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NATIONAL YWCA NEWSLETTER

YWCA

THE *M* RECIPE

INTERVIEW *WITH* DR. DIVYA *IYER*

PRESIDENT'S *MESSAGE*

OH! PANDEMIC!

JANUARY 2021, VOL 1
MIRROR

YWCA OF INDIA
NATIONAL E-NEWSLETTER

ABOUT US

Young Women's Christian Association is a world wide movement that targets the empowerment of women, protection of their rights and building of leadership. It aims at advancing the physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual interests of young women. Mirror is a publication that intends to provide a space to bring out talent and express themselves with freedom at their own leisure and pleasure.

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Editor's Note

DR ANNIE THOMAS

We all know that due to the current COVID-19 situation, life has changed in many ways for most of us. With social distancing, we are less connected with our neighbours and our surrounding community more than ever. The negative news surrounding us can dampen our spirits and we are in need of good news stories, kindness, and positive vibes. We as YWCA members with a vision and mission are committed to support the community and take pride in ourselves on the positive contribution we make to the lives of all members of our community. We have the responsibility to concentrate on the areas of advocacy and action, as well as focus on human rights and women empowerment for social development.

As we all know, Government measures in response to the outbreak have included severe restrictions on movement and physical distance maintained. This will inevitably impact the way we engage with communities. YWCA volunteers can use WhatsApp groups to stay in touch with each other and other community members, allowing the sharing and gathering of information on key developments. We can start developing advocacy strategies that include issues such as human rights or gender discrimination and all sorts of violence in the society.

We need to think about strategic foresight as an alternative, in our work for ourselves and the communities. It's a way of thinking that envisions alternative futures to guide the decisions we make today. This can help us better anticipate possible circumstances in the future and adapt when those circumstances loom to threaten our ability to achieve our goals. For example, in the face of economic instability brought on by the pandemic, most of our income generating sources are at a standstill. So our vision may be financial sustainability or even just survival over the coming months and years. We as leaders need to develop scenarios to explore the future world in which our decisions will play out. Link our reflections about the future to actual decision-making and actions. Everything may change, or new normals may emerge and old certainties may not come back at all, even once COVID-19 is under control. So be ready to make changes based on what we learn.

National President's Message

DR SHAKUNTALA DAVID
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
YWCA OF INDIA

My Dear Y Sisters,
I place on record my greatest admiration and appreciation for the Editorial Board of Mirror for publishing the E-magazine after a long time. The efforts under the leadership of Dr. Annie and team have given us a platform to amplify our voices and thoughts that will resonate throughout the YWCA movement. My Congratulations to the Team!

As such a time as this!! The Pandemic has brought distraught to our lives in magnanimous proportions and we have lost many dear ones to COVID-19. 2020 has seen the demise of many YWCA leaders and it is indeed with a difficult time for most of us. But what's unique about COVID-19 is that everyone is touched by it in some capacity. In this moment, we need more social connection more than ever, even if we can't physically be in the same room with one another. When we look around us violence seems to be getting bad to worse every day and the worst part of it is that we are becoming immune to it. The shadow pandemic loomed as domestic violence intensified its grip on young women, women and girls who were being trapped at homes with their perpetrators. Sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women continue to occur on streets, in public spaces and online. This calls for collective efforts and resources to respond for immediate relief for these aspects of COVID-19 crisis. YWCA has presence pan India and we must be seen as proactive participants in the journey of eliminating violence at least in some areas.

One of our convention priorities – Creating Safe Spaces must become a reality of our work plan. I am glad that in some regions we have started talking about it in our regional committees. My request and expectation is that within the next financial year we must have developed and evolved our YWCA's into safe spaces for young women and women, both physically and virtually increases in generalized crime and violence and the intensified abuse that children will

have been exposed to during isolation. Hence we need to work on mid to long term plan of dealing with the distraught minds. This will have to be a continuing process, so lets adapt to the community needs and work forward.

The need for counseling is increasing at every age of life. Most of our local associations run counseling centers. It is time we revisit them both in terms of competence of the counselors and services provided – are they meeting the local needs! Let us utilize our spaces as shelter homes. Lets us have an economic recovery plan to provide livelihood support to women. They need to be as financially independent as they can be in these challenging times. Let us explore ways to address cyber bullying and attacks which is causing a great deal of negative impact on our youth.

We must focus on reviving local associations to be more proactive and resolve local issues, to consciously look at expanding membership especially young women and programs and encourage more people to be part of our journey. Perhaps established local associations can mentor GIF's and support them to increase their capacities. We cannot do everything therefore we must stay focused. Let us always be in communication as we move forward on a mission- A united response to face the crisis.

Let us rise and respond.

National General Secretary's Message

MS KALPANA DAVID
NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

The revival of the YWCA of India publications after more than a year is indeed a happy moment specially at a time when the movement has been relentlessly trying to reach out to women, youth and communities to help them in these unprecedented times.

The Covid19 pandemic has disrupted lives and livelihood. In spite of the monstrous effects of the pandemic, the society continues to be regressing at all levels. In matters pertaining to relations between men and women, this is visible in every sphere of life.

Religion is being used negatively and its effect is noticeable be it in politics, culture, business, higher education and even more serious problems of rapes. The Media plays a pivotal role as it possesses the ability to greatly influence and inform the masses and shape public perception through coverage of incidents. However, the objectivity and positivity in these reporting is lacking affecting the very fabric of the society, increasing the divide further.

At this juncture the YWCA has more responsibility to act and serve as a rallying point for women's movements around the country and in local settings create wider awareness on the tumultuous situations specially among young women in particular. It must seek to influence the intellectuals, the policy makers and government bodies alike to work for preventive measures and strict implementation of constitutional rights, drawing up neutral policies and strengthening rehabilitation services.

Alternately within the movement there is also a need to create groups for gender justice that involves both men and women in selected locations in every region of the country where partnerships for gender justice can be developed.

The YWCA of India had in the quadrennium committed to work with both genders considering each other as partners. Change cannot be achieved by addressing and empowering only women. Men must walk alongside the women to make this change consistent and sustainable. We at the YWCA need to find ways and means to work together at every level of our activities.

Furthermore, to become a more proactive movement we also require involving as many youths as possible. Youth are our backbone and it necessitates that they be nurtured, mentored and involved in the movement to take the mantle of leaders. There are many things that we may not be able to achieve alone but by partnering and networking with likeminded organisations we can together complement our work for the good of the society and country.

To be alive we need to evolve. There is no place for stagnation but flowing with the need and demands of the communities who bank on us to be their succor and support in times of need.

As an organisation working against violence, lets become more open and supportive of the victims moving from just awareness building to rehabilitation and livelihood. Let's change the attitude of society towards victims of violence by creating survivor networks aimed at building their strength and resilience to fight against this stigma.

Furthermore, let these YWCA publications speak up for the voiceless emphasizing on the importance of the constitutional foundations, the oneness of humankind, the primacy of service to the common good as an ethics that should guide individuals and social life specially during the COVID-19 times.

I convey my best wishes and thanks to the united efforts of the editorial team as they come out of the first publication for the year 2021

Interview with Dr. Divya S Iyer

COMPILED BY
LATHA MATHEW
PRESIDENT
YWCA OF THIRUVALLA

This is an interview which Thiruvalla YWCA members had with Dr.Divys S Iyer IAS.
She was the sub collector of Trivandrum and currently is the Mission Director of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and the managing Director of National Ayush Mission She is a popular civil servant who has excelled in the fields of music, dance, column writings and acting.

In What ways women organizations like YWCA can help in this pandemic situation?

In this pandemic situation women organizations like YWCA should continue to operate in a fashion that is of great aid to everybody around us, especially in areas which have been neglected largely by the society like mental health issues, counseling wherein a lot more support is required .Apart from it livelihood rejuvenation is another area; house hold cottage industry or small-scale industry can be promoted by such organizations wherein more employment and education opportunities can be provided. YWCA can promote online education and such related activities so that even the remotest villages can get access to basic rights like these.

"Gender inequality at workplaces". In Kerala, is it relevant? If so your perspective of effective handling.

I would like to say that gender equality in any space, public or private is still a dream we are daring to go. I believe equality has to begin at families. Kerala is far more progressed in terms of the topic in question when compared to other states of the country, but it doesn't mean we are perfect in any sense. There is still lot of gender inequality in workplaces in Kerala. Though we have several laws which mandates equalities for both genders and also prevents any sort of harassment or abuse of women at work places, there still are areas where implementation of these laws are flawed. As the mission director of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural employment guarantee scheme I am proud of the fact that we are providing employment to over 20 lakh beneficiaries of which 90% are women. This is a huge step in the right direction as far as equality or financial or social empowerment of women is considered. I think we are definitely moving to right direction as a society, we just have to ensure that every little thing counts at work places which gives women the assurance that they are important /valuable for the organization.

COVID-19 has disrupted the education system, how to improve the state of affairs ? What positive changes do you expect in this field post pandemic phase?

Sometimes innovations which are most effective is the most destructive in nature . Due to the COVID-19 situation most kids are spending lot of hours indoor now, but I believe we have utilized this opportunity to make immense use of the technology available to us. Virtual education has

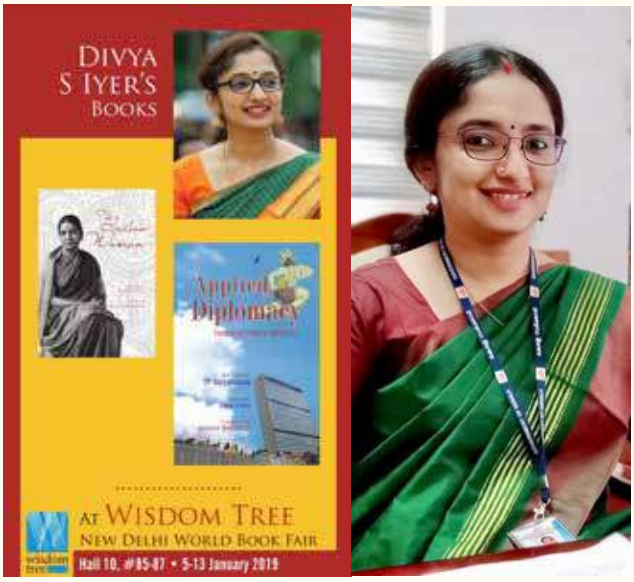
been a great boon to our kids. Whether we like it or not this is the new future of education, and the fact that our kids have gotten accustomed to the virtual learning spaces is commendable. As adults we have to ensure that our kids are not bound by this technology, they do not become slaves of these machines, but these only open up opportunities for them to be more creative and imaginative. As long as we are aware of this and we provide kids a chance to socialize and have real touch with the nature and the world around us , then the virtual learning platform is the new way forward.

Do you think COVID-19 pandemic has gendered impact on women ? if so what are the areas?

Women definitely have been one set of people who have redefined their lives and helped the society to cope up with this pandemic situation, both on professional and domestic front. The health care professionals especially have sacrificed a lot during this phase, if not for their efforts and dedication we wouldn't have been able to survive this long. Their contribution has been immense. Also women who were bound to their home traditionally and known how to make limits of domesticity a happy have now taught everyone around especially the men that how difficult it is to live under restrictions. The perspective to domesticity has changed a lot. Yes women have sacrificed , endured but they have also taught the world how to cope better in this pandemic situation.

Your views on "Women are their own rivals".

Well I do not think that women are their own rivals, this is a misconception. We can never generalize it based on few stories or examples. It is important that we focus on aiding each other, being that friend on whose shoulder where we can cry own, with whom we can share our worries, pain and happiness, being able to empathize with other women. This is very important to feel empowered. I really hope that organizations as yours spread the cheer and spirit of womanhood and celebrate being a woman .



Coping with the Pandemic!

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A new lifestyle, a different pattern of life. One wonders what is in store, when will things be normal. For sure it will be a new normal social distancing, face masks and hand washing we will have to live with this for years. The world as we see in a few years! Not long back people will say we faced a catastrophic phase. We wore masks , we kept social distance, no schools and colleges, it was work from home, we were stuck at home. People called it a pandemic, some say it was manmade others called it God's wrath yet others a clean up. Whatever they were indeed tough times. The rich and poor were equally affected, the rich not able to make more and the poor not able to get rich. The young and old were affected by it, it was either the lung or the heart it depended on how each one's DNA read. Not to forget the deaths which turned out to be thousands by the day, a constant rise and fall. Years down the line The fear lingers, the masks still on , of course the social distancing and not to forget the safe bubble. The constant doubt another bout. Isn't it better to be careful rather than be the spark for yet another catastrophe. Work from home becomes a norm Online classes a safer bet Smaller gatherings, an effective way of life. 'Safety first' is the key word. Parents echo, doctors second it. WHO coos and institutions just want to follow. No harm done after all it's " safety first" Bouts of cough let's get it tested " who knows it maybe the Corona again" So goes life in the aftermath of the pandemic. Long lost are the days when I could freely roam the streets, dress for a party without a fear. A second thought will always linger should we, whether it be an outing,or a flight to another place or even a simple fun-filled evening. That question mark in our brains will be a built in persona. The lavish lifestyle and patterns will surely take a turn because people have realised or atleast a lot of people have that things can work out differently. "I still wonder though how we did manage the terrible pandemic that took away quite a few lives and left a few ill for life " this would be a fore thought coming to our minds back and forth. Yet we did face it so we will gear up and live with it. Pandemic or no, man has the inner will power that will carry him on.

Mental Health Importance in the Context of COVID-19

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Mark Twain quotes "We all are partially insane". In the wake of Corona, one experiences varying degrees of fear anxiety anger sorrow and depression. One need not be too much concerned as all are in the same boat.

The word sane from Latin word "sanus", meaning not merely absence of Mental Illness, but it is a state of emotional psychological and social well-being: where the individual realizes his ability to cope with stress and working fruitfully to make a contribution to the community, the key factor being positive feeling with positive functioning

Emotional well-being includes happiness and satisfaction .The uncertainty and fear surrounding corona virus need not mar the joy of life. Worrying does not take us anywhere. So push it aside. Do some creative work involving your favorite hobbies, like gardening, embroidery, learning new language and skill and and meditation, prayer and yoga.

Psychological well-being helps one in spite of stressful situation like unemployment, economic instability and Health crisis. To overcome this, one can think in three domains. Self-realization, sense of Mastery over environment and sense of autonomy, i.e. ability to identify, confront and solve the problem. Accept the limitations and reality and be flexible: ready to accept the new Norm.

In this pandemic, children are forced to do online studies without interacting with their friends, elders are confined to homes, deprived of social gatherings and entertainments even public worship. Do not have ANXIETY but be AWARE. To overcome this one can take the help of social media for entertainment and information, but beware not spend too much time listening to unfavorable news. For connectivity with others especially during quarantine and isolation make use of the video chatting, Zoom platform and Google meet. Be connected with like-minded people with positive thoughts

rather than people of negative thought, lest you too be pulled down.

Spend time with the word of God in prayer and meditation, reminding ourselves that God is in control and nothing happens without His knowledge. When we trust in the Lord, troubles will become blessings. Social well-being refers to positive contribution to society .One should feel as being part of a community. That is social integration. Diverting our attention from ourselves to the community around us results in social actualization leading to empathy. Absence of empathy impairs social interaction. Empathy itself can be a Stress Reliever for a person. So by helping others cope with their stress makes us and the community strong.

A harmonious relationship between body and mind is equally important as they are interconnected, so be strong physically and mentally to fight this pandemic.

Nine Step Strategy to Deal With Stress

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What is stress? Stress or tension is a demand on physical or mental energy of a person. There are many factors that produce stress. Loneliness, diseases, competition, undue craze for money or power, depression are a few among them. In this pandemic situation stress has stretched its vulgar wings all over the world without any discrimination of age, caste, creed or country. Let me introduce a nine step strategy to overcome or reduce the stress situation. To start with focus on the positive in your life. Positive thinking is the best medicine to overcome stress. For that one needs control over one's self. "A wise man will be his minds master and a fool will be slave of his mind". (Syrus). Being a positive thinker does not mean one has to agree or accept everything. It only means that a person is solution – focused." Think only the best, work only for the best, and expect only the best. . . . . Be too big for worry

and too noble for anger." (From "Optimists creed" by Christian D Larsen.) Next is to have mental happiness. If you have a positive out look mental happiness is easy to attain "It is the mind that maketh good or ill That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor" (Edmund Spensor) There is a beautiful formula for mental happiness. 2W + 2L+ 2M = H 2W = Walk and Water 2L = Love and Laughter 2 M = Meditation and Moderation

H = Happiness (Indebted to Dr. M. V. John) All the ingredients for mental happiness is in this formula. Only thing is to take decision and practice. Procrastination leads to a negative attitude. The reverse is just as true remember the words of Benjamin Franklin "Never leave till tomorrow, which you can do today." Have some hobbies. Keep oneself engaged by doing some works regularly. Reading, listening music, cooking, gardening, embroidery and any such things that suits your aptitude. This will give mental pleasure and may be a service to others. A change in life style is inevitable to reduce tension. The time demands a change in life style and life style medicines. "The American College of Life Style Medicine" is a global organization started in 2007 at California. It is run by specialists' doctors from all over the world. They firmly state that a change in life style is the best way to cope with stress and diseases. The readiness to forget and forgive is a good mechanism to reduce stress. It is not so easy as said. But if one deliberately tries the result will be positive and that will give much relaxation. Also develop an attitude of gratitude. "Never forget what others have done for you, and never remember what you have done for others." Exercises of any kind will relax the body and mind. Choose the type of exercise as your physique and age demand. Breathing exercise is the best and must for all. Reflexology also can be practised by people of all ages. Walking for a minimum of thirty minutes is also good. For youngsters' art forms also can be selected. Community interaction of any type is good to overcome stress and tension. Friends, relatives, and any preferred group can be your choice. Never remain secluded. It will pave the way for bad thoughts and may enhance your tension. Don't allow such conditions to prevail. Good friends are ideal remedy, Romain Rolland has said. "The friend who understands you, can create you." Utilize the possibilities of social media.

Travel of any sort will help a lot. The type, duration and distance can be decided as your situation allows. The sights and change of environment will refresh your mind and soothe your temper. It will be a pleasure producing experience. Age or physical weakness should not be a hindrance to enjoy the trips. Prayer and Meditation will help a long way to overcome stress. Choose any time or place for prayer and meditation. It will calm your self and bring peace of mind." For nothing will be impossible with God." (Mark 1:37) Ponder over the above discussed strategies and take a decision now. Don't be hesitant. Condition your body and mind to practice all or a few.

Creative Explorations During COVID Times

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Unprecedented COVID-19 virus created such a havoc on the entire world. Countries went into lockdown mode to fight against this pandemic. None of us common folks knew how to adjust to this 'new normal'. Staying at home whole day, we felt caged. Nonetheless, human spirit is never to give up. We are highly adjustable creatures and soon we owned this situation and how! On a personal note, I was engaged in a number of activities during this time period. Cooking is an activity which I personally enjoy. From mango flavored ice cream to momo and pasta, I prepared dishes I hadn't tried before. Not only did I cook, I also practiced some gardening. Eggplant, ladies finger, ginger garlic, pumpkin and bitter gourd are some of the plants I have in my kitchen garden. Apart from this, I also encouraged and guided my nephews and nieces to create a video skit even though they were living in different cities. The theme of the skit, titled 'Aji para Sunday' in Odia, was about giving God His rightful place in our lives and not forgetting Him even when churches are closed. On the same theme, I arranged virtual prayer meetings/chains in my YWCA and

Prison Ministry circle. We, as a family, also started a virtual prayer meeting every Sunday evening, where all my extended family came together to pray, which could not have been possible if not for the lockdown.

Even as the pandemic brought my extended family closer on a weekly basis, the same magic took place closer home too.We had the time to play indoor games with each other every night. Individually, I also spent quality time with myself and used the creative bug in me to write poems and short stories. I also wrote an article in an Odia Christian magazine Christ. In spite of the pain the lessons we learned, lasts for a lifetime. This year we learnt how to be resilient, to set our priorities in order, the importance of little things ,all taught us to have a huge impact on our lives. It taught us the value of human interaction and in some ways brought us all closer even as we were required to maintain social distancing. Like every dark cloud, this too shall pass away and we will experience warm sun rays. Let us not forget the learnings. May we carry forward the teachings of this year into the years to come.

