

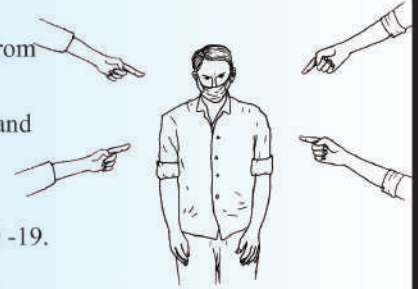
## Social Stigma associated with COVID-19

COVID-19 can affect anyone, but the pandemic has caused the community to be afraid of, discriminate against and treat the affected people with hostility, which is causing considerable distress and anxiety for the affected. The discrimination and hostility might be due to extreme fear about contacting the virus and lack of adequate information about the way this virus spreads. In addition, various several fake and exaggerated messages have been circulating through the social media, which have spread among the community causing panic.

### HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THE SOCIAL STIGMA?

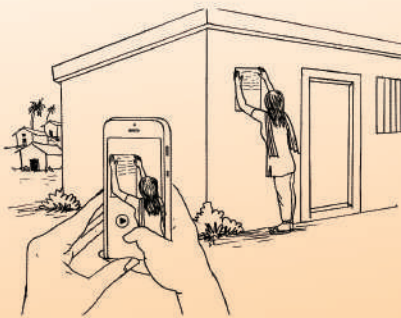
#### AVOID LABELING PERSONS TAKING TREATMENT

- Always address those seeking treatment as “people with COVID-19” or “people recovering from COVID-19 and not words such as case/victim/suspect/COVID-19 families. This can prevent people from coming to hospitals for getting screened and for treatment.
- Understand the stress of the affected person or his family being treated for COVID-19 and be kind and supportive.
- Avoid stigmatizing those who have respiratory symptoms such as cough/breathlessness.
- Do not discriminate suspected, monitored, quarantined and those who have recovered from COVID -19.
- Avoid stigmatizing children, elderly and those with other medical conditions as they are vulnerable.
- If you need to keep anybody quarantined, don't isolate them. Enquire regularly their progress through phone calls and messages to show that you care for them and are concerned about their health.



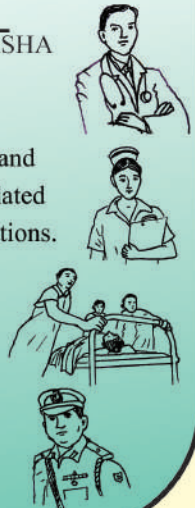
#### AVOID DISCLOSING INFORMATION ABOUT SUSPECTED/ QUARANTINED PEOPLE

- Avoid stigmatizing people by spreading their names or identity on the social media by posting pictures or videos of them and their houses having the quarantine stickers on their walls.
- This can cause unnecessary panic and can create additional problems for the family or person.



#### AVOID STIGMATIZING FRONTLINE WORKERS AND SUPPORT THEM

- Health care workers such as doctors, nurses, ASHA workers are stigmatized thinking they acquire, contract or spread the virus.
- Never abuse or assault the health care workers and police when they approach you for COVID 19 related services either during home visits or tele consultations.
- Avoid discriminating them by behaving hostile, labeling them as infected or asking them to vacate the house.
- Continuously support and encourage the health care workers, police, sanitary workers, volunteers and emergency/essential workers.



#### AVOID INDUCING UNNECESSARY FEAR AND PANIC

- Avoid using negative terms such as 'World is going to end' or 'Everyone will die'. Share the positive stories of those who have experienced or affected by the virus and have recovered or survived.



- This can remove the myths/wrong beliefs that the society is having towards people undergoing treatment or quarantined.

#### DO NOT SHARE OR SPREAD RUMOURS

- Share only the latest facts about COVID-19 by referring to authentic information that is available on the website of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India [<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>]
- Try to correct misconception and do not encourage false propagation and avoid spreading rumours on social media.



### IN CASE YOU NEED ANY HELP

Please contact COVID -19 Psycho social toll free helpline at (080-46110007)  
or consult your doctor or a mental health professional