

STAFF CONTINGENCY MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL



PURPOSE

In the wake of the threat of corona virus to South Africa, the President's has declared a national 'state of disaster' on Sunday, 15th March 2020.

The management team of Masimanyane Women's Rights International meet on Monday, March 16th 2020 to discuss the implications of this call on the organisation, our work and the staff involved.

As a response to the call for social distancing and isolation to prevent the spread of COVID-19, management has decided to request staff members to work from home.

Masimanyane is cognisant of the fact that violence against women and girls will not dissipate during social distancing / isolation but will in fact increase. While we will not have a physical presence at our 12 offices, we will continue to provide services using various media platforms.

This is introduced as a prevention measure in keeping to limiting contact between people or social distancing. In effect, the ordinary community counselling service rendition will be disrupted until further notice consistent with management decision to lock down non-essential aspects of our service.

This Staff Contingency Mental Health Protocol serves as an emergency response to mitigate the threat to staff health and wellbeing during the lock down period.

Various strategies are being offered to staff who will continue to support women. This will assist them to provide better support for their clients and assist with their own challenges in being isolated.

The key purpose of the telephonic supervision will be to protect the interests of service beneficiaries and promote safe and accountable practice.

PERSONS AFFECTED

This contingency protocol is applicable to all staff members who are employed by Masimanyane. Affected staff include, but is not limited to, programme managers, first responders, social workers, psychologists, professional counsellors, social auxiliary workers and lay counsellors.



CHANGES TO METHOD OF SUPERVISION

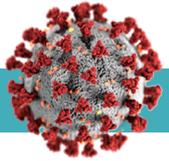
Due to the lock down of nonessential services, relevant staff will work from home and therefore, the staff's usual face-to-face supervision session will now be rendered as a telephonic service by a professional psychologist.

Supervision during this lock down period will happen at the request of a staff member. The staff member will send an SMS or WhatsApp message to their manager who currently acts as a health and safety officer for the team.

She/he will contact the supervising psychologist. The psychologist will then make contact with the staff member to set up an appropriate time for telephonic supervision and any necessary follow up support that may be required based on the case on call.

The HR Manager will be in contact with the supervising psychologist to alert her on the contents of this protocol.





STAFF CONTINGENCY MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL (CONT.)

COPING MECHANISMS FOR STRESS & ANXIETY

Several coping mechanisms have been identified and suggested to staff to assist them in preserving their mental health. Creating rituals and having set daily routines can help to preserve mental health and improve functioning:

- Listening to favourite music is a good way to incorporate downtime into a routine and can help to unclutter one's mind.
- Read good books: choose great books that will keep you engaged and take your mind away from the immediate environment into another world. Also get recommendations of good books from other people. There are different ways to access books other than print.
- Exercise is key to good mental health. Build into your routine a daily exercise regime which can include jogging or taking a leisurely stroll. Just doing exercise in a small space has a good effect on your body mind and spirit.
- Spending time in quiet contemplation or meditation for just ten minutes a day has proven to be excellent for stress reduction and mental wellbeing. Doing this before getting up for the day or just before sleeping will ensure good wellbeing.
- Even though everyone will be practising social distancing and isolation, conversations with a friend who you know will help replenish lost energy and provide different perspectives which can be helpful.
- Playing games with your children is a good opportunity to reconnect with those closest to us. You will learn from them and about them which will enrich your life and give them much joy. Such quality time

always proves to be a worthwhile investment.

- Practice deep work: as far as you can, create a distraction-free environment, a high level of concentration by single-tasking in order to maximize productivity and gain a sense of accomplishment once done.
- Envisioning: This is the space to think and dream and create a pathway for one's desired life, reviewing and refining vision maps or boards.
- Limit social media: social media are examples of shallow work as it offers little beneficial for the amount of time we spend on it and tends to be addictive.
- Embrace boredom: Hone your concentration skills and do not give in to distractions e.g. stop yourself from checking phone notifications every time there is a beep. Train your ability to resist distractions.
- Call your managers or a colleague if you find yourself struggling to cope with being in social isolation.