Be Positive

GIGILY C CHANDY
PRESIDENT YWCA OF ALUVA

Stress as we all know is part and parcel of our day to day life. Our ability to face problems and think and act in the right manner gets affected. Ability to cope up or the degree of stress varies from one individual to another. But at the same time, an element of stress is needed to bring out the best in situations. Stress has its positive and negative sides to it.

Different methods can be adopted to combat stress during these COVID-19 times. Meditating on the word of God will definitely give a good start to our day. This can include personal talks with God at any time of the day or night.. Certain other adoptive methods include asking others to help or assist you, taking responsibility of the situation, maintaining emotionally supportive relationships , maintaining emotional

composure and expressing our distress etc.. Other measures include ways like regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, carving out hobbies like gardening or bonding with a pet, and getting enough sleep.

But in spite of all these mentioned above, one of the best method we can adopt is "keep a positive attitude" as , " behind every black cloud there is a silver lining". We should quit thinking limited unworthy, defeated thoughts and instead start thinking positively as God had a specific reason for bringing each one of us into this world. As said in the book of Mathew 11..v.28..30" come to me all you labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" Last but not the least, at the end of the day, do a self evaluation and try to be a better person with each new day that God has bestowed upon us.

Resilience to Cope up Under Pressure

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A tiny virus, which is not even visible to human eyes created a great havoc all over the world, as never before. Every century witnessed epidemics in some parts of the world destroying man-kind but it was never a global pandemic. Before the world could realise it is a pandemic, the virus had taken lacs of lives globally. There was panic and fear everywhere, not knowing how to save lives, what treatment to be given, how to control the spread. Suddenly life came to a standstill with the lockdown. Watching the Breaking news pouring out from channels all over the world and the WhatsApp forwards gradually turned out to be depressing. People are stuck and unable to reach home. All family members sitting at home, some working on-line at home, children studying on-line, servants stopped coming, all these were another

mental pandemic for the women in the houses. Tensed whether we get sufficient provisions, medicines, cooking more food when family members are at home, how to manage with reduced income and in some cases with no salary coming, doing household chores ,cooking, cleaning, washing without a helping hand, family members falling sick etc. Even a fever or nausea gives them a shock. Families are not able to do the funeral rights when someone dies COVID-19 +ve. Those far away are not able to come to have a last look of their dear ones. Yes, We were caught unprepared. The psychological impact was great.

The stress level was beyond imagination. The new vocabularies coined in the pandemic also gave a negative feeling : Lock-down, Quarantine, Mask, Social Distancing, keep washing your hands with soap for 20 seconds after anything you do. It is under these circumstances the importance of Mental Health comes and how we can cope with the stress. Mental Health fitness is a must for us to take care of our physical health and to do our things in the right way, logically and on time. If our mental health drops, we will not be able to do anything well for ourselves, our families and society. Some tips for reducing our stress and keep our mental health intact:

1. Selective choice of news, social media:

Stop listening to all sorts of news coming especially the negative news and hear only to the extent what we should be knowing to update ourselves. Frequent listening to pandemic news create fear and anxiety leading to depression.

2. See the positive aspects:

The world powers are trying their best to find medicines and vaccines and the medical fraternity is doing their best so selflessly risking their own lives for the patients. Gradually medical equipment's, masks etc are produced on war-footing. We are not the only one affected. The whole world is concerned and working on it.

3. Shred negativism, think positively:

Lock-down is there but we are safe not stuck. It is nice and safe to have cleaner habits. Social distancing does not mean mental distancing. Thanks to technology we can see and talk to people wherever they are, even if in a far corner of the world. Masks cover our mouth and nose not our hearts. Break the Chain does not mean breaking the relationships. Break the mental blocks and start healthy pleasant relationships.

4.Stay connected:
Keep up and strengthen relationships. It gives a sense of inclusion and acceptance and a social well-being.

5.Engage in creative and uplifting activities as per our aptitude:
Reading, writing, painting, drawing, stitching, gardening, dancing, singing, listening to music or Ted talks, watch films, anything we like. Keep ourselves active.

6. Exercise regularly:
Its a must to keep one physically and mentally fit.

7.Take care of family's health and own health:
Eat healthy, and boost ones immunity.

8.Trust in God:
Spend time for Bible study, prayer, hearing devotional talks. Faith and Spirituality is a panacea in coping with stress and a levelling factor for harmony. Wishing all Physical and Mental Fitness this COVID-19 as we are stepping into its first Anniversary.

"New Familiar".. Creative Explorations

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Even though our regular activities might be limited right now, our curiosity, creativity, and sense of adventure need not be confined. Here are a few ideas of how we can use this period as an opportunity to search & find activities to embark on new and wonderful creative explorations!

Stop and Smell the Roses
Use this time as an opportunity to appreciate the abundance of wonders present right in front of you that might have been previously overlooked. Notice the feeling of the sunlight waking you up naturally in the morning. Go for a walk outside to explore and enjoy time in nature. Notice all your senses: the sounds of

the wind rustling the trees, the sound of the rain on the ground, the smell of your tea or coffee in the morning before you sip, the warmth of the cup in your hand.

Find Peace in Meditation & Visualization

During stressful times, it can sometimes help to look within for peace and use your mind to transport you to a peaceful and tranquil place. Meditation can enable you to observe your thoughts, be present in the moment or even drift off to a wonderful place of your choosing using your imagination. If you are new to meditation practice, make use of guided techniques that can help you get started on embarking a journey within yourself, the benefits of which will last long after COVID-19.

Enjoy Dining-Out Experience into your Home!

Find some "fancy" dishes you would normally not make at home and learn how to make them. Perhaps try recreating your favorite restaurant dish. Set the atmosphere at home to resemble a restaurant setting: try lighting candles or using special decorations. You could even try experimenting with different cuisines or themes like Italian, Chinese, Dessert, Appetizers or Seafood.

Find your "New Familiar"

Though this time and the changes in our daily life might seem unfamiliar, we can still find a "new familiar" create a new routine that is your own. One that plans a new schedule around these new circumstances that you enjoy! Perhaps that involves a morning walk, listening to music you enjoy or some afternoon reading. If you are used to meeting with family, try to schedule regular recurring video calls where you can still enjoy time together and stay connected.

Try Something New

We may not be able to do the same activities we did before, but we can try new things and discover new passions! Try to find something that you wouldn't have otherwise: try writing a short story, experimenting with photography, perhaps learning a new obscure skill such as knitting. Swap a chore/activity with your spouse or challenge your mind with some crossword puzzles, riddles or Sudoku.

We hope this provided some inspiration and serves as a quick reminder that there is a world of opportunity still available for us waiting be explored!

Anger - Danger!!!!

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Anger - Danger!!!! Dear moms..... Have you ever watched your kids any of these days! Too smart, isn't? But beware!!! The smart mobile phones along with the smart e- net spread over our globe are injecting false smartness into them... and these guys are to build tomorrows world!!! It seems some of our kids have grown up to such an extent, to end up all nuisance with a bit of rope or even with blazing guns, just in seconds! We name our nominees most dearly as Abhishek, Vikas, Vineeth, Vivek. Vidya and Saraswati but, hesitate to see what culture they are inheriting from all forms of advanced information technology brought into our home interiors!

So it is high time dear moms, you sprinkle some ethical values into their growing senses, from a very early age so that you can do that, and you only can do that. Only if you start it early, when their minds are new and fresh! The peaceful face of every child is Gods own image and God's grace is upon every child. It's our duty to protect, culture and groom them in our creator's line and light. Whatever be your beliefs, teach the kids to honor their CREATOR. So the Basic Lessons of " ETHICS" are highlighting Discipline and Self-control, Love and Care for others, Honesty and Transparency, Humility and Sincerity!

Over all self - respect and respect for others, should be given to our children with striking examples so as to register in their memory! Let these values be part of their lives!! Remember, a child growing without self- control is prone to become dangerous in the society, for himself, and the family , since A -N -G –E- R is only one letter short than D –A- N- G- E- R.! Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent, how you react to it!! So let us start reacting for our children. Let not any one of us throw our new generation into.... DANGER... Thank you.

Oh! Pandemic!

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Oh Pandemic! Oh Dreadful Pandemic,
Mocking a world, which you made sick.
Soaring, swooping as an eagle for its prey,
Shocked, bewildered, undercover we lay.
Ceaselessly it continues its drastic sway
Sick, dying, despairing day by day.
Our friends, our dear ones, our bonds we miss,
No touch, no hug, no holding hands or kiss.
Yet man cannot conquer his sinful greeds
No end to crimes, fraud, murderous deeds
A time to ponder, rethink and realign
To place your real priorities right in line
Before, like butterflies dressed up we flew
From shopping to meeting, without any queue
Now life itself is right on the edge.
A revaluation staring at us upon the ledge.
Will we leave behind sweet memories of love?
Or only lands, gold, wealth, all sealed with a vow?
Are we Someone who in trouble will abide?
Or Someone who craves position, honour and pride?
Someone who judges or waits for a fight?
Or Someone of compassion, kind and polite?
Someone who drinks of Humility's cup?
Or Someone whose ego is all blown up?
Can we forgive, and give with an open heart?
Can we from our safe 'Comfort Zone' depart?
Can we reach out in love, to share and care?
Can we fight for justice, found so rare?
No longer "Self" and all things to possess.
But "Others" whose lives are in a mess.
Our true motives are measured on a scale
The "Judge" before Whom we should not fail.
So lets work towards a 'Kinder World',
Rise from our thoughtless luxury curled.
God given talents, just let them be used
To help the downtrodden, the much abused
So Women! Your voices of concern do raise
With Courage, Strength and all of God's Grace.
So Pandemic, Oh Pandemic, to leave 'Be Quick'
As to a Better World a "Start Up" we kick.

Time to Introspect

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Here we are face to face with a dreadful pandemic to which we never had a precedence in our lifetime. The whole world was caught unawares by this horrific Corona virus whose onslaught brought untold miseries, anxiety, and stress in our lives. The world almost came to a standstill. Lockdowns everywhere!!

But fortunately, man has been bestowed with resourcefulness to deal with any crisis. What can we do to tide over the crisis? How best can we cope with the forced stay indoors due to lockdowns? Isn't it time to introspect? Yes, it is the best time to look deep down into our inner self and prioritise our needs. Am I doing enough for my self-care, catering to my personal - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual - needs? Let us ponder over how we can make the optimum use of our forced stay at home for our self-care. We can bring some discipline in our thought processes, behaviour, and attitudes with some positive thinking.

The first step towards self- care, I believe, is staying fit and active physically and mentally. Let us start the day with simple exercises, yoga, and meditation which will help reduce stress and anxiety. We can ward off the virus by eating immunity boosting, home-cooked, nutritious diet with a good supply of fruit and vegetables and drinking plenty of water. It is also very imperative to get good sleep for 6 to 8 hours. It is also the best time to boost our morale by catching up with extended families and old friends over phone and mail, listening to music, watching good movies, recapturing our long- lost hobbies and also spending quality time with family and also following spiritual pursuits. The best self-care is by adhering strictly to the instructions of the Health Department about hygiene, wearing face masks and gloves, sanitising hands as often as possible, avoiding social gatherings, maintaining social distance and staying at home as much as possible.

Time is on our side. Let us pursue our interests which has taken a back seat due to other pressing needs. Let us find time to connect with God and try to be at peace with ourselves and at everything around us. Against all odds, we have the potential to reinvigorate and rejuvenate ourselves and fight the virus. Let us pray to God to help us conquer this pandemic and get our lives back to normal.

Leisure Time Activities for Children

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During this pandemic most people are experiencing various kinds of difficulties. Parents who are working from home in any field endure the problem of their own children disturbing them during their work by seeking attention in various ways. This is where the concept of Leisure Time Activities assume importance and all parents can provide some activities for Children regardless of the ages of children.

What are the suitable activities for children of various age groups? Are they affordable for all households? Are they simple and do not require constant supervision and help from adults? The preschool child (2.5 -5 years) will be an exception regarding assistance & supervision. An attempt is being made in this article to list many leisure-time activities for children of various age groups and backgrounds, which will promote all areas of wholesome development of Self and Personality. The areas of development of an individual are: physical & motor, cognitive & language, socio-emotional, and spiritual, including values to be learnt.

The ability to do an activity will depend on the socio-economic background, sex of the child etc. A particular activity may be suitable for a child in an urban area, but not for a child in a rural setting. An adult, parent or a care giver would have to initiate the children into starting these activities. Sometimes the adults must

make time to do the activity with the children. This is a good time for 'bonding' with family!

Given below is a list of Activities for ALL age groups; Most of the activities can be done by children living in rural or urban areas, in houses or in apartments, by an individual child or with siblings or in small groups of children, keeping in mind social distancing.Modifications may be made depending on the ages of children.

Names of Activities:
Cooking, making juices & salads, helping adults with household chores, gardening, stringing flowers, making brooms, eg. coconut brooms, needlework, knitting, tatting etc., fixing/stitching buttons, mending hems,(boys & girls),singing & playing instruments, role play with kids & adults, drawing, painting, collage with various articles, collections &display of them{for collage & collections- sky is the limit!},doing yoga & exercises from watching videos or online, practicing public speaking, debates, reciting & memorising poems, writing limericks, poems, storytelling & writing stories, mimicry, studying atlas/maps for names of countries, capitols, rivers, & mountains, star gazing, watching the sky at night, board games, hop scotch, stationery skipping, I spy, word building, sentence making, stringing beads, artificial jewellery making, stitching dolls' clothes, simple garments for , polishing brassware, utensils, understanding body parts, rules for health & hygiene, good manners, safety rules-inside & outside. Let me conclude emphasising, that by engaging in these activities the children can relieve their pent-up emotions which might build up being confined to indoors due to the COVID-19 times.

Social Wellbeing

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Ten months back, we woke up with a shocking news that the world is in the grip of a new RNA virus named CORONA, which is fast spreading causing great socio-economic uncertainties. Though we saw the media reports of the number of people affected, we thought it was just exaggeration. When one of my siblings turned positive with this virus and got hospitalized, the grim reality

set in. Fear and anxiety permeated our minds and realized the heedfulness of wearing masks, sanitizing and social distancing. This pandemic has truly turned the whole world upside down impacting our habits, routine and overall lives. Fear, worry and stress are normal responses faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home schooling of children and the lack of physical contact with family members and friends. In this situation, it is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared and even angry. Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious and agitated. Due to constant sitting in front of computer, adults are prone to health issues. For elderly there is helplessness and loneliness. Here the mental health plays an important role. Following self-care strategies are good for mental and physical health.

• Get enough sleep
• Eat healthy and balanced diet. Avoid junk foods.
• Avoid the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.
• Limit screen time.
• Relax and recharge- Take care of the mind. Reduce stress and stay busy. Take an effort to be engaged and being happy. Use technology to learn new skills, art or craft. Indulging in hobbies, meditation and yoga will help to calm our minds. Focus on positive thoughts and practice spiritual life.
• Call or text a close friend, neighbour or loved ones. Make sure that the elderly people we know are OK.
•Train ourselves and others to practice, kindness and understanding. Helping others counteracts the stress and anxiety.
• Do something for others-The best and easiest way to help others during this time is to wash our hands, practice social distancing and go for self-quarantining. We can donate masks and PPE kits to hospitals and health workers. Appreciate the hard work of first responders, health care professionals and government.

This pandemic is likely to have long and short-term implications. In spite of the best efforts, we may feel, helpless, sad, angry and irritable. Survey and studies revealed that people who do not have contact with families and loved ones during quarantine and hospital stays are prone to psychological instability. Good mental status in difficult times may win the battle more easily. We should realise that anyone at any time can be affected by the virus. We have learnt to use mask and sanitisers to keep away the disease but we must be kind to the people who are suffering from it. So, we should maintain physical distancing while being socially united. This pandemic taught us the meaning of life and its purpose, value of freedom-the freedom to move.

Nature the Healer

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The golden rules for Self-Care during this COVID-19 times are Social distancing, using Mask and Sanitizing . In order to follow the new health standards, we have to adjust ourselves to certain things. Some of us are doing our profession or work sitting at home. Some have to go outside as a part of their job. Those who remain at home can make use of it fruitfully. This is the best and must time for us to take care of our body, mind and soul. My going out home is rare. Still remember to keep social distance, use mask and wash hands whenever outsiders come home as delivery boys, vegetable vendor and the like.

In general, people have cut short their travelling. No celebrations, no entertainments, no get together or eating outs. Shopping is only for essential commodities. We are cutting short all luxuries. These sudden changes may cause depression for some persons, while some others benefit from the home centered life. But normal life has to go on under COVID-19 protocol. We are compelled to follow a healthy life. No one can be spared from being healthy, is a specialty of this pandemic. Each one's immunity contributes to the overall health of the family. Majority of women who do not take care of their physical body after their middle age have to pay attention to their health. Me, a woman in sixties, was a little over weight. First thing that I did was to reduce my body weight. It was easily possible since there was no eating out side home.

Children and grandchildren came to stay with us in the new scenario of 'working and studying at home' culture. Homely food without any artificial flavours or taste makers, weight gaining oils and fats are served for all. Vegetarian and non- vegetarian foods having correct quantity of proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins are included by selecting cereals and pulses, leafy vegetables, fruits and eggs. Meat and fish are used along with lunch and dinner. Thus self-care leads to the care of all. For body care, proper exercise should be part of daily routine. So I decided to do all cleaning works inside and outside the house by myself giving a break to the house maid. Daily walks half an hour

along the pathway beside the house enjoying fresh country air became a habit. Nourishing the mind is also of important. Contacts were maintained with near and far family members and friends. Life is made normal by attending online church services and participating in online meetings and and webinars. Viewed long cherished films, read books, periodicals and listened to music. Even though world is in a total dilemma, learned to be thankful for the unbounded energy in the form of light, heat, rain, water and vegetation that is bestowed upon us by nature.

Coping Mechanism to Deal With Stress, in the Backdrop of COVID-19

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"Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength"
Sigmund Freud
Father of Modern Psychology.

The COVID-19 is undoubtedly one of the biggest banes of this century. It has brought misery, hopelessness and despair to the humankind. It must be noted that pandemics such as corona happens once every century. Its predecessors such as Spanish flu, Smallpox, Cholera ravished the world, killing millions of people. However, at the end, these viruses made their absolute submission to mankind. Now, how did mankind save itself from the clutches of theses pandemics? While the answer lies in advancement of medical science (vaccines), the role played by the human mind cannot be undermined. Borrowing the words of Sigmund Freud let me quote— "Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength". It simply extends that human minds have the unique power to combat any challenges, when threatened. My point here is to make use of the power of the mind and develop simple coping mechanisms against this pandemic.

Let's discuss it, with minimal details.

Stick to a standard routine

Let's set a standard routine - wake up and get to bed at the same time. Additionally, it helps in ensuring that our bodies get the true rest it needs. We can also develop the habit by sticking to the same mealtimes, choosing a certain time of day for exercise, bathing, and getting dressed. Set a timetable for completing household chores.

Enjoy some fresh air

Let's remind ourselves of the sheer healing powers of fresh air. Let's take a morning walk around our house, in between the coconut trees, among the mango garden, and near to our wells or ponds. While at home, let's keep the windows open and allow fresh air to flow in. Let's not forget to take a moment to enjoy the beauty of the outside patch of land and paddy fields. You can find many such places in our Kunnamkulam.

Reduce Exposure

Let's stay inside our homes, unless it's absolutely required. For those of us who need to go outside, let's be mindful of social distancing and interaction etiquettes. Let's wear our masks and use sanitizers regularly (minimum 8 times a day). Remember, prevention is cure. Life is more precious than the cost of the sanitizer

Fill our minds with positivity

Let's helps ourselves by warding off the negative thoughts that may creep in. Let's infuse our minds with positive thoughts, events filled with fun, and invoke some of the soothing memories. Just remember the day you got married, or your child was born, or you secured a job. All these are precious moments. You will find many more; I bet!

