



Psychological Coping during a Disease Outbreak

For families, friends, colleagues of those in
quarantine or self-isolation

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When quarantined or self-isolated it is normal to experience different emotions and reactions



Being worried about physical conditions, job, and future arrangements etc

Imagining the worst case scenario that could happen, which may lead to feeling surreal, restless and fearful



Feeling furious or anxious when freedom is suspended and restricted

Self-blame about previous behaviours which might have caused their own potential infection



Worrying about having infected others

Sense of loneliness and isolation due to limited interaction with others



Feeling annoyed and irritable

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What to do for those in quarantine or self-isolation



Dos

Pay attention to their health condition, physical and psychological changes. If having access to their doorstep, deliver something that meets their needs and surprises them.



Allow and accept emotional outbursts such as crying, yelling without minimizing the emotions. When listening you give them the possibility to understand their own feelings, thoughts and needs.



If there are signs that they are not able to control their normal sleep-wake routine, encourage them to schedule time to eat, exercise and sleep sufficiently. It is also important to encourage them to care for their personal hygiene.



Support them in maintaining and trying new pleasurable or relaxing activities. Encourage keeping active and stimulate the mind.



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What to do for others in quarantine or self-isolation



Dos



Keep in regularly contact via social networks, visual and/or phone calls. A digital presence is important to be and feel connected and avoid feelings of loneliness.



Smiling and laughing provide relief from anxiety and frustration. Introduce something happy or humorous to them.



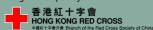
Information may be limited during a period of isolation. Make sure all advice and information given is reliable and updated.



Keeping updated, maintaining communication and daily conversations is a way of supporting. Welcome them warmly, when they come back to their workplace or usual surroundings.



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What not to do say to quarantined or self-isolated



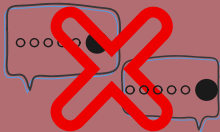
Don't



Don't talk about the isolation period saying thoughtless things such as, "You must be happy that you can take a lot of rest", or "I am jealous of you for not having to work hard during this time". Bear in mind that a period of isolation contributes to prevention of spreading of COVID-19.



Don't use terms as "COVID-19 cases", "victims" or "COVID-19 suspects". It is disrespectful and may without having the intention be hurtful or bring a feeling of alienation.



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If they don't feel well....



Recommend seeking medical advice by calling a doctor, a medical hotline or a consultation center.

If feeling ill, a poor health condition will be worrying for those in isolation. Fear could discourage them from seeking health care. Assist by accepting their anxiety whilst being firm in insisting they get medical advice.

Being and feeling supported is necessary for their next steps.

Resources :

Red Cross Society of China Hong Kong Branch (2020) Psychological Coping during Disease Outbreak -people who are being quarantined- IFRC PS Centre: Remote Psychological First Aid during the COVID-19 Outbreak.

British Red Cross (2020) Coronavirus: eight ways to be kind to your neighbours – and yourself

Samantha K Brooks, others (2020) The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence

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