

PSS and Learning kits for Disease Outbreak Psychosocial and learning Activities during precautionary measures

Introduction:

During infectious disease outbreaks, children may experience distress for a variety of reasons. The collective anxiety and grief that a community experiences can impact heavily on children. Limited public knowledge of the disease may trigger misinformation, rumors and panic. Media campaigns can also increase levels of distress in the population. Children may lose their regular support networks due to limited mobility and social interaction due to precautionary measures such as curfews, ban on mass gathering, or school closures. Children may become hyper vigilant, afraid of their caregivers or other family members falling ill and dying. When caregivers, family members or friends fall ill, children may be unable to visit them in treatment centers, and may not receive regular updates on their condition. They may also experience the loss of caregivers and family members, upon whom they are dependent for care and survival.

COVID-19 Scenarios in humanitarian access:

Coronavirus disease (COVID19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is being well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. This psychosocial support (PSS) and learning kit aims to provide list of tools and activities Child Protection and Education partners can use under below scenario:

Scenarios	Assumptions
1. Children and families are not accessible to external humanitarian actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precautionary measures such as road closure, camp entry limit, limit of visitors to institutions which limits external humanitarian staff to assist children and families Within the location (neighborhood/ camp institutions), community-based volunteers or staff are able to assist children and families
2. Children and families not accessible to either community-based humanitarian workers or external humanitarian workers (and not having any access to online/ wifi resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong precautionary measures such as curfew, lockdown, no movement out of house/tents Children/ family members are not willing to meet any visitors/ facilitators to avoid contracting diseases No wifi/ internet access available to use social network system (SNS) such as facebook, Twitter, whatsapp, viber, youtube etc
3. Children and families not accessible to either community-based humanitarian workers or external humanitarian workers (but able to access to online/ wifi resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same assumptions as scenario 2, but Wifi/ internet access available to use SNS such as facebook, Twitter, whatsapp, viber, youtube etc, able to interact through online platform

*The tool kit contains the below age- appropriate materials to assist partners to address

- 1) Messages for caregivers / parents
- 2) Stories / comic books explaining COVID 19 and how to take precautionary measures
- 3) List of activities categorized by three scenario

Part 1: Messages for Parents and Caregivers

COVID 19: well-being of you and your children

The following tips will help you to reduce the stress and anxiety of you and your children related to the outbreak of COVID 19. These are tips for you as a parent, but they can also be used by older children who take care of children or by other caregivers of children.

Why your well-being is important:

- You will be able to think clearer
- You will be able to cope better
- You will be more patient
- You will be able to understand the feelings and behavior of your children better
- Your well-being will help your body to be stronger
- Children up to 12 years old make sense of the outside world by the way that you react to that outside world. Their well-being is directly linked with your well-being.

Tips for your emotional well being

- Have enough rest, but do not stay too long hours in bed
- Take every day some time for yourself
- Talk with friends or neighbors
- Do not search for news related to COVID 19 continuously. Instead, keep yourself informed through searching news on dedicated moments once a day.
- Try to distinguish facts from rumors
- Ensure that you can exercise/ move your body every day, even if you cannot leave the place where you live
- Once you follow all guidelines regarding hygiene and contacts with others, congratulate yourself that you are doing everything that you can do to protect yourself and your family
- Accept that you are human. You will have feelings of anxiety, fear or anger. Once you recognize these feelings, try to think about beautiful things, try to talk more softly and slowly and breathe normally.

Tips for helping children feel better:

For all ages: Children need to see that not everything in their life has changed. Stick to the routine of eating times, cleaning times, playing times and sleeping times

Tips per age group: 0 - 3 years old

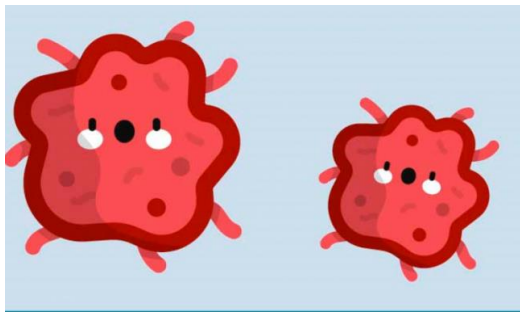
- Children are sensitive to your emotional and physical closeness. Try as much as possible to address them in the same way as you did before, even if they are babies.
- Around the age of two, children often use the word 'no'. Accept this as normal behavior

Tips per age group: 3- 6 years old

- Remind your child that you are there to take good care of the child
- Some children might lose abilities that they acquired before, e.g. they start bedwetting
- Children in this age explore things and like to be busy. Do not limit this, but ensure this is done in the place where you live

Part 2: Stories and Comics

Story 1: CORONELLO STORY (4-6 years old)



Purpose: Help children to understand the problem related to the infectious disease and why is important to not be in close contact

Process: • read “Coronello story” loudly • ask to the child what he/her think, how she/he feel, if she/he think is similar to something he/she experienced etc. • ask the child to make a drawing for another child in the story. For older children you can also ask to write a small message.