Please remember that coping mechanisms are equally important like the vaccines specially until the vaccine is available, these mechanisms shall act as our shields against COVID-19. Best of it is that they are free, as they are available from within our own surroundings. Let's make the best use of them!

Handling Stress

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Psalm 147:3 says "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" and Isaiah 26:3 says "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you" What a wonderful promise it is that God can give us perfect peace. We don't need to be

stressed. Many are suffering globally during this pandemic. Many are stressed. Many are anxious about what is going to happen next? It's true that we all deal with stress at some point in our lives in the areas of job, family, finance, health and so on. It is also true that stress affects all aspects of our life including emotions, behaviour, thinking ability and physical health. Stress is our body's reaction to an external event. Our body is wonderfully designed to handle small doses of stresses. Blood pressure rises irregularly, palms of our hands get sweaty, heart rate increases and breathing quickens. Don't be stressed, body is handling it, you have got yourself ready to act. It's how you protect yourself through physical reaction.

Some people are better able to handle it than others. They become assertive instead of being aggressive. It's their positive attitude which makes them more aware of things around them and keeps them more focused. It gives them strength and helps them to accomplish the task under pressure. Positive attitude of a person prevents him from getting hurt by stress. We all acknowledge that fear, anger, irritations, sadness, anxiety are all emotional expression of stress. These symptoms of stress are for a short period or called as acute stress. Nothing to worry when you handle a project or speak before a group of people, large gathering or standing before a group of higher ranking people for an interview. Because your body and mind get through in such a tough situation. Stress begets depression caused by serious internal or mental hurt. For instance, death of loved ones, serious injury, forced immoral activities, repeated abuses, rape, bad childhood experience, hearing a bad shocking experience of any family member or friends and many more. In these cases, the events are external but the wound or hurt is internal. The person goes into depression which can be mild or severe. The symptoms of mild depression are sadness, irritability, eating disorder, sleep disorder.

All of these can be handled differently

- Sharing the feelings with others is important
- When overwhelmed, a deep breathe will help one to be emotionally controlled
- Can try learning and practicing mediation as technique for relaxation
- Regular exercise is essential
- Healthy food and balanced meals are required for the stable functioning of the body. When children experience stress they suffer from anger, fear, cry for no reason, appetite change, disturbed sleep, may fight at

school, struggle with study, guilty feelings and many bad things.

- Must help them deal with stress by listening to them carefully
- Encourage them to tell the truth about the situation
- Re-establish their daily routine.

Severe depression might lead to trauma if not consulted with a specialist and go through required medication. Our body is not equipped to handle long term stress or severe depression. We must accept that there are evens that we cannot control.

I am not going into or pondering the wide spectrum of stress management techniques or psychotherapies. I will only go with controlling one's level of stress.

Purpose of controlling one's level of stress is:

- To improve ones everyday functions
- Breaking the hold of stress on one's life
- Learn to manage stress and lead a balanced, happier life and become more productive
- Resilience to cope under pressure
- Bible teaches us wonderfully to handle our feelings (James 1:2-4).
- Share the pain with a trustworthy person or someone very close. Listening to the victim helps draw out out ones feelings (Job 21:2)
- Jesus expressed his feelings to his disciples (Matt 26:37-38)
- Need to tell God all about our troubles (Proverbs 4:23)
- Jesus lamented and poured out pain to God (Matt 27:46)
- Bible verses not only encourage but also help us to deal with stress and manage it.
- Bible quotes about strength bring serenity (Isaiah 40:31)
- Pray on every occasion (Eph 6:18)
- He can take all our fears (1 Peter 5:7)
- God gives strength to endure. He will provide the way out (Luke 21:19, 2 Cor 10:13)

When we fully trust in the Lord we won't live in stress and constant

It's High Time to be Awake

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Corona virus has sickened our strength
From poor to rich it assaulted everyone
Creating chaos, terror and aggregation
Killing lakhs and left many abandoned....
Corona disaster is not a region's malady A
Biological catastrophe spreading incredibly
From country to continents, states to districts
Spreading it's impact leaving none behind.....
It's not only a country's challenge

But became a Pandemic Worldwide
There is no medicine for complete healing
It's alarmingly transmitting among human beings...
Once you get significant symptoms
No way of inattention or skepticism
Should go to physician for medication
Without hiding yourself or detaining...
Be alert and take preventive measures
Washing hands by sanitiser and shop
Avoiding touching eyes, mouth and nose
Staying at home in Prayer and meditation..
Using Mask to cover nose & mouth tight
Taking measures to stay healthy and fit
Obeying the norms of police & administration
Helping the hunger in such confrontation...
Lakhs of lives have already deceased
It's time for us to repent and realize
For self analysis and renewing our life
Praying God to save us from this Pandemic...

We Shall Overcome

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The global crisis due to the pandemic demands utmost vigilance in all quarters. The impact of the disease has been heavy on public health, social life, workplace, economy, education, environment, agriculture etc. Since last January people have been battling with the invisible virus and facing the consequences of its outspread. In fact, many have fallen victims to the deadly virus. The toll of the affected and the dead is steadily ascending the scale in the statistical graph. Not a single nation is left out from the disastrous attack of the tiny, spiky, and dangerous man-made virus, Corona. Scientists are frantically experimenting for an effective vaccine for the prevention and eradication of this fatal virus. The consequences and remedial measures vary from nation to nation and person to person. While many seek allopathic medicines, others resort to homeopathic, Ayurvedic, homely, native, indigenous medicines and methods.

People of all walks of life have succumbed to this fatal disease. While many have died, many more among the living find it hard to make both ends meet. Those without retirement annuity, regular work and income are the ones who suffer the most. Farmers and workers go through a difficult time. Those who work for daily wages are severely affected as many hesitate to call them for work. The maids are probably the largest

category badly affected in the crisis as they are denied work in the threat of this highly communicable disease. Students in schools and colleges undergo severe stress.

A discussion of coping mechanisms to deal with stress requires consideration of the topic from different angles. Firstly, we have to overcome the fear of the pandemic. For that we need an awareness of the disease; the mode of transmission; medicines and measures to prevent and cure; modes of management during the course of the disease and after etc. Secondly, we have to be conscious of the mental stress during isolation or quarantine; solitude; lack of interaction with friends and family members; lack of outdoor games and recreation.

What are the solutions? We can resort to indoor games, yoga, meditation etc. Aerobics are also advisable. Healthy diet can be followed. Pet animals can be entertained to relieve oneself of boredom and stress.

Prayer and Tele-medicine counselling are useful. Listening to music is also very effective, as music has a proven track record of having therapeutic effect to alleviate pain and stress.

People with creative and literary flavor are not likely to get bored and stressed. They can indulge in craft, painting, writing stories, poems, plays, articles and using the audio and video facilities. Social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, You-tube etc. also open new avenues to bar stress and isolation. Gardening is another option. Rearing dogs can also be a profitable pastime.

Let us be optimistic about a bright future. Surely, we shall overcome this difficult time. As Milton, the English poet said, we will definitely move "tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Innovative Explorations..New normals...

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"I have to go for a meeting for three days " husband ordered. Hearing this wife will start packing clothes and accessories for him. When wife is having this situation husband has to soothe her at her nervousness. But at present times these words will not

irritate people. As most of the meetings are done through "Google Meet" or any other meeting platforms. COVID-19 has created this platform. So we can creatively use this "Google Meet" application for conducting meetings.

As we all are familiar with the words "Google" and "Gmail" we can go to understand "What is Google Meet? ". Google is an American Multinational Technology Company that works in internet related services and products. And it is situated in California, USA. Everyone having an internet connection can make use of Google Applications.

Google Meet is a real time high quality video conferencing / meeting tool available to all having a Google Account, which is our personal Gmail Account. It can create or join an online meeting up to 100 participants of 60 minutes duration.

Schools and other business organizations can make use of its advanced features and include 250 internal or external participants and a live streaming up to 1 lakh viewers within that organization's domain.

The Key Features of Google Meet are Compatibility on devices, Unlimited high-definition video meetings, Safe meetings, Easy access , Screen sharing and Real-time captions powered by Google speech-to-text technology.

Step 1: Open your Gmail from Laptop/Desktop. Click on New meeting from the left side menu.

Step 2: Then select "Send invite" or "Join now" option from the "Share your Meeting" window appeared on screen. Clicking "Join now" will take you to the Google Meet window. (While clicking "Send invite" two options like "copy meeting Invite" and "share via email" will come. Use this meeting link/address by sending to the persons whom you want to include in the online meeting through WhatsApp or by SMS.)

Step 3: Use the microphone on/off, Leave meeting, Camera on/off settings from the Bottom Center of the "Meet" window.

Step 4: use "Show everyone", "Chat every one" from the Top Right of "Meet" window to see people joined in the meeting and to chat with everyone.

Step 5: To Record meeting Start or join a meeting, then click the three dots at the Bottom Right "Record meeting". To stop recording, click the three dots again.

Step 6: Use "Turn on captions" and "Present now" options from Bottom Right of "Meet" window to turn on the voice of meeting as English captions and to present your slide shows or files in the screen or in a window.

Step 7: Leave meeting by clicking "Leave call" from Bottom Center of "Meet" window. I hope all of you can understand my brief description of "Google Meet", a Google tool for video conferencing through Internet.

Mental Wellness

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Novel Coronavirus a.k.a COVID-19 has drastically changed our lives. Today we have accustomed ourselves to live with this virus.

Mental health has always been a forsaken entity in our society for ages. Mental health, its impact and its complications has always been a subject of hush-hush & social stigma. Effect of mental wellbeing is a rising concern amid this COVID-19 scenario. When the world entered into a phase of COVID-19 lockdown, little did we know the drastic impact it would have on our lives.

The importance of social wellbeing has been more evident during these lockdown days. Its impact is seen at various levels in our society – elderly to the youngest generations, all professions (be it the health sector or in the life of a home maker) has been affected. Few triggering factors are work stress, extended hours of work (eg : health care workers), social isolation, fear of financial instability, fear of contracting the disease, death of a close relative and so on. Among patients with a history of psychological issues and who are already on treatment, the graph has been rising due to irregular follow-up (with primary physician), unavailability of regular medications etc.

Looking at the brighter side, several organisations are creating social awareness through mental health campaigns. One such activity initiated by WHO is "Move for mental health: Lets invest". In India , various steps has been adopted by our government to address these issues. A 24 x 7 toll free number & online support has been made available. This facility aims at individuals who needs immediate attention. They can seek help over a phone call/ online consultation. In fact it is appreciable to see how people are now accepting the importance of mental wellbeing without stigmatising it. On the contrary, the rise in number of suicides due to emotional instability is also on the rise . It is high time we promote mental health wellness and remove the stigma associated with it. This can be successfully implemented by conducting awareness programmes at schools, colleges and public places. Media is an ideal platform to reach out to the public.

Let's stand together and work towards removing the social stigma of mental health. Let's normalise to be able to open up our mental health issues and seek timely help. To seek help & support when emotionally stressed should no longer be labelled as cowardice. It is not a weakness to be mentally crippled and nobody is at fault if they fall prey to it. As we are about to step into 2021, let's join hands and work together towards mental health wellbeing. #MentalHealthIsReal

Healthy Mind for a Stress Free Life

LIZY THOMAS
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Being a person with stress, anxiety and acidity I would like to pen down the self-made strategies I have tried during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We, all human beings are equally made of cells, same body parts, mind and spirit. But everyone is different in appearance, thoughts, lifestyle and so on. When we are at the infant stage, we are always happy, and have no stress. Babies love playing, have good food and sleep. As we grow older, we need more food. Adequate food intake is vital for proper growth. Growth affects our mind also. Spiritual growth is also essential from our childhood. The biological, emotional and spiritual growth make our body normal.

When we grow, our subconscious mind accepts what we think. Hence doubts, fear, tension and negative thoughts come up in mind. To be stress free we must think about ourselves like I love my body, I love my mind, I have the right to exist and I respect my individuality. No one is exactly like me, I am unique, and I appreciate my appearance.

If we organize our mind in this way, our body will be organized, and our emotions will be focused in one direction. Our mind is always changing every moment in different directions. As John Milton said, mind can make heaven out of hell and hell out of heaven. In order to lead a stress-free life, we should learn to master our mind.

During this pandemic if we have more fear of the virus, we will wash our hands multiple times and that becomes a phobia and we will be practically imprisoned at home. Then we must have control on our mind to be stress free. We must cope with the situation. It is difficult to control but think it is not impossible. We must strengthen our spiritual side, that will help us to create a mentally balanced situation. Hence the government is repeatedly reminding, us not to fear but to be aware of the situation. For that we must remove our toxic emotions and feelings to bring in courage, confidence and acceptance.

Our mind is like a software, there should be a linking system between the mind and body. Positive thoughts will work like electrical energy. Our mind has two parts, subconscious and conscious. The subconscious mind will work 24 hours a day. It is a divine power but act as a servant for conscious mind. The conscious mind will work when we are awake. If we

keep our mind healthy, stress will gradually be relieved. If we are able to accomplish what we expect then stress level will not increase. For this we need to first love our body, do not panic for simple reasons, appreciate yourself, your body, your character and your attitude. In my case even from my childhood I considered myself a responsible child, so I took responsibilities in my own matters like studies, better eating, better living and better thinking.

To get rid of stress and anxiety and stress we can resort to breathing exercises, practice yoga, walking and prayer. If we have strong faith, we can be stress free. If we are like a zero-volt bulb nothing will lighten us, be like an LED bulb. My first and foremost policy is 'Do Your Best', the motto of scout and Guide Movement. Be best, in your thoughts, actions, be obedient, be thankful, be honest and be positive. Obey the rules and surely, we will be stress free.

Somewhere Over The Rainbow

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The darkest hour, they say, is just before the dawn and that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. But when darkness envelops the world, accompanied by a pall of gloom, and there is no light at the end of the tunnel, one can only muster courage and fall upon inner resources to perceive the faintest glimmer of light and hear a gentle whisper of hope. Our household vocabulary now resonates with the negativity of words like pandemic, isolation, stay home, stay safe, quarantine, ventilator, ambulance and and the ultimate oxymoron- social distancing. There is the unmitigated sorrow of afflicted loved ones left to live their last days alone. There is no final communal rite of passage and ceremonial closure to personal losses. All creativity, however, is seen to have come from the depths of deep despair. In the beautiful poem 'The Nightingales', the poet asks the nightingales who enthrall the world with their song,

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams wherefrom

Ye learn your song.
to which the nightingales reply:
Nay, barren are the mountains and spent the streams
Our voice is the voice of desire that haunts our dreams.

The Romantic poet Shelley says that our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. Vincent van Gogh, one of the greatest artists of all time, produced his art in poverty, anonymity and mental illness. He says, "Normality is a paved path comfortable to walk. But no flowers grow on it." 'Normal' refers to a routine of predictable repetitions in life that we have taken for granted. It is only when we are shaken out of our complacency and deprived of our certainties that we realise that we have just been walking the trodden path: we have achieved little because our dreams have been small and our vision dimmed with our inability to set our goals across the ever- expanding horizons.

The new normal has led us out of our comfort zones. Irrespective of age, we have raised the bar and built up resilient communities on virtual platforms. With no external help, we have learnt new ways of organising our personal spaces, simplifying our food habits and finding a clear distinction between our wants and our needs. We have learnt to leave Nature alone to heal and restore herself. In the economic fallout, we realise our commitment to sharing our resources with those forced out of their livelihood. The word 'unprecedented', has now become a cliche, but the Bible reveals to us many a journey in the wilderness and in the Valley of the shadow of Death.

Then when the night is upon us
Why should the heart sink away?
When the dark midnight is over,
Watch for the breaking of day!
(Whispering Hope)
And with daybreak, dawns tomorrow and tomorrow is another day!

Healthy Body and Healthy Mind

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Mental Health is as important as our physical health. People are more conscious about their physical health but they are ignoring their mental health. It is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fear worry and stress are normal responses that perceive the real threats of time when we face uncertainty or the unknown.

COVID-19 made a significant change to our daily lives; as our movements are restricted to slow down due to the spread of virus. People have been facing new realities like working from home, temporary unemployment, online schooling of children, lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues. It is important that we should look after our mental health as well our physical health.

WHO is providing guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic for health workers, people who are managing old age people, children and people in isolation to help them look after their mental health. Fortunately we can do a lot of things to improve our mental health.

- Listen to advices and recommendations from our national and local authorities
- Keep up our daily routine like before or make a new one, like getting up and going to bed at the same time daily, keep up personal hygiene, eat healthy food, exercise regularly, allocate time for work and rest, find time to enjoy yourself .
- Try to reduce reading or listening to news that makes you feel more anxious and depressed.
- Since our movements are restricted keep regular contact with people close to you by telephone or online channels.
- Avoid using alcohol or any drugs as a way of dealing with fear and anxiety, boredom and social isolation.
- Make sure that you have regular breaks from onscreen activities.
- Video games is a way to relax but it may lead to more problems like addiction, obesity etc. So make sure to keep the right balance with active exercises.
- Promote positive and hopeful stories and correct the misinformation.
- Do not curse ourselves, situations which may arise due to fear, for it will give negativity and take out the positivity too.
- Fear, worries, stress, may lead to other physical illnesses like Hypertension, Diabetes, anxiety, sleeplessness.

Prayer, active exercises, yoga etc will help us to improve and give mental health .

HEALTHY BODY SHOULD HAVE A HEALTHY MIND.

Not the first…Not the last…

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In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking care of our mental health is as important as looking after our physical health. Good mental health and positive wellbeing can help us cope better with the threat of COVID-19

and the uncertainty it's creating. COVID-19 pandemic has led to a worldwide crisis. At present, everyone is focusing on the prevention of COVID-19 infection, preparing and discussing issues related to physical health consequences. However, it is important to understand that the life-threatening negative physical health consequences are going to be faced by a few, but everyone is going to face the negative mental health consequences of the pandemic. Therefore, importance of mental wellbeing becomes all the more crucial to face this challenge at present as well as in future perspectives. While some people struggle to procure food to eat for two meals, others are struggling with demons in their own minds – mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. Such are the times that the coronavirus pandemic has brought upon us. With the stress of increasing work pressure, the constant worry to keep your family safe, or being stranded away from your family – various reasons can trigger such mental health disorders. Studies have also found that people who have experienced mental health disorders in the past are seeing their symptoms resurface, while others who have not, are seeing new symptoms. There are certain ways or steps which an individual or families in general can do to better nurture their mental health during this period.

At an individual level, it is important to continue being active and create a routine for ourselves. This means that although one might be at home all day, there need to be clear schedules for pleasure and work. We need to keep our bodies and minds healthy by doing things that we like to do on a daily basis, whether it be reading, gardening, music, or whatever activity keeps our spirits high. These are particularly important because of the strict lockdown rules in the country. One should avoid repeated viewing of news items on COVID-19, which are now broadcasted throughout the day. It is also important to have regular interactions with friends and relatives through electronic means, e.g. telephone or video calls.

At a family level, it is important to bring in a sense of cohesiveness and togetherness. Families need to ensure that there is a division of work within the family such that no one person is overloaded with household chores. This is also the time to do family activities which might otherwise have been difficult due to busy work schedules. We should also minimise repeated discussions on the negative consequences of COVID-19 and maintain an atmosphere of hope within the family. At last we can conclude that the long term solution to fighting microbes like COVID -19 is not complete isolation or endless disinfecting, but building immunity of the body and mind to fight any such external aggravators, because this is not the first or the last one.

