

No Need to Panic: Mental Health Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic

How did this all start?

COVID-19 is a virus that can lead to lung infection. The World Health Organization announced a *pandemic* in January 2020, due to the high number of COVID-19 cases around the world. Wuhan, China had the first case of COVID-19. Shortly after this first case, Singapore increased their public health warning to the highest level. This was the start of widespread fears about the virus.

During a pandemic, it is common to see more mental health concerns. You might have new feelings of worry, stress or thoughts of self-harm. These emotional responses to world-wide outbreaks are often caused by fears about the disease spreading, illness, or death. For people who already have mental health concerns, their symptoms may become worse. For those who lose a loved one to the disease, they may feel sad, confused and angry.



Healthcare workers also have a very high chance of developing mental health problems during a pandemic. They may worry about working in close contact with infected people, and spreading sickness to their own family members.

So what should we do?

There are no global standards or recommendations to guide mental health support for the public or healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Standards are important to make sure:

- people are getting the best type of care
- time and money for healthcare is being used properly

The Singapore government created advice to help guide mental health support during the outbreak. The advice below was created using proven and accurate information:

- Identify people at high-risk for mental health troubles
- Improve screening and testing for mental health illness
- Use of video meetings or phone applications to provide mental health services
- Increase support for healthcare workers
- Provide correct and timely information to the public
- Help hospitals and communities to work together and share resources

The Singapore government suggests countries around the world can use these ideas to help plan better mental health services. Mental health doctors, governments and hospitals will play an important role in putting these recommendations into action.

Where do we go from here?

It is important to think about [how the COVID-19 outbreak will affect mental health now, and in the months to come](#). Hospital and community services need to [work together to help communities cope](#) with their fears about this outbreak. This is essential to help people get through this pandemic and be healthier in the future.

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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alankohll/2018/11/27/how-to-create-a-workplace-that-supports-mental-health/#710b16badda7>

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