

Indian Association of Clinical Psychologist (IACP)
Tele-counselling Instructions during Covid 19 for volunteers

Tele-counselling Instructions for volunteers, who are receiving the call from the public on behalf of IACP

Objective

The objective of this guideline is to give practical advice to the volunteers so that they can smoothly deliver the psychosocial support to the callers. These Instructions should be used in conjunction with the other Indian policies, procedures, personal data protection bill and mental health care act.

Core Instructions for Telephonic Counselling for COVID-19 related Psychological Issues

- 1. Voluntary Service-** All the volunteers to offer voluntary services to the callers over the helpline. Core Instructions for Telephonic Counselling for COVID-19
- 2. Ethics in Telephonic Counselling-** In telephonic counselling, all ethical and legal guidelines are applicable and remain similar to those practiced in the face to face/ In-person counselling sessions.
- 3. Active Listening-** All the volunteers must actively listen and understand the perspective and difficulties of the caller.
- 4. Information about COVID-19-** All the volunteers are required to know basic information about SARS-Cov-2 and the COVID-19.
- 5. Identification of Symptoms-** All the volunteers must be able to identify the symptoms of COVID-19 illness and offer them information about state or district helplines for COVID-19 set up by the government.
- 6. Assess your helping role–** Assess your role in the first few minutes of receiving the phone call– Whether [A] Information is needed about SARS-Cov-2 and COVID-19 Symptoms [B] information is required about State or District COVID-19 helplines [C] whether help is required for addressing mental health symptoms of fear, anxiety, panic, anger, sadness and the like
- 7. Assess Safety Concerns-** Assess whether there are concerns surrounding the safety of the caller [A] Neighbours or community members are troubling or threatening him or her because of suspected COVID-19 as they are home quarantined by the health department [B] they are being threatened or troubled ever after the self-quarantine period is over [C] the individual is reporting of ideas of self-harm.
- 8. Awareness about Information -** All the volunteers are to be well aware of [A] the information about State and District Helplines on COVID-19 set up by the government [B] State and District Police Helpline Numbers set-up for COVID-19 [C] Contact Telephone Numbers of Major State and District Government Hospitals.

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9. Assess your Position – If during the call you as a volunteering professional, you feel overwhelmed with the situation, please hand over the call to the senior professional or the team in-charge at the duty.

10. Accept the Situation- All volunteers to kindly remember that it is perfectly fine to feel overwhelmed at times during the process of offering telephonic counselling on a daily basis. At this time, a fellow professional or a senior professional can take the role of discharging your duties for some time.

11. Management of Expectations– All the volunteers to assess after a few minutes of listening to the caller, the expectations of the caller and respond appropriately within the guidelines of the telephonic counselling. If the caller is not seeking support with respect to psychological concerns and psychosocial support, then advise them accordingly to get in touch with other government helpline numbers.

12. Burnout- All the volunteers need to be aware that if they are finding it difficult on a given day to offer telephonic counselling services because they are experiencing stress, fatigue, tiredness or for any other reason, they can inform the senior professional or the team in charge about the same.

13. Self-Care- All the volunteers are advised to ensure that they are following self-care practices like sleeping for eight hours a day, having meals at regular intervals, following a consistent sleep-wake routine, a structure for the day, and spending time for relaxation and leisure time activities.

DO's to keep in mind for Telephonic Counselling Sessions

1. Introduction & Rapport Formation– Introduce yourself and the helpline in a polite and empathetic manner.

2. Identify Callers Language– Initiate and continue the conversation in the preferred language of the caller if possible.

3. Informed Consent– Take informed consent from the caller for counselling.

4. Socio-Demographic Information– Do Collect the socio-demographic information like name, age, gender, education, location.

5. Active Listening Skills- Basics are as follows: A] All the volunteers must actively listen and understand the perspective and difficulties of the caller [B] Ask Clarification Questions– It helps to become clear what is the concern shared [C] Paraphrasing- use paraphrasing skills to confirm that your understanding is the same as what is being meant by the caller [D] Verbal Responses & Cues– Yes, Hmm, okay, I can understand, I can see your position, alright and the like

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6. Assess your Helping Role – Assess your role in the first few minutes of receiving the phone call– Whether [A] Information is needed about SARS-Cov-2 and COVID-19 Symptoms [B] information is required about State or District COVID-19 helplines [C] whether help is needed for addressing mental health symptoms of fear, anxiety, panic, anger, sadness and the like

7. Assess Safety Concerns - Assess whether there are concerns surrounding safety of the caller [A] Neighbours or community members are troubling or threatening him or her because of suspected COVID-19 as they are home quarantined by the health department [B] they are being threatened or troubled ever after the self-quarantine period is over [C] the individual is reporting of ideas of self-harm.

8. Address Emotions and Distress – [A] Identify the distressing emotion like worry, fear, panic, anxiety, sadness and the like [B]-Psycho-educate them about the distressing emotions and the context in which these are emerging [C] Address the distress by application of psychological techniques like grounding techniques, ventilation of emotions, validation of emotional experiences, relaxation techniques, self-care during times of quarantine, problem solving, cognitive restructuring and the like. [D] If others, other than the caller, need help, then educate the caller how they can motivate the other person to seek help and also inform them about other helplines which offer help for specific issues like medical emergencies, domestic violence and the like.

9. Adhering to a routine in Lockdown: To suggest the callers to follow a daily routine during lockdown which includes adequate sleep of 7 to 8 hours, regular sleep-wake schedules, regular meal times, regular time for social interaction over digital platforms, regular time for engaging in office work digitally, daily exercises, yoga, and taking time for leisure time activities (reading books, listening music, watching movies).