Financial Empowerment in Times of Crisis

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As the whole of humanity is toiling through these unprecedented times of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown, the words of the great scientist Albert Einstein, "In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity," holds great significance. This is an opportunity in disguise to rethink our financial strategies, financial discipline and planning and expanding our sources of income. Everyone has a chance to start afresh. The first step for financial empowerment is distinguishing between what you 'need' and what you 'want'. A clear distinction between these, is the first step towards financial discipline and the constrained socialising and spending due to the restrictions of lockdown actually helps the cause. An effective rule is to use half the monthly income towards spending for basic necessities and the other half, for savings. Lockdown times are ideal to probe into various investment options such as stocks, debt funds and other derivatives. Reserving an amount towards health insurance is quintessential. A switch from credit cards to debit cards and minimising borrowing of money would be a right decision to make. Many practices previously not followed were newly 'adapted' across the globe which consequently resulted in a self-imposed financial discipline. For example, most families spend time in kitchen experimenting with new dishes and recipes. This directly saves money which otherwise would be spent dining out in restaurants. Over the top media streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime etc. saves a huge chunk of money which was spent on expensive multiplex movie tickets and pricey snacks. This even increases the bonding between families as there is nothing like a good movie night on a couch with some pop-corn and hot coffee. The bells and whistles of a luxury life were automatically curtailed. The search for cheaper or even free alternatives for a lot of paid services you avail eventually leads to financial empowerment. Financial empowerment is not limited to increasing savings - another major aspect is increasing income generating ources. The best strategy is to utilise

time to acquire skills through online platforms and gear up for a competitive world. Income is a direct derivative of your job or business; which requires skill. Numerous online jobs are available ranging from content writing to teaching to photography to advertisement review to social media reviews. We should keep our eyes and ears open to new opportunities. The lockdown has witnessed a never before rise in bloggers and entrepreneurs across various social media platforms. Cooking, lifestyle, movie, automobile and tech reviews, finance and technology related courses, the list goes on. So, all the aficionados out there, now is the time to get going. Put on your shoes and start running because never before has there been a time where following your passions and making money with it can actually materialise! Remember, though this difficult stretch of time will retreat soon; the 'new normal' would take over. The right step taken at the right time towards financial planning would give success and prosperity which would last a lifetime!

C-A-R-E

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With the advent of year 2020, the entire world is facing unprecedented tough time due to COVID-19. The pandemic has affected the normalcy in ways uncountable. People are not only fighting the deadly virus but also are struggling to stay calm and sane while doing so.

To maintain a balanced physical and mental health it takes a lot of purposeful efforts. Setting out to time for oneself is one of the most effective way to cope with the current situation and maintain a sound body, mind and soul.

I have penned a few thoughts that can be included in our daily self-care time and make the best use of it.

C-Cognizant: Being cognizant and conscious about our inner self and nurturing our mind with positive thoughts can have enormous effect on our life. Setting up a specific amount of time from our day to meditate and have a mind body connection can be really helpful to curb anxiety and reduce stress.

A-Alert: Depression is a growing menace among the younger generation during this Pandemic. Constant fiddling on phones, feeding

one's mind with a lot of redundant information causes huge mental strain. Thus, it is very important to be alert and mindful about what fodders are we giving to minds to ponder upon. Alert fully deciding to have positive thoughts and cutting out from negativity will help us to create an optimistic attitude to handle difficult situations.

R-Reading Scriptures: During these testing times it is immensely necessary to keep our faith on the supreme power and hope for a brighter future. Spending some time of the day in reading verses from the holy books can have a useful effect on us.

E-Exercise: With a lot of other things this virus has taught us how important it is to have a healthy immune system. The better our immunity the better is our power to fight the deadly virus. Along with eating nutritious food it is very important to have an exercise regime. Be it a brisk morning/evening walk or practicing yoga it is very essential to inculcate some form of physical movement in our daily routine.

The important thing is to remember that every obstacle is temporary. It may take a while but will definitely come to an end. We must harbour positive thoughts and devote some time to care for ourselves. The key to a healthy and happy life, is after all, bearing everything spiritedly. There is always a dawn after a dark night and as the English proverbs says- "Tough times do not last long, but tough people do".

Enjoy Your Beautiful Life and Be a Blessing to Others!

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As we all witnessed on March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus a pandemic.

Even before the announcement, governments and communities have been on high alert as the number of those infected with the virus rose exponentially.

With rapid changes in safety

guidelines—and as misinformation spreads—it's challenging for many to manage their health and mental well-being when faced with so many unknowns. For many public health crises, medical professionals such as doctors and nurses are often on the front lines, helping to diagnose and treat those impacted as well as providing essential guidance on how to stay safe.

Social workers play a unique active role during a public health crisis, one that's often overlooked. From offering emotional and mental health support to educating the larger community, their role entails navigating what is often a complex and evolving situation.

For many months, social service workers have been on the frontlines of promotive, preventative and treatment services during COVID-19 to ensure the health and well-being of the people they serve. In countries where many individuals are infected, workers are ensuring they have access to needed services, providing remote counseling and organizing ways to overcome isolation. In other communities, workers are distributing factual information to dispel myths and fears, reaching out to agencies to assist with preparedness, ensuring inclusive planning efforts and advocating to governments for increased support. Workers and associations are also advocating to governments for increased support. Workers and associations are also advocating to governments for recognition as essential service providers so they can continue in-person services when necessary.

Ideal Social Work Response to COVID-19

Given the rampaging onslaught of the pandemic on individuals and families, it is most probable that our response would be within healthcare institutions in urban, suburban, and rural locations, but also within economically-deprived households with no or inadequate medical insurance or knowledge of how to secure care. In this regard, social workers could assume the role of educator, counsellor, and referral, linking care-users to care-givers. Our counselling intervention should draw on resiliency- and relationship-building strategies, as well as strength-based practice combined with a blend of spirituality since many families and individuals- especially the older adults- find comfort from these dimensions mentioned below.

• Identifying vulnerable households at increased risk of severe illness due to COVID-19

• Ensuring to receive support to help prevent illness work with community leaders

• Identification of community based emerging needs to provide remote

psycho-social & mental support during COVID-19
• Utilizing latest technology to contact at-risk families and community
• To provide family-based alternative care options
• Respond to issues raised via child help
• Carry out contact tracing to identify COVID-19 positive people
• To educate and create awareness to people and community on pandemic protocols and guidelines at grass root level.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned responses Social Work needs to be given utmost priority during pandemic to keep everyone safe, healthy and virus free.

Stress-Free World

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During COVID-19 pandemic almost all people are experiencing mental stress in one way or other. Stress changes our body, mind and behaviours. We may feel overwhelmed with emotions like anxiety, sadness and depression. So it is important to come up with helpful ways of coping with stress. In this situation I would like to share some of my experiences. In July 2020, I attended an official meeting which was convened with all COVID-19 protocol. After two days I was informed that one of our friends, who attended the meeting, was COVID-19 positive. All the people who attended the meeting were scared and decided to go for fourteen days' quarantine.

Our friend became very serious and was admitted in the medical college. He was quiet young and healthy, even then he could not survive. This was a shocking news for us and we were very much depressed. We prayed to God almighty because He only gives relief in this painful situation. After that incident we were more careful about our physical and mental health and took precautionary measures to improve our immunity power as directed by medical experts. With balanced diet, regular exercise, enough rest to the body and mind stress was reduced. Our friends and relatives helped us and encouraged us to face this difficult situation.
Another experience I want to share is

about my cousin's daughter. She is working in an I.T. company and working from home during COVID-19 pandemic. She was over loaded with her job and worried a lot. Working from morning till midnight throughout the week without any rest, made her overwrought and disrupted sleep at night. She could not even do her household works or care her children. She was weeping and thinking of quitting the job. She shared her feelings and difficulties with myself and our relatives. On our request she talked to the authorities of the company and they gave her some relaxation in the timings. She scheduled her work to lighten her load and this gave some relaxation to her mind and body. She spent time with her loved ones and experienced relief from her stress. She started working systematically and more efficiently now.

Share our concerns and feelings with someone we trust, spent some time with our loved ones and do activities we enjoy. This gives confidence to deal with stressful situation. If we are extremely stressed, seek help from a counsellor for finding ways to cope with stress. Take care of our body with healthy food, regular exercise, and adequate sleep. Yoga and meditation reduces our anxiety and helps our mind to stay relaxed. Managing our time effectively reduces the risk of stress.

All of us are anxious about corona virus. Let us take care of ourselves and our family to create a stress free community.

Mental Health

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Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important in every stage of life. As reported by the "The Hindu" on November 8th 2020, a study concluded that individuals with cheerful, enthusiastic and positive attitude are less likely to experience memory loss with age. The mind and body, both should be healthy and sound. Only then, can one think normally and act instantly in any given situation.

How to acquire mental health?

At present humanity is facing the biggest challenge — The COVID 19 pandemic. People are facing a situation of uncertainty. New realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues are causing more stress and worry.

People are in a hurry to earn their livelihood to make way for their changing needs. The human mind is a great wonder, its full potential still unrevealed. It is full of thoughts, fear, joy or even disappointment.

People suffer from various difficulties, face a lot of problems which can either be related to health, financial or economical. We have to motivate people, so that they can make a more optimistic approach to life. We should try to understand people suffering from mental problems by being more supportive and compassionate, thus making them realize their full potential.

To achieve mental health they can start by staying positive, getting enough sleep, connecting and helping others, getting physically active, practice Yoga/ Meditation, healthy food and above all a good aim in their lives. "The greatest gift you can give someone is your Time, because when you give your time, you are giving a portion of your life, that you will never get back"

Protection of Children- A Bird's Eye View

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What can be done towards protection of children, being the members of a global institution? That is a great challenge we have to address. A paradigm shift in our mind is needed to bring about a drastic change in the prevailing scenario. At present thousands and millions of children are exposed to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, exclusion and/or discrimination every day. If they are protected, they can survive, grow, learn and develop to their fullest potential. Care and strategies have to be implemented to improve children's mental health and emotional well-being. A child's mental

health is as important as their physical health, particularly when it comes to dealing with stress, behavior, and academics.

Be role models to your children by doing what you say and saying what you mean. Your kids want you to be consistent, honest, and caring. Find ways to demonstrate that you love them and that they can trust you to keep them safe and healthy. Once they do not get the care and love they expect within their home they are forced to or attracted to places or persons of their happiness and solace. Now children are over protected and brought up as broiler chicken. Expose them to realities of life and make them aware of the dangers around them quoting examples and everyday experiences instead of giving advices alone.

Teach children the "language of feelings". Help them to recognize what they are feeling and to express their feelings in words, whether it is good or bad. Help your children grow by teaching many words for different emotions, and using examples when those feelings arise in themselves and others. Feelings are like important road signs. If we, adults understand them and listen to them patiently they can teach us where to go next and what to look for.

Learn to put yourself in your child's shoes. Now all are too busy to hear what children say. Give a listening ear to your child before offering advice or or getting angry. When children are upset, be careful to understand their point of view and try to address their problem as they see or experience whether you agree or not. If their emotions have been accepted and understood, your child can have better confidence in you, speak openly and listen to the advice you decide to give. If we hear the child's viewpoint patiently, it can reduce their defensive reaction. If children are allowed to grow up with their feelings not accepted, they will struggle in the future.

We be with our children emotionally and physically. Detoxify them with love and confidence. Approach them with empathy. Better not to give toys like gun which can generate offensive attitude in them. Always try to give positive appreciation

Try to spend more time with children. There should be family time when all the family members join and share their experience during that day. Better to have dinner all together exchanging the views and having a pleasant time. All these help to increase the bond between children and parents and to solve any problem.

Be Responsible Parents. Avoid situations which are not safe for your children. If you notice any abnormal behavior in your child , look out for the reason and provide help and emotional support.

Let us join hands and advocate against violent extremism and also sexual and gender based violence in our communities and all over the world. It is the need of the hour to spread the sense of fraternity and compassion to a greater extent. All women, young women, and girls should have the right to be safe and live free from fear and violence in all its forms. Addressing violence against women and girls must be a priority for all. We should strive to end violence against women and girls through local, national, regional, and international advocacy efforts, educational programs, resilience work, and support services.

Christian Life in Stressful Times

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Christian life is living with God with commitment,gracious, communication, compassion and conviction.

In a world of drastic changes we have to keep our temper balanced, maintain dignity and avoid negative thoughts. " I am the wine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit' St. John 15:5. If we stay faithful with God He will shower us with energy, enthusiasm, courage and creativity in the midst of all problems.

COVID-19 pandemic has very adversely affected the whole world. There is hectic change in the life of the people all over the world. This small virus has forced us to isolation, quarantine, lock down and social distancing. Moreover wearing of mask and washing our hands is now a part of our life to protect us from spreading the virus.

During this stressful COVID-19 situation try to be active listeners. Talk with family members and friends. Recognize the limitations of the situation but try to be cheerful. Make teams so that you get engaged in fruitful activities. This will help us to be more purposeful and we won't feel that lonely. Find more time to read meditate and for preparing notes on Holy Bible.

It is quite natural that crisis will come and hit us like big storms in the sea. We will get frustrated. Even in Holy Bible faithful Elijah, Jonah, Job, Jacob

got desperate. When they came back to God they were strengthened. Hope is the best medicine. The assurance in God will provide strength and courage. Job said "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes sees thee. Job 42:5

We have to identify the need of the hour. We can turn problems in to projects with God. Pray together and have good vision. We have to accept responsibilities and stop blaming each other. We must develop our talents and hidden potentials for the betterment of the society.

COVID-19 has very badly affected elderly people and children.

It is the duty of the middle aged to give relaxation to the elder people from their loneliness and try to have quality time with children. The middle aged are highly affected because of financial crisis. Kneel to God, be balanced, try to help those who are in need and console each other.

We have to try our level best to use resources and try to care and share with each other. Stay in touch and stay with grace. God will turn bitter into better and worst in to best. We have to be more faithful and fruitful. "bear each other's burdens and fulfil the law of Christ. Gal 6: 2

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord"

Psalm 27: 14

Time for Self-Care

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'Time for Self-Care' means finding time to take care of oneself, a concept which is not given much consideration in our society. How does one take care of one-self?

Following actions come to mind:

- Engage in daily yoga practice or exercise.
- Set aside time for meditation or prayer.
- Go for spa to make yourself feel good.
- Indulge in getting a manicure and

pedicure. Do it yourself if you can't afford a beautician.

• Take up a hobby such as cooking, painting, gardening, singing, reading, etc.

• Treat yourself to an outing, party, new clothes, movie etc., with your partner/loved ones.

• Be mindfully present to a song, or something you see, or a spiritual practice.

• Try to be well-dressed always and avoid being un-kempt.

• Make space or remove clutter in one portion or desk in the house and engage in this practice once every two days. Rearranging furniture always gives you a positive feeling.

• Provide a balanced diet for yourself and family. Proper diet can make you beautiful.

• Introduce a well-balanced timetable for all members of the family and make changes as and when required. Observe 'early to bed and early to rise' rule.

• Balance expenditure and income of the household. Understanding your finances will help you articulate steps to make it better.

• Be self-sufficient always. Avoid borrowing. Live within your means and save for a rainy day.

• Be well-informed of the news around you. It's a good habit to keep up with the news daily.

• Be aware of your looks; take care of your eyes, ears, hair, mouth, teeth, neck, hands, and feet. A well-groomed person is always presentable. You are lucky, if your vision is good so do not take it for granted. Eat well, and also remember to relax and exercise them. Consider yourself blessed if your hearing is good. And if you are hard of hearing, face it with courage as it is a difficult handicap to live with. Get yourself a proper hearing aid. Whatever hair you have, be glad of it. Keep it clean, brush well keeping your head straight as well as bending over to stimulate circulation. Pay equal attention to your mouth and teeth. Do periodical checks and dental cleaning. Your neck should be supported with a folded towel while sleeping/resting.

• Reach out to a needy person outside your home. Be charitable. Give liberally and you will get back in plenty.

Self-care is of paramount importance for one to lead a successful, fruitful life, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic situation which is far from over. We are still in the midst of it with no certainty of its closure. Therefore, the aforementioned activities if practiced would definitely help one to become confident and ready to face life's challenges. You might think it is difficult to find time. But where there is a will, there is a way. Enjoy your beautiful life and be a blessing to others!

Easing Life During the Pandemic

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1. Grateful Heart

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18

"16. Rejoice always, 17. Pray without ceasing. 18. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Let us get our eyes focusing on God than ourselves. The mighty God is in control and knows what he is doing. At all times we need to keep reminded of his goodness and blessings which is ready for us all. Soften your heart and let it be thankful to help recycle and refresh your spirits!

2. "Good" in the bad

Romans 8:28

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

This precious time has helped us to priorities and introspects. Many of us are bottled up at our homes working, but consider it a blessing or an opportunity to live life differently, improvising all the time to seek betterment in all fields. Think about the children too who have been able to explore their talent and gain. The readership of various knowledge bases also has helped us to steer through rough patches. Open your hearts and minds and absorb the good!!

3. Surround Optimism

Joshua 1:9

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Now is the time to analyze a glass of water and adjudge, is the glass half full or half empty! Optimism is contagious like the virus, more the exposure more the effect for a positive heart and mind. We hear of lots of atrocities most of which are form of abuses and are a repercussion of nothing but anxiety and pessimism. Therefore, one step a day towards positivity will help just like one act of goodness should do the trick, and we say "a spoonful of sugar lets the medicine go down."

4. Spread love and kindness

Luke 6 3:5

" But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the most high, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil." Of course being kind and loving is self explanatory, but there are a variety of ways that you can express it in. Whether it is opening a door to someone in need or delivering a requirement to the needy. It is one of the greatest attributes that one can have.

Most of all, as we can learn and apply in the words of Harold S Kushner, "Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are." Greater satisfaction is fetched in giving, try it!!

Mindfullness

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As the COVID-19 pandemic reached our community, a lot of people experienced stress like anxiety, fear, sadness, loss of interest, racing unnecessary thoughts, frustration, irritability, restlessness and feeling helpless. Physical symptoms like stomach upset , increased heartrate or other uncomfortable sensations are also a problem. These experience are all understandable in the face of this significant challenge. Looking after our wellbeing in times like this can help reduce stress and enable us to still take calm and effective action. How?We can all take protection against infection and prevent virus from spreading by self-isolation and social distancing. We can manage stress and anxiety by focusing the actions that are in our control.

Whatever we are feeling right now, its okay to feel that way. Allow our self to notice and express what we are feeling. This could be through talking with others, channeling our emotions into something creative like drawing, painting, writing, poetry, short stories, skits etc... Hearing good music, eating healthy meals, getting enough sleep are essential for mental health. Exercises like walking, running, cycling, swimming, yoga, will keep away from stress. Mind fullness and meditation exercises can help us to stay grounded in the midst of an emotional storm.

If you are living alone you can meet new people in small groups over zoom. Chat with friends and family, join on Online group.

Your Emotions Matter

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Have you heard about the tale of the two wolves? It goes like this -An Old Cherokee chief was teaching his grandson a lesson about life. He told his grandson "A terrible fight is going on inside me, it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is full of anger, envy, regret, greed, guilt, inferiority and ego. The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, empathy, truth, compassion and faith." The grandson thought about it for a moment and then asked, "Grandpa, Which wolf will win?" The old chief replied, "The one you feed."

This story has been taken from "Escape Anxiety: 8 Steps to Freedom Through Meditative Therapies" by Suzanne Jessee.

The same fight is going on inside you, me and every other person too. We know all the emotions good or bad cannot be got rid off from our life. But the quality of life depends on how much time, effort and energy you choose to give to the 'good wolf' or 'bad wolf.'

Right from the time of birth till death everyone is exposed to various stressful situation. But not all of us suffer from the stressors. Why? It depends on not how much stress we experience but it's how well we cope with it and how we respond to the stressors in our lives. Let us try to understand this better with a real life situation: You are driving from office after a day's hectic work, suddenly someone cuts you off in traffic. You brake to make space for him and to avoid collision. How do you react to this event? Will the reaction come from the 'good wolf' inside you or the 'bad wolf' inside you? If it is the good wolf, you would say to yourself, "I guess he must need to reach somewhere more urgently than I do." If it is bad wolf, you would think "What if I had an accident?! What if ended up in the hospital? Who would pay the bill then? I could have even lost my job"

In the first scenario the stressful moment would just wash over you and you would move on. But in the second scenario, you start thinking about all the terrible things that could have happened, which leads to the release of stress hormones. Here the problem is with our negative thoughts which releases negative emotions. That leads to stress which affects the body and mind. Stress is a process in which you view and react to the event or situation.

