PLEASE NOTE: Talk Groups should be conducted in groups of 2-3 people only; sitting 2 metres apart from each other in the interests of protection against spread of the virus.

BACKGROUND NOTES

ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT... CORONAVIRUSES AND COVID-19

Quick Facts

Most of us have heard about **Coronaviruses** and **COVID-19** already. Here are some quick facts to make sure that we all know the truth:

• **What are coronaviruses?** They are large groups of viruses that are common in animals. These viruses can make people sick, usually with a mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illness (affecting the organs needed to breathe – nose, throat, airways, lungs).

• **What is COVID-19?** COVID-19 is the new infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus, called SARS-CoV-2. In the name COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. The outbreak began in Wuhan City, China in December 2019.
Note: Viruses, and the diseases they cause, often have different names. For example, HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) is the virus that causes COVID-19.

• **How do I know if I have COVID-19?**
Symptoms are a runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever and difficulty of breathing (severe cases only). You can suspect to possibly have COVID-19 if you have these symptoms and:
o you have travelled to, or are living in an area where COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in the community OR
o had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
Note: a sore throat and runny nose tend to be less common in COVID-19. If you ONLY have a sore throat and runny nose, you probably have an upper respiratory tract infection.

• **Can I recover from COVID-19?** Yes! So far, about 80% of people who were infected got healthy again. Because it's all still so new, many cases don't have an outcome yet, so doctors and scientists are learning more about it every day. Severe cases of COVID-19 can cause deaths. Severe cases cause pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction/failure.

• **How long does it take from being infected to seeing symptoms?** If someone is infected, it takes a while before the person starts to feel sick. This is called the 'incubation period'.
o The average incubation period for COVID-19 is just over 5 days.
o 97.5% of people who develop symptoms will do so within 11.5 days of infection.
o During the incubation period, the sick person doesn't know yet that he or she has COVID-19. But during this time the person can pass the virus on to everyone he or she comes into contact with.

• **How is the virus spread?**
o The virus is mostly spread from person to person through tiny droplets that are produced when the sick person coughs or sneezes.
o It is also possible to get infected by touching something that has the virus on it. Money and public areas that are touched by lots of people can be especially unsafe. The virus can stay in the air for up to 3 hours, on copper for up to 4 hours, on cardboard up to 24 hours and on plastic and stainless steel up to 72 hours.

So, what's all this about 'social distancing to flatten the curve'?

When you have lots of people close together, the spread of the virus can be very fast. If all those people get sick at the same time, the hospitals won't be able to cope and people might not get good medical care. So, it's better to slow the spread of the virus down. When people stay at home and away from each other as much as is possible, this is called 'social distancing'. It's a choice that people make to keep one another safe.

What will stop it?

Scientists are working on a cure. Because so many people around the world have the virus, they are trying to develop a treatment or medicine that will stop it as quickly as possible. They are also testing all the medicines we already have to see if anything helps.

People who have had the virus once will develop some immunity, and it is rare to get an infectious disease again. So, once a large part of the population has had the virus, the spread will slow down naturally. In a way, those who haven't had it yet are then protected by all the people around them who've already had it. This is called 'herd immunity'. The problem with herd immunity is that many people are likely to have died by the time it starts to take effect.

Myths & Fake News

It's important to have the facts. You can play a big part in your community by giving out correct information and stopping myths and fake news from spreading. These scare people and waste time and energy. By helping your community to respond in a calm and informed way, you can help to save lives!

FALSE	TRUE
If you can hold your breath without coughing for 10 seconds, you don't have the virus.	There is NO quick self-test that can tell you whether you have COVID-19 or not but it's important to remember what the symptoms are: shortness of breath, fever, coughing, sore throat, runny nose.
Hot weather will kill the virus.	The virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather.
Cold weather will kill the virus.	There is no evidence that cold weather kills the virus.
Hand dryers will kill the virus.	Hand dryers will NOT kill the virus.
Thermometers and thermal scanners can tell you if you have COVID-19.	Thermometers can tell you if you have a fever (high temperature), but not all fevers come from having COVID-19.
Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will kill the virus.	Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will NOT kill the virus.
Regularly rinsing your nose with salt-water (saline) will help prevent infection.	There is no evidence that rinsing your nose with salt-water helps to prevent infection.
Eating garlic or drinking sesame oil will help prevent infection.	There is no evidence that eating garlic or drinking sesame oil will help prevent infection.
Only old people get infected.	People of all ages can be infected. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming very ill. Although there isn't yet evidence of this, we can expect that people with HIV and TB will be more vulnerable.
Antibiotics can treat COVID-19.	Antibiotics do not work against viruses.

