

## COVID-19 Related Stress and How to Deal with It.

Dear Friends, Colleagues, Members and Supporters,

Greetings from Uganda Counselling Association (UCA)! As many countries go on partial and/or complete lockdowns as one of the measures to #FlattenTheCurve of new COVID-19 infections, it's inevitable that lives in Uganda and elsewhere continue to change in ways we had never seen before.

Deeply concerned about the psychological impacts of COVID-19 on individuals, their families and communities in general, Uganda Counselling Association in partnership with Sanyuka TV deemed it necessary to dedicate a moment to discuss the associated psychological stress of COVID-19 and the resultant lockdown in Uganda.

Hosted by Hatmah Nalugwa Sekaaya during #MorningXpress on 1 April 2020, Uganda Counselling Association was represented by Sarah Kalyowa, a seasoned Counsellor and General Secretary of Uganda Counselling Association. During the live talk show dubbed **"Stress and How to Deal with It"**, Sarah elaborated on signs of stress in both children and adults and provided useful information how individuals and families can identify and respond appropriately.

Furthermore, the talk show explored the challenges in identifying symptoms of stress especially for non-professional counsellors and advised viewers to periodically check on those they care about through telephone calls and online platforms where possible.

According to Sarah [The talk show guest],

*"It is important to check on people to let them know that you think and care about them. Just in case they are caught in a moment where they feel like no one is available to stand with them during tough times - It makes a big difference."*

The talk show also discussed issues related to parenting amidst COVID-19. We cannot deny the fact that some children already have some basic information about the pandemic – some of the knowledge obtained from schools, traditional and new media. However, some of these information have been labelled '[fake news](#)' and '[misinformation](#)'.

The [battle against wrong information](#) remains an uphill task and yet some parents/guardians wonder how to effectively inform their children about the pandemic in ways that are age-friendly and reassuring but does not make children worried.

Irrespective of the level of their children's understanding on the pandemic, parents/guardians should continue to find creative ways to educate their children on the developments on COVID-19, adhere to Ministry of Health's [Guidelines](#) and Presidential [directives](#), and monitor their physical and mental health.

As this trying moment where access to professional counselling services is physical limited, parents and guardians remain first point of support for children and those in their care. While professional counselling services may be necessary depending on the situation, 'simple' approaches including 'quality' family time and communication cannot be over emphasised.

During the talk show, the discussant noted that to some people, Coronavirus is the least of their worries. Some people are worried about their well-being, what they will eat, and how they will survive during the lock-down and the times to come – all of which compounds on already existing stress. As emphasised by Sarah Kawalya,

*“People are stressed, and stress can be harmful. Stress that stays around for weeks or months can weaken the immune system and cause high anxiety, fatigue, depression, and even heart disease.”*

For those who missed this very insightful and informative Talk show, kindly follow the [link](#) for a recorded version. For those wondering how to talk to children about the Coronavirus, refer to [useful guidance](#) on helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak by [World Health Organisation](#) and other [creative and informative brochure](#) to share and discuss with children around you.

In the meantime, let's watch over our physical and psychological wellbeing as well as those we love and care about. Do not allow the lock-down to destroy your relationships. If you feel overwhelmed and want to talk to a professional Counsellor, reach out to Uganda Counselling Association via Telephone (+256 751 263 433) and/or Email ([counsellingassn@gmail.com](mailto:counsellingassn@gmail.com)).

Fingers crossed for a better tomorrow. #FollowGuidelines #KeepSafe #StayAtHome #LetsFightCoronaTogether #MentalHealthMatters

**Uganda Counselling Association**