

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE POPULATION FOR EFFECTIVE ADAPTATION AGAINST PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCOMFORT GENERATED BY THE CORONAVIRUS-COVID 19

In the current context, the Official College of Psychology of Madrid, through its working group on medical and health emergencies, wishes to transmit a series of guidelines intended for the general population and population at risk, aimed at promoting adequate psychological adjustment.

However, due to the uncertainty caused by this type of situation, we must pay attention to care related to the prevention of transmission itself, such as hygiene measures, as well as care that has to do with emotional health with aim to reduce as far as possible alarm situations that affect citizens.

The evolution of the situation communicated through news and warnings, is not always done in the right way, either due to lack of rigor, due to the volume of information, or due to the way the information is provided. This can influence people's emotional state, leading to ineffective personal and social alert behaviors.

A — IF YOU ARE NOT ILL

But you feel a series of **intense and/or persistent emotions such as:**

- Nervousness, agitation or tension, feeling of imminent danger and / or panic
- Can't stop thinking about something other than illness or worry about getting sick
- You must constantly see and hear information about it
- You have difficulty concentrating or being interested in other matters
- You have trouble doing your daily tasks or doing your job adequately; fear paralyzes you and prevents you from going out
- You are on alert, analyze your bodily sensations and interpret them as symptoms of the disease, although the symptoms are normal

- You have trouble controlling your worry and constantly ask family members about their health, warning them of the serious dangers that run every time they leave the house
- You should constantly see / hear information about it
- You notice an increase in the heart rate, rapid breathing (hyperventilation), sweating, tremors without just cause
- You have trouble finding restful sleep

WE RECOMMEND YOU TO...

1. **Identify the thoughts that may be bothering you.** Thinking constantly about the disease can cause or worsen symptoms that increase your emotional distress
2. **Acknowledge and accept your emotions.** If necessary, share your situation with those closest to you to find the help and support you need
3. **Ask yourself: look for evidence of reality and reliable data.** Get to know the reliable facts and data provided by the official and scientific media and avoid information that does not come from these sources, avoid alarmist information and images
4. **Realistically inform your loved ones.** In the case of minors or particularly vulnerable people such as the elderly, do not lie to them and give them truthful explanations adapted to their level of understanding
5. **Avoid excessive information,** being constantly connected will not make you better informed and could increase your sense of risk and nervousness unnecessarily
6. **Compare the information you share.** If you use social media to educate yourself, try to do so with official sources

GUIDELINES AND SELF-CARE TASKS

- Keep an optimistic and objective attitude. You are strong and capable
- Adopt good hygiene and prevention habits that recommend the health authorities
- Avoid talking permanently on the subject
- Lean on your family and friends
- Help family and friends stay calm and think adaptively to each situation
- Access official sources and search for information verified by experts: Ministry of Health, Colleges of health professionals, Official organizations, WHO, etc
- Do not help spread false news and hoaxes. Do not fuel your fear or that of others
- Try to live a normal life and continue your routines

- Pay attention to rejection, stigma and / or discrimination behaviors. Fear can cause us to act impulsively, to reject or discriminate against certain people

B — IF YOU BELONG TO A POPULATION AT RISK AS INDICATED BY THE SANITARY AUTHORITIES

1. **Follow the recommendations and preventive measures** determined by the health authorities. Trust them because they know what to do. They have the knowledge and the means
2. **Realistically learn** and follow the emotional directives in Part A
3. **Don't trivialize your risk** to avoid being afraid or apprehensive about the disease
4. **Never increase** the real risk you run. Be careful without being alarmed
5. **If isolation is recommended**, keep in mind that this is a scenario that can lead to feelings of stress, anxiety, loneliness, frustration, boredom and / or of anger, as well as feelings of fear and hopelessness, the effects of which may last or appear even after confinement. Try to keep yourself busy and keep in touch with your loved ones
6. **Generate a daily routine and take advantage of it to do the things** you enjoy but which, generally due to lack of time, you cannot do (read books, watch movies, etc.)

C – IF YOU ARE ILL

Follow the previous recommendations and moreover:

1. **Manage your intrusive thoughts.**
2. **Don't worry unnecessarily.** Be realistic. The vast majority of people recover
3. **When you feel fear, count on an related experience and try to associate it.** If you can't then think about the number of illnesses you have successfully overcome in your life

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