STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH AMIDST THE NEW NORMAL

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The continuous spread of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) with its newly detected variants is profoundly affecting lives in the country and across the globe for almost two years now. This pandemic brought inevitable changes to our daily lives, starting from the altering guidelines and health protocols depending on levels of community quarantine we are comprised now and then. These guidelines and protocols includes: border control otherwise checkpoints installed at every point of entry, movements of people which are limited to essential travels, establishments, activities and services which are not operational, transportation are limited to percent capacities as well as religious gatherings, family gatherings are prohibited, and even necrological services are limited.

These guidelines and health protocols limits people to recreational activities, celebrations, socializing and even grieving for our departed loved ones, imagine up to what level these restrictions could affect our mental health and these are only some major guidelines and protocols that we are practicing to adjust during this New Normal. How further could the most distressing situation in this pandemic bring damage to our mental health like sending off your child whose COVID positive alone in a quarantine/COVID facility, being unable to show your support and take care of your loved ones while they were fighting against the virus who eventually died alone in the hospital and worst just receiving the ashes of your loved ones in a plastic bag. With all of these traumatic and unforeseen circumstances, people may experience or suffer from increased feelings of sadness, loneliness, frustration, hopelessness, irritability, fear, stress and anxiety which could lead to serious medical illness like depression and anxiety disorders.
In order for us to cope with this whole different setting, here are some tips to strengthen our mental health through the New Normal:

EAT HEALTHY. Start strengthening mental health from the food you intake. Try to eat a well-balanced diet. Choose a diet with whole fiber-rich grains, vegetables, fruits, fish and other lean meats, these healthy foods have nutrients to feed your brain. Avoid processed meat, fried food, junk foods, sweets and high-fat dairy products, these flavorful but unhealthy foods could get you more depressed and anxious. Limit your caffeine intake as it can intensify stress and anxiety.

MOVE YOUR BODY. Similar to the amount of food we intake, should also be the amount of the physical work we do to keep our body in shape, as healthy living promotes mental health. There are lots of physical activities that not just help our body to stay healthy but also help us to calm our minds specifically, walking, jogging, biking or even less vigorous activities like stretching and yoga. Choose what is best for you.

STAY SOCIALLY CONNECTED. Keeping our connections and expressing ourselves to the people we love and trust is a big help during this tough times. As the pandemic limits us to meet and bond with our friends and relatives physically, we shift to different ways in order for us to stay connected to them. With the use of the internet through gadgets, we could still exchange our thoughts and share our moments with our loved ones. And this is a perfect way to stay safe from the virus while having conversation and good time with them.

RELIEVE AND RELAX. After a busy day at work or at home, don’t forget to do the things you enjoy, find your own stress reliever. Search for your happy pill and activities you find relaxing, even the slightest little things like playing with your pet, watching the shows or movies you like, playing video games, reading your favorite book or online
story, playing your type of music and singing your favorite songs out loud, just simply do what you think will let you forget your worries and wipe your stress away.

BEWARE OF FAKE NEWS. Unreliable information and news are all over the internet, be selective and suspicious of what you are reading, investigate if the source is reliable before absorbing information. Many people are having fear and anxiety because of misinformation. Fake news are not only acquired on the internet but also through word of mouth, be more cautious of the information from your neighborhood especially news which may cause panic and distress during this pandemic. Do not let these fallacious information ruin your peace of mind. Protect your mental health.

SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY. Your family is your number one support group. In times like this, strengthening the bond of your family is a must. As we face this unseen enemy, only our closest family members will be there to help us when the most unwanted situation happens, being positive of the coronavirus disease. After being detected positive of the virus, chains of more stressful situation arise, quarantine days, close contacts, hospital admissions, symptoms and many more. During these times, only our family members will be there to support us and give us strength to fight the virus in our body and to be completely healed after days and weeks of isolation. Spend time with your family anytime you can especially this time of the pandemic where we don’t know when will be the last time we will have the chance to be with them.

RELEASE AND REST. Once in a while, we should let our emotions out of our body. Releasing these emotions in ways we know that could make us feel lighter will keep our mental health more resilient. As challenges are part of our lives, we don’t have to act strong if deep inside we are packed with different unwanted emotions which could damage our mental health. Having our own ways of release and taking time to rest is the best way to protect our mental health from all the feelings and emotions that this pandemic could cause. Last but not the least, rest and surrender all your worries to God.
References:

Link-https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19/information/covid-19-mental-health