PRACTICAL HYGIENE MEASURES FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) FOCUSED NON-SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR WOMEN & GIRLS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OUTBREAK MIGHT RESULT IN EMERGING IMPACTS ON GENDER; THESE INCLUDE:

1. Increased burden of women and girls' unpaid domestic and care work; in some cases, used more than once or for prolonged periods of time and when discarded inappropriately, they can present more harm than protection.

2. Increasing GBV and protectionlessness particularly women and girls who are at-risk and/or survivors of GBV at their household or in the case of a survivor being trapped in lockdown/self-isolation with their abuser where due to heightened tensions in the household, intimate partner violence (IPV) is increased. Life-saving care and support to GBV survivors (including case management and clinical management of rape) may be disrupted.

3. Interrupted access to sexual and reproductive health; women and girls access to reproductive health services may be disrupted to contain the outbreak; placing pregnant and lactating women at greater risk – including limiting their access to pre- and post-natal healthcare services.

4. Stigmatization of women and girls reporting symptoms or seeking care.

5. Disrupted to contain the outbreak; placing pregnant and lactating women at greater risk – including limiting their access to pre- and post-natal healthcare services.

Guidelines for PSS Focused Sessions within the WGSS are as follows:

- Avoid stigma and preserve protection spaces for participants, don’t attach to the illness to someone’s living area, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- Ensure confidentiality for participants that disclose health issues.
- Respect the participants’ decision not to participate in the sessions.
- Reduce number of participants in one meeting according to the size of the room. Make sure 1 meter distance is kept between one person and another. Do not exceed maximum of 10 participants.
- Seating arrangements are set to ensure distance between participants of at least 1 meter.
- Avoid distribution of handouts or materials for activities.
- Visual and audio alternative materials to be used (e.g. videos, sound, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)
- Limit role-play and avoid physical interaction.
- Avoid handsetaking and any other form of physical contact during greetings.
- Facilitator to maintain a safe distance from participants.
- Facilitator and all participants recommended to wash their hands with water and soap before the start of any session.
- Ensure proper preparation of the activity room before and after the session (cleaning, sanitizing, and defocing of the area).
- Ensure the availability of dispensers of alcohol-based hand sanitizers around the venue.
- Recommend participants with similar symptoms to wear face-masks during the session.
- Ensure non-discriminatory behavior: not everyone with flu symptoms necessarily has Covid-19.
- Let’s be kind, together we can fight COVID-19.

The various services at the WGSS are:
- Social support.
- Holistic multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary GBV services (psychosocial, legal, case management, and safe referrals).

The various services at the WGS are:
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- Holistic multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary GBV services (psychosocial, legal, case management, and safe referrals).

Following the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, it is strongly advisable and vital to continue providing access to WGSS to ensure continuation of case management of high-risk cases, individual counseling and formal support interventions geared towards strengthening the support between the individual and the social environment. The support is offered by trained service providers that focus on the individuals’ cognitive, affective, and social needs. Example of focused PSS includes: Basic Livelihoods training for women and girls that include a cycle of 10 sessions.

5 STEPS TO COPE WITH THE STRESS LINKED TO COVID-19

1. Identify the worry you feel is personal to you and seek information only from reliable sources. Check @mophleb @wholeb @UNICEFLebanon.

2. Set a daily routine that includes activities that you enjoy or find relaxing (such as reading, praying, family games, slow-breathing, walking-with friends through phone).

3. Talk to trusted others about any distressing thoughts or feelings you might have.

4. Maintain a healthy diet, proper sleep and regular physical activity. Even walking 15-30 minutes daily at home can make a difference.

5. Don’t react to peoples’ stigmatizing language, such as attributing to the illness to a person’s country of origin, living area, religion, profession, etc.

Cor: 1214 MOPH hotline for clarification about COVID-19
1564 “Embrace Lifeline” – The National emotional support and suicide prevention hotline, if you feel severely distressed (from 12:00pm to 5:30 am)