Part 3: PSS and learning activities Activities within the family

Activity 1: I Am Here. Who Is Here? (0-3 years old)

Try to get down to the eye level of the infants and children; this can open or increase communication and interaction with children. Let them know what will be happening next.



- Call or sing the name of the infant or child. Observe the infant or child to see if he or she is focusing on the voice or sound.
- Sing the verse, “I am here. Who is here?”
- Sing again, “I am here. Who is here?” but this time, add the infant’s or child’s name and the caregiver’s name.
- Repeat several times while smiling.
- Whenever a person enters the room, sing or call out, “Look, (the person’s name) is here,” and then say, “Hi, (the child’s name) is here, and we like to wave to our friends.”

Activity 2: We Can Make Music (0-6 years old)

- Tell the young children that they are going to play their body instruments—arms and hands.
- Show them some possible ways of producing sounds with their bodies: clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, clapping their thighs with their hands, knocking on the table or on the floor with their fists.
- Create your own song and repeat so the infant or young child can hear it over and over again.
- Hold the infant or young child in your arms and dance or sway while singing familiar children’s songs.

Activity 3: I See Something (0-3 years old)

Try to get down to the eye level of the infants and children; this can open or increase communication and interaction with children. Let them know what will be happening next.

- Pick up or point to different objects around you. Ask, “What do I see?”
- Take a walk with the infant or young child around the room. Encourage the infant or young child to touch all kinds of textures. Talk about the textures as the infant or child touches them.
- Keep children away from dangerous objects (knives, fires) and use the opportunity to emphasize that children must be cautious around these objects and not touch them.



Activity 4: Quiet Talking Time (0-3 years old)

Try to establish eye contact or body contact with the infants and children; this can open or increase communication and interaction with children, and helps teach them how to focus. Let them know what will be happening next.



- Set aside a little time to talk with your infant or young child.
- Let him/her sit on your lap, maybe holding hands.
- Talk quietly to the infant or young child about anything that might be interesting. Sample topics

include talking about your surroundings, what will happen / has happened that day, or about friends and family members.



Activity 5: Can you copy me (0-3 years old)

Even the tiniest infants listen when they are talked to and talk back in their own special ways. They watch as the adult’s mouth moves and wave their legs and arms or coo and gurgle in reply.



- While the infants and young children are sitting, play a little “copy me” game. Do simple actions in front of them and try to get them copy you. For example, clap your hands, pat your head, and tip your head from side to side.
- Point to your eyes, nose, and mouth and do the same on the infant or young child. Take the infant or child’s hand and have him/her touch his/her own eyes, nose, and mouth. “See my nose? And here is your nose.”
- Ask the young children to perform a task such as “Make a silly shape”; “Touch your head”; “Tap your foot”; “Jump up”; “Draw circles on your stomach”; etc

Activity 6: Follow the Leader (4-6 years old)

Children need to feel they are part of a team. Assigning roles is a way to increase the sense of responsibility, to build trust, and to organize interaction with children.



- Choose one child in your family to be a leader. The leader gets up and the other children follow him/her, imitating him/her as he/she moves around the room hopping, clapping hands, nodding head, waving, jumping, etc.
- Choose a new leader and the game continues.
- Select children to be leaders in other activities such to wash hands properly, collecting the toys

Activity 7: Touch Blue (4-6 years old)

Children can use their concentration skills to find different objects that the caregiver says in a game with music and dancing.

- You or a child can play a musical instrument or control the playing of music from a player/mobile phone
- Tell a child/children they have to move around or dance fast while the music is playing.
- When the music stops, the person controlling the music calls “Touch blue”, or “Touch nose” or “Touch a shoe” or any other color or object in the room. Everyone must touch that color or object on someone else, not on themselves.
- Each time the music starts, the caregiver /child changes the command.

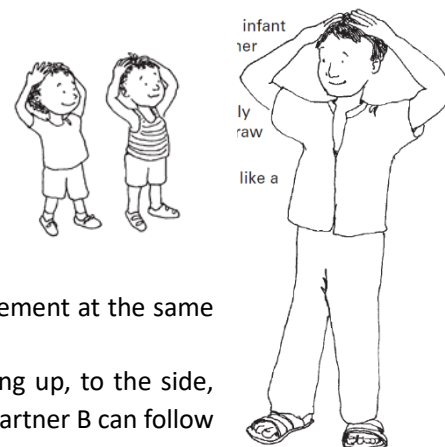
Activity 8: Mirror Exercise (4-6 years old)

Purpose: encourage children to express their emotions and to find a way to interact with each other without close contacts

Process: place the child in front of you at about 1mt distance (if there are siblings, they can be in a pair). Keep the eye contact, and stay completely quiet – so quiet they could hear a feather drop! The exercise should be done in total silence. Partner A is going to start moving their hands very slowly (squeeze their hands, open their hands, circle the wrist, etc.). Partner B has to copy this movement at the same time, as if they were the mirror reflection of their partner.

