

*COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH  
DURING COVID 19 AND BEYOND*

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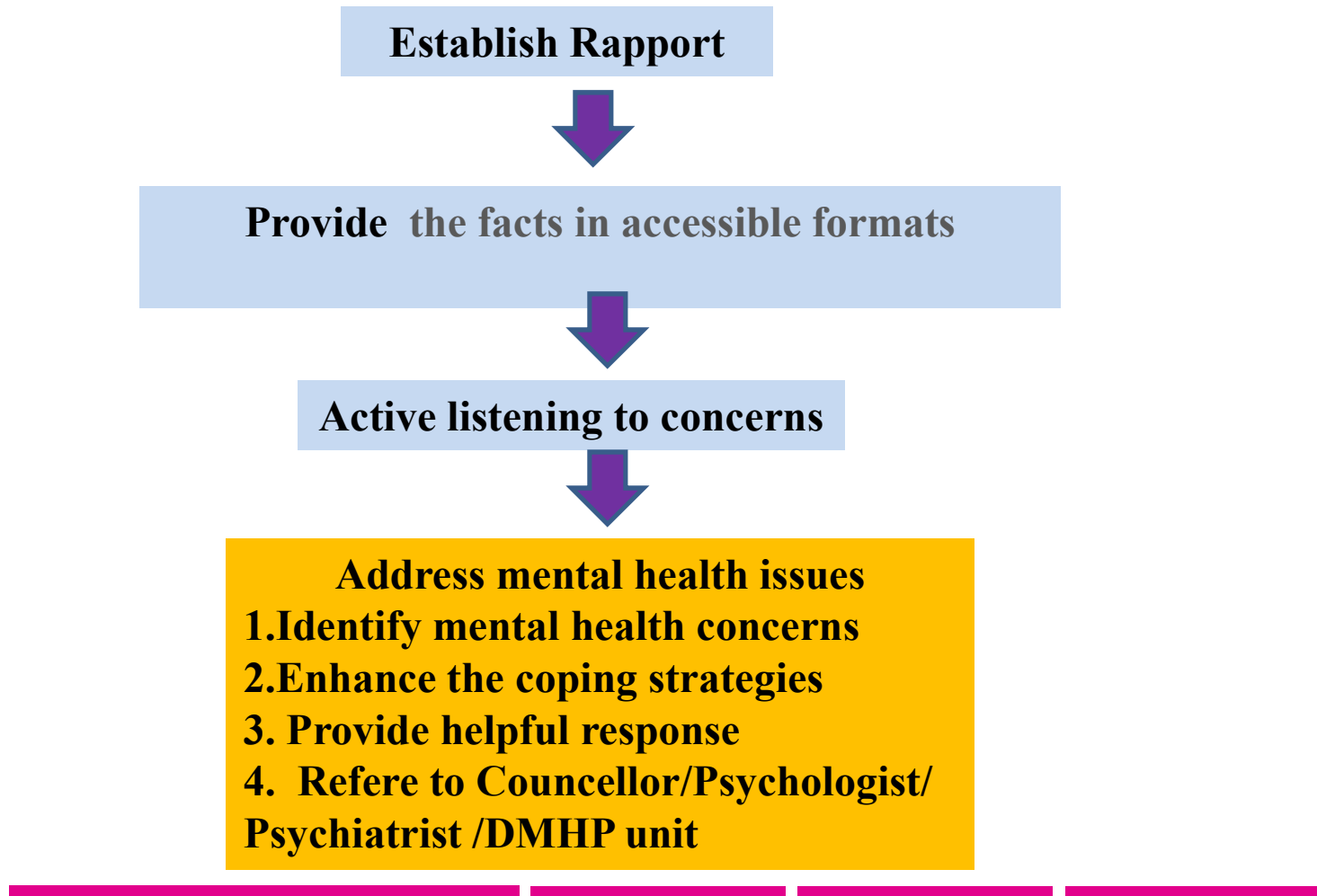
# Psychosocial stressors and COVID-19

