

THE IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

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Fear, worry, and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and at times when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown. So it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Added to the fear of contracting the virus in a pandemic such as COVID-19 are the significant changes to our daily lives as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain and slow down the spread of the virus. Faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and 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.

WHO, together with partners, is providing guidance and advice during the COVID-19 pandemic for health workers, managers of health facilities, people who are looking after children, older adults, people in isolation and members of the public more generally, to help us look after our mental health.

As the coronavirus pandemic rapidly sweeps across the world, it is inducing a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern in the population at large and among certain groups in particular, such as older adults, care providers and people with underlying health conditions.

In public mental health terms, the main psychological impact to date is elevated rates of stress or anxiety. But as new measures and impacts are introduced especially

quarantine and its effects on many people's usual activities, routines or livelihoods levels of loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour are also expected to rise.

In populations already heavily affected, issues of service access and continuity for people with developing or existing mental health conditions are also now a major concern, along with the mental health and well-being of frontline workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders.

During the pandemic, including young adults, people experiencing job loss, parents and children, communities of color, and essential workers.

Research from prior economic downturns shows that job loss is associated with increased depression, anxiety, distress, and low self-esteem and may lead to higher rates of substance use disorder and suicide. During the pandemic, adults in households with job loss or lower incomes report higher rates of symptoms of mental illness than those without job or income loss.

As individual and member of society the impact of global pandemic and its significance are felt differently depending on our status. It's affecting different people in different ways. Some people experienced loneliness and lost and other's lost their job. The old face of our society is gone, we are facing in new normal trying to adopt to work online, homeschooling our children and ordering foods we want and also some groceries is now online. This global pandemic can have a long lasting impacts to us.

References:

<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>