



TRAINING PRESENTATION ON

Combating Stigma Related to COVID-19 to Assist Counsellors



Presentation structure

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and discrimination

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Who are at risk of
stigmatisation
during COVID
outbreak

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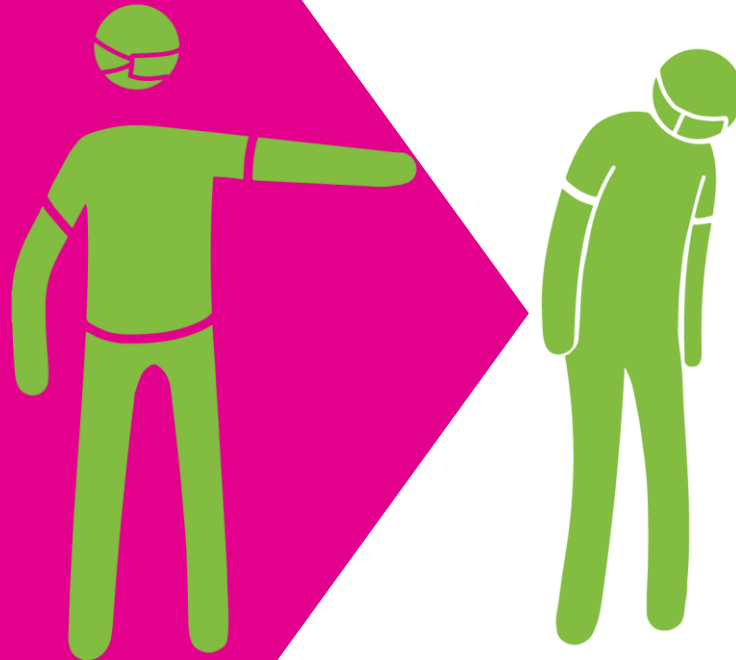
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What is stigma and discrimination

Social stigma is the negative association between a person/ group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease

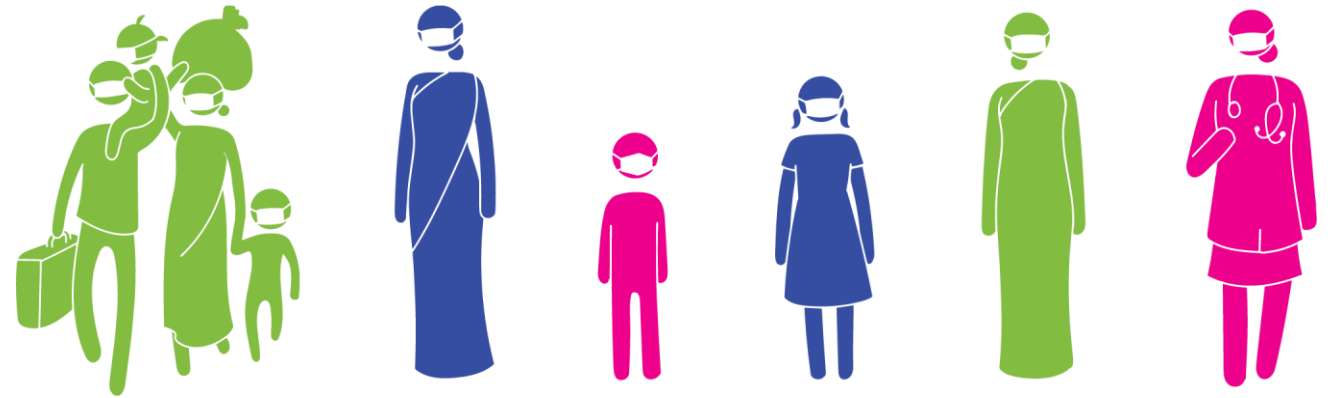


Involves any kind of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a person or a community based on a perceived link with a disease like novel Corona virus (nCoV) or COVID-19

Leads to discrimination, stereotyping, social isolation and separate treatment of people/ communities who are affected

Who are at risk of stigmatisation during COVID outbreak

Current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours. Stories of stigma and discrimination against people affected by COVID-19, health workers and essential service providers are being reported from across the country.