**It is common and normal for individuals to feel stressed and worried in response to any disease outbreak.**

**Specific stressors particular to the COVID-19 pandemic are:**

- **Uncertainty about course of disease, severity, outcome etc**
- **Rumors and misinformation (social media)**
- **Closure of schools and children's activity spaces**
- **Travel restrictions**
- **Possibility of or actual physical isolation and quarantine**
- **Deterioration of trust in government agencies and social networks**
- **Avoidance of health facilities**
- **Risk of relapse in pre-existing health conditions (including mental health)**
- **Common symptoms of other health problems can lead to fear of infection.**

# Role of field Volunteer in addressing mental stress



# Why Psychological First Aid?

- **Psychological First Aid (PFA)** provides **emotional** and practical support to individuals, families or communities who are having difficulty coping.

# Psychological first aid

Provide psychological first aid to others who may be experiencing loss or grief after a trauma.

- **Loss:** Loss comes in many forms.
  - It may be the death of a family member, friend, or pet, or the loss of a home, job, sentimental items, way of life, or a community.
- **Grief:** When responding to people who are grieving, be sure to do the following:
  - Reassure them that what they are feeling is to be expected.
  - Avoid defining what they should be feeling or doing.
  - There is no right way to grieve & There is no timetable for grieving
  - Avoid making judgments.
  - A person who is grieving may display strong emotions or no emotions at all.
  - Do not take others' emotions personally.
  - Allow people time to process their emotions.
  - Pressuring them to move on will not help.
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# Look, Listen, Link and Live

- **Look** for common signs which indicates stress
- - Physical ( Stomach ache, tiredness )
- - Mental ( difficulty concentrating, irritability )
- - Emotional ( Anxiety )
- - Spiritual ( Loss of faith)
- -Behavioral (recklessness, increased use of alcohol or drugs)
- Interpersonal (withdrawn or in conflict with others)
- Signs of distress (uncontrollable sobbing, inability to care for basic needs, silence, delusions).
- Nonverbal signs of communication.
- Basic needs covered.
- Signs of violence.
- Those requiring special attention.
- Resiliency.

# Listen

Approach people and ask them about their needs and concerns to determine what kind of support they may need.

- Ensure you carry out the following principles when listening to others:
- **Be calm: When approaching someone, be sure you are calm.**
- **Be open: When asking if you can help, be open to listening to the person's experience.**
- Acknowledge feelings
- Make no assumptions: Check your understanding as well as supporting and empowering others by providing accurate information, acknowledging their journey, and encouraging healthy coping strategies and decision-making.

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# Listen..

## **Listening Tips:**

- Be present and respectful.
- Be compassionate, Offer words of encouragement
- Promote - kindness, solidarity,
- Allay anxiety and create awareness
- Avoid using words like COVID-19 cases, victims, transmitters and suspects
- Consider the person's age, gender, cultural background, etc.
- Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Leave space for silence.
- Empathize.
- Be aware of tone and inflection of voice



# Link

- Your goal is to empower someone to link into their self care plan or another resource if they are unable to.
- Relationships: Healthy relationships with family, friends, Elders and/or colleagues (a mentor).
- Community: Neighborhood, club, workplace, or volunteer organizations.
- Culture and Society: Cultural tradition , societal systems in place to protect you.
- Be prepared and know in advance where and how to get practical help if needed, such as calling a ambulance, having food delivered , Mental health professional , requesting medical care.
- You should learn about the resources that are available and the referral information in your community. PHC / CHC / District level referral
- You have a legal obligation to report if someone is at risk of harm (from themselves or others) and get the person appropriate support.
- Emergency medical services / Help Line numbers (**Mansmvad 18001800018, GOI – NIMHANS -08046110007**)

# Live with coping strategies in place so you can continue living!

Strategies include:

- Taking breaks.
- Developing realistic work expectations.
- Maintaining healthy habits (eating, sleeping, exercising).
- Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol or other drugs
- Practicing stress management techniques ( walk / indoor games/ music / recreational activities /Deep breathing or mindfulness).
- Asking for help if you need it.

# Messages need to be given to carers children

1. Let children express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
2. Avoid separating children and their caregivers as much as possible.
3. Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible, or create new routines, especially if children must stay at home.  
Provide engaging age-appropriate activities for children, including activities for their learning.

**Thank You**

