[Zainab Nazir](https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/zainab-nazir)

November 12, 2020

**Two contagions**

We are now dealing with two different contagions – the virus and the detrimental emotions that follow. The challenges brought about by Covid-19 are unparalleled and have caused anxiety, fear and uncertainty for many of us.

The coronavirus pandemic is an epidemiological and psychological crisis. Staying in closed spaces has never felt as claustrophobic as this. The constant sight of the very same walls, colours and faces around us builds two different psychologies. On the positive side, the frequency of communication and transparency in a family has increased and on the other side of the coin, “too many vessels result in more noise”.

All of us are social animals. We are meant to be contrasted together in groups; living, laughing and working together. When this aspect of human social and psychological structure is stripped and peeled, we suffer.

Covid-19 has affected the mental health of individuals, irrespective of their financial status and age. Many of us are worried about our loved ones and our livelihoods. The pandemic has created unprecedented change and a need for a response from everyone around the globe. Movements are restricted; we meet only a limited number of people, we cannot socialise, go to office or college. This has already led to a large number of cases of depression.

The medical profession is highly dignified but equally more challenging during tough times. Treating Covid-19 is not just physical but emotional labour as well. It has become a matter of life and death for these frontline warriors. The mental exhaustion of being unable to keep up with the volume of coronavirus patients takes its toll on doctors.

The mental health of people all around the globe is getting affected at both communal and individual levels. People are anxious over their worsening financial conditions and the closure of their businesses. They are confused whether the lockdown will ever end and their businesses will ever be able to gain what has been lost. Many are worried about their loved ones potentially contracting the virus. It is normal to feel this way; we all are in this, together.

Taking care of the mind is always important, but doing so during a pandemic can be tricky. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Helping others cope with their stress can also make our community stronger. There is no harm in talking with people you trust about your concerns and how you feel. We need to break the stigma of suffering in silence. If you are struggling, it is always better to see a doctor or a therapist before it gets too late. There are many mental health associations that are working to improve the lives of people around the globe.

The coronavirus pandemic is a very traumatic societal event for people. One thing we know about trauma is that while it is happening, you do whatever you can to survive. You bear down and you just get through it. This is exactly what we all are trying to do. We are still very much in the active trauma phase of this pandemic. But, what happens after social distancing measures are lifted? What comes after the pandemic is over and people are able to get back to whatever their normal may be? There will be residual stress, financial pressures and depression. The rapid spread of the pandemic gave little chance to prepare for or even process all that has happened in terms of complete uprooting of everyday life.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed everything: the way we greet, socialise, our sanitary habits and even our appearances. The novel virus has created a new set of challenges. This is a time filled with loss and uncertainty. Protecting yourself from a mental health illness is just as important as protecting yourself from the virus.

But how can we fix this? An optimistic approach could help us. Convincing yourself that you are happy and thankful for everything can go a long way. We should know that the worst of life will pass, and that pain exists for the sole purpose of making the light on the other side brighter. Behold the might of psychology.

The writer is a freelance contributor based in Islamabad.

Email: zainab.nazir@gmail.com

Twitter: ZainabNazir28