

Stay Safe, Stay Sane.

By Felydia Hung



Source: freepik.com

Since the Covid-19 pandemic started, we have seen the numbers of cases and deaths spike drastically over the past few weeks across the nation that has led the Government of Malaysia to impose a 'total lockdown' during the nationwide Movement Control Order to curb the spreading of Covid-19 virus. According to WHO, staying home is the best approach to break the infection chain and flatten the curve of Covid-19 threat to the nation. Therefore; social distancing, wearing a face mask, and washing our hands frequently has been the new norm in our daily lives.

Over the past year, the pandemic has also led us to a catastrophic impact and caused several economic sectors in Malaysia to struggle, predominantly on vulnerable households. According to World Bank, it denotes that 5.6% Malaysian households are currently living in absolute poverty. The article further highlights that the lower income group remains particularly vulnerable to economic shocks as well as increases in the cost of living and accumulating financial obligations. Several industries such as tourism, aviation, and other SME businesses has been slammed with financial difficulties consequently downsizing their company by reducing workforce, freezing the hiring of new employees, reducing or limiting overtime prior to retrenchment of employees.

With how the current situation unfolds, uncertainties tapped into more lives on a daily basis. Many people have been affected mentally and financially during this unprecedented time. From losing jobs, to income reduction as well as social isolation from their loved ones. Unfortunately, these



challenges could have a negative effect on an individuals' mental health as the situations may break individuals' social ties, which leads to considerably higher reported feelings of loneliness and depression thus further lower mental health scores.

Staying positive during this challenging time is easier said than done, especially when the odds are not in our favor. One may feel that they can't see *the light at the end of the tunnel* or feeling hopeless. Nevertheless, one should always persevere and stay resilient regardless of circumstances.

Here are some tips for you to STAY SANE!

Seek help for your mental health issues

- Whether it is a panic attack, anxiety or having a negative feeling on one of your low days, reach out to your family members and friends or seek professional help. When we're struggling to cope with our mental health, reaching out to people around us might be an uncomfortable thing to do for certain people. However, a call for emotional support often makes us feel much better.
- Befrienders KL provides mental health services for people to reach out to develop better emotional self-awareness, improved emotional health and well-being.

Hotline: 03-76272929 (24 Hours)

Email: sam@befrienders.org.my

Exercise at least 20 - 30 minutes a day

- Studies have shown that exercising regularly improves one's mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood. It also further boosts our self-esteem as well as cognitive function. So put those sneakers on and sweat it out!

Have a routine to occupy yourselves

- Sticking to a regular routine may help one to keep going despite lockdown limitations. Perhaps start your day by waking up early every day with a goal in mind to be productive. It could be from making up your bed every morning, to reading a good book, to decluttering your home to keep yourselves occupy. Whatever floats your boat.

Here's to reminding everyone to stay safe and stay sane!



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