10. Minimizing Consumption of News and Social Media: To advise the callers that they need to minimize consumption of news and content from social media, which adds to worries and anxiety about COVID-19.

11. Appreciation of Efforts: You can appreciate the caller about the efforts which they are taking in maintaining social distancing and following social isolation during the lockdown period.

12. Management of Expectations – All the volunteers to assess after a few minutes of listening to the caller, the expectations of the caller and respond appropriately within the guidelines of the telephonic counselling. If the caller is not seeking support with respect to psychological concerns and psychosocial support, then advise them accordingly to get in touch with other government helpline numbers.

13. Communicate Facts about COVID-19 - All the volunteers are required to know information about SARS-Cov-2 and the COVID-19. It is advised that you only provide

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evidence-based information about SARS-Cov-2, COVID-19, Social distancing, Quarantine and lockdown.

14. Ethics in Telephonic Counselling- You are required to follow all ethical and legal guidelines as applicable and practiced in face to face/in-person counselling sessions.

15. Burnout - All the volunteers need to be aware that if they are finding it difficult on a given day to offer telephonic counselling services because they are experiencing stress, fatigue, tiredness or for any other reason, they can inform the senior professional or the team in charge about the same.

DON'Ts to keep in mind for Telephonic Counselling Sessions

1. Personal Contact Details – The volunteers should not share the details of personal landline numbers, mobile numbers or emails of themselves or other professionals.

2. Use of Offensive Language – You should not use offensive or abusive language with any caller.

3. Do not offer Medical Advice – You should not give suggestions for treatments for medical disorders like diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular illness and the like. In addition, do not offer suggestions for medical treatments of mental health conditions as well. You can offer them helpline numbers of State and District helplines established by the government or state helpline numbers for ambulance and emergency services.

4. Call Recording – Do not record the conversation with the caller. If required, arrange a call back to the caller.

5. Incomplete or Misleading Information: The volunteers should not offer incomplete information or misleading information, if you do not know about a particular aspect being asked, then handover the telephonic counselling session to the senior professional or arrange for a call back for the caller.

6. False Reassurances: Do not offer false information, hope or reassurance to the caller. If you do not know about a particular aspect being asked, then handover the telephonic counselling session to the senior professional or arrange for a call back for the caller.

7. Assumptions: Do not be in a hurry to understand the caller and do not assume that you have understood the caller. Kindly use active listening skills to understand the difficulties, perceptions and the help needed by the caller. If you assume that you have understood, there is a danger that you would engage in premature problem-solving.

8. Advertisement: Do not advertise during the call about any other mental health service platforms or any mental health service which you or others may be delivered in either online or offline formats.

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There is google group for volunteers engaged in telephonic counselling through IACP's centralised number, they will receive an email from the group. It will be used to have a connect with the volunteers and share resources.

The Zonal Members of IACP EC will be the initial contact point for volunteer support, the details are follows-

North Zone: Ms Shweta Sharma- 9717722413, Mr Pradeep K. Gupta -7678425041

South Zone: Dr Srinivasan Jayaraman- 7339571880, Dr Sanjeev K. Gupta-9538142418

East Zone: Dr Preeti Gupta- 8709396119, Dr Jasobanta Mahapatra- 9437256903

West Zone: Dr Biswjit Dey- 7600492692, Dr Ajay K. Sharma- 9993974007

If you are not able to reach out to your zonal members, please reach out to IACP's All India EC Members as Follows-

Dr Vikas Sharma- 9868097964, Mr. Ashok Kumar Patel-8010754646

If zonal and All India representatives of your zone are not available and the issue is urgent, you can reach out to-

Dr Dherendra Kumar

President Elect-IACP

Chairperson-Tele-counselling Practice Guidelines Committee

Mob: 9811714071/ 7011841072

E-mail: dpsychologist@gmail.com/dr@psyindia.com

Disclaimer: These Instructions should be used in conjunction with the other Indian policies, procedures, personal data protection bill and mental health care act, and it is the responsibility of the volunteer to act in accordance with professional ethics and these laws. If the volunteer does not follow these, IACP will not be held responsible.

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Central Helpline Number for corona-virus: - +91-11-23978046

Helpline Numbers of States & Union Territories (UTs)

S. No	Name of the State	Helpline Nos.
1	Andhra Pradesh	0866-2410978
2	Arunachal Pradesh	9436055743
3	Assam	6913347770
4	Bihar	104
5	Chhattisgarh	104
6	Goa	104
7	Gujarat	104
8	Haryana	8558893911
9	Himachal Pradesh	104
10	Jharkhand	104
11	Karnataka	104
12	Kerala	0471-2552056
13	Madhya Pradesh	104
14	Maharashtra	020-26127394
15	Manipur	3852411668
16	Meghalaya	108
17	Mizoram	102
18	Nagaland	7005539653
19	Odisha	9439994859
20	Punjab	104
21	Rajasthan	0141-2225624
22	Sikkim	104
23	Tamil Nadu	044-29510500
24	Telangana	104
25	Tripura	0381-2315879
26	Uttarakhand	104
27	Uttar Pradesh	18001805145
28	West Bengal	1800313444222, 03323412600,
S. No	Name of Union Territory (UT)	Helpline Nos.
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	03192-232102
2	Chandigarh	9779558282
3	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	104
4	Delhi	011-22307145
5	Jammu & Kashmir	01912520982, 0194-2440283
6	Ladakh	01982256462
7	Lakshadweep	104
8	Puducherry	104