Adaptation of MHPSS programming during COVID-19 outbreak

Ukraine MHPSS TWG Coordination
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Agenda

• MHPSS consequences of COVID-19 – what do we know so far?

• Mapping the MHPSS Global Response – review of resources

• Examples/lessons learned of MHPSS country responses

• Discussion
MHPSS consequences of COVID-19

What do we know so far?
Individual

• Fear, anxiety and depressions
• Uncertainty about the future, plans, etc.
• Fear for loved ones - not being able to visit ill relatives
• Confinement/quarantine is stressful – consequences for the mind, body, relations (e.g. Intimate violence)
• Overwhelming experience for balancing work – life – home school (children)
• Substance use (what about individuals with active addiction?)
Individual

- Workforce – increased workloads, risks, Decision-Making dilemmas
- Loss of livelihoods, jobs.
  - COVID-19, unemployment, and suicide (Lancet Psychiatry May 1\textsuperscript{st})
  - Loss of employment and financial stressors are well-recognised risk factors for suicide
  - Suicide risk was elevated by 20–30\% when associated with unemployment during 2000–11
  - Repeated exposure to stories about the crisis can increase fear and heighten suicide risk
- Vulnerable groups/increase of previous vulnerabilities - Would you name few?
  - Pre-existing mental health problems
  - Older population
  - Persons with disabilities
Community

- Disruption of services or avoidance of health facilities

- Multifaceted threat to socially excluded groups such as prisoners, the homeless, and refugees

- Social Stigma – misinformation

- Deterioration of trust in government agencies and social networks

- Considerations about loss, mourning and burial practices/rituals - particularly painful without the chance to say goodbye.
Community

• Covid-19 in developing countries:
  • the exacerbation of old challenges and emergence of new challenges
  • the negative impacts on economy and society and the consequent exacerbation of inequalities within and between countries
The risk of Instrumentalization

• Political instrumentalization of the COVID-19 as such (polarization)

• The risk of instrumentalizing COVID-19 Mental Health consequences

• COVID-19 and Human rights - respond to threats and crises in a way that puts people at the centre
Human rights-based approach to COVID-19

Respond to COVID-19 in a way that puts people at the centre
We know a lot of the negatives consequences, but what about the aspects of positive functioning?
Aspects of positive functioning

- Aspects of positive functioning—courage, compassion, hope, agency—If is not measured as part of mental health in the evolving pandemic, we won't see it.

- Young people in Sudan have launched #221CHECK, a platform to combat coronavirus misinformation online. (Lancet Psychiatry - July 1st)
MHPSS Global Response
Growing acknowledgement

- Policy Brief: COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health
  - UN acknowledgement – important!
  - Is there a side – unintended risk?
Interim Briefing Note

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Version 1.5

February 2020

IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings

Translated to 24 languages
MHPSS should be considered a cross-cutting issue amongst all sectors and emergency pillars involved in the response.

Addressing MHPSS considerations will be key to stopping transmission and preventing the risk of long-term repercussions on the population’s well-being.

Hope, safety, empathy, social connectedness and self- and community efficacy should be embedded across every intervention.

Clear coordination mechanisms and integration of MHPSS technical expertise are critical.

Local actors need to be supported with both accurate knowledge and facts about COVID-19 as well as MHPSS skills.

MHPSS responses must be grounded in the context, to evolve and adapt to the needs of each population over the course of the outbreak.

People with mental health, substance abuse or psychosocial disabilities need continued/uninterrupted access to care and support during the outbreak.
Operational considerations for multisectoral mental health and psychosocial support programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Adapting psychological first aid for the COVID-19 context
- Continuation of comprehensive and clinical MHPSS in humanitarian settings during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Mental health and psychosocial support considerations for children, adolescents and families during the COVID-19 response
- Considerations for developing MHPSS responses to the COVID-19 pandemic for older adults
- Addressing substance use and addictive behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic
Basic Psychosocial Skills - A Guide for COVID-19 Responders

• Module 1: Your well-being - You cannot take care of others if you do not take care of yourself
• Module 2: Supportive communication in everyday interactions - How to help through the way you interact and communicate
• Module 3: Offering practical support - Helping people to help themselves so they can regain control of the situation
Basic Psychosocial Skills - A Guide for COVID-19 Responders

• Module 4: Supporting people who are experiencing stress - How to help people who are feeling stressed and how to know when to call specialized service providers

• Module 5: Helping in specific situations - such as working in care homes, law enforcement, displacement or refugee situations and supporting those who are grieving
Working with communities in time of COVID-19

- Understanding how communities organize themselves in order to protect children and other vulnerable groups in times of COVID-19

- Working with communities to implement safe and effective ways to protect
  - Safe, child-friendly and effective awareness raising in light of COVID-19
  - Strengthen the family and caregiving environment to promote children’s healthy development and keep them safe
  - Monitoring and referral of highly vulnerable children and families

- The health, safety and wellbeing of community members
- Be creative and learn new skills
Lebanon – engaging faith leaders in times of covid-19

• Why faith leaders?
• Supporting their initiatives to promote safe and healthy behaviour
• Enabling them to take leadership in tackling stigma and fear in the community
• Enriching their care for the most vulnerable groups towards protection risks.
• Fostering collaboration of faith leaders with other parts of protection system (services)
Examples

- Italy
  - Coordination
  - Training
  - Dissemination.

- Brazil
  - remote support – achievements and risks
  - Community mobilization
MHPSS & COVID-19 Toolkit

- 348 resources in total (without duplicates).
- 23 resources updated since version 1.0.
- 229 new resources since version 1.0.
- 46 resources have been translated into 99 languages.
MHPSS & COVID-19 Toolkit

- Featured Resources: 11
- IASC Resources: 13
- Considerations around Loss, Mourning and Burial Practices: 11
- MHPSS in COVID-19 Country Response Plans: 30
- Remote MHPSS Support: 20
- Dealing with Mental Health Conditions and other MHPSS Interventions in COVID-19: 49
- Human Rights and Stigma in COVID-19: 20
- Risk Communication and Community Engagement in COVID-19: 24

- Isolation and Quarantine in COVID-19: 13
- COVID-19 & Useful Infographics or Storybooks: 16
- Front-line health care workers in COVID-19: 23
- Support for Children and Adolescents in COVID-19: 26
- Child and Adolescent Protection in COVID-19: 31
- Education in COVID-19: 17
- Migrant, Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons in COVID-19: 17
- COVID-19 & Gender: 21
- COVID-19 & Persons with Disabilities: 12
- COVID-19 & Older Population: 10
What about this as a TWG activity?
Where do we go from here?

• Continue facilitating conversations – within the next two weeks

• Please share in the chatbox:
  • What are your priorities for future sessions?

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