- Partner A can let the movement become bigger, slowly reaching up, to the side, maybe bending down. All the movement should be very slow, so Partner B can follow at the same time.
- Let the children explore this in silence for 3 minutes.
- Swap roles: Partner B leads, Partner A mirrors.

DEBRIEF: Ask the children the following: How does it feel to move all together? Were any moves difficult to follow?



Activity 9: THE WAVE OF LIGHT (4-6 years old)

Purpose: Releasing worry and stress.

Process: • Find a comfortable standing position. Relax your shoulders. Feel the length in your spine, and through the top of your head.

- Place your left foot forward, grounding the feet again.

- Breathe in: float your hands forward and over your head, imagining you are drawing a wave of bright light above your head.
- Breathe out: move your hands downward, past the shoulders, as if you are showering yourself with a wave of soothing cool light.
- Keep this flowing for at least ten breaths. With each breath in, imagine drawing that wave of beautiful, healing light above you. With each breathe out, imagine that cool, shining light flowing down over you, taking your tightness and troubles away.
- Repeat on the other side, with the right foot forward. Breathe in the shower of light. Breathe out and let go of any negativity or tension you feel inside. Feel the flow of light cleansing and refreshing you.



Activity 10: TWO TREES (4-6 years old)

Purpose: Encouraging body awareness, and positive relaxing actions.

PROCESS: if there are siblings ask them to stand face to face with enough space to extend their arms. If the child is alone the adult can face the child (eventually seat on your knees to be same size as the child)

- Facing your partner, stand with your feet hip distance apart, with your toes pointing towards your partner.
- Close your eyes, stand nice and tall: let your backbone become long.
- Relax your shoulders. Think about your feet. Relax your toes, spread them wide.
- Imagine there are roots growing out from your feet into the earth, spreading wide, just like the roots of a tree.
- Imagine how strong those roots are. Just like a tree, those roots help you to be strong, and steady, and grow up tall from the earth. Imagine those roots are helping you to draw in good things, just like tree roots. They help you to draw in nourishment, and help you to grow tall.
- Feel how that goodness and tallness can travel all the way up through your body, through your legs, to your belly, up to your heart, growing tall like a tree, and up to the top of your head.
- Relax your shoulders. Now, keeping very quiet, open your eyes and smile at your partner.
- You are still standing tall and strong, rooted like a tree.
- Now, keep looking your partner in the eyes to keep your focus.
- Start to mirror your partner- **Partner A:** Lift your right foot, and place it at the side of your ankle, or higher at the side of your lower leg (not on your knee). **Partner B:** Lift your left foot, and place it at the side of your ankle, or higher at the side of your lower leg (not on your knee).
- Both of you find your balance. Keep rooting down through your standing foot. You are steady and strong and balanced.

Activities which can be facilitated with NGO staff

Depending on the situation in the area, a community-based facilitator or volunteer may be able to visit the family face to face. Please bear in mind many families may not accept the visitor under the current circumstances in order to minimize the spread of the virus.

Activity 11: THE BOWL OF POSSIBILITIES (4-6 years old)

Purpose: Recognizing and expressing needs/desires.

Process: • if you have few siblings, put them in a circle, otherwise seat with a child

• the facilitator is like a big magical calabash. Child/children can express a wish, a need and “take it” from the calabash. • the instructor will ask a child/children “what do you need today? The child will reply saying what he needs and miming it. (if there are siblings, a child can mime without speaking, and other children will need to interpret the miming).

DEBRIEF: Ask participant(s) the following: o How does it feel to ask for what you need? o Was this helpful? o Did the other understand your needs?



Activity 12: EXPRESSING EMOTIONS (4-6 years old)

Purpose: Help children to express their feelings

Process: Show the emotions paper and ask the child if she/he can recognize all the emotions. Ask to the child which emotion represents him/her and discuss the reasons with him/ her.

Materials: emotion paper.

Activity 13: MEMORY CARDS (4-6 years old)

Purpose: reinforce awareness about hygiene and help children to cope with the fear

Process: • Place the cards randomly on the floor/table with the picture face down; • the first player will turn up 2 cards, if they have the same pictures he will keep them otherwise she/he will turn them down again • the second player will do the same, trying to remember the other cards in order to do the match; • the game will continue until the cards end. The winner is the player with more cards.

Materials: memory card printed on thick and laminated

NOTES: each time you move from one child to another clean the cards with a wet towel or with a disinfectant spray. Otherwise you can leave one set of cards to each child.



Activity 14: VIRUS PUPPETS (4-6 years old)

Purpose: Help the child to cope with the fear;

Process: Print each emotion picture in A4 size and cut them. Place a wooden stick or a straw on the back to hold them. Use the puppets to create a story or ask to the child to create one.

Materials: virus pictures printed on thick paper and laminated, wooden sticks or straws

NOTES: if the child will get in direct touch with the puppets clean them with wet towels or disinfectant before using them again.