People worst hit by stigma include

People who have contracted the infection, their families/friends and anyone in contact with them

Communities and people who are stereotyped

Ethnic or minority communities

Women, sex workers, migrant labours and LGBT communities since they are mainly seen as powerless and hence fall easy prey to being oppressed

Service providers like FLWs (Healthcare and sanitation workers, NGO workers, police personnel)

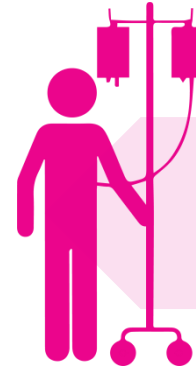
Stigma and discrimination among PLHIV

HIV is one of the most stigmatised public health concern

HIV infection is a lifelong condition. Nearly 86% of HIV transmission occur through the sexual route

Stigma stems from a society that is judgemental about sex and sexual practices

COVID-19 due to simple transmission is incremental on their health burden and aggravated stigmatisation of PLHIV



THEY MAY FACE

Heightened risk of severe physical health illness

Adverse effect on emotional and social well-being

Obstruction in the delivery of effective healthcare and access to HIV treatment

Key drivers of stigma during COVID-19



COVID-19 is a new virus and we are still learning... there are many unknowns

Fear and anxiety of unknown primarily leads people to stigmatise in outbreak situations

Information overload and myths

Therefore, the focus should be on reducing fear, through more awareness



Effects of stigma on managing COVID-19

Effects of stigma are debilitating, medically, socially and emotionally. It results in



Concealing symptoms, hesitancy in seeking medical care and adoption of protective behavior making outbreak management more difficult

This is particularly problematic for PLHIV who may not be able to access antiretroviral therapy (ART) and counselling services

Loss of status and negative impact on those with the disease, their caregivers, family, friends and communities

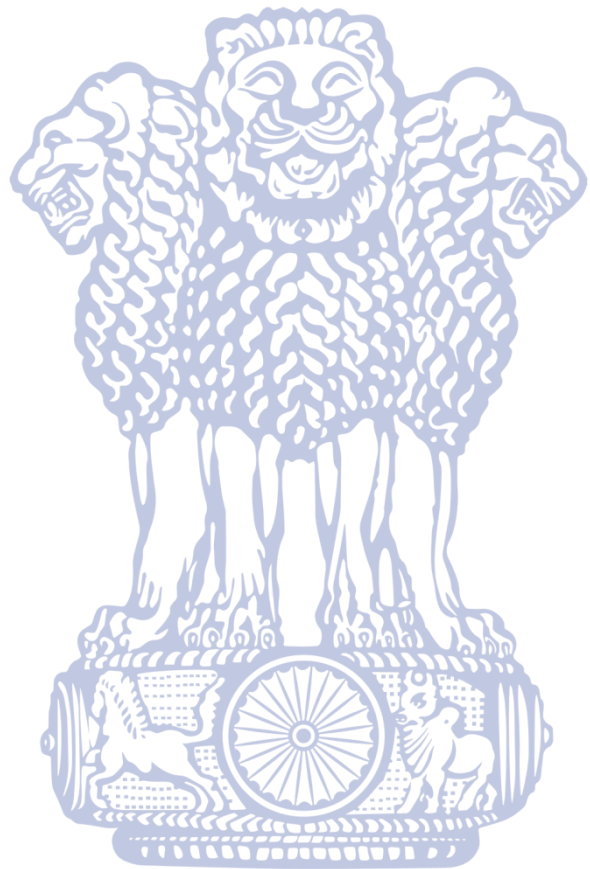
Increased sense of emotional isolation, feeling of guilt and anxiety

Lack of self-esteem and confidence

Ostracization of healthcare workers and others involved in COVID-19 management

Worsening of pre-existing psychiatric illness such as depression

Gol's efforts to address stigma and discrimination



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India is committed to fight stigma through its initiatives.

