

# OBLIGATORY EDUCATION FOR EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract:** Presently, lockdown and unpredictable spreading of infection has caused anxiety, distress, hysteria, fear, and other psychological responses among people. In long terms one may experience feelings of apathy, insomnia, unusual appetite, fretfulness, irritability and weight loss or gain. Studies have showed that these symptoms are often associated with feeling deeply sad and emotional unhealthiness. Recent data also indicated that with positive mindset and understandings, these losses can be minimized at different levels. In this article we have discussed about the remedy to cure our emotional health that has greatly damaged in this period. As the same has direct relation with our physical health, mental health and other areas of life. Here, recent research and analysis with simple tips to keep self calm, happy and kind and fit have been discussed. Researchers have found that taking proper diet, sleep, exercise, love-bonding, care and feelings to help each other are basic medicines to cure emotional health. Scientifically the same has also been reported to increase immunity power and power to fight against any infection. So, in conclusion, we need to give special attention to ours and others emotional health to decrease the adverse impacts of pandemic and related issues.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, pandemic, emotional health, immunity power, physical exercise, acute anxiety, happiness quotient.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the present pandemic, we need to work extra hard to deal with emotional health along with physical and mental health. Since, a wide population is primarily restricted to their homes to break the chain of infection[1]. This lockdown and unpredictable spreading of infectious disease acute anxiety and distress are natural psychological responses among people[2]. Recent studies all around the worlds are showing the rapid expansion of mass hysteria, fear, depression, violence and panic regarding COVID-19 in public[1-3].

The grief period after a loss can be lightened, but not eliminated. Each individual's personal experiences differ as per its state, even in the same household. For a time after a loss, we may experience feelings of apathy, insomnia, poor or increased appetite, anxiety, irritability and weight loss or gain[3]. These symptoms are often associated with feeling deeply sad and having severe worries[4].

In one way, these factors are causing great loss to the people at different levels of life but on the other way the same are helping to bond together from a physical distance, and slow the spread of the virus[2]. People are more aware for their feelings and emotions, it has been observed all around emotional bonding, care and feelings to help each other are increasing. So anxiety, uneasiness, panic of infection is becoming good things right now, especially if we manage them well[5].

At the same time, one must do efforts to prevent panic infection and create periods when one is able to be screen-free, calm, engaging attention in normal daily activities, spending time with family, watching laughter shows etc. Seize other opportunities to share lightness and humor. Laughter right now is proved to be relief for all of us[4]. Although, there are so much uncertainty but one can find moments of hope and resilience all around and can also spread the same among others. For example- we can share motivational stories, inspirational videos, and creative tasks all around the surroundings[6]. In the present article we have mentioned some reports, observations and tips to deal with this tough time and manage our emotional health. We will also describe the safety measure that keep people happy and make help to convert anxiety into creativity. Below are important tips to be healthy at physical, mental and emotional levels.

### **Stay physically safe from the virus**

- The biggest safety behaviors are physical distancing and hand washing, these help to decrease transmission of the COVID-19 virus, are also an integral part of anxiety management.
- Stay at home when you can.
- When outside the home, wash your hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Make the thorough hand-washing a new habit.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- “Social Distancing” is actually a misnomer; it is actually physical distancing while we work hard to stay socially connected[1,3].

### **Routine life style**

- As physical, mental activities, thoughts, and mood are closely linked. If you want to change your mood, change your activities and/or your thoughts.
- Create new routines and keep practicing health behaviors.
- Routine and ritual are restorative to us. Our brain wants predictable activity so we can relax our vigilant nervous system. So, practice to go to bed early and go outside each day to be active.
- Maintain a regular wake up time.
- If possible, also try to get some direct sunlight in the morning. Together, these will help regulate your circadian rhythm[6].

### **Eat well**

- Stress makes us seek and good nutrition helps our health and mood.
- In many population-based studies showed that raw foods, fruits, Mediterranean diet etc has been linked to better mental health and stress resilience, on the other hand junk food, fried food, western diet is linked to depression and anxiety[7].
- Fill your home with fresh fruits, veggies, and whole foods when possible.
- Multivitamins, antioxidant rich diet is mandatory to make immune system strong[8].
- As it has already been proved that over diet cause harm to body so we should avoid it.
- Sometime fasting is also helpful to make immune system stronger.
- One should prefer whole grain diet to fine flour like maida.

- Fiber rich herbs, fruit juices etc should be taken regularly.
- Add half a cup of beans or peas to your salad to add fiber, texture, and flavor.
- Cut the sodium from your meal. Sodium increases blood pressure, which raises the risk for heart disease and stroke.
- Avoid processed and prepackaged food, which can be full of hidden sodium[7,8].

