

# Lemon and lemonade

Indians are born with a strong mind. Most of the time our family members, friends, neighbors are our primary counselors. We are too social. Our festivals, rituals do not let us be alone for a longer time. Sometimes we know better what's happening in our neighbor's house better than our home. By training, we certainly are not selfish and self-centered.

Maybe that's the reason, when the psychologists of the highly developed and right now profusely COVID-19 infected countries are predicting the mental health outbreak after the pandemic subsides, I feel, we will be in better condition.

Still, if we are aware and be ready for what can happen in the future, it becomes easy to fight with it. The same goes for your mental health. Deteriorated mental health is also knocking the door. The only difference is, it will take the next 2 to 3 years to understand mental health loss in a non-generic way. So here are some general tips to manage your mental health during this lockdown. I will be writing about some specific concerns like anxiety, OCD, stress, etc. in my next article.

- Try to maintain a routine. You do not have to go out for any work, job, school or college does not mean that you can bath, eat and sleep anytime. Strictly maintain the timings for these three things.
- Make sure to talk to your relatives and friends every day over the phone or make a video call.
- Watching mythological serials are the favorite time pass of Indians. So we have Ramayan and Mahabharat back on DD channel. You can watch it along with other good serials or TV shows. Those who can access Netflix, Hotstar, etc. 2 episodes a day could be sufficient.
- Excess of screen time will definitely harm your cognition i.e. mental abilities. Do not waste more than 2 hours per day on mobile.
- Do not think much. In the current situation, everything is unpredictable. Always tell yourself that everything will be alright. That's the history of mankind.
- If you have kids at home, see how can you keep them constructively busy all the time. If you are a young couple, invest time to strengthen your relationship for lifelong companionship. If you are an old couple, guide the young people to overcome this stage. Your suggestions are priceless at this point. If you are alone, stay connected to your love ones as much as possible.
- Improve your skills. Looking at the possible economic loss, you should prepare yourself with multiple skills. 'Jack of all' will be the requirement of the time.

- Some kind of physical exercise is a must. Physical exercise is not only for people who are overweight or unhealthy. Exercise plays an important role to keep your mental health intact by reducing stress.
- Do not 'Google' for simple things. Call your Mausi for different recipes, Phuphaji for financial matters, Dada-Dadi and Nana-Nani for nursing/child-rearing concerns. Find the answers from the people around us.
- Do at least an act of kindness throughout the day selflessly. That does not mean you should go out to feed the needy people, taking out notes of a difficult subject, making charts to simplify any difficult topic for your maid's son or daughter will also help to keep you healthy.
- Be creative. Creativity does not simply mean cutting- pasting, stitching and painting. Making different kinds of rice dishes is also creativity. Inventing something which simplifies the household work of your mother is also creativity. This way you will not feel monotonous.
- Be updated but do not watch the news too frequently. Nothing is going to change much within every 2 to 3 hours.
- Get attached to nature. There are lots of birds in the sky. Watch them. Bask in the sun standing near the window or balcony for some time. Watch sunrise and sunset. Water the plants in the pots. Grow some indoor plants.
- Try to avoid speculation. Do not talk much about your assumptions. Rumors fuel the fire of anxiety and may lead to panic
- Follow hygiene advices strictly.
- Eat healthily. Stay healthy. It is difficult to see the doctor easily now. Still, in case of an emergency, talk to your family doctor first.
- Talk to your children and explain to them what exactly happening in the world in your words. Do not give them overexposure on the virus information but balance it with whatever is required.
- Distinguish between global and local. In the present scenario focus more on what is happening in your city; your nation.
  - Practice mindfulness. Live in present.
  - Keep yourself busy.
  - Be humorous, not sarcastic.

At last, prepare yourself for after pandemics. This is the time to gather strength. Once the pandemic subsides, we have to work putting up extra efforts to compensate for the loss. Truly said, when life gives you lemon make lemonade.

I am preparing myself. Are you?

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