In my counseling experience, many

people report being affected by stress due to COVID-19 pandemic situation. What we need to understand is that, we cannot change the situation but we can make conscious choices about our emotions. A brief experience of stress can be beneficial for improving immune system and for motivating positive actions. But extreme or prolonged stress causes problems to mental and physical coping system. We can deal with stress in two ways:

1. Problem focused coping – Reducing stress by changing events that causes stress by changing our reaction to stress.

2. Emotion based coping - Reducing the emotional impact of stress by getting support, comfort and perceptive from others.

Tips for coping with stress

• Be aware of your stress.

• Adopting a humorous view towards life's situations.

•Always spend some time for yourself. (Engage in a hobby)

• Practice exercise.

• Good sleep.

• Concentrate on controlling YOUR OWN emotions and NOT on controlling emotions of others.

COVID Free World.. Social Wellbeing

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No visible symptoms, no fever (or) rash , no fracture (or) sprains, just a longing for something difficult to explain.....MENTAL HEALTH.

Past six months of corona outbreak and we are tired of hearing the words depression, frustration, stress, anxiety and so on.

Instantaneously, when the lock down was announced students were overjoyed with the hashtag no schools and colleges, but it turned out to be #nofriends, #nogames, #loneliness, #missingclasstime,and #onlineclasses. No shops to purchase food supplies, no food to eat oh! We can order it on the online store he will bring it to the house door, but poor people did not have any other choice but to starve.

Government slogans wear mask, use hand wash and sanitizer, confused with which brands to purchase, but all these were out of stock even for the health care workers, which showed the human less behaviour of mean people.

Staying at home saved children from the virus, but in some cases it made these innocents a prey to child abusers from their family and neighbourhood.

They said this virus is a deadly one, but it showed some concern on the children, who is deadly? The virus or these animal mentality people who don't know the difference between their mother and wife.

Work from home is not so bad at all for the high working class with their laptops sitting on the sofa, only the target gave a chill on their nerves, but it was not so for the daily wages labour, no job!, no work!, no money!, and no food!, after all starvation became a huge pandemic.

I am starving! and I am starving to death! do made a difference.
Postponing important events were totally easy and fine too but applying the same condition to surgery, normal and psychiatric treatment were not fine at all...
Discrimination of health care workers, showed the strain of this situation, virus did not affect the lungs of people, over all it diseased their thought process.
Doctors and other health care workers sacrificed their time and life....Their enemy was sleep and tiredness , which they defeated by the victory of saving an infected patient, but some thought this is the right time to get back the fees that they spent in medical school.....

Variety of news of famous people getting infected with COVID-19, such as from the royal throne to politicians, celebrities, journalists and even health care workers ,which showed that this is a virus not a human being to show favouritism , but news of them dying even treatment with latest technology , dried out the throat of the normal people out of fear.

Portraying the words COVID- 19 POSITIVE as a death sentenced scene by some medias and news feeds made some toxic people to give names, discriminate, abuse and pressure these innocent COVID-19 positive patients who were dead just by their words.

Some people hated the government slogans which made the virus to extend its summer vacation.
As a result mental health has reached to its station, that has made some to commit suicide.

Therefore let us join our hands to support, help, serve, comfort, respect, and co -operate to make our world a COVID-19 free one.

The M-Recipe for Covid19

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INGREDIENTS:

Mental health: Ensure that the mental health ingredient is strong as this can snap very easily during bouts of isolation or loneliness caused due to COVID-19.

Movement: Movement should be of the restricted kind as this will not be used much in the outside environment of the home. However, it should be able to be pliable within the home in the form of exercise, aerobics, Zumba & the like.

Mindfulness: Two varieties of mindfulness should be used – self-care as well as helpfulness towards others

Mastery: Take your time in looking for this because mastering this ingredient can be tedious & a lot of dedication is to be used.

Meaningful social relationships: In today's world, relationships have taken a whole new meaning – especially in the social media world; however if they are meaningful & efforts are made to keep the relationship alive, this can be an easy ingredient to find.

METHOD:

Take equal quantities of mental health, movement & self-care mindfulness – blend them well in the Mixie of Life, till it is of a smooth texture. Add an extra portion of mental health to strengthen the dish. Then add a generous portion of mastery of any particular hobby to divert the focus of a tedious day to a mind-calming 30 to 60 minutes of relaxation. Blend in the helping-mindfulness as often as possible – this is optional, however a very good ingredient to add every day. Carefully garnish the dish with social relationships – one gets a variety from all over – such that a beautiful pattern is formed. After baking it to a golden brown, ensure that it is rested for a good 8 hours before starting the recipe again the next day.

Confronting Stress

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For an article on coping with stress, this might start a teeny bit stressful. But truth be told, the best way to deal with stress is to confront it rather than to pretend it doesn't exist. We all have our favorite stress busters. Some of us read, some paint, some binge watch series, some travel, and this list could sabotage my word limit if it goes on. While these achieve their motive of distracting us from stress, they often tend to get addictive. That translates as Deadlines, Cramming, and ugh! Mission successfully failed. There's nothing wrong with our stress busters, but anything in moderation should be the motto. If it exceeds limits it does more harm than good. (You know, like homework.)

Back to confrontation, what does it mean to confront stress? Is it like declaring war on stress? (Hey stress, how about a dance-off?) Or is it making posters like "Hey Stress, I'm the BOSS."? Not quite, let me take you through it step by step.

STEP 1: ACCEPT THAT YOU ARE STRESSED

The first step in confronting an enemy is acknowledging his existence (insert war stratagem). Often people tend to blame themselves and their mood swings for being emotional and tired, while it is the stress that is wreaking havoc. Know your stress. Why are you stressed? When does it happen? Then you can plan on specific interventions to combat your stress.

STEP 2: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR TIME

Most of us stress over wasting time or the lack of it thereof (Oh to have been alive before they invented the clock!). Here are two tips to help you optimize your time.

1. Use your Phone. (Wait. What?!)
We always carry them around, so might as well put them to good use. All phones have alarms and planners and it's time to finally use them. But, here's the twist; don't time your tasks, instead, limit your leisure time to a particular duration. We don't need encouragement to take breaks from work; we need it to get back to work.

2. Sleep. (No, I'm not giving out my lockdown schedule by mistake.)
Not sleep all day (Disney princess

feels) but Power naps. Power naps can improve our efficiency. When missing out on sleep it wears you down, recharge with a power nap.

STEP 3: PRAY FOR PEACE

There is a peace that comes from God that nothing on earth could bring us. This is the most important step. When the peace of God which transcends all understanding guards our hearts (Philippians 4:7), we are not only relieved of our stress but also become empowered to do His will.

Finally, sisters, Pressure is external, Tension is internal and they both result in stress. So take that break. Make that green tea with a hint of lemon zest. Grab your Bible and spend time with the Creator amidst all the creation. Happy de-stressing!

Sweet are the Uses of Adversity

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God is the Creator. The desire to create or to make is a deep yearning of the human soul. From time immemorial the human race has kept on ruminating, creating new ideas, or forming new combinations from old thoughts and images. Aristotle observed that the mind of man is superior because of its ability to create a metaphor which is a verbal picture or image. Men and women have contributed to artistic creations such as music, sculpture, visual arts, and genres of literature. Life is the raw material and art is the outcome of the imagination of the human psyche. The truth behind every perception is apprehended by a person with finer sensibilities through imagination.

The poet, John Keats said, "What imagination seizes as beauty is truth". Creativity doesn't wait for the perfect moment. The web of life is woven with good and bad together. History tells us that Art flourished not only in times of political stability and peace but also in times of war and conflict, oppression, and suppression. During the Indian freedom struggle, several poets and dramatists including Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Subramania Bharathiar inspired the people and helped their drooping souls to soar and envisage the glimmering light at the end of the dark tunnel.

Coming to our present situation, the year 2020 which started with great expectations turned out to be one of turbulence, uncertainty, and fear with the visit of the pestilence, COVID-19. But the Rays of Hope continue to shine like the stars illumining the Milky Way by night. This has been a season of enormous creative activity on the part of the young and old. The mind-blowing advancements of technology with Zoom, Google Meet, and Television have inspired the indomitable human spirit to rise like the phoenix out of its ashes. Apart from the contributions of renowned artists, ordinary people have been empowered to do extraordinary feats. Perhaps the faceless citizens of the world could never have had the opportunity to articulate and bring out the talents that hitherto had lain dormant in them. The lockdown has made indifferent people recognize and acknowledge the artistic achievements of the rich and the poor.

Social distancing is no deterrent to move forward. The MASK has become iconic, artistic ones ranging from inexpensive to the most expensive. What is funny but still innovative is making eatables in the shape of masks. Culinary arts, craft making, dancing, singing, play-acting taught on webinars were unheard of before. Corona has been the theme of remixed tunes, advertisements, naming of children, practical jokes, digitally portrayed 'fun and frolic'. The therapeutic effect of art has reached many a household. The eBooks have triggered self-expression.

As this is a YWCA platform I can mention that God has helped His children to be more creative in spiritual activities too. GLEAMS OF CREATIVITY STILL ABIDE!

Peace I Leave With You... Positive Wellbeing

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She was a timid girl in an engineering college pursuing her final year with a pack of dreams in her heart. She thought that after completing her studies, she would be a butterfly out from the cocoon with flying colors. Days rolled on. She was overwhelmed as the completion of her course was

approaching. One fine day, she heard the applause and shouts of joy of girls in her hostel. She suddenly opened the door of her hostel room to find out the reason for their happiness. She was informed that the government had given them a 10-day holiday due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She jumped with joy and went on to pack her things to go home after a 12-hour journey. As she expected, she came home and spent the holidays with her family. But as days went on, she began to brood over her life. Life was difficult for her, as she could not decide what she was striving for. She began to think of her future which was visible but ambiguous. She was mentally disturbed and wanted answers to her questions in life. As she was a very talented girl and the only girl to her parents, they were very much worried about her.

Alas! The COVID-19 situation has affected everyone's mental health. For a 5-year old, she wants to go and see her friends at school. For a Class 10 student, she wants to go to school and learn her lessons, as this online class is affecting her visual health. As for a college student, she wants to learn more by using laboratory equipment, practical classes, and projects. For a final year student, she needs to search for a job which invites application from fresher's. For a home-maker, she is worried about the finance of her family. As for a working woman, she longs to find some time with her family amidst her work from home.

Every woman and man in society is affected mentally. If we are mentally ill, we will not be able to do other things that we ought to do. Mental health is very important to everyone in this world to survive and lead a successful life. Jesus says in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid". The Lord is our only hope to cling on. Let us join our hands and make our loved ones peaceful amidst this situation. Stay safe and be blessed!

Be Positive..Drive Away Stress

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Stress is caused by different reasons for different people. When the COVID-19 virus invaded India, a lockdown was announced and people were gripped with fear. Even scientists, medical researchers, etc

couldn't explain the deadly virus. People had to stay at home. Shops, restaurants, schools, colleges, worship places, and transport systems were all closed. Many people had to start working in their homes. E-pass was introduced to go to interstates and districts. It all led to chaos, confusion, and constant worry for people of all ages.

Prayer and Meditation: The first and foremost reason for stress is fear. For all religions, seeking and submitting to God seemed the way. As a Christian, I thought of Jesus as the prime solution and cast my worries and anxieties upon the Lord and thus relieved.

Reading: My tension increased when I watch the pathetic scenes on news. So I decided not to watch the news frequently. Instead, I instructed the newspaper guy to bring me certain magazines to concentrate on reading. I also have spiritual magazines that instill hope and confidence in me.

Cutting down going out and started storing: Before corona, I used to ride Honda Activa (I'm turning 71 next month) to get fresh vegetables from the farmers' market nearby, chicken, meat, and fish. As choosing and buying by myself satisfy me I do not want to lose it by buying online. I limited my shopping, going out rare with precaution.

Vegetable Gardening: I have a garden, mainly flowers but now I allotted space for vegetable growing, gaining knowledge from my vast friends. This gives us pleasure cum gain and is surely a good stress-buster.

Cleaning and Arranging: Being a member of local clubs and YWCA, I have lots of friends. All regular meetings were canceled. No outings, no receptions this gives me ample time in the evenings. So it diverted me to clean and arrange the shelves, wardrobes, etc. Now got a bundle of clothes to donate to the Blessing Youth Mission (will come to collect it next month).

Social Servicing: Even for our birthdays and anniversaries, we didn't buy a new dress. No invitation for parties and weddings so could save an amount that is diverted to social servicing through our church youth who distribute free lunch to the poor and needy.

Walking, gathering on the terrace: The terrace is used not only for walking but also is for our gathering to eat, chat and play. Such leisurely talks relieve us from all tensions, thus a new opening to our previous hurry burry life.

Culinary Art: No hotels and so no outside food. My grandchildren are having online classes and those on

work from home have to be fed with a variety of snacks and food. Thanks to friends and YouTube which seems to happen in every household.

Drawing and painting: I have revived my drawing and painting interest and have also participated in a poster competition held by ICCR.

Finally, these are a few of my favorite things to do to drive away stress.

Stress Busters

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Don't forget your mask! Sanitize! Hearing this instantly evokes a stress response in us, and when experienced chronically, like in the last 10 months, it's not good news. If you are feeling a moderate or high level of stress, know that you are not alone. While life is more stable now than when COVID-19 began, we are collectively grieving the loss of our normal life. Stress manifests as irritability, frustration, anger, fear, worry, sadness, helplessness, etc. While we feel physically okay, we need to check how we are feeling mentally.

Some of the distressing symptoms people have been experiencing since the pandemic began are persistent or excessive worry, difficulty in concentrating, sleep problems, panic attacks, signs of depression, or just not feeling good to name a few. Remember, experiencing stress is not abnormal, however, if you are feeling the above, it means that the stress levels are peaking and it's time to get help. The below are the best ways to manage stress, so don't be fooled by how simple they are to do:

• **Exercise, Eating and Sleeping:** Cardiovascular exercise and good nutrition can enhance mood and combat stress along with 6-8 hours of sleep each night. Do this regularly for an easy and simple way to manage even big stressors.

• **Routine:** Set a routine and follow it without fail. Routines and schedules are key as they give us a sense of control which helps us feel less stressed. Irrespective of your stress levels, if you do the above regularly, you will be able to manage the stress in your life.

• **Be grateful:** Gratitude has positive effects on wellbeing, so think of something each day you need to be grateful for and maybe do it with your family as well.

• **Take breaks:** Taking periodic breaks to deep breathe, meditate, sip a cup of tea, watch a fun video, play a game, daydream or anything you like to rejuvenate yourself.

• **Connect with others (virtually):** As humans we are social beings and emotional connections make us thrive. Try and talk to one person daily who you care about and who cares about you. Talking to people who love you has been shown to significantly lower stress.

• **Reach out:** Being compassionate and helping those in need enhances our wellbeing so do what you can to help others. Just be sure you take care of yourself as well, before you help others.

• **Limit COVID-19 news:** Limit how much scary information you allow yourself to absorb and try to filter information to focus on what allows you to feel positive. You control what you hear and what you read, so protect yourself from negative and fearful information.

• **Be positive:** Dealing with challenges begins with nurturing a positive frame of mind. Focus on the present and what is controllable right now to feel less helpless and reduce stress about the future.

Use the above coping strategies to combat stress during this pandemic and remember to ask for help anytime you need it.

Financial Empowerment and Budgeting During Pandemic

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It was like fiancé management before an arranged marriage within the given period! Yup, you read it right! Have to make plans for the D-day! Especially clothes, decors, invitations, those mega spreads of the buffet, a grand banquet hall, purchasing gold bangles, jhumkas, Kundan sets, rings, anklets, polkis, and jadaus! Let those aesthetic

jewels be from Amrita Singh's and the lehenga would be from the house of Rituji's! Must have a honeymoon shoot in Paradise Island of Maldives! Thus imagined…

The role of a woman as the pillar of the family is completely frozen up to handle the liquidity shortage that she had all these years…as monthly budgeting! All had incredibly different times in handling cash flows with restricted mindsets! Even a small scale enterprise and medium concerns had potential growth reductions. Unemployment raised! That was a painful panic which made us think about financial empowerment in all of its ways! Our budgeting both at the country level and within the family sector has become more uncertain, unpredictable. Probably it has to lead to decreasing chart ever!

Corporates started analyzing their ABC changes and cost-cutting methods in a huge way! "Single penny should not be squandered" must be everyone thought hereafter! People were stuck-up with miserable choices about what to spend and what not to?! That gave an approach of a minimalistic one!

As simple as that we would have bought `N` number of clothes and filled up the wardrobes before... But during this pandemic, we thought of cutting unwanted expenses not to buy even a Kurti sometimes! Awww that's an amazing changeover of women-folks! We tried to keep up the good savings and took that out for the most needed commodities! I would say that itself a very wise investment describing "Less is still more".

It needs an unflinching determination and indomitable will -power to have a proactive analysis for this type of cash management. Apart from usual expenditures, we have been taught by COVID-19 not to make any rash decisions on purchase levels.

Many people have turned to their roots and started living simply. We have begun to list out the things that is required at this particular moment for living. Priority does matter - saving the extra money leads to a great future. Eliminating clutter gives happiness. This increases the efficacy of budgeting.

As Macroeconomists usually work on inflations, cash flow, and outputs, upon realization even a single citizen during this pandemic has become one. They say Marriages are made in heaven. But it's been carried out through zoom and skype nowadays. Let us train ourselves to this new normal situation and come up with a minimalistic approach to get maximum benefits of our balance sheets done!

New Realities

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On the 7th of May, Kerala waited with bated breath for the first Vande Bharat repatriation flight from Abu Dhabi to land at CIAL. At 10:57 pm, Air India touched down on the runway with 177 Malayalis. Television cameras zoomed into the Arrival Terminal exit to catch a glimpse of the first passenger to step out of those glass-doors. What was his or her story? Terminated from his company or expiry of job visa? Pre-existing medical conditions or a wife who is pregnant? COVID-19 positive or not? Whatever be the reason, the expat has got to be relieved to return, for sure.

That was two months ago.

Today, his sense of relief has been replaced by something more sinister. The compulsory quarantine period is over; the voluntary self-isolation week is also complete. It's not the likelihood of mortality that's worrying him now. He's faced with a deeper, disturbing fear – what next? "The Gulf Malayali NRI had a status of his own", says Irudaya Rajan, professor, Centre for Development Studies. "He could demand bigger dowries and was pursued by banks and investors. His homecoming-holidays became to be called as the 'NRI season' back home. "Even though today he is not able to make as much money as someone twenty years ago, the Gulf-Kerala connect is an inseparable reality." The Kuwait invasion, the 2007 recession have all been factors behind his return earlier. So the concept of "return' is not new to him. Plus, the Gulf countries do not offer PR status. So even if everything went well, 'return' is mandatory.

But COVID-19 was sudden and unexpected. "For the first time in the history of migration, the Gulf Malayali has been forced to return with nothing." And now, all he can think of is re-migration.

The idea of re-migration can stem from a sense of denial, says Dr Varghese Punnoose, HOD of Psychiatry, Alappuzha Medical College. "Those above 50 years tend to be realistic but the young are needy and cannot imagine settling for less. To escape the anxiety and the bleakness, they shut down and focus on re-migration."

Varghese Punnoose claims that mental health professionals in Kerala must anticipate the risks to the expatriate's emotional health. This sense of uncertainty can be a fertile ground for anxiety disorders and substance abuse. "When I get

referrals saying un-cooperative COVID-19 patient, it usually means a substance-using expatriate whose emotional health is at risk."

Women, especially, are bearing the brunt of keeping things sane at home for the sake of their families. "There is a cultural expectation on women to be less demanding, to get her family to pitch in, to silence her stress and tensions."

Before COVID-19, a Gulf returnee without a job had only lost his economic value. Today, he is deemed a 'dangerous disease-carrying agent'. The wives too have lost their employment.

