

Psychological Impact during the Current Times of Pandemic

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All around the world, measures to restrict movement as part of the efforts to reduce the number of people infected with COVID-19 have been taken for almost 24 months. The new normal of working, studying, or connecting from home has also emerged. Adapting to the new lifestyle and managing the fear of contracting the virus had its challenges. Restrictions and sudden changes can prove to have psychological challenges. Anxiety and depression escalated in testing times of COVID-19, and it is predicted to have an impact in post COVID-19 times. This is an alarming situation for people with mental health conditions. Anxiety, for one, has become one of the major concerns for the mental health practitioners. Life is different from what it was before.

Simple things like home schooling were a major lifestyle change for both the students and the teachers. Students struggled with the absence of school interactions and being out of the playgrounds. Excessive screen-time of both the children and adults still poses threat to mental health. Lockdowns also brought poor or no routines for children. Disturbance in routine caused a sense of insecurity and instability having poor psychological impacts. Alteration in social learning of children was observed in which children were restricted to no physical touch, no handshakes, and no hugs. There is no denying of psychological benefits of healthy physical touch (Kovacs et al., 2021).

Following the standard operating procedures, even young people are being trained to look at life in a very technical manner. The psychological impact of visually looking at people where half their face is covered has been immense and somewhat normalized. Now, when adults are talking only auditory senses are involved whereas the wholistic

visuals are missing. Social interactions have changed to such an extent that the adults themselves are unprepared to help the children (Varma et al., 2021).

The psycho-social aspects come into question as well as these new methods and ways of living are applied. The adults have been hit by having to adjust to these new ways of interacting, but most significantly by the financial crisis as well as physical loss of people. There is a hovering impact of fear of the unknown creating anxiety. The death anxiety materializing by having people in their lives who faced such consequences, to anxiety of survival including financials and social placement of adult lives have become major factors that have been introduced in the lives of most people (Varma et al., 2021).

The elderly people have mostly been hit by loneliness due to the extremely limited social and physical interaction. As the world moved to online mediums, elderly people in Pakistan struggled with the lack of knowledge about how to interact online or use the applications that kept many connected throughout the lockdowns. Social isolation took away a healthy coping mechanism of geriatric needs (Mumtaz, 2021; Patel & Clark-Ginsberg, 2020; Vahia et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health practitioners faced new challenges while interacting with their clients. Clients with psychotic conditions came in wanting the therapists to take off their masks while a few in paranoia saw the mask on the therapist as a triggering factor of their paranoia. Although, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) was suspected to be on rise during and post-COVID times, the scale and gravity of this has reached concerning levels. Harmful alcohol and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behavior also rose. All forms of

Psychological Impact of Pandemic mental health concerns now call for mental health professionals to work on ways that are woven around uncalled for times like COVID-19 so that the unpreparedness this time ends here (Chen et al., 2020).

Mental Health guidelines were issued from leading organizations of the world for everyone including the mental health practitioners from Pakistan, keeping in account the cultural backdrop of the people of Pakistan (Shuja et al., 2020). Those who followed simple breathing exercises and grounding techniques, who stayed connected and maintained routines managed and

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