A National Campaign to address stigma and discrimination related to COVID-19 has been launched

Supporting development of strategy documents and guidelines for programme planners and implementers

The Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 amended to make any form of violence against or harassment of healthcare workers punishable by levying hefty fines and non-bailable punishments

Training and capacity building materials for service providers, caregivers and parents

Role of counsellors in addressing COVID-19 stigma



Counsellors responding to distress calls have a critical role in dealing with stigma. They can



Offer words of encouragement

Promote - kindness, solidarity, compassion

Allay anxiety and create awareness

Provide guidance on supportive interventions (e.g. refer to mental health helplines, share information on videos/resources available on MoHFW's website)

Choose words carefully while referring to those affected by COVID

Avoid using words like COVID-19 cases, victims, transmitters and suspects

Share key messages to prevent stigma

Messages effective in dealing with stigma

MESSAGE 1



Focus on the facts based on scientific evidence and latest official health advice



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after sneezing and coughing, touching surfaces, before and after meal



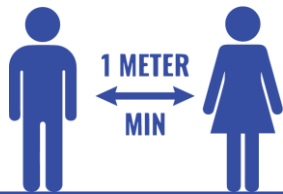
Cover your mouth with handkerchief/tissue while coughing and sneezing, wash used handkerchief thoroughly and dispose of tissue in a covered bin immediately after use



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth



Use mask while stepping out



Maintain at least 1 meter distance in market places, medical stores, hospitals, etc.



Avoid participating in large gatherings



Self monitor your health and contact a doctor immediately if you have cough, fever or breathing difficulty



If you have these signs/symptoms please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 24X7 helpline at 011-23978046

Messages effective in dealing with stigma

MESSAGE 2



Focus on positives

Emphasise the effectiveness of prevention and treatment measures like social distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette

80% of COVID-19 patients have mild symptoms and can be cured with supportive care and treatment

Share examples or stories where people affected with COVID are recovering.....with supportive treatment.

Focus on early reporting, testing and treatment, in case of symptoms. Guide for next steps and assure necessary infrastructure and services are available to support

MESSAGE 3



Anyone who does not take due precautions is at risk and can get infected. Do not label any persons, community or area for spread of COVID-19 as it will not help fight corona

Messages effective in dealing with stigma

MESSAGE 4



Dispel myths



COVID-19
IS NOT
transmitted through
houseflies



Adding pepper
to your soup or
other meals
DOES NOT
prevent or cure
COVID-19



Exposing yourself
to the sun or to
temperatures
higher than 25°C
degrees DOES
NOT prevent nor
cure COVID-19



Spraying or
introducing bleach or
another disinfectant
into your body WILL
NOT protect you
against COVID-19 and
can be dangerous



Currently no
licensed drug
is there for the
treatment or
prevention of
COVID-19



Drinking methanol,
ethanol or bleach
DOES NOT prevent
or cure COVID-19
and can be
extremely
dangerous

MESSAGE 5



Focus on what people can do to support each other like

Taking care of each other especially the
elderly and those with co-morbidities

Follow compassion, empathy, care,
comfort towards such people

Messages effective in dealing with stigma

MESSAGE 6



Appreciate frontline providers



Appreciate and celebrate the efforts of frontline providers (Doctors, nurses, paramedics sanitation and other essential workers) who are protecting our communities from COVID 19



Inform that health workers are being extensively trained to respond using all precautions

MESSAGE 7



Be a good listener when responding to those in stress and share

All available psychosocial resources and helplines - Mental health and Psychosocial support (NIMHANS-080 4611 0007) and Child Support (1098)

Encourage PLHIV to continue ART and access counselling services

Motivate them to engage in simple daily physical activities

#TogetherAgainstCOVID19

