

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: ITC Response

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

"We don't need an exit strategy, we need a coping strategy" MG Tamir Yadai, Commanding General, Home Front Command, Israel.

We are all over six weeks into this new reality, everything is changing, we are all navigating uncharted waters. The entire Israel Trauma Coalition team is working every day to respond in real time. **The most important thing we want you all to know is that we will do whatever we can professionally and personally to help you take care of yourself, your family, your friends, and your co-workers.**

Throughout this period, we have provided webinars with our experts providing psychosocial support to social workers, clinicians, community leaders and the like. We have compiled and shared a list of COVID-19 resources and guidelines for a variety of populations in several languages. This is all available for your use and benefit.

Take care everyone. We will get through this. And, if you need ANYTHING from us please let us know. We want to help in any way we can.

### ITC Briefing Points

#### Guidelines – what to do?

- From the start we have been reaching out to the population with psychosocial guidelines and best practices for parents, rabbis, those in isolation, therapists, medical teams, those working with elderly, youth, social workers, families who have lost loved ones – some of these materials were also produced in English, Arabic, Amharic, Spanish, Italian, French, Russian.

#### Medical teams – the new frontline

- Medical and hospitals teams are overwhelmed and understaffed – 30% of the staff is in isolation with the number of patients rising. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health ITC is working with 31 general hospitals and 16 geriatric hospitals (total of 1,300 beneficiaries – staff members) in Israel to create face-to-face workshops and webinars to support, build resilience and cohesiveness and maintain the wellbeing of doctors and nurses who are facing many emotional challenges both on the work and home front. All social service teams in these hospitals are trained to work with the medical teams to support, minimize burnout, reduce compassion fatigue, build resilience and team cohesion (90 team leaders are being trained).

## Vulnerable Population Groups

- Facilities for the elderly – one of the biggest challenges. Following a spate of Corona-virus deaths in homes for the elderly, the Ministry of Health has appointed the Director General of Ichilov hospital to formulate a national plan of action. ITC has been asked to help by supporting all social services and management in 280 old age facilities under the responsibility of MOH to help support staff, families and elderly to cope with the situation.
- In the Arab community there is a large increase in the number of diagnoses that is partly due to non-compliance with instructions and lack of information and testing. The upcoming Ramadan holiday only raises more concerns about Coronavirus. So it is necessary to work from top-down and from bottom up so that the message of adhering to instructions is followed. ITC, in close cooperation with Home Front Command, is working with leadership, mayors, spokesmen, and Imams. We opened the first ever hotline in Arabic to provide support and held webinars for different target populations in Arabic.
- A unique hotline for support on psychosocial Corona-related issues was created with Eran where an average of 1,400 calls are answered each day.
- Ultra-orthodox community - a total lockdown was declared on 15 Haredi neighborhoods and cities (approximately 600,000 residences) nationwide following conflict over which leadership instruction the communities would follow –Governmental or Rabbinical. The delay in following governmental ordinances resulted in high numbers of Corona patients in ultra-orthodox neighborhoods. The result is that many families are in lock down, in small houses, with large families, men are home, with synagogues and rabbinical study houses closed. Leadership training sessions for 156 major Rabbis in Rabbinic and educational institutions were held in the ultra-Orthodox sectors to help build an information and prevention program. A unique hotline is being created, training for Home Front Command representatives working with the Haredi community, education teams in local councils, training and supporting social services departments and creating a round table of clinical care.
- Day-care facilities– there are 800 institutions for people with special needs who have remained in the facilities, there are outbreaks and the staff is in isolation with the patients. Naturally the staff are anxious and overwhelmed. ITC is working with the supervisors, with the management to maintain continuity, well-being and resilience in collaboration with the Ministry of Social services.

## Resilience Centers – work continues

- All Resilience Centers (Gaza Envelope, Judea and Samaria, Bedouin Resilience center, Jerusalem and Ashkelon) moved to providing remote care on March 18th, 2020. All therapists and all patients were mapped in preparation for remote care. Team support and emergency work with the local councils is increasing. Over the next couple of weeks there will be a gradual return to working from the Resilience centers.



## **Social workers – the new first responders**

- All social workers were declared essential workers in order to ensure services for these populations. Social workers are reaching out to vulnerable populations – elderly, single mothers, etc. There is a rise in domestic violence. ITC is investing efforts to support social workers in municipalities by providing online training. In collaboration with local government a special program was designed to provide workshops to help teams and in turn their clients to cope with the situation. Training includes – providing emotional support, working with children, community work, working remotely (phone and zoom), self-care and body and mind techniques
- ITC is part of Coordination Center established by Home Front Command to synchronize multiple agencies and services working in support of population needs.

Looking forward to sharing better and healthier times together.