You can get infected from eating meat or eggs.	There is no evidence that you can get infected from any food. However, the World Health Organization says, "To protect yourself, such as when visiting live animal markets, avoid direct contact with animals and surfaces in contact with animals. Ensure good food safety practices at all times. Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care to avoid contamination of uncooked foods and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products."
Drinking water will protect you from the virus. You should drink water every 15 minutes at least to wash the virus down through the throat and into the stomach, where the acid will kill the virus.	Although it is necessary to drink clean water for good health, it will NOT kill the virus.
COVID-19 patients will experience a drowning sensation	COVID-19 patients will NOT experience a drowning sensation.
By the time a person with COVID-19 is hospitalized, their lungs will have experienced fibrosis.	By the time a person with COVID-19 is hospitalized, their lungs will NOT have experienced fibrosis. (Fibrosis is the scarring of the lung which can lead to respiratory failure [not being able to breathe].)
You can get the virus in a package or envelope.	The virus doesn't stay alive long enough to go through the postal system.

What can we do to stay safe?

This information is taken from the World Health Organization website:

1. Wash your hands often.

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash them with soap and water for longer than 20 seconds. Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer kills viruses that may be on your hands.

2. Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the virus if the person coughing has the disease.

3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

4. Practise respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you.

5. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority. National and local authorities will have the most up-to-date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

Important note for when you clean your home or work space: "Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser," the CDC says. This releases harmful chlorine vapors.

Premier of the Western Cape in South Africa, Alan Winde, said,

"I appeal to businesses that have the means to allow their staff to work from home, to take this step. Now is the time to take bold steps and to innovate as we all work to stop the spread. Where this isn't possible, we appeal to businesses to take decisions in the best interests of their employees— by ensuring that they are able to keep their distance, in a hygienic environment. Consider where you can make a difference— maybe you can send an email instead of holding a meeting, or re-arrange the workspace so as to allow for more space,"

ACT NOW

- ✓ Make sure that you know what coronavirus and COVID-19 are, how the virus is spread and what the best way is to protect yourself. Check facts before you share them. Help to contain the spread of myths and false information.

- ✓ Help to keep your community from needless panic and chaos, but also help people to see that this coronavirus is dangerous and that it's important to take unusual steps to stay safe.

- ✓ Mobilize other young people like yourself to be leaders at this time.

- ✓ You and other young people in your community can role-model your values and infuse your community with hope and wisdom. **You are the message giver and you are the strongest message**. Show your community that youth are filled with promise and resilience!

CALL FOR HELP

- ✓ **BOTSWANA:**
  Call 997/ 3632756/ 3632757/ 363 2773

- ✓ **SOUTH AFRICA:**
  Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999.
  WhatsApp Support Line: 0600 123456.
  Send 'hi' to this number

- ✓ **ZAMBIA:**
  National Public Health Institute: 0953898941 or
  DMMU hotline at 909.

- ✓ **ZIMBABWE**: Wilkins Hospital Harare +263 242740433

Information taken from:
- https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/16/us/coronavirus-myths-debunking-holding-breath-10-seconds-trnd/index.html
- https://www.westerncape.gov.za/department-of-health/news/western-cape-government-update-coronavirus-19-march
- https://www.westerncape.gov.za/department-of-health/coronavirus
- https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317175438.htm
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html
- https://www.livescience.com/how-long-coronavirus-last-surfaces.html
- https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/16/the-big-question-over-coronavirus-can-a-person-get-it-twice
- https://www.businessinsider.co.za/wuhan-coronavirus-myths-red-meat-bleach-antibiotics-and-sesame-oil-2020-2?r=US&IR=T

We want to hear from you!

- ✓ After completing this Talk Group, please send (whatsapp or email) your **gold** Facilitator Intern/ Sites Coordinator/ Field Coordinator a VIDEO or PHOTO or VOICE NOTE sharing what you've learnt and/or how you are going to be the change and stop the spread of this virus! **#letyourgoldshine**

You are the message giver and you are the strongest message.

Talk Group Outline: COVID-19 Message Givers

Talk Groups can be great for getting our peers TALKING about some of the big issues in their lives and communities.

