Psychosocial support:
Guidance for communities

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mental health of many in the community. This is as a result of uncertainty about the future, loss of loved ones as well as loss of means to earn a livelihood. The following are actions that can help to safeguard mental health and wellbeing.

- When referring to people with COVID-19, do not attach the disease to any particular ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to all those who are affected, in and from any country.
- Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information only from trusted sources, and at specific times during the day once or twice.
- Check on your family, friends and neighbors through the telephone or safe visits that adhered to government guidelines.
- Discuss your worries and fears with your family and let them understand the situation. This will help to avoid them putting pressure on you for not providing certain things that they are used to.
- Listen to and amplify positive stories on COVID-19.
- As much as possible, maintain familiar routines for you and your family.
- Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness, e.g. through drawing and playing.
- Keep children close to parents and their caregivers as much as possible.
- Openly and clearly discuss COVID-19 with children and address any concerns they may have.
- For those at high risk:
  - Provide practical and emotional support through families and health professionals.
  - Encourage them to ensure they have all the medication they need for their underlying conditions.
  - Ensure you and they have information about how and where to seek help in case of infection.
- For those in isolation:
  - Stay connected and maintain your social networks.
  - Engage in healthy activities to reduce stress and anxiety.

Source: WHO