

Viruses don't discriminate
and neither should we
#TogetherWeCan
#PreventCOVID-19



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Vision: A Healthy Nation by 2023

Values: Customer Focus, Botho, Timeliness, Equity,
Teamwork, Accountability.

**DON'T LET FEAR
OF COVID-19
TURN INTO
STIGMA**



INTRODUCTION

We all have a role to play in protecting the physical and mental health of ourselves and others during the COVID-19 pandemic. These are difficult times for all of us. People should adopt only acts of kindness, acceptance and love.

WHAT IS SOCIAL STIGMA?

A strong negative feeling in society that being in a particular situation or having a particular illness is something to be ashamed of or to be avoided for.

In an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease.

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO STIGMA?

- Excessive fear of the disease and possible related deaths.
- Inadequate information among the general public about the disease.

WHO IS AT RISK OF EXPERIENCING STIGMA BECAUSE OF COVID-19?

- People who have travelled to affected areas.
- People who have been quarantined.
- Emergency responders or healthcare professionals.
- Caregivers, family and friends.
- Those with the disease.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Stigma can undermine relationships and prompt possible social isolation of groups, which might contribute to a situation where the virus is more, not less, likely to spread. This can result in more severe health problems and difficulties controlling the disease outbreak.

STIGMA CAN:

- Drive people to hide the illness to avoid discrimination.
- Prevent people from seeking health care immediately.
- Discourage them from adopting healthy behaviors.
- Affect the emotional or mental health of stigmatized groups.


STIGMATIZED GROUPS MAY BE SUBJECTED TO:

- Social avoidance, rejection & neglect.
- Physical violence.
- Denial of services or employment.
- Racial killings.

HOW CAN WE AVOID STIGMA?

- Do not associate the disease with any village, any class of people or any race.
- Don't blame anyone for bringing the disease to the country or village.
- Get information from verified sources to get facts e.g. Ministry of Health Facebook page, WHO website.

- Embrace and accept people who have been quarantined and isolated.
- Think positive & talk positivity.



Stigma can affect the emotional and mental health of stigmatized person or group.