Use this outline to help you plan a Talk Group on our response to the new Coronavirus outbreak.

Remember to go back to the background notes so you have all the information fresh in your mind.

PLEASE NOTE: Talk Groups should be conducted in groups of 2-3 people only; sitting 2 metres apart from each other in the interests of protection against spread of the virus.

How to Plan a Talk Group on Our Response to COVID-19

1. **Think of a fun and interesting way to introduce the topic and get people thinking about the issue.**

2. **Think of some questions or statements to guide the discussion.**

3. **Make sure you communicate some of the key points on the issue**

- So far, about 80% of people who got the new coronavirus got healthy again.
- If someone is infected, it takes a while before the person starts to feel sick. During the incubation period, the sick person can pass it on to others.
- The virus is mostly spread from person to person through tiny droplets that are produced when the sick person coughs or sneezes.
- The virus can stay in the air for up to 3 hours, on copper for up to 4 hours, on cardboard up to 24 hours and on plastic and stainless steel up to 72 hours.
- Wrong information is dangerous.
- Young people can be leaders in their communities by staying calm and giving out correct information. By helping a community to respond in an orderly, calm and informed way, young people can help to save many lives!

4. **Wrap up by summarizing the discussion and encouraging the group to think about how they can impact their communities positively during the outbreak.**

To help you with Step 1 and 2 from the Talk Group Plan, here are a few ideas to get your talk group going, and questions to shape your discussion.

But remember, it's up to YOU how your talk group turns out. You can be creative and make the talk group fun for other learners – this way they will want to keep coming back to more talk groups.

Also remember, a talk group is a chance for you to learn from your peers, and for them to learn from each other – there are no experts in a talk group, just lots of peers getting together and saying it how it IS...

COVID-19 Message Givers Talk Group Starter Ideas ...

COVID-19 quiz: You can use the following questions to get the Talk Group going (you can find all the answers in the Background Notes):
- Is COVID-19 the same as the flu?
- When was the first case of COVID-19 discovered?
- What's the difference between coronaviruses and COVID-19?
- What are people's symptoms when they get COVID-19?
- What percentage of people recover fully?
- What is the 'incubation period'?
- How long is the average incubation period for COVID-19?
- Can you pass the virus on during the incubation period?
- How is the virus spread?
- How can you slow down the spread of the virus?

We want to hear from you!
After completing this Talk Group, please send (whatsapp or email) your **gold** Facilitator Intern/ Sites Coordinator/Field Coordinator a VIDEO or PHOTO or VOICE NOTE sharing what you've learnt and/or how you are going to be the change and stop the spread of this virus and help others along the way! **#letyourgoldshine**

OR: Ask your peers whether they've heard any fake information about the virus that's spreading in their communities. Discuss why wrong information is harmful, as well as the role they can play by making sure people know the facts. You can go through the True/False Table (from the Background Notes) why each of the false statements is wrong.

OR: Some of the recommended actions for safety are hard to do, especially for people who live in crowded places, who have to go to work in order to put food on the table for their families, who can't travel in any way other than in full taxis and who don't have running water in their homes where they can wash their hands.
Facilitate an honest discussion with your peers:
1. Wash your hands often.
Is this a challenge in your community? Why? What can you do to try to overcome this challenge?
2. Maintain social distancing.
Is this a challenge in your community? Why? What can you do to try to overcome this challenge?
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
Is this a challenge in your community? Why? What can you do to try to overcome this challenge?
4. Practice respiratory hygiene.
Is this a challenge in your community? Why? What can you do to try to overcome this challenge?
5. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.
Is this a challenge in your community? Why? What can you do to try to overcome this challenge?

OR: Ask your peers what message is important for their community right now.
- What can you say to your community at this time to have a positive impact on how they are dealing with COVID-19?
- Are you role-modelling safe behaviour?
- Can you share facts and helpful online messaging with your community, such as Facebook or whatsapp posts, to help people stay calm and informed?
- How can you encourage your peers to step up as leaders during the COVID-19 crisis?
- In what practical ways can you help others in your community, especially those who are more vulnerable?

Remember: The idea behind talk groups is that your peers can TALK about an issue, DECIDE what they think about it, and then MAKE A CHANGE for the better in their lives! By running a talk group, you as Peer Educators have the power to MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Remember to use the TALK Group Tool to help you plan and review your talk group!