



CHANGING LANDSCAPE: MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 IN LEYTE, PHILIPPINES

Ruth Edisel Rylle B. Sadian-Cercado
University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College
rbsadiancercado@up.edu.ph

INTRODUCTION

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is “any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental health condition” (IASC, 2019).

Over the years, MHPSS has had several adaptations to fit particular settings, culture, language, health and social systems across the country.

This study involved the MHPSS programmes at the third layer of the intervention pyramid and monitored the remote delivery of psychological services in the time of COVID-19.

FRAMEWORK

The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for MHPSS (IASC, 2017) is used to describe the impact of the changed landscape of MHPSS in Leyte from April to May 2020, at the height of community lockdowns.

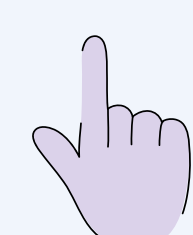
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1 Identify the pros and cons of remote MHPSS.
- 2 Highlight the importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in remote MHPSS.

METHODOLOGY



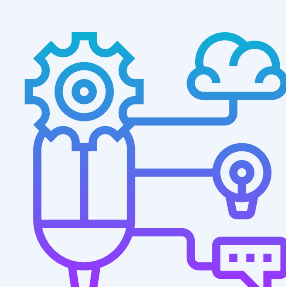
7 local actors composed of mental health professionals, primary health care workers, and Psychological First Aid providers



Purposive sampling



Online focus group



Content and thematic analysis

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pros and Cons of Remote MHPSS

Pros

- Wider reach
- Greater accessibility of support
- Rapid risk assessment
- Better linkages
- Increased sense of safety
- Lesser stigma

Cons

- Absence of important nonverbal cues
- Requires moderate to high-tech literacy
- Client misfit
- Lacks the structure of physical space

Importance of ICT in the Remote Delivery of MHPSS

- ✓ Design of program goal, protocols, and guidelines
- ✓ Online assessment of mental health and psychosocial needs
- ✓ Remote communication
 - Telehealth and Telecounseling
 - Establishing linkages
 - Dissemination of information-education messages

CONCLUSION

The worsening health crisis, limited mobility, and restrictive health protocols changed the way MHPSS is being delivered to individuals and communities in Leyte. The traditional face to face approach is not ideal. Hence, the use of ICT was proven helpful in the remote delivery of psychological services aimed at reducing distress and minimizing the impact of community lockdowns.

REFERENCES

- IASC. (2019). Briefing Note on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak.
- IASC (2017). A Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.