

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

No.Health.99/2020/109,

Dated Shillong, the 21st September, 2020.

ORDER

The Positive Psychology Protocol for COVID – 19: Guidelines for upkeep of mental health of people under quarantine/isolation is issued for information and compliance of all concerned.

In view of the COVID-19 Pandemic situation in Meghalaya, an increasing number of persons are required to be quarantined/isolated in order to contain the spread of the virus. This entails feelings of solitude, loneliness, anxiety, depression and other forms of psychological issues in a person. To address these issues, the Government of Meghalaya has brought out the Positive Psychology Protocol for those affected by COVID-19.

The issue is currently being addressed by Psycho Social Support Units that are active in all districts. They cater to the mental health issues faced by persons under quarantine/isolation through on-call services. The unit also provides consultations for clinical psychology as well as counselling services and are currently checking on every person who are under quarantine/isolation.

However, a Positive Psychology Protocol is the need of the hour to ensure that people under home/institutional quarantine/isolation are educated and sensitized about common mental health issues so that they can seek assistance as and when needed.

Counselling guidelines for people managing Institutional Quarantine/Isolation

1. Persons under quarantine/isolation are to be mandatorily briefed about the duration of their quarantine/isolation period on arrival at the Institutional centre.
2. Every person should be made aware of a dedicated active helpline number (108) that they can call to seek counselling support whenever they feel stressed or distressed while under quarantine/isolation. These helpline numbers are to be put up in every quarantine/isolation rooms as well as at the entrance of the institutional centre. Numbers that provide dedicated telemedicine facilities should also be made known to the people and put up.
3. Persons under quarantine/isolation are to mandatorily download the Behavioural Change Management App on their smart phones through this link-
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.peace.nhm.contentdelivery&hl=en>
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4. Doctors/healthcare workers are to ensure that queries of people pertaining to their test reports, duration of quarantine and any other information related to COVID-19 are answered during their regular rounds.
5. A case history of each person pertaining to previous mental health issues should be taken. Measures should be taken to ensure that patients with mental health history receive their regular medication to prevent relapse.
6. All persons in quarantine or isolation should be contacted on a daily basis - Psycho Social Support teams should make the first call when in need and at least once in three days to everyone. IVRS team should call everyone on a daily basis.
7. Daily documentation of stigma, stress, distress, anxiety, sleep impairment, depression etc., and other psychiatric issues and number of calls received in the helpline number provided is to be maintained.
8. Prescription of necessary mental health drugs through nearby PHC doctors and distribution medicines through health workers to the ones that need it.

9. Encourage people under quarantine/isolation to keep themselves engaged through various activities as listed down in **ANNEXURE 1**.
10. It is to be ensured that all persons under isolation/quarantine are encouraged to fill up the checklist given at **ANNEXURE 2** (either in hard copy handouts or through the Behavioural Change Management App) and check their score as indicated.
11. Successful recovery stories of people from within the State to be printed in English and other local languages and pasted at the institutional centres.
12. Personal Diaries with activities given under Annexure 1 is to be printed and handed over to each person under quarantine/isolation. Extra pages is to be included in the diary to allow them to record their feelings every day.
13. It is recommended that district hospital mental health teams and medical college mental health teams are to make periodical action plans regarding the activities to improve mental health for people under home and institutional quarantine/isolation.
14. Ensure proper counselling of persons during their discharge after completion of quarantine/isolation from institutional centres.

Sd/-

(Sampath Kumar, IAS)

Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya,
Health & Family Welfare Department

Memo No. Health.99/2020/109-A,

Dated Shillong, the 21st September, 2020.