#### **Think well**

- Our thoughts shape our physiological stress responses.
- Acute, short-term stress is not necessarily bad, and, in fact, can be good. We can approach stressors with a positive mental view that we can cope well, that we have the resources.
- Be realistic and fact-based[6].
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic will likely go on for months, we need to make sure we are creating breaks and coping well with the stressful events that arise each day. It's easy to think about the worst outcomes, which are catastrophic, but that creates unnecessary stress arousal and suffering. It can be helpful to think of worst case, and then best case scenarios, and settle on something in between.
- Some scientific reports revealed that creating short-term stress in the body, is helpful for improving our immune response[8,9].

#### **Keep a regular sleep schedule**

- Sleep is a pillar of health. Having enough sleep keeps our immune system strong.
- Proper sleep is also crucial for helping us mentally.
- For this, before going to bed, it is important to unplug and ready ourselves for a restful night. The first thing to do is to send-off to all COVID-19-related news[6].
- It is better to unplug from email, news, and anything else that creates a busy mind 1-2 hours prior to bed, and begin focusing on creating a calm, relaxing environment.
- One can do things that are relaxing like reading, listening to music, or a meditation audio etc[8].
- In general also for proper sleep one should avoid alcohol close to bedtime and discontinue caffeine after noon.
- Don't toss and turn in bed. If you are unable to fall asleep or wake up and can't fall back to sleep, don't toss and turn in bed for longer than 15-20 minutes. Get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy and then go back to bed[9].
- Make your bedroom a shrine to sleep.
- Be sure to keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.
- Mind your day to protect your night[8,9].

#### **Engage in regular physical activities**

- Find ways to exercise. Our physical health affects our mental health, and exercise can reduce stress reactivity and even ameliorate moderate depression.
- Engaging in regular physical activity will help reduce your anxiety and stress[6,8].
- If possible one can go for morning walk in nearby park, jungle or in personal garden. As research shows fresh air, and seeing greenery, reduces somatic stress in our body, and clears our mind.
- If possible, enjoy nature in your immediate neighborhood.
- One can consider live online classes for exercise, yoga and meditation. Mind-body movements are very helpful for restoration and relaxation.

- Core Power Yoga offers free classes online.
- Zumba dance concert videos can help us for great workouts.
- Qi Gong to Enhance the Immune System, by Roger Jahnke, OMD, contains free short practices that are beginner friendly.
- The acute effects of deep breathing and cognitive reappraisal are important to use throughout the day.
- The most basic thing to know is that taking a longer exhale than inhale can help calm your body. Easy techniques include slow diaphragmatic belly breathing (vs. chest breathing)[8-10].



**Fig.1: Showing various factors that help to maintain emotional health.**

### **Meditation**

- Meditation is already proved science that heals body and mind both.
- Mental and physical stress increases the release of the stress hormone cortisol in blood. That induces free radical generation, oxidation reactions, release of inflammatory chemicals in body. Meditation helps to reduce stress and thus beneficial for body[11].
- In an 8-week research study, a meditation style called “mindfulness meditation” reduced the inflammation response caused by stress.
- A variety of meditation exercises have been reported to reduce anxiety levels at mental and emotional levels too.
- Some forms of meditation can lead to improved self-image and a more positive outlook on life. For example, one review of treatments given to more than 3,500 adults found that mindfulness meditation improved symptoms of depression.
- Meditation may help cultivate more creative problem-solving skills.
- Meditation can improve memory in patients with dementia.
- Meditation appears to control blood pressure by relaxing the nerve signals that coordinate heart function, blood vessel tension, and the “fight-or-flight” response that increases alertness in stressful situations[12-14].

### **Show emotional care / Be kind**

- Find ways of expressing kindness, patience, and compassion.
- Loving and caring for pets can be phenomenal stress reduction for us as well.
- Be extra kind to yourself. This is a hard time for everyone. We are all together and we may all emerge with a renewed gratitude for our interconnectedness.
- Helping others in need is both significant to get through this well, and also creates more purpose to our days and well-being[6].
- The blood bank faces a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during this coronavirus outbreak. Eligible and healthy donors can donate blood and can save one or more lives[8].
- Be gentle with yourself.
- Be compassionate to yourself for the losses that anyone might see in your life, for the invisible suffering only you can feel, and for your place in the misery of what has befallen us all in a million inexplicable ways[5].
- Whether on the frontlines or the sidelines, kindness and taking care of yourself allow you to be compassionate with and to provide deep help to others.
- Kindness and self-care, most of all, allow us to see the sacrifices and contributions that we and so many are making and to feel our connection to all humankind[9,11,14].