Without unconditional family support, pro-NRI policies and a progressive society, these families will barely be able to eke

COVID Musings: Confusion, Stress and Empowerment in Times of Turmoil

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When the COVID-19 virus first made its presence known in China, for most of us the numbers were mere statistics, protected as we were by the safety net of distance. The human mind has this curious way of being impervious to realities that occur far away from its circle of concern. So when the virus crossed the borders and attacked us with an intensity that we were unprepared for, the result was turmoil for individuals, families and communities. But for me, there were a number of takeaways from this crisis.

One lesson Covid taught me was **the need for self-reliance.** Till then, my culinary experiments were limited to weekend forays into the kitchen. I was quite resigned to the realization that the title of "Superwoman" who juggles workplace and domestic responsibilities with equal ease and efficiency, was something I could never aspire to. I was convinced that the wisest decision I had ever made was to outsource my areas of non-expertise (decidedly a more flattering term than incompetence) to those more qualified than I to do justice to the same. After all, business organizations tapped the power of outsourcing to boost their competitiveness, I argued, in case the family was inclined to ascribe my lack

of involvement in the household domain to laziness. However, my lockdown experiences harshly corrected my misconceptions. Managing the routine chores of cooking and home management on a daily basis challenged my creativity, resilience and organizational skills to an extent that no workplace crisis ever had. When the maid finally reappeared, though I was more delighted to see her than Romeo may have been at the sight of Juliet in the heyday of their romance, I realized that nothing empowers like self-reliance.

Another COVID-19 lesson: **"Less can really be more"**. A de-cluttering experiment I embarked upon showed me that a significant part of the things accumulated over the years were those I didn't need, and I confess with remorse, hadn't even used. That miracle health supplement which I paid a fortune for and was guaranteed to be the cure-all for many ills, that wonder cosmetic which had lured me with its promise to take years off my age, I sadly noted, were well past their expiry dates, and had not even been opened. I could identify with the wisdom of Socrates, who when questioned by a disciple as to why an enlightened soul like him was seen in the markets of Greece (or someplace akin to our present day shopping malls, replied that this practice showed him how many things were available that he didn't need. Yes, though late in life, COVID-19 taught me that whether food, clothing, possessions or relationships, we human beings need far less than we think we do, to lead a happy and contented life.

COVID-19 taught me about **the power of love and community**; to look beyond the superficial for deeper sources of power and meaning. Despite the norm of "social distancing", I learnt that we could build stronger bonds with our fellow beings and find creative ways to help each other navigate the challenges during these difficult times.

Time For Self-Care

BEENAMACHADO
YWCA OF PALAY
BEENAMACHADO@GMAIL.COM

"And in the end, it's not the years in your life, it's the life in your years"
- *Abraham Lincoln.*

Just like 'Self-help is the best to help' I would say that *Self-care is the best way to care* and the right way to progress in life through which one can

reduce stress and enrich the quality of life. Self-care helps drain the strain!

The importance of self-care can be felt when it comes to commitments relating to the mind and body. During the lockdown, I had the opportunity of attending Mindfulness/ heartfulness sessions for eight weeks where Dr.Denley Elizabeth, Sydney, and Mr. Ariel Mercurio, Switzerland explained about the *amygdala* in the brain that is responsible for a person's emotions. As such, "Do more of what makes you happy" would seem to be a very good place to start!

What self-care means to each one may differ from person to person, and to start from the very beginning, its **soul-search and spiritual self-care** considered most significant…I begin each day, first, seeking and speaking to God rather than man, and my day is well spent with divine strength from above. Mark 1:35 says 'Very early in the morning… Jesus got up…. went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. How else could He have coped with the nuisance and nonsense of mankind, while on earth?

Well, while I was pursuing MSW, I was given to understand that self-care was kinda' taboo being a professional social worker but very soon I began realizing that there can't be a mural without a wall. We are the temple of of God…says I Corinthian 3:16. For a person's holistic wellbeing, importance needs to be given to **physical and psychological self-care.** However, it is vital to strike a harmonious balance… Maslow's hierarchical levels within a pyramid, bottom-up, are physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs. It's no coincidence, according to me, that 'listen' and 'silent' are spelt with the same letters,'coz even if a person is silent, as a professional counsellor one ought to *listen* to her/ his *silence,* and I listen patiently but speak a lot, about all that I had listened, to my spiritual Husband, the best Psychologisteva'.

Rethinking priorities, next would be **professional self-care.** After ten years of being a social worker in SCAD (NGO), I've taken up the job of being with children and youth. Our institution makes sure we are live on video for all our classes/ meetings, which is also about netiquettes and grooming. Though the pandemic doesn't permit my parlor visits, I take time-off for a homemade face-pack or henna hair-care, messy though, as a self-care measure; and also the usual morning walk, with social distancing though, for that healthy BMI between 20 and 25, also an opportunity to break away from the rush of everyday life.

Last but not the least, fostering and sustaining relationships, and technology helps a lot. While work meetings are on Microsoft Teams, I'm on zoom or WhatsApp to patch up with my children and grandchildren, as well as siblings in Glasgow and Sydney, besides digital party with old school friends and even teachers, as well as usual time for visiting the sick/ senior citizens now, as well as coordinating google meet prayer and Bible study. Besides, I'm also hooked to watering my plants (I grow, harvest, and stir-fry bitter gourds, beans n greens), feeding my hens/ cockatiel and fish. A real discovery will be my cross-stitch, I had been doing way back in the 90s, and which Y Palay is offering now, and picking up my art-work again, brings a sense of calm.

That said, evaluating things taken for granted, I delve into a lot of online Cambridge courses as well as webinars, to keep abreast of the trending requirement. Self-care, my secret to looking younger than my age, as many complement… And I hope my message hits home!

God's People are Blessed to Bless Others

DAPHNE ZOTHANSANGI
YWCA OF AIZAWL
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You are never too old to make an impact. Lead by example. Be kind and compassionate to one another. These are just a few of the lessons we learn from Mrs. Nghakliani.

Who is Mrs. Nghakliani? She is 95-year old resident of Aizawl, Mizoram, and mother-in-law to Mrs. Zothansangi, long-term vivacious Board Member of YWCA of Aizawl. When we came face to face with the pandemic in March, rather than waiting for others to take action and care for others, Mrs. Nghakliani took it upon herself to do what she could.

Mrs. Nghakliani generously donated her late husband's one month pension, Rs. 14,500, to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Not only did she donate monetary, but she gave of her time and talents by sewing much needed face masks. This was at a time when there was a great shortage of face masks and PPE equipment in the State. The masks sewed by Mrs. Nghakliani were distributed to frontline workers.

Such an outpouring of love in action by Mrs. Nghakliani moved many across the nation as her generosity was shared in various media outlets, including those abroad! Mrs. Nghakliani has continued to be resolute in her efforts to be a blessing for others throughout these challenging times. She has continued to sew face masks for various groups and give enthusiastically to NGOs including the Bible Society.

They say that one's true character is revealed in times of crisis. This pandemic has revealed the true character of the Mizo people. Namely, the sense of community, the shared desire to support and care for each other, and their enterprising and resilient nature. Furthermore, Mrs. Nghakliani illustrates that where there is a will there is a way. We are truly blessed to have such a fierce God fearing woman as an example for us all.

Teen Mental Stigmas

ANN KORAH
YWCA OF KOTHAMANGALAM

"Mental Health is not a destination, but a process. Its about how you drive, not where you are going"
This is a wonderful quote which I got to read few days back in an article ….. Even though I'm still 15, this statement touched my heart somewhere. So when I further thought about this, I realised it is a piece of advice that is very much necessary in everyone's life, especially during these lockdown days ,mental health is something that one shouldn't compromise!

All of us have must heard or read that being healthy is important during COVID-19 but very often we forget that being healthy includes a stable and happy mind as prime factor.

"Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways"

As a teenager I have always felt that everyone is belittling teenagers generally and that have egos bigger than their heads or they just don't know the value of things. Most of their problems are treated silly in fact!

Many of us teenagers, at least the majority of them are depressed or are being unhappy due to some unpleasant situations which may have occurred in their school or neighbourhood or even at their own home.

Everyone has their own insecurities. I do understand that adults have bigger problems, responsibilities, but that doesn't justify yourselves always for taking your kids or teenagers problems as silly' .

During pandemic situations, each one of us are restricted from going out and meeting up with each other. All of us can get moody. So ,me a fifteen year old girl is requesting every adult out there to take your teenagers ,they may be your niece, nephew, cousin, brother or sister, their problems seriously and don't pressurize them unnecessarily by comparing them with others .

Just as I mentioned earlier, health can't be just about what you eat, it's always about what you are thinking and feeling too…!

Time For Self Care…For Others Too!

SAIRA JAMES
YWCA OF KOTHAMANGALAM

As time is a very valuable component in everyone's life, let's reassure the quality of time, for people around you as well as yours!

There is certainly a time bridge in which only, majority of people are moving on, connecting-mentally/spiritually/physically, the good times and bad times…. so currently in which bridge you are in?

Thriving out of bad times to better days or trying best to pull on good old days in terms of friends, money, health, spiritual life, mental status, career wise, academic wise etc or in a moderate mode of constant graph….thinking nothing is going to improve! Whatever be the state its fine, provided we haven't lost the hope for doing good, breathing good, speaking good, and thinking good…..it gives us all courage and energy to fight against all negative news which makes us think no good is happening at all around us! Actually we ourselves can

make a change here…by improving the quality of time for others around us…it can be anything from a happy smile to our neighbour, supporting words to kids, listening ears to in-laws, prayerful words for parents, helping hands to maid, sharing jobs for juniors, wishing a good day to husband and so on……yes each and everyone's time is valuable,

• be it our kids, getting a chance of clearing a concept with his or her teacher adds value to time spent for learning it

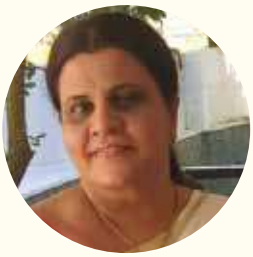
• be it our maid, getting to know that she gets a helping hand in sharing a tough job

If we can respect that value factor" we can bring in a great amount of collaborative effort in framing each day…it need not be a strict output at the end of the day whereas it can be realizations of the fact that we are not alone, things can still work out, hopeful for tomorrow, that each soul is counted and we are valued in our own positions, in making the place we live, a better one!

Come out of that mind set that me-time alone will work, it actually works better with our loved ones so that a selfless concept can be shared to our next generations!

LOCAL NEWS

Thodupuzha



LOVELY SAJEEV ,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF THODUPUZHA, SWR

In spite of COVID-19 epidemic, Thodupuzha YWCA has done well in all the parameters during this period. Some of the main activities are furnished here under.

1. Water purifier costing rupees 33000/- donated to District Govt. Hospital Thodupuzha.

2.. Education Front – We donated 4 television sets to the following schools:

1) St. Sebastian's School Thodupuzha – 2 sets
2) Perumpillichira School – 1 set
3) Karimkunnam Higher Secondary School – 1 set

3.Marriage Assistance to poor girls

1) Gold ornaments worth Rs.1,26,000.00 to a poor girl.
2) Rs. 5000/- paid to a poor girl through Mother & Child Orphanage Paynkulam

4. Medical Assistance

1)Treatment assistance- Rs. 10,000/-
2)Treatment assistance to Cancer Patient. Rs. 2,500/-
3)To a poor girl - Rs. 5,000/-
4) To Cancer Patient Rs. 4,000/
5)To a Kidney Patient for buying Pedestrial Fan Rs. 2,500/-

5.Special day virtual celebrations conducted during the report period.

1) World environment day celebrated on 05/06/2020
2) Independence Day celebrated on 15/08/2020
3) Onam celebrated on September 08/09/2020
4) Gandhi Jayanthi celebrated on 02/10/2020
5) Children's day celebrated on 14/11/2020

WEBINARS

1. In association with the New Man College, Thodupuzha, Mrs. Betty Iype

National Vice President gave an informative talk on " Cashing The Corona Time"

2.On September 12th Jessy Xavier former senior Technical Officer POSCO conducted a class on legal protection against sexual crimes under POCSO Act and child right.

3 As part of a certification course of Newman College Thodupuzha, aiming at Life Skill Development, YWCA Thodupuzha held a cooking class on Bake the Cookies by Mrs. Reshma Liz Thomas on 10/10/2020.

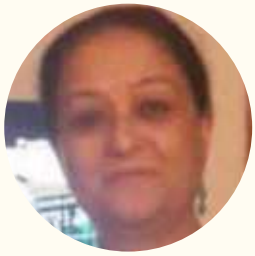
4 Another cooking class on Baking Cakes and Making Wine conducted on 07/11/2020 at Newman College Thodupuzha under the leadership of Mrs. Biby Jose and K J B Lizbeth.
5.Every month Bible Quiz competitions.

Television sets donation to schools

Bake the Cookies

Water purifier donation to District Govt. Hospital Thodupuzha

Simla



VIDHUPRIYA CHAKRAVARTY ,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF SIMLA, NR

WORLD YWCA DAY

This year on the occasion of World YWCA Day, YWCA of Simla contributed Rs. 30,000/- towards the H.P. COVID-19 response fund to the district administration of Shimla. Another amount of Rs. 10,000/- was donated to the Diocese of Amritsar towards COVID-19 relief fund.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION / TREE PLANTATION

YWCA of Simla celebrated Independence Day by organizing Tree Plantation in the YWCA compound on 15th August 2020. Members, staff and volunteers of the YWCA participated in the same.

PROTEST AGAINST RAPES

YWCA of Simla in collaboration with SYSCO (Synergistic Youth Social & Cultural Organization) organized a Protest March on 5th October 2020 against the continuous gruesome rapes in our country demanding fair trial and swift justice.

MONTHLY PRAYER & FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

Monthly Prayer & Fellowship (online & physical) meetings are being organized each month by the YWCA for the members.

TOGETHER WE CAN ....
RISE FOR JUSTICE
LOVE
RESPECT
UNITY
END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
JUSTICE
STOP RAPE
PUMA

Secunderabad

GENEVIVE ANGELA, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF SECUNDERABAD, SER
SECBAD_YWCA@HOTMAIL.COM

YUVATA Series / Y-Wing (Virtual Meetings):

YWCA of Secunderabad started the Yuvata series to reach out to students during the COVID-19 /pandemic, as it has impacted the mental health of students. It was initiated to engage the students and adolescents in a meaningful way, in order that they are able to cope with their stress levels, learning to deal with the current challenges, stay connected and healthy. The following are the series of sessions taken for St. Pious X Degree & PG College and St. Peters International Residential School.

Date	Name of the Programme	Speaker	No. of Participants
21-Jul-20 08-Aug-20	Biggest lesson learnt during COVID-19 & the changes one will make	Bakhita Francis & Anjana Ramanathan	188
10-Oct-20 13-Oct-20	Eat Right & Stay Fit	Dr. Dharini Krishnan	200
07-Nov-20	The Art of Decoupage	Mahrukh Patell	61
17-Nov-20	Everyday Easy Makeup Application	Bakhita Francis	100

Programmes for Youth:

Date	Name of the Programme	Speaker	No. of Participants
29-Jun-20	International Day against Drug-Abuse &Illicit-trafficking (Theme: Better Knowledge for Better Care)	Dr. Phanikanth (Asst Prof. IMH)	124

12-Aug-20 18-Aug-20	International Youth Day (Youth Engagement for Global Action)	Isidore Phillips (Director-Divya Disha)	159
08-Sep-20 10-Sep-20 11-Sep-20 15-Sep-20	World Suicide Prevention Day	Dr. Diana Monteiro (Counselling-Psychologist)	244

Membership Programmes:

Date	Name of the Programme	Speaker	No. of Participants
24-Apr-20	World YWCA Day-We Think, We Share, We Speak	Seema Victor	34
26-May-20	Biggest lesson learnt during COVID-19 & the changes one will make	Ms. Bakhita Francis	20
18-Jun-20	Building Resilience	Dr. Diana Monteiro	43
23-Jul-20	Sing-a-long	Nymphea Reddy	20
20-Aug-20	Menopause & Post-Menopausal Issues	Dr. Rashna Chenoy, FRCOG MRCS	21
04-Sep-20	Cookery demo	Chef Jason	69
17-Oct-20	The Art of Decoupage	Mahrukh Patell	58
19-Nov-20	Cookery Quiz	Nymphea Reddy	29

Religious Emphasis:

Quiet Hour: Due to COVID-19 and the lockdown, since June 2020, our Quiet Hour (prayer) was conducted virtually on Zoom. We start each meeting with Praise & Worship, Bible readings, expository teaching from the scripture, intercessory prayers for various persons, our committees, programmes, India & the world. Here are the details:

Date	Name of the Programme	Speaker	No. of Participants
25-Jun-20	The Bridge (to someone's life)	Sharon Solomon	35

16-Jul-20	Victory in the Battle	Dr. Beena Dorcas	23
25-Aug-20	International Youth Day (Youth Engagement for Global Action)	Isidore Phillips (Director-Divya Disha)	159
12-Aug-20 18-Aug-20	Women in Bible – taken burden during crisis	Sr. Aminah Varingva	19
16-Sep-20	Don't blend in but stand out in darkness	Nirmala Abraham	22
20-Oct-20	Religion in Covid19	Fr. Anthony Sagararaja	30
13-Nov-20	Weaving Fabrics of Support (World Week of Prayer)	Madhu Bala Ernest	35

Community Development:
Self-Sustainability: Vasanthamma, a helper from Kowkoor Community requested us to help her as the community project is temporarily closed. She is 60+ age, has a mentally challenged daughter. We reached out by helping her setup a vegetable stall in collaboration with another NGO, The City Transformers. She is now independent, earning her livelihood and expressed her gratitude.

Trivandrum

NEENA THOMAS, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF TRIVANDRUM, SWR

During the abrupt nationwide lockdown imposed in March 2020, YWCA of Trivandrum decided to keep the Working Women's Hostel functional all through the pandemic.
Following all safety measures and participating in the Break the Chain measures, we were able to ensure many of the working women in the city a safe place to stay.
As masks became an important and necessary accessory, within a short span of time, almost 1000 masks were stitched and handed over to the Health authorities of the Corporation of Trivandrum to be given to the immigrant labourers living in labour camps in the city.

YWCA also donated Rs. 50,000/- worth of food provisions to the Mayor of the Corporation of Trivandrum to donate to the community kitchen that was preparing meals and distributing to the needy people in the city at a time when all the hotels were closed.

An amount of Rs. 15,000/- was given to a destitute man in Kannur in June to help rebuild his house which he had lost in the heavy floods.

A HIV positive girl child in our city was given an amount of Rs. 500 every month along with a nutrition health kit all through the COVID-19 months.

We the family of YWCA will always be indebted to God Almighty who helped us to raise an amount of Rs. 1,60,000 from our Annual Welfare Fund raising sale. The same was donated to the Cardiology Department of Sree Chithra Hospital. This was helpful to do balloon treatment for 17 patients .We look to God for guidance to accomplish this feat.

Mask donation

Mavelikara

SUJA ROY CHERIAN,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF MAVELIKARA, SWR

The pandemic has marred us from being of service to the society.

We had great plans of finding areas to be of service yet due to the current scenario we are stuck in doors.

On record as service
1. We have sent an amount of 15000/- to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Kundara

BLESSY MATHEW ,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF KUNDARA, SWR

During the time of COVID-19 panedemic Kundara YWCA visited and donated mask and sanitizers worth Rs 10000 to Taluk Hospital.Kundara on 23/04/2020

Kundara YWCA donated masks and sanitizer and mineral water bottles worth Rs10000 to Kundara Police Station on 24th April 2020.

Two Mobile Phones were donated to two needy students on 22/06/2020

Kothamangalam

DR. SHAMY ALEYAS, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF KOTHAMANGALAM, SWR

We know that our world is facing COVID-19 pandemic from November 2019 onwards. In this time of crisis, YWCA Kothamangalam came out with help and assistance to support poor and needy people.

Distribution of Television

In June 2020 ,some of our Y-Deepa members and some other students of Govt. School, Mathirappilly, Kothamangalam were not able to continue their studies through virtual classes due to the non-availability of television. At this time of crisis YWCA Kothamangalam has given all support by providing televisions to four poor students of the school for attending online classes.