Copy to :-

1. The Secretary to the Governor of Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of Governor
2. The Private Secretary to Chief Minister, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of Chief Minister.
3. The Private Secretary to Deputy Chief Minister, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of Deputy Chief Minister.
4. The Private Secretary to Health Minister, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of Minister.
5. Private Secretaries to all Ministers, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind of Minister.
6. Private Secretary to Chief Secretary for kind information of the Chief Secretary.
7. The Additional Chief Secretaries/ Principal Secretaries/ Commissioners & Secretaries/ Secretaries of all the Department, Government of Meghalaya.
8. Director of Health Services (MI)/(MCH & FW)/(Research), Meghalaya, Shillong.
9. Director of Information & Public Relation for wide circulation in the Print/Electronic media of the State.
10. The Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong
11. Deputy Commissioners, East Khasi Hills, Shillong/ West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin/Ri Bhoi District, Nongpoh / West Jaintia Hills District, Jowai / West Garo Hills District, Tura / East Garo Hills District, Williamnagar / South Garo Hills District, Baghmara/North Garo Hills, Resubelpara/South West Garo Hills, Ampati/East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat/ South West Khasi Hills, Mawkyrwat.
12. Joint Director of Health Services (MCH & FW) I/c IDSP, Meghalaya, Shillong.
13. District Medical & Health Officer, East Khasi Hills, Shillong/ West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin/Ri Bhoi District, Nongpoh / West Jaintia Hills District, Jowai / West Garo Hills District, Tura / East Garo Hills District, Williamnagar / South Garo Hills District, Baghmara/North Garo Hills, Resubelpara/South West Garo Hills, Ampati/East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat/ South West Khasi Hills, Mawkyrwat.

By Orders, etc.


Joint Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya,
Health & Family Welfare Department

ANNEXURE 1: Daily activities that a person under quarantine/isolation can engage in when at the institutional centres

1. **Stay hydrated:** Remember to drink not less than 2 litres of water every day. This can be done at regular intervals.
2. **Reduce your social media time:** It is important to limit your time on social media as much as possible (preferably one hour per day). Use your quarantine/isolation period as an opportunity to take care of yourself. Rely only on authentic sources of information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some credible websites that you can follow for authentic information on COVID-19 are-
 - a. <http://nhmmeghalaya.nic.in/>
 - b. <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>
 - c. <https://www.who.int/>
 - d. <https://www.cdc.gov/>
 - e. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/india>
3. **Download the Behavioural Change Management App** to ensure that you are updated with latest protocols pertaining to COVID-19. The same can be downloaded by following this link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.peace.nhm.contentdelivery&hl=en>
4. **Practising Sleep Hygiene:** Potential sleep hygiene factors include bedtime, night time rituals, and disruptions to one's sleep. These are typically represented by simple guidelines meant to effectively promote a good night's rest. Some habits that can improve your sleep health:
 - a. Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends
 - b. Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smart phones, from your sleeping area.
 - c. Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
 - d. Get some exercise (only if your body allows it. Do not exert yourself). Deep breathing techniques can also be practised (Given in the next point).
5. **Meditation to practice mindfulness as part of your quarantine/isolation period:** This exercise teaches basic mindfulness meditation:
 - a. Sit on a straight-backed chair or cross-legged on the floor/bed.
 - b. Focus on an aspect of your breathing, such as the sensations of air flowing into your nostrils and out of your mouth, or your belly rising and falling as you inhale and exhale.
 - c. Once you've narrowed your concentration in this way, begin to widen your focus. Become aware of sounds, sensations, and ideas.
 - d. Embrace and consider each thought or sensation without judging it good or bad. If your mind starts to race, return your focus to your breathing. Then expand your awareness again.
 - e. Most people find that it takes at least 20 minutes for the mind to begin to settle, so this is a reasonable way to start. This practice is recommended for at least an hour.
 - f. Further instructions for when and how to use various forms of meditations are described in detail in The Mindfulness Solution which can be reached by following this link- <https://mindfulness-solution.com/downloadmeditations/>
6. **Maintain a diary or express your feelings:** Maintain a diary to record your feelings every day during the quarantine/isolation period. If you cannot write, talk to a closed one/caregiver/counsellor about your feelings. Alternatively, you can also maintain a **Gratitude Journal** in which you regularly write down things for which you're grateful.

In a gratitude journal, for example, document your gratitude for a beautiful scenic view, an uplifting conversation, a heartfelt compliment from a friend, a book you loved, a challenging game where you performed well, a kind word from a stranger, an event at work, a treasured possession—whatever occurs to you.

7. **Fill up a checklist everyday and score yourself** based on your activities during quarantine period. The scoring basis is given in ANNEXURE 2.