### **Work well enough from home**

- End the workday with clear boundaries.
- Put away electronic devices and work tools at the end of your workday and set clear hours in the day for work[15].
- Have a morning or evening check-in with a colleague or supervisor to reduce social isolation at mental level and provide structure to your day. Use video communications when you can. Seeing faces provides more social connection and information than just talking[13].
- Reach out to people who may feel stigmatized. Ask how you can help. Listen to them and show that you understand and support them.
- Show support for health care workers and others who are caring for people with COVID-19. Thank them for their work and share positive messages on social media[3].
- Show support for essential workers. Share extra gratitude and kindness with those who continue their essential jobs to help you and your community, such as police officers, bus drivers, grocery store clerks, food bank workers, and delivery people[15].

### **Limit media to reduce anxiety**

- Leave your mobile phone if unnecessary.
- The researchers showed that stress and screen time exhibited significant positive correlation in many studies[4].
- There is research behind it that watching or scrolling through the media makes us more anxious. Too much news and visual images about a traumatic event can create symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and poor health in long term[7,10].
- Make an effort to limit COVID-19 media exposure e.g. checking for updates again and again.
- Try to avoid reading about COVID-19 especially in morning and before bedtime.
- One can use media to spread news about the people those who have recovered from disease.
- In contrast to this, make a promise to not propagate alarming headlines to friends and family.
- Get and provide warm, comforting, social support by video, phone, or text.

- Talking with others who have our best interests at heart makes us feel safe. One can use phone, video, text, or email.
- One can host book club online, for example - which can create feelings of connectedness.
- Talk on, Google meet, whatsapp video call, FaceTime or Zoom while you eat or in free time about some positive things, childhood memories, school times, college times etc[14].

#### **May Use online stress reduction resources**

- A variety of practices to reduce mental and somatic stress that can be done online. Explore these and see and enjoy what you like. Different people like different types of stress reduction practices.
- We have already mentioned above about various mind-body practices like online webinars, video chats, social apps, spiritual web series, yoga, dancing, cooking, qi gong, or meditation etc that can help us to utilize free time in more creative ways[4,7,12,15].

## **II. DISCUSSION**

The world is suffering deep losses in the COVID-19 pandemic. Already, million people are infected; hundreds of thousands have lost their lives, a global economic disaster, worry for food and safety and all the suffering that accompanies it[3,8].

COVID-19 is a direct threat to the lives of people. We are all either vicariously witnessing trauma or directly experiencing trauma, by becoming ill, isolated, or experiencing the plight of close others. Even, frontline workers are at higher risk of developing traumatic stress symptoms[5]. Although, acute stress reactions are natural, but it is important to promote self-care, social support, and sleep, in order to prevent prolonged psychological and emotional consequences. In this period people are also experiencing a common feeling of moral distress and outrage[7]. At ground or broad levels common approach like radical acceptance, self compassion, positive challenge appraisals can be followed to reduce stress by changing mindset. As given above, mind-body exercises are very innovative tools that reduce stress reactions such as breathing exercises, meditation, physical activities, and social support[13,16].

Moral injury is a new term and it is defined as the psychosocial and spiritual burden caused by an act that goes against one's own or shared morals and values. Some general symptoms of moral injury are demoralization, inability to self-forgive, guilt, shame, and self-punishing behaviors[6]. Moral injury can happen both from actions and inaction. For example, one was not able to be at a loved one's bedside when they fall ill from the virus can cause distress; being a patient in a hospital and feeling helpless while hearing others around you in distress[14]. To get rid of these feeling, starting with your family, make sure that each individual is tending not only to their physical health but also their mental health. If some family members are in isolation, try to communicate in safe ways (phone or online), offer support, and check in about mental well-being. In this period, we need to take pride in taking care of our self and others[2,5].

For most of us, this pandemic has caused loss of everything we are familiar with, including our daily structure, for some jobs, physical boundaries with our beloved and social contacts[11]. It had led to serious financial despair, illness, family person and death. There are thus a range of emotional responses including grief, loss, and mourning[17].

Taking care of our self can better equip to take care of others. During times of social distancing, it is especially important to stay connected with our friends, family, neighbors, colleagues etc. Helping others cope with stress through phone calls or video chats can help ones feel less lonely, stressed or isolated[18,19]. Avoid self-medicating is also needed. And we need to be careful without fearing of situations.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

This article is mean to point out the basic and essential education to cope with present pandemic at physical, mental and most especially at emotional level. Since, all these factors are interconnected and change in one affect the other two too so we need to take care of ourselves and others more especially in this period. For this we need to manage physical distancing, eating habits, sleep habits, daily physical exercise, limited use of mobile phone, more caring for others, Work well enough from home, strong and positive at mental level etc. these practices are proving to be helpful to bring people out of stress and making them more loving to others. Change in thoughts and change in life style can make us strong enough to fight against Covid-19.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** - No conflict

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