

Benefits of Online Counselling during Lockdown in India

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ABSTRACT

Mental health of the people is particularly important topic in the world. The performance of the people is depending upon their mental health and well being. Now days throughout the world pandemic covid-19 spread and therefore people cannot go out of their home. Most of the countries are following lockdown, this is the only solution to slow down the spread of coronavirus. In this lockdown situation many students, parents and individuals are facing mental stress. Therefore, there is need of counselor and psychologist to help people to overcome their stress, depression and sadness.

Online counselling is the best option to get help from their home. People can easily talk with counselor, psychologist or health professionals through video call, live chat, Skype, WhatsApp call, audio call or another option. They can use their mobile, iPad or laptop for talking. Now days mobile is available in remote areas also. Online counselling is affordable. It is convenient for client and Counselor also. It is also allowing counselor and client more comfort, client can communicate more openly. Online counselling is helpful for parents because they do not have need to travel outside with children for counselling, it saves their travelling time and money. Through online counselling client can express themselves without any hesitation, its a variant forms of communication with some more benefits.

Keywords : COVID-19, Lockdown, Online Counselling,

1 INTRODUCTION

Currently lockdown period is going on India because of covid-19 pandemic. there are lots of people facing mental health related problem. online counselling can be helpful for them to overcome stress, depression, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, illogical thoughts, low self-esteem, suppressed emotion, interpersonal relationship and so on. Online counselling can be easily accessible for or anybody, by using electronic devices like mobile, iPad, computer or laptop. it can be better option for remote areas also. it has no physical limitations, from anywhere anybody can talk with counselor and get help. it is more affordable than face to face counselling. in online counselling client can get instant answer to their urgent questions. it is incredibly good for those parents who don't have time to visit counselor in their center, parents and children to get counselling in their home without any travelling. it is extremely comfortable; client can get counselling in their home. these are some of the best thing of online counselling. Many counsellor in India are counselling through online sources like video call, Skype ,zoom app, WhatsApp call, audio call and so on

Online counselling can be beneficial for improving communication and interpersonal skill, it can be helpful for changing self-defeating behavior or habits, also can increase confidence and decision making skills. Mental health of the students is the topic of interest throughout the world. The entire performance of the student depends on his mental health. Disturbances in the mental health not only have negative impact to the particular student but also have serious negative impacts on the community, as today's student is the future of the country contributing to its development by serving

various roles like teacher, engineers, doctors, nurses etc. Hence, the mental health of the students must be given at most importance. Till date there is no proven treatment to manage the Novel corona virus disease. As the rate of spread is increasing day by day, lockdown is the only option available to slowdown the rate of spreading the infection. In this process, all the education institutes were also locked down all sudden. The students were in different phases of their academic year like some are about to complete the academic year, some are about to write their entrance examinations, and some are writing their examinations. It is well known that the students experience lots of stress especially before and during the examinations. The examinations were postponed due to the lockdown effect and the actual date of exam is awaited. In this context many students were undergoing mental stress and there is a strong need to consider their mental health status. The students were preparing the examinations especially the entrance examinations for years together

2 Difference Between Face-Face Counselling & Online Counselling:

2.1 Face to Face Counselling : Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. By listening attentively and patiently the counsellor can begin to perceive the difficulties from the client's point of view and can help them to see things more clearly, possibly from a different perspective. Counselling is a way of enabling choice or change or of reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing a client to take a course of action. Counsellors do not judge or exploit their clients in any way.

The Advantages of Face to Face Counselling:

- Counsellors are trained to observe your non-verbal communication (for example, the expressions on your face, the way you are sitting) to get a deeper understanding of what you are saying.
- It enables you to develop your communication skills.
- It is a more personal form of therapy.

2.2. Online counseling: Online counseling is the provision of professional mental health counseling services through the Internet. Services are typically offered via email, real-time chat, and video conferencing. Some clients use online counseling in conjunction with traditional psychotherapy, or nutritional counseling, and a growing number of clients are using online counseling as a replacement for office visits.

