



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE DURING COVID-19

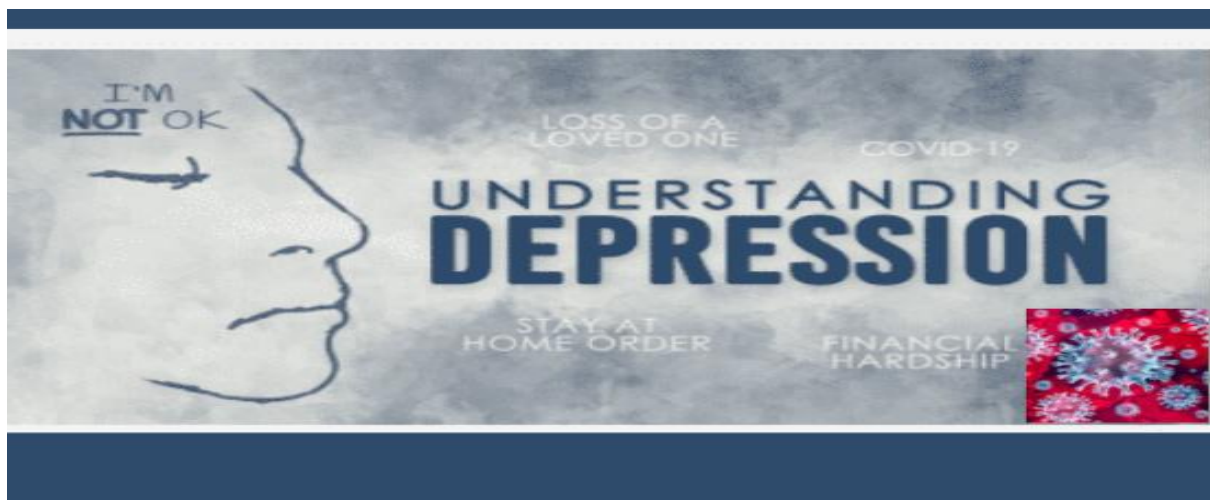
Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19, MCO and Mental Health

Fear and anxiety are natural responses to COVID-19. The contributing factors to these are a sense of uncontrollability and unpredictability. Research initiatives on the novel virus are still ongoing (e.g., the development of COVID-19 vaccine) and hence many of us may feel uncertain whether we can effectively save ourselves and our loved ones from the outbreak.

During this period of MCO, the majority of us were asked to socially distance ourselves (i.e., prevent us from interacting closely and frequently). Meanwhile, some of us are being quarantined (i.e., an act of separation and restriction of movement of an individual who has been exposed to the disease as a measure to see if they become sick), and/or being isolated (i.e., an act to separate people who are sick from those who are not). **Social distancing, quarantine and isolation may trigger different types of emotions such as worry, fear, anxiety, frustration, boredom, loneliness and anger. For example, we may feel uncertain and frustrated about how long we will need to remain in this situation.**



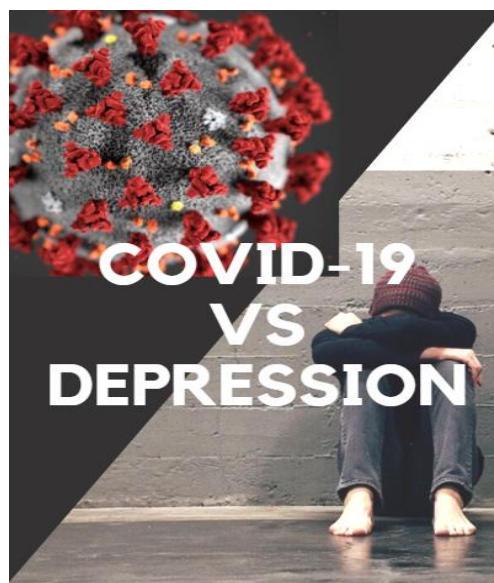
Apart from the above responses, the impact of COVID-19 and MCO may worsen when more intense psychological symptoms appear and the frequency becomes more consistent. Some of the symptoms are physiological in nature. Such conditions include headaches, body pain, stomach problems, poor sleeping patterns (i.e. too much or too little), and excessive crying. Other psychological symptoms may be talking less or avoiding others (i.e. even within the confines of social distancing); having difficulties concentrating; feeling confused, numb, helpless or depressed; feeling anxious or having panic attacks; feeling angry and having little patience; excessive eating, extreme intakes of alcohol, or taking prescribed drugs in excessiveness.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.


Maintaining Mental Health Using Cognitive Behavioural Approaches, Mindfulness and Spirituality

Today, in order to maintain and/or improve our mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, World Confederation of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies urged everyone to challenge unhelpful thoughts related to COVID-19 (e.g., negative predictions on the worst-case scenario) and take flexible, balanced perspectives, and long-term optimistic view about the situation.




Apart from the cognitive strategies, below are some of the behavioural strategies that are helpful to do:

HELPFUL STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN YOUR MENTAL HEALTH




1) MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Manage sleeping time, exercise at home, eat a balanced diet with regular mealtime, avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol, avoid doing something that we may regret later




2) DO YOUR ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

Engage in enjoyable activities that make us feel pleasant every day (e.g., watching movies, cook a nice meal, and gardening);




3) GATHER FACTUAL INFORMATION AVOID BAD MEDIA

Gather correct information from credible sources to help you accurately determine your risk and take reasonable precautions.



5) MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS

Long diaphragmatic breathing that may calm our sympathetic nervous system and progressive muscular relaxations that may relieve our physical stress and tension



2) ENGAGE IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

eg: How to reduce procrastination while working from home

Therapy

Mindfulness and meditation are interconnected with spirituality. This is evident in many eastern traditions and Abrahamic religions. As COVID-19 may trigger a lot of boredom, suffering and grieving; returning to the foundation of human existence (i.e., spirituality) is worth to be considered. Spirituality is ‘that aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred’. Substantial empirical evidence has found that spirituality is significantly associated with better mental health. Looking at the current situation of COVID-19 and the lockdown that is taking place, returning to the significant, sacred, divine being or our Creator may offer us some relief

Impact on Aviation Industry / Safety Challenge

The COVID-19 has triggered many challenges for the aviation industry. These challenges may impose potential risks to flight operations. Below are some examples of the challenges:

<p>01 Changes to the normal operations/kind of flight undertaken (e.g.: carrying cargo in passenger aircraft, flying almost empty aircraft, etc.)</p>	<p>02 Operating with new public health requirements e.g.: wearing masks and personal protective equipment (PPE)</p>	<p>03 Human performance effect due to flight crew mental state associated with possible loss of job and other personal matters</p>
<p>04 Flight crew not able to maintain license validity and currency requirements</p>	<p>IMPACT ON AVIATION INDUSTRY / SAFETY CHALLENGE</p>	<p>05 Decrease flying skills after being inactive for a period of time</p>
<p>06 Technical issues as a result of aircraft being out of service for a long period</p>	<p>07 Health risk and the possibility of being infected with the virus</p>	<p>08 Adapting to operations under changed regulatory requirements (exemption).</p>

The list is on-exhaustive. It shows that the industry is currently facing an unimaginable and unprecedented number of challenges to continue its operation. To manage these challenges, we require unprecedented measures and options as well.

Galaxy Aerospace also have taken a few safety measures that are: -

1. Following SOP given by our government
2. Rotating staff (Work from home)
3. Training Guidance During Covid-19 (Ref Safety Memo in OA – (GAM-SME59DEC20)
4. HR memo on SOP & MCO updating.

