

Overcoming Mental Health Challenges During Pandemic Crisis

Augustine Joseph Borge, *Spicer Adventist University*

Bolt from the blue! We all remember the first lockdown on Sunday, March 22, 2020. We were advised not to step outside unless necessary. No one imagines staying indoors for an entire day unless someone is sick, but now we were in a condition where we had to maintain lockdown to prevent the spread of the novel Coronavirus; as predicted, we would be exposed to the virus if not cautious. Isn't this something that caught everyone off guard?

People were unaware that the country would be put on lockdown for days at a time. Corporate sectors had to retort that working from home was a radical concept for those who were not tech-savvy. The challenging situation made them feel uncomfortable. During the same time, many people lost their jobs. Schools, colleges, and universities were closed, and students were eventually forced to take online classes. People around the world suffered, in different ways, of course. Nonetheless, pain is a pain! This had a detrimental effect on our mental, emotional, financial, and physical health. Hence, this article discusses mental health and overcoming challenges associated with it.

World Health Organization describes mental health as “a condition of well-being in which a person understands their abilities, cope with the usual stresses of life, work productively, and is able to contribute to their community” (World Health Organization, 2018). It is an essential part of overall health. According to the World Health Organization, the absence of disease or incapacity is simply one aspect of health and physical, mental, and social well-being (Reid, 2020; World Health Organization). This definition implies that mental health is more than just the absence of mental diseases or disabilities.

Every year on October 10th, World Mental Health Day is observed to raise awareness about the importance of mental health (DiversityQ, 2018). On this day, people hope to bring attention to and organize support for mental health challenges worldwide. This Day allows all parties involved in mental health issues to discuss their work and what remains to be improved to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide (Optiva Media, 2021).

Infectious outbreaks such as Coronavirus can be devastating and affect our mental health. It is essential to stay informed; nonetheless, it is imperative to take care of our mental health and well-being. After living through a pandemic, people tend to feel anxious, fed up, or depressed. People may have experienced unemployment, loneliness, bereavement, relationship issues, relationship stress, and difficulty living normally. On the contrary, some people have enjoyed their life or spend more time with family visiting outdoors; life seems mundane and lacklustre for some people.

Here are a few tips to enhance Mental Health during the pandemic:

1. Take good care of your physical health by:

- a. *Keep enough prescribed medicine*
- b. *Go for routine checks or scans*

- c. *Eat a healthy & balanced diet (this can enhance your mood)*
 - d. *Drink enough water*
 - e. *Exercise, walk, jog for at least 30 – 40 minutes a day.*
 - f. *Sleep well*
2. **Verify news & Information** – Do not believe any information unless you verify every news or information source.
 3. **Stay connected** - Try to stay in touch with your friends or relatives through messages, calls, video calls, etc.
 4. **Try not to overthink** – Make sure you do not stress yourself over petty things, take one day at a time.
 5. **Stay positive** – One must be optimistic. Being a pessimist will not make things easier; instead, anticipate happiness, work toward it, and remember the light is at the end of the road.

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