Advantages of online counseling:

The effectiveness of this form of counseling in comparison with traditional form of counseling are as follows:

Accessibility

Online counseling is easy accessible to everyone. People who are residing in remote and rural areas may also take benefit out of this, as proper counseling services may not be possible in their area. Those that are physically disabled or unable to leave their home can also easily access such services with little inconvenience.

Affordability

Online counseling is typically done via internet. Thus, it is more economical and affordable for both the therapist and the client. Many a times a therapist may not afford to rent commercial space or may not be willing to do so. In such cases, online counseling lowers the overhead costs of investing in capital and property. It also reduces commuting and other administration procedures when compared to traditional counseling services.

Convenience

Online counseling is very flexible and convenient as it gives an opportunity to both the therapist and the client to have the counseling session according to their preferred range of timings. This flexibility creates an opportunity for the therapist to extend their services globally to a larger geographical region. The appointments with the therapists too can be potentially scheduled over 24/7, thus, reducing the hassle of scheduling and setting appointments more common in traditional settings.

Social stigma

Online counseling allows more comfort and privacy as there is no need for the client to visit the counseling centre. Thus eliminating the social stigma associated with receiving therapy. The client will no longer feel uneasy to share his details and issues bothering him as it is executed by the client in their own home through the computer. Thus, their comfort zone helps them to express better.

Anonymity

As online counseling does not involve face to face contact, It allows the clients to communicate more openly without any concerns for bias of race, gender, age, size or physical appearance. Thus, there is an increased chance for the client to be honest, and therefore higher validity in the case of self-disclosure. This type of counseling allows a level of anonymity because of the therapist being invisible and non-threatening to the client.

Variant forms of communication

Communication through the internet are mostly in written forms like chats, emails, and instant messaging services. It is believed that writing during times of distress is particularly useful for clients as it provides an important approach for emotional healing. Thus, it is an interactive form of therapeutic writing. Interventions delivered through the therapeutic writing is quite effective in encouraging clients to express themselves in more thoughtful, self-reflective and insightful manner. At the same time, a written record is also useful for the client to have a reference point in future discussion, review and to assess his change and progress.

3. Technical Things which is useful for online Counselling:

- Telephone (Mobile)
- Instant Massaging (IM)
- Online Chatting (WhatsApp, Social Networking Site)
- Email (Email Communication)
- Video Conferencing (Skype, Zoom etc.)

4. Current Scenario of online counselling in Lockdown:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a spike in the number of people suffering from mental health issues. The panic and stress of the lockdown and the disease only add to the increasing problem. For people suffering from mental health issues, therapy is, sometimes, the best way for them to deal with what is going on in their lives. However, with the lockdown, face-to-face therapy is difficult too. In such times, people are taking to online Counselling. It is already difficult for many to open to their therapists, which is only aggravated with being forced to adjust to online Counselling.

5. Conclusion: In lockdown period Online Counselling can be beneficial for those who are facing Mental Health Problem. Online Counselling can be easily accessible for anybody by using electronic devices like Mobile, I-Pad, Laptop. Online Counseling has no physical limitation from anywhere anybody get counseling. Through online counseling client can get instant solution for their Solution. In lockdown it is not possible for people to go outside for face-face counseling so online counseling playing important role for helping stress, mental health problem. It is also beneficial for improving communication skill, Decision Making Skill, changing self-defeating behaviour or Habits. The Internet is not just for chatting with friends and relatives anymore. Although the Internet has made communication easier with emails, chat rooms, and instant messaging services, many people have also found the World Wide Web to be helpful in obtaining information about mental health, including specifics on disorders, medication, and treatment. It was only a matter of time before the availability of easy communication and mental health resources merged to form what is now known as online counseling. Online counselling clearly does pose some unique problems and some unique possibilities for both the clients and the therapists. As such, both mental health practitioners and individuals who wish to engage in such services must be informed of both the benefits and limitations of this style of therapeutic approach.

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