Again in July 2020 we have extended our support to economically weak students of St. Thomas High school, Pampady by sponsoring three television sets to attend online classes.

Telecounseling

In collabration with Yeldho Mar Baseliose College Kothamangalam , our secretary, Ms. Aksa Mathew, started telecounseling during May 2020 , to raise awaireness about COVID-19 and to heip the needy . Now she is a member of COVID-19 Rapid Response Team , Mental Health Department ,Ernakulam Dist. ,Kerala and is serving as a counselor, voluntarily doing telecounseling .After screening mental health issues faced by COVID-19 patients and quarantine people , telecounseling is giving for needy people with a follow up .

We thank God almighty for His blessings in all our activities.

Alleppey

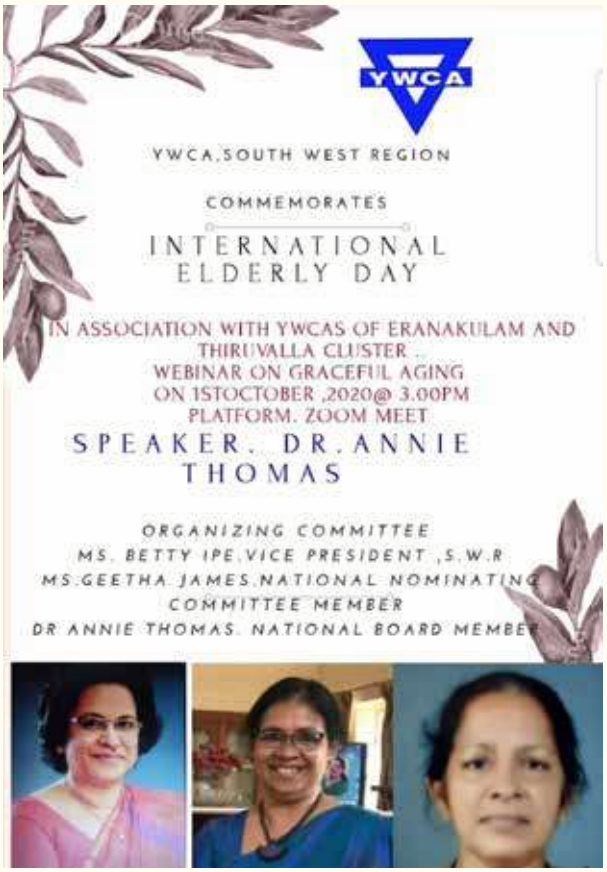
ADV ELIZABETH, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF ALLEPPEY ,SWR

During this COVID-19 pandemic, YWCA Alappuzha distributed masks to the shopkeepers in the Market Ward as part of the "Break The Chain Campaign" – a kind gesture in these challenging times.
A small contribution was made to Rev. Sr. Annie Mathew, Manager, St. Joseph's College, Alappuzha, for providing healthcare essentials to the students of the college - an initiative started by Dr. Annie Thomas, National Board Member of YWCA.

Due importance was given to Spirituality during the lockdown days. Scriptural messages were shared online everyday by members for one month.

As part of the INTERNATIONAL ELDERLY DAY,YWCA,South West Region,in association with YWCAs of Eranakulam and Thiruvalla Cluster organized a Webinar on GRACEFUL AGING On 1stOctober ,2020 at 3.00pm.

The resource person was Dr. Annie Thomas ,National Board Member. The inaugural address was done by Ms. Betty Ipe.Vice President, S.W.R and welcome by Ms.Geetha James, National Nominating Committee Member .About 96 members from eighteen associations participated.

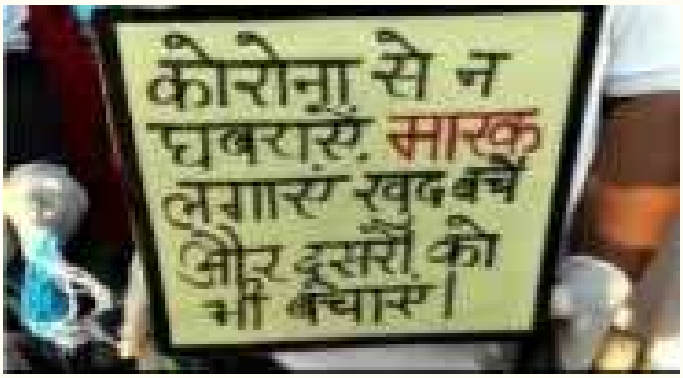


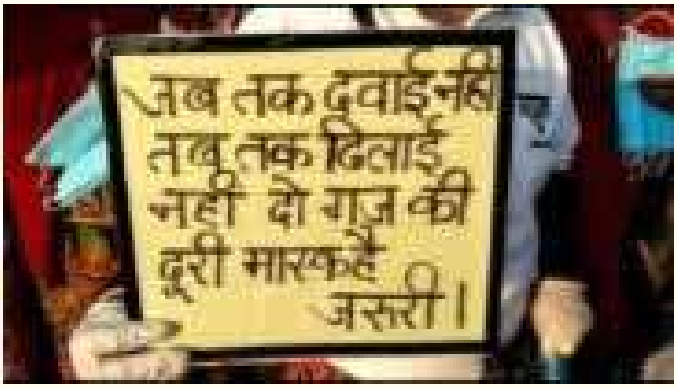
Jabalpur

DR.NEELAM ANUPAMA TOPPO, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF JABALPUR, NR

A " ROKO TOKO Campaign" was organized by the local administration on 11th November, 2020, 21 members participated.
The objective of the campaign was to create awareness regarding use of Masks in community and to educate the community about importance of Masks. The members of YWCA Jabalpur of M.P. were divided in three groups for three areas of Jabalpur and distributed masks to all those people who were not wearing masks. We talked to them about importance of using mask and motivated them to wear masks always in public places to keep themselves and others safe.

World Week of Prayer was observed from 8th and 14th November 2020.





Observation of "World Week of Prayer"
on 8th November, 2020
"Roko Toko Campaign"

Nagercoil

SHEELA RABINDRA,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF NAGERCOIL , SER

As COVID-19 relief, we contributed Rs 31,000/ to needy people on different occasions - the beneficiaries namely Ms Mabel, Ms Indra, Mr John, Ms Punitha and seven new born children on the celebration of International Girl Children's Day.

On May 1, 2020, food essentials such as rice bags, grocery items, sugar, oil and soaps and dettol worth Rs 25,000/- were distributed. Fifty families were benefitted.

Face masks were given to the needy.

Due to the pandemic, we conducted virtual Zoom meeting on September 30, 2020. Dr. Belinda Bennett, Former National President of YWCA was our Guest Speaker.

On October 24, 2020 we had a virtual meeting, the topic, 'Say No to Violence, Respect Life.' The guest speaker was Dr Mrs Jenny Paduva of Holy Cross College, Nagercoil .

Ms Suka Joshua of Lady Doak College, Madurai shared the word of God on November 5, 2020 through Zoom meeting.

We observed the YMCA/ YWCA World Week of Prayer on November 12, 2020 through virtual meeting.

Dr. James R Daniel, the Keynote Speaker, spoke on the theme, The Rays of Hope.

We communicate and maintain our inter-personal relationship through social media and mobile phone.
Further we have a chain link prayer for one hour every day.
We thank and praise God, though the doors are closed in many quarters, God has opened some channels for us with communication tools to exchange our ideas and praise Him.

Madras

YWCA OF MADRAS , SER

Lockdown to contain the virus impacted families, individuals, children in many ways and created a major shift. Though various organisations have closed their services during lockdown, YWCA of Madras still extended their hands in rendering service and support to the beneficiaries of the projects without locking down.

PROJECTS AND CONTRIBUTION:

The children of Lily Pithavadian Balwadi were engaged with art and craft work. Videos and worksheets were sent through social media to the parents of the children and follow up was being recorded.

Considering the pandemic situation the elders at the St Margrets Senior Citizen Home were kept informed of the protocol of COVID – 19. They were provided healthy food with regular medical checkups and were kept safe.

Though the Community College of the YWCA of Madras has been closed the students were kept engaged through online classes by sharing the worksheets, giving assignments. The Community College also helped in

preparing and supporting the students to complete their exams conducted by National Skill Development Corporation and Tamil Nadu Open University along with Geriatric and Corporate Secretaryship course exams for the students successfully this year.

The Navajeevan Project has been giving special care to the cured mentally ill . The staff of the project took initiative in analysing the day to day health status and reporting it to Commissionerate Office for Welfare of the Differently Abled as per the proposed format given by them due to COVID -19 lockdown. As part of COVID- 19 response rehabilitation activity of face masks were made by the residents and the same was put up for sale in the campus.

Sahodari is a short stay home and a family counselling centre offering protection, guidance, legal aid and medical care to "Women in Crisis." Day to day health monitoring for the Sahodari Residents was maintained during the lockdown. The counsellors offered help to Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board and were engaged in Tele-Counselling on social and mental distress for Men, Women and Senior Citizens due to COVID- 19 lockdown.

The Pastor Pfeiffer Home of the YWCA of Madras took special care to the children during this COVID-19 pandemic. The staff of the project took initiative in analysing the day to day health status and reporting it to District Child Protection Unit.

Rural Development Project is a village outreach programme of the YWCA of Madras in Mudichur and other villages for young girls and women in the rural areas and Senior Citizens. During the lockdown, Sanitary pads were distributed to the tailoring students and mothers of the children attending Balwadi. Dry Rations were distributed through Help Age India to the Senior Citizens, who were unable to attend the Day Care Centre. Balwadi children were kept occupied by forwarding rhymes, interesting stories and colourful worksheets.

The YWCA of Madras extended a helping hand to community at large to reach out to the people as we live up to our motto "BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER".

Madurai

DR ROOPA RAVIKUMAR,PRESIDENT
YWCA OF MADURAI, SER

All of us were caught unaware by the pandemic which threw our life out of gear. There was unpredicted loss for some and pain of losing the dear ones for others. The pandemic spread was high in many places in Madurai. In spite of all this we are thankful that God is our Protector, Defender and Provider.

Initially when the schools closed, it gave us an opportunity to train and equip our teachers with orientation programmes by training them in effective teaching techniques and classroom management. A couple of sessions were organised with resource persons before the complete lockdown. Apart from these, during the complete lockdown the teaching staff were separated into groups and trained based on their subject and classes handled. They were also trained to use technology for online teaching which has improved their teaching skills online.

During lockdown our Association organised fasting prayer regularly online with all the staff joining in the prayer. We had the privilege of listening to Rev.Dr.Daniel Moses in one of our prayer meetings.

The usual closing and opening retreat could not be held and hence a virtual online retreat was organised. The message was given by Mrs.Persis Johnson on the topic "What are you having?" – 2 Kings 4:2. Bible quiz was conducted from the book of Ruth.

A Christmas Craft workshop was organised online with Carla Suzana Kruger, a theologian from Brazil. She taught to make stars and angels with paper. It was a pleasure to watch the attendees from our Association and from other places in India trying out the craft and succeeding in doing it.

The non-teaching staff in Schools (clerk and attenders) were provided with rice and provisions during the lockdown period.

A couple of the staff and a few relatives of the members of the association were affected by Covid19. But this situation has brought us all together to support each other morally and in prayer, which is being continued till now.

Bangalore

BEENA THOMAS, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF BANGALORE CITY.SER

COVID-19 has another side to it for YWCA of Bangalore City. While most people are complaining about the negative impact of the global pandemic, new areas were explored for betterment and development. We are happy to note that a few of our members came out with the following programmes to help the marginalized sections.

Homeschooling:
There was a great need to keep the children of our Day care centres (pre-school ages), occupied even during the lockdown and closure of schools and Day care Centres. Home Schooling was born out of this need, in various stages, from content development to delivery.

Homework books were given to the children through their parents once in two weeks. Teachers introduce topics every week that are relevant to the children and choose according to the props available at home. Teachers develop the videos to support the lesson introduced for that week.

School Ki Ghanti (SKG)
YWCA of Bangalore City in collaboration with School Ki Ghanti (SKG) has been a wonderful opportunity to learn and spread knowledge to about 100 preschool kids.

Together with Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog, we joined hands with school ki Ghanti to facilitate and foster innovation for inclusion and help develop initiatives to ensure no one is left behind. YWCA started this collaboration in September 2020, as a part of the home-schooling process.

This initiative is probably the first of its kind in Karnataka in Kannada and cater to our children and nurture the young minds with interesting and insightful learning.

Susamaya, our Centre for Out of School children aged 8 to 14yrs was open for children to come in very small batches and school was open. The Teachers conduct classes in the open-air for children above 10years, following the rules laid down by the Government.

The Education Sponsorship Committee was able to do a fruitful service to the less privileged children of the society during COVID- 19 by providing dry provisions for 52 sponsored children families.

We were also able to provide and support some of the students with Smartphones to attend their online classes .
The sponsors of our Day Care Centres requested us to start some programmes to empower the mothers during the pandemic. Therefore, our tailoring instructor taught them different ways of making tassels for garments. We are glad to state that a few mothers have learnt and started taking orders from their neighbourhood to earn some money after completing the course.

Basic First Aid was taught to the mothers by a professional. The mothers who attended this programme were supplied with a First Aid kit by our YWCA.

Children in Susamaya

Muvattupuzha

PHILOMINA BABY, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF MUVATTUPUZHA, SWR

1. Support to CFLTC, Muvattupuzha Municipality

In response to the donation request made by Muvattupuzha Municipality, YWCA

Muvattupuzha donated bedsheets, pillow cases, towels etc for Rs. 10000/- to the COVID-19 First Line Treatment Center, Muvattupuzha on 20/7/2020.

2. Free Online Counselling

Mrs. Giji Johnson, member of YWCA Muvattupuzha, also a trained counsellor has been imparting free counselling to needy students and families for the last 12 years.

There was a temporary halt since the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. But the Board of Management, in consultation with Mrs. Johnson, has decided to restart the counselling sessions online, especially during the traumatic Pandemic time.

Subsequently, ads were given through local TV News Channels. As expected, there was good response. The online sessions are going on and many people are being benefitted.

Kotagiri

YWCA OF KOTAGIRI, SER

During COVID-19 , YWCA of Kotagiri was able to help several tribal hamlets in the forest region who were not able to go for work due to lockdown .We collected details of these tribes, their geographic details and provided them cereals,pulses, rice, sanitary napkins and biscuits.

In collaboration with the Government block level and other organisations we were able to clean and disinfectant public areas and provide sanitizers, face mask and hand gloves . We also did road painting in the towns of Kotagiri.

We submitted personal details of the tribal people like kotas, todas, irulas and kurumbas to the government in order to get welfare schemes. We were also able to help them by selling their handmade craft items like clay pottery,todas embroidery dresses , handloom and honey.

Central government tribal department came to know about our works and we joined them to discuss about the upcoming programs and projects to uplift them.

We thank God for giving us a chance to help the Tribal women and young girls so that they can live a better life now.

March 18, 2020

May 29, 2020

August 13, 2020

March 27, 2020

Kottayam

GEETHA SUKU, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF KOTTAYAM, SWR

Awareness programmes

1. On 17th July 2020 we organized a webinar on 'Stress management with Biblical reference'. Prof. Mary Mathew was our resource person.
2. On 21st October 2020 we conducted a webinar on 'Healthy ageing' in collaboration with Manipal University.
3. On October 24th 2020 we facilitated a webinar on 'Protection of Children'. Resource person was Dr. Ancy Joseph, Principal, St. Dominic's college.

Community development activities

1. We have distributed Provisions to Sixty families in an adopted colony at Kaduvakkulam during Covid19 pandemic.
2. We have provided lunch to Balagram on November 14th Children's Day.

Dimapur

ABENI LOTHA, GENERAL SECRETARY
YWCA OF DIMAPUR, NER
THECHAMO99@GMAIL.COM

As part of the relief operation during COVID-19 Lockdown in the State, the YWCA of Dimapur led by the President Watisula and General Secretary Abeni Lotha, served breakfast to 60 inmates at the St. Stephen Higher Secondary School Quarantine Center and also served refreshments to the Special Task Force and Monitoring Committee members and Railway Officials after the arrival of the Shramik Special Train from Kerala on the 13th of June 2020.

In it's second phase of relief operation, the YWCA of Dimapur, in recognition of the unacclaimed service of the COVID-19 Bus drivers who were assigned to a chain of duties related to the returnees, were served breakfast as they awaited the arrival of the Shramik Special Train from New Delhi on the 16th of June 2020. The Transportation Committee members were also served breakfast along with the Bus drivers.

The YWCA of Dimapur members also served breakfast to 25 traffic personnel at the Traffic Control Room. Refreshments were also served to the Monitoring Committee members and Railway staff at the Railway Station after the arrival of the Shramik Special Train from New Delhi.

The YWCA members of Dimapur volunteered to help in weeding, trimming and cleaning the Clock Tower area of Dimapur in the midst of COVID-19 on the 16th of July 2020.

Serving breakfast to Traffic Police personnels

Serving special breakfast to all the NST & Pvt. Drivers together with the Transportation Committee

Weeding, trimming and cleaning the Clock Tower area

Serving breakfast to 60 inmates at St. Stephen Higher Secondary school, Quarantine Centre

Serving breakfast to the Railway officials

Aizawl

C. LALCHHANDAMI, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF AIZAWL ,NER

The Joy of Sharing with Others .

YWCA of Aizawl kick started the year with a powerful praise and worship program. Little did we know that this PIYA led initiative, aptly themed Glow 2020: Be the Light, would prove to be what we were all especially called to be this year.

As the reality of the pandemic hit our region in March of this year, we joined our community members to do what was within our power to do. We rallied behind the State Government by contributing to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Our Board Members gave generously and we collectively donated Rs.53,100 towards relief efforts of those affected by COVID-19.

We focused our traditional annual programs towards various COVID-19 relief efforts. For World Breakfast Day, we donated essentials including cooking oil, eggs and bags of rice to 'Jericho Khualbuk', a home for women. Additionally, as part of our annual World AIDS Day programs, we intend to donate much needed face masks (2,500 in total) and hand sanitizers to various ART Centres and to the Positive Women Network in Mizoram group (PWNM) in Aizawl.

Our state has been under various levels of total and partial Lockdown since March. As such, many of the HIV positive people / clients we work with have been unable to access their ART medication. Many fear the coronavirus and do not want to leave their homes, or have been unable to leave due to restrictions of area specific lockdowns. To allay their situation, YWCA members have volunteered to collect and deliver ART medication to their homes. Furthermore, volunteers delivered nutrition supplements to over 50 HIV affected families.

An unfortunate byproduct of lockdowns due to the pandemic has been the increase of domestic violence cases. Our counsellors, through our Family Counselling Centre, have been diligently working with our clients (mostly women). Our counsellors have not only been providing counselling sessions, but have been following up with clients and supporting them in court.

As we near the Christmas season, our YWCA of Aizawl members are looking ahead to our annual 'Luanchhuah' giving program. Our members give generously, and without hesitation. This year, in addition to providing support to four homes that are in dire need of assistance, we contributed to relief efforts for a locality in Aizawl, Dinthar Veng. This area was marked off as a Containment Zone on 9 November, 2020, immediately following a Total Lockdown enforced by the State government. As a result, more than 60 families within the locality ran out of basic necessities and provisions. YWCA of Aizawl rallied along with other community members to provide much needed relief.

In addition to helping as much as we could practically in our area, we joined our sisters in Christ across the nation and joined the Prayer Chain organized by YWCA of India. The past few months have reminded us that He has blessed us so that we can be a blessing to others, and that there is true joy in serving our brothers and sisters in His name.

Lunglei

HK LALLIANZAUVI, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF LUNGLEI GIF, NER

Although we had many activities scheduled for this year, once the pandemic hit we readjusted plans towards relief efforts in the State. Volunteers quickly came forward and coordinated with stakeholders to identify communities in need of assistance.

