Now, online classes are going on for students. Business is taking form of e commerce. One can take relish of restaurants food at home by getting home delivery from Restaurants. People go outside in Mask and with sanitizer. Mass gatherings are being avoided. Even people are celebrating festival, like Durga Puja, Chhath Puja, Holi and Id etc. with less contact with their relatives and friends. Marriages are taking place with less number of people. Death ceremonies are taking place with less number of people. Through video calling facility

brought people close to their friends and family, so no need to visit their home to see them and chat with them. Medical facility is not much available, as it was before COVID19 outbreak. Everybody is taking precaution, so that they cannot get infected with COVID 19. Doctors are hesitating to come in contact with patients at the same time patients also wants to avoid doctors contact, due to fear of catching COVID 19 infection. Doctors are giving online consultation (Tele – consultation) to their patient. Ministry of Health and family welfare, Government of India launched e Sanjivini OPD. It is National Tele-consultation Service on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. Its aim was to provide telemedicine network at rural areas. This service prove beneficial during COVID Pandemic. Doctors are Prescribing medicine to the patient with minimal physical contact. Even though the job is so hazardous that doctors had to come in contact with the patient. As a consequence of which they became victim of COVID 19 infection.

People try to do their work themselves. They do not want to take help of maid, driver or other person. They clean their home, wash their cloth, press it, cooking, drive car themselves. In other word by doing all these work people keep themselves physically active and safe. People are adopting naturopathy. They are doing Yoga and meditation to keep them healthy and fit at home. They opt for home remedies like Dadi ma ke Nuskhe, to cure minor problems, like taking Ajwain for digestion, To improve Immune System Citric food, Kadha, Tulsi, Haldi vala Dhudh etc. are consumed. All educational Institutions are closed. Students are attending their online classes from their home. Students are missing their school activities.

### **Psychological Impact Of Covid 19 :**

COVID 19 Pandemic brought not only health emergencies but it also affected our economical infrastructure, social life, and mental health. Due to all these problems people are living in stress. High stress levels affect immunity, says Dr Prabha S Chandra, Psychiatrist at Nimhans . Person with lower immunity is in high risk zone. Three people, who were tested positive for COVID 19 in Tamilnadu, India, ended their life (The times of India, 29 May, 2020). A man, who had returned from Mumbai to his native place in Karnataka was sent to quarantine, reportedly he committed suicide.

Psychologist Hans Selye has given a model of Stress. It is called General Adaptive Syndrome (GAS). It says how organism responds to stress. GAS consists of 3 stages – Alarm Stages is the first stage, in which body prepares itself for immediate action. Here arousal of Sympathetic Nervous System Occurs. Sympathetic Nervous System releases hormones that helps to prepare our body to meet threats or dangers. If stress continues, the Resistance Stage, Second Stage, begins. Our body draws on resources at an above normal rate in order to cope with the stress effectively. Continued exposure to the same stressor leads to the third stage, Exhaustion. It drains the body of its resources. During this stage our capacity to resist is depleted and our susceptibility to illnesses increases. In severe Cases of prolonged physical stress, the result can be death.

Large numbers of People are suffering from mental Disorders which include Coronaphobia, it is fear of contracting COVID 19. Due to COVID 19 Pandemic many people is fearful, anxious and worried. They are under stress. They are not able to do their work due to fear of getting COVID 19 infection. People don't want to go outside to purchase food, medicine or other essential things due to fear of getting infected. They are having errors in

thinking (thinking errors – jumping to conclusion, personalization, Catastrophic thinking, Filtering etc.). If they develop normal coughing, they may Jump to the Conclusion that they got infected with COVID 19. Some causality was reported even person even after getting 2n dose of COVID 19 vaccination. COVID suspect are running from quarantine center due to fear of catching virus. People are likely to develop mental illness like Depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Hypochondriasis, Somatization, Dissociation, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Insomnia.

Depression is a mood disorder. It is characterized by low mood, pessimistic view about future, helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness, irritability, fatigue, suicidal ideation, loss of appetite and disturbed sleep. Generalized Anxiety Disorder involves excessive anxiety and worry about different kinds of topic, events or activities. Hypochondriasis involves persistent preoccupation with the possibility of having one or more serious and progressive physical disorders. Person with Panic disorder experience recurrent anxiety attack in which the person experiences intense terror. Many people are having negative thinking. They are persistently worried about their temporary unemployment, business, future. They are likely to lose their temper easily, on trivial issues. The sense of isolation and financial and medical anxiety coming along with the deadly pandemic and sinking economy have increased the frequency of terror within homes. The national lockdown has reported more than 50% rise in domestic violence. Recent data released by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) suggest that the nationwide lockdown has led to a rapid increase in cases of domestic violence.

People spend lots of times on social networking sites or internet. Students are also getting their classes online. All these things have increased

our dependency on mobile and internet. Now many people are having mobile addition.

Not only adults but children are also showing maladaptive behaviors. They do not want to go to bed on time and do not want to get up early in the morning. As there is no school. Since they are not allowed to go outside so they spends lots of time on mobile, playing game or watching videos and watching television. They spend time in quarreling with their sibling. In spite of all these negative aspects some positive things are also taking place like it has given us opportunity to spend times with family members. People are getting time to follow their hobbies, like –reading, cooking, dancing, painting, singing etc. Working parents are able to give time to their kids. There are several Psychological techniques which can be helpful in reducing stress like Activity Scheduling (maintaining daily routine activities and keeping oneself busy), Distraction techniques, Relaxation techniques, Deep breathing exercises, Replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts and by developing and following hobbies and minimizing watching, reading and listening too much COVID 19 related news. One should not be preoccupied with watching COVID 19 related news all the time because it causes unnecessary tension. To decrease domestic violence we should do anger management, Cognitive restructuring. By following all these measures we can stay mentally and physically fit with COVID 19.

### **Conclusion:**

Due to COVID 19 Pandemic many people is fearful, anxious and worried. They are under stress. They are not able to do their work due to fear of getting COVID 19 infection. Due to COVID 19 pandemic many psychological problems are rising including rise in domestic violence. Many people have developed mobile and game addition. This COVID-19 pandemic

and Lockdown have forced entire human being living in a world that is more stressful and full of anxiety. Psychological approaches to live with COVID 19 will reduce our stress, anxiety and domestic violence. Psychological approach will improve our mental health and Psychological well being.

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