Given below are additional tasks that a person under quarantine/isolation can engage in:

1. **Practicing Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is the experience of being aware of what you are doing while you are doing it. It emphasises on being around in the present moment and not thinking about the past or the future. Here are some YouTube video links that will guide you into practicing mindfulness-
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2zdUXve6fQ>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p_yaNFSYao
 - The Honest Guys - Meditations - Relaxation:<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4jWo5kiyOCt4PnvF4jbaLg>
 - Heartfulness practice:<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoG2o8WtvYh8sCS40pUFtCg>
2. **Read/Watch about people who have recovered from COVID-19:** Be sure to fill yourself with positive information by watching/reading about testimonials from COVID-19 recovered persons from the State and how they coped with the virus and spent their isolation period. Some testimonials of COVID-19 recovered persons can be found by visiting the following links:
 - *An inspiring covid-19 survivor's story from Meghalaya:* https://www.facebook.com/107907414225784/videos/589534015269881/?_so=_channel_tab&_rv=_all_videos_card (English) <https://www.facebook.com/MeghCovid/videos/718982012262227/> (With Garo Subtitles)
 - *An inspiring story of recovery of a covid-19 survivor from Pomlakrai village in Meghalaya:* https://www.facebook.com/107907414225784/videos/2778647475577125/?_so=_channel_tab&_rv=_all_videos_card (English subtitles and Khasi audio)
 - *If you are a pregnant woman and anxious during your quarantine/isolation period, try visiting these websites:* <https://www.uchealth.org/today/story-of-giving-birth-while-covid-positive/> , <https://www.wbez.org/stories/im-bringing-a-baby-into-the-world-in-the-middle-of-a-pandemic/2dd9c33f-79cf-4ceb-ac97-90a0f72b2a90> , <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-52098036>
3. **Challenge yourself to acquire a new skill:** Quarantine/Isolation period can be the best period to learn a new skill. Here are the top 8 online platforms according to Google that you can explore: 1) *Skillshare*, 2) *LinkedIn Learning Ex Lynda*, 3) *MasterClass*, 4) *Udemy*, 5) *Edx.org*, 6) *Udacity.com*, 7) *Coursera.org*, 8) *Futurelearn.com*
4. **Online apps that will help you tide through your quarantine/isolation period by keeping you positive and grounded:** One can download Apps like 21 days challenge that sets everyday goals for a person to perform and also rewards them with coins for every completed challenge. It also has a Note feature where a person can create and save notes or the day.
 - Apps like *Calm*, *MyLife Meditation by Stop.Breathe.Think*, *Mindfulness App* can easily be downloaded by smartphone users induce mindfulness sessions as part of a person's daily life.

- For book lovers, apps like *audible app* can be downloaded for audio books and podcasts.
- You can also attempt to learn a local language (or any language for that matter) during the quarantine/isolation period.

****Do not hesitate to reach out for help:***In case you feel overly stressed or anxious, make sure to reach out for counselling support through the State helpline number (108) and always keep your caregiver, family, friends informed about yourself during the quarantine/isolation period.*

ANNEXURE 2: Checklist and Scoring guidelines for people under quarantine/isolation at institutional centres

<u>No.</u>	<u>Daily self-monitoring question</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>Award Points</u>
1	Did you drink at least 8 glasses of water today?	Yes/No	10/0
2	Were you able to maintain the one hour time limit for social media today?	Yes/No	10/0
3	Did you fill the checklist given in the Behavioural Change Management App today?	Yes/No	10/0
4	Did you practice sleep hygiene today?	Yes/No	10/0
5	Did you practice mindfulness today for at least one to two hours?	Yes/No	10/0
6	Did you record your feelings in your diary today?	Yes/No	10/0
7	Did you watch any of the mindfulness video links provided in the list above in the past two days?	Yes/No	10/0
8	Did you reach/watch about people who recovered from COVID-19 in the past two days?	Yes/No	10/0
9	Have you challenged yourself to learn something new yet?	Yes/No	10/0
10	Do you feel alright without any counselling support today?	Yes/No	10/0

A score equal to or above 70 should be an indication that you are holding up fine. Please do not hesitate to reach out for counselling support in case you feel the need to do so. Call 108 to avail counselling service. Stay in touch with your family and friends and use this quarantine/isolation period as an opportunity to take care of yourself.

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