After consultation with various NGOs, the need of the COVID-19 volunteers in the Lawngtlai District boundary area was identified as the most crucial. Members of Lunglei GIF came together to donate rice (10 bags), lentils (5 bags), canned fish (4 dozen), torchlights along with batteries, as well as a variety of basic medication.

Once the relief materials were collected, five members of Lunglei GIF presented the essential items to the CYLA (the NGO in Lawngtlai) who in turn distributed the items to various duty posts accordingly.

We are continuing with relief efforts and have plans to distribute face masks to groups in need. We continue to uphold all those affected by this pandemic in prayer.

Berhampur

LENA CHAND, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF BERHAMPUR, ER

1. Dt- 02.04.2020

Venue- Hinjilicut Block and nearby areas.
Program – Advocacy
Themes – Provision of shelter and assistance to the stranded laborers.
Participants – 45

It was an Advocacy program where 45 stranded laborer of Ganjam district could be sheltered properly at Tamil Nadu. About 45 people of Ganjam district of Hinjilicut Block and nearby areas who were working as factory laborers were stranded at Chennai since three days in lockdown without food and basic daily needs in a single room at Narasinghpur area.We were able to communicate with the district Collector and help them.

2. Dt- 15.04.2020

Venue – Hillpatna community
Program – Hand-made mask distribution.
Theme – Awareness on Pandemic COVID-19 issues and cleanliness.
Participants – 30 – 40

YWCA members of Berhampur taken the initiative to distribute the hand-made mask to the local municipality workers (women) and domestic workers in the streets.

3. Dt- 22.05.2020.

Programme – Rescue Care and helpline for Banjaras(Migrants from Chatigsarh Dist)
Programe – Advocacy
Theme – Provision of shelter financial help for travel Assistance
Stranded Banjaras 30-35 nos

Some stranded Banjaras whose occupation was selling Bangles were living in open tents in a field near Bhanjanagar (Odisha) in unsafe environment. When we could drawn attention about their such conditions by HHRC organization then we tried to help them. Finally they could be able to travel back to their State by a Bus arranged with the Advocacy and communication of our President to Dist Administration and Sub-collector, Bhanjanagar.

4. Dt 28.05.2020.

Venue- NH-16 Route
Programe – Relief distribution.
Theme – Food for migrant laborers under COVID-19 crisis
Participants – 10

Its a great initiative taken up by our Association for satisfaction of mind and soul in adding a wide SMILE to the distresses and migrant laborer from Tamil Nadu, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kerala and other Southern States.

5. 03.08.2020
Venue – Webinar of Zoom
Program – Caring self and the Co morbidities during COVID-19 by Dr. Sunil Kumar Kota (MD, DNB, FACE) Endocrinologist by profession.
Theme – Self-care in Pandemic
Participants – 50-60

The Eastern Region members from all the Associations of YWCA of India organized a Webinar on the Topic – Caring self and the co morbidities during COVID-19. The main aim was to aware and motivate the people to follow necessary precautions and other measures to inhibit mental strength and to stay safe and secure in these pandemic times.

6. Dt- 05.09.2020
Venue – Old Bus Stand, Berhampur.
Program – Mass Protest If we do not rise – National Campaign.
Theme – Awareness and Mass Rally for the safeguard of constitution and women
Protection and safety.
Participants – 100 – 200

YWCA of Berhampur in association of SAHA organization and other like-minded institutions and NGO's were also involved in this National Campaign and struggle to fight against different types of issues relating to women and children faced in day to day life.

7. Date – 25.09.2020.
Venue – Sub-Collector Office.
Program – Mass protest against farm bill (National wide campaign).
Theme – IF we do not rise", along with Human Rights.
Participants- 500-

It was based on theme of "If we do not rise" along with human rights and other farmers organization of Odisha (A nation-wide campaign). The main objective was a mass protest against farm bill. YWCA Berhampur has participated in the mass protest against farm bill 2020 with the leadership of President Lenachand and other youth members along with different H.R Organization, farmers' organization of Odisha.

Had a virtual discussion with members of eastern region of YWCA, India on "Caring self and Comorbidities during #Covid_19"

YWCA Of Berhampur
DM Ganjam

Tirupur

JANAM JOHN, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF TIRUPUR, SER

YWCA OF TIRUPUR is running a family counselling centre called Snehithi from 1992 and is one of the well known counselling centres in Tirupur.

During the lockdown beginning April 2020, the counsellors were working in tandem with the District Social Welfare Office under the direct supervision of the District Collectorate and did tremendous work everyday inspite of the COVID-19 dangers present in those months of April, May and June.

Seated above on the left are our counsellors Mrs.Shanmugha priya and Mrs.Priya Mary., at the Protection Officer's desk during a counselling session.

Our Counsellors were deputed to visit elderly people living alone and were entrusted with the task of counselling them to avoid mental breakdown, alerting the collectorate if medical attention and provision was required.

Tragically Child sex abuse and domestic violence increased during this lockdown. Exasperated women came to the counseling centre seeking intervention.

During the lockdown, our Hon.Secretary Mrs.Asha Davidraj, encouraged the Y Deepa children to GO GREEN at home by growing plants in their homes via phone and Whats app video calls to alleviate boredom, eye and mental stress and obesity. She did an online sale in September.

In May, YWCA of Tirupur distributed provisions worth Rs: 10,000 for needy families around our hostel.

6th Oct 2020 / ABOVE AWARENESS CAMP FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS , YOUNG MOTHERS & TEENAGE GIRLS (at govt hospital) on how to adjust to the new normal

Goa

DR. RITA M. VAZ
PRESIDENT, YWCA OF GOA, WR
DR.RITAVAZ@GMAIL.COM

The unprecedented COVID-19 times created a havoc in our lives; being caged in the houses.The vacuum created by the forced pause did not stop the brave women of YWCA Goa from venturing out to render their services even during these COVID times.

YWCA Goa's COVID-19 work include:

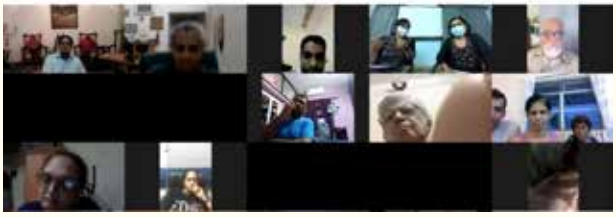
1. Collection Drives - linen and other personal article, for the first ever isolation centre set up in the state of Goa. Articles like bathing towels, soaps, slippers and t-shirts were collected and handed to the Government isolation facility.

2. Help in Setting Up of the Respiratory Wards: The members of YWCA Goa have worked round the clock in resourcing essential items like washing machines, bedspreads, blanket, bedding for a 20-bedded ward.

3. Cuppa Care: In a continuing effort to fight COVID-19, the YWCA Goa launched a new initiative, "CUPPA CARE". It is an effort to soothe and bring comfort to those patients in COVID-19 Care Centres who are bravely battling the virus. This kit of warmth and goodness has all the ingredients for a nice hot cuppa tea!

4. COVID-19 Warrior - Donation Drive: As many of the members of YWCA Goa are a part of the medical fraternity, YWCA, quickly addressing the needs of health care at the uncertain times, gave a call to all donors to help raise funds to support COVID-19 related work. The funds so raised were utilised to donate PPE and other medical utilities to the South

5. Zoom Series on Financial, Mental Health, etc:
One of the upright efforts of YWCA at the times of isolation, to bring people together, descipate knowledge and pass on the right information on health, prevention of COVID-19, healthy habits and mental , financial health was achieved successfully through the virtual platform – zoom series on 'Living the New Normal'.



6. Token of Gratitude & Diwali Greetings to C0VID-19 Warriors -HCW.

YWCA celebrated the festival of lights by recognizing the hard work of the MTS (Multi Purpose Workers) working at the COVID-19 frontline. We distributed a small Diwali bag of goodies to each worker at the New South Goa District Hospital.

8. Supply of Ration to transgender / migrants/ destitute:

Members of Y Goa , joined in ,various relief works for migrants in collaboration with Carmelite Monastery, by contributing rotis and dry food articles for those migrants travelling back home. Our member extended their helping hand at orphanages to prepare and distribute food for the destitute.

Our members joined relief works at the containment zones by supplying essential food items for over 200 families.

9. Door step delivery of medicines for senior citizens and pregnant women:

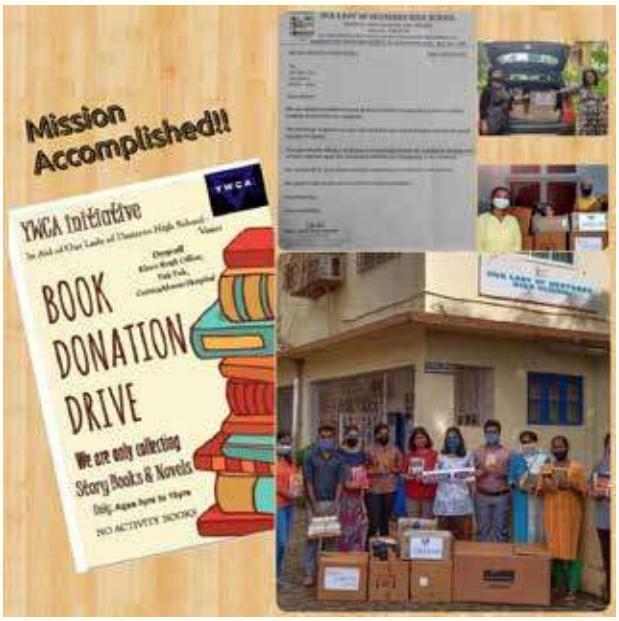
Our members continued their services of reaching out to the senior citizens by collecting the medicines from the hospital esply during the pandaemic as most were locked in their houses our members along with young students volunteers reached out to such vulanarable part of the society.

Our other work during the pandaemic were:

- Book collection drive , over 1000 books were collected and handed over to a high school in North Goa

We continued our eco-friendly projects-

- Sustainable menstruation project, was continued on the virtual platform
- Celebration of the Environment day with mass planting of trees.



Bombay

SHARON PIRES, PRESIDENT
YWCA OF BOMBAY, WR

Distribution of groceries and essential items

YWCA of Bombay in collaboration with various well-wishers, local leaders, corporators and NGOs provided groceries to 2720 families.

PEE kits with goggles, Radiation Guns, Oxymeter and sanitizers were donated to the CBD Belapur Police. Mask and sanitizer was distributed to Community beneficiaries and transgender groups.

Membership

60 members participated in World Membership Day. Members shared creative activities like making cushions, bags, door mats with dupattas, tailoring, cooking, gardening, new recipes and spending time with family and friends.

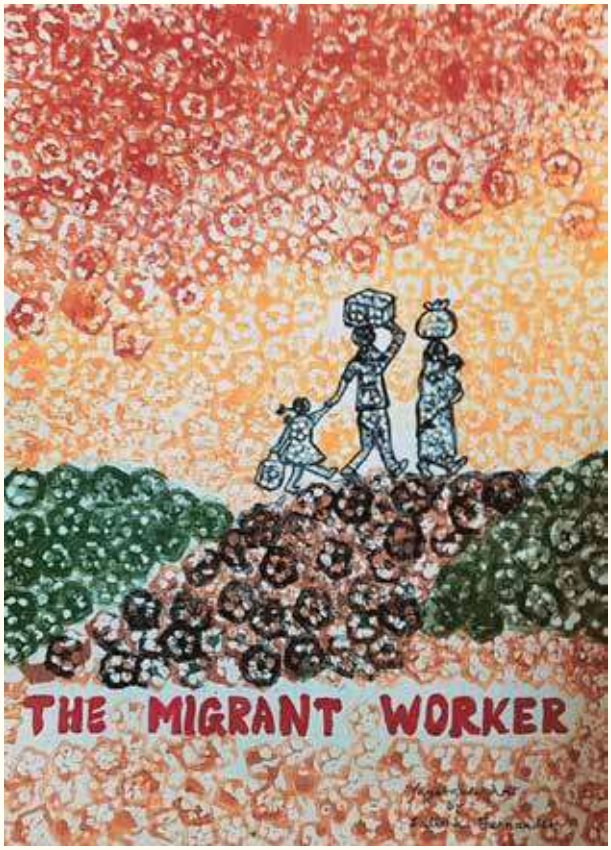
Webinars held on: Women of the Elements, Mental Health, Maintenance & Welfare of Senior Citizens, Healthy Lifestyle, Organ Donation, Dementia, Coping with Stress during the Pandemic, Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace, Rationing Rights, Women and Conservation, Youth and Climate Change, How to build our Immune System Care during COVID-19, Child Abuse and Prevention, Career Guidance, 'Building Resilience' & 'Wellness through Graphology'.

Online Poster Competition on 'Art During Quarantine', Celebrate Your Quarantine Creativity, Green Thumb received good response.

40 members participated in EKTA held on 12th September via Zoom. Resource person spoke of life being a constant battle, of how to create values from all encounters, situations and circumstances, no matter how impossible it may seem.

Area Meetings - Sessions were organized on Dealing with Stress, Domestic Violence and Senior Citizens, Happiness, Insurance Policy, How to be graceful, Maintaining positivity, Mental Health, Building immunity, Spreading Awareness of Cleanliness in the Communities, Need to Pray for all Requirements Together Making a Will, Enhancing Happiness Quotient, How to make Paper Hyacinth Flowers . Various games like Onion Art, Guess what's in the box, Tambo-la, Name Place Animal Thing and Quarantine Party were played.

The Spiritual Emphasis Committee actively hosted retreats every alternate Friday to address the realities we face today.



Women's Development Unit/ Asha Kiran

1. All community staff attended a Zoom Workshop on Mental Health organised by MPower organization.

2. Youth Group: A monthly youth group meeting was conducted by PSW in all communities on WhatsApp in April to discuss the relief and awareness of the prevention of COVID-19

3. Balwadi teachers have formed a parents' group on Whatsapp to share daily activities, worksheets, art and craft video.

4. SHG meetings were conducted on Whatsapp group.

5. Bakery Unit – Our students made good profit by taking orders. One student taught recipes to the residents of Aashray Shelter.

Youth group: meeting held at all communities on: Rationing information, BMC forms to those who do not have a ration card, Distribution of food grains, How to share information about online courses and job advertisements.

Balwadi teachers created hand-crafted articles like woollen wall- hanging birds, table lamp, book-marks, puppets, flower pot, hand fan, toran, different types of traffic signals, bottle puppets, use of clay, alphabets, jewellery- box, frame- frawing, flowers, taste- bud mapping, mobile stand, candle holder, woollen napkin, paper plate painting, wall pen stand, cups from card board paper, flower basket, stick puppets, shapes cut out of craft, box pup-pet, Best out of Waste & puppet show based on a story. Toy Bank gave daily activity to Balwadi children and siblings on Whatsapp group.

Sustainable Livelihood - The following topics were covered: Awareness of COVID-19, Rationing facilities provided by the government, Awareness on prevention of Domestic Violence, Information about employment vacancies in different hospitals and companies, How to boost immunity.

Aasra- Conducted online individual and group counselling sessions with clients.

Hospital Aide : All students from Batch 2019 -2020 were successfully placed for jobs.

Tiffin project, Bakery Sales, Mask and Sanitizer sale were **Income Generation Programmes**

Success stories: 3 women from Jagruti Mahila Bachat Gat, received a sewing machine each, from the BMC. Para Social Workers provided employment to seven youth of the Kalachowki and Mankhurd communities where they earn 10,000/- to 18,000/- per month.

Online classes – Cookery, Bakery & Confectionery, Nursing Care, Caregiver and English Speaking started from August 2020. A five-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme was conducted for 101 Community women

Short term Courses : Dress-Designing, Beautician and Yashwantrao Chauhan Open University Preparatory Course were completed online.

SSC Results : The highest score from study centre was 91.40% secured by Sravani Patil.
Received donations of notebooks and sanitary napkins for study centre students.

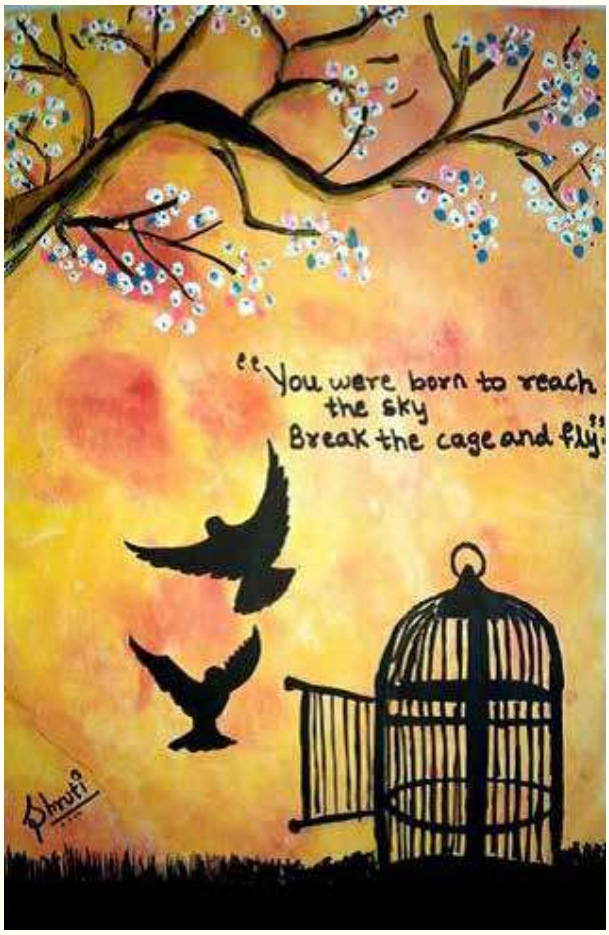
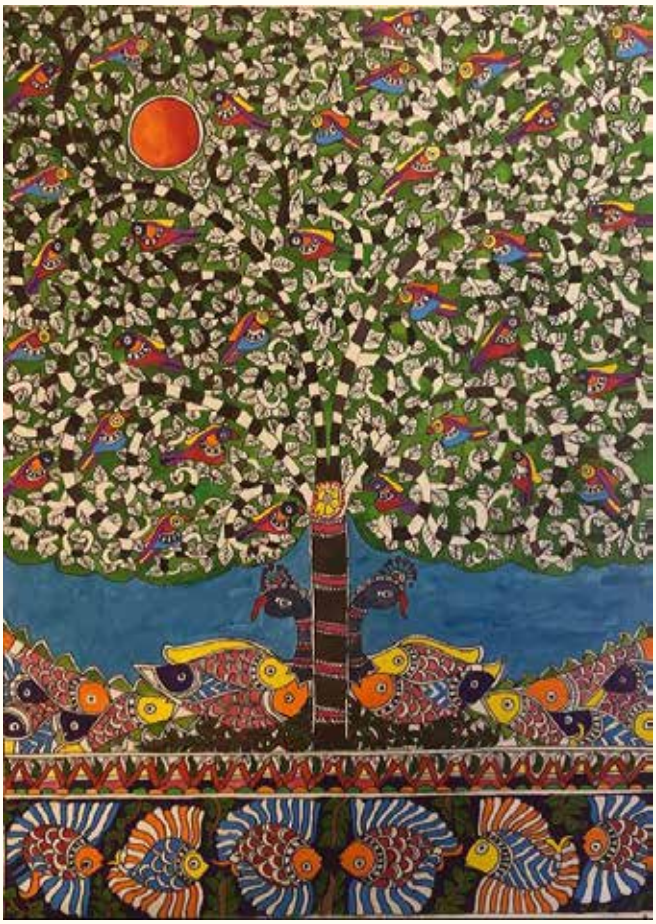
Co-operative Housing Society Management Course Batch No.2 commenced from 24th August.

Shelter Homes – 50 residents of the Shelter Homes have been gainfully engaged with English classes, bakery, papads and pickles, bag and mats making.
World Beghars' Day was celebrated at both the Shelter Homes on 10th October.

Hostels- During the lockdown residents have expressed their talents of book folding, origami, string art, painting, knitting, quilling, reading and some teaching online.

Abbreviations

NR-Northern Region
WR-West Region
ER-East Region
NER-North East Region
SER-South East Region
SWR-South West Region

Credits

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