

# TIPS FOR COMMUNICATORS AND FRONTLINE RESPONDERS TO ADDRESS STIGMA DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Disease outbreaks, such as the COVID-19, are challenging for the public, communities and other responders. Anxiety and fear about the disease can lead to social stigma and requires a delicate balance between protecting public's health and the practices that can lead to stigmatization and discrimination against some special groups. During the current COVID-19 outbreak response, stigma and discrimination is observed against:

- Asian descents.
- Persons who have been released from COVID-19 quarantine.
- Migrants and refugees.
- Persons who have been travelling to infected regions.
- Emergency responders or healthcare professionals.

## Communicators and frontline responders can help reduce stigma during the COVID-19 response by:

1. Raise awareness about COVID-19 by sharing accurate, timely information about how the virus spreads and stressing the following facts:
  - o COVID-19 is a global disease that is infecting anyone anywhere.
  - o The virus is not discriminating. Everyone is at risk.
  - o The persons infected with COVID-19 are not spreading the virus on purpose, they are victims of the virus.
2. Maintain privacy and confidentiality of suspected cases and confirmed cases.
3. Be careful of sharing images of persons suspected and / or confirmed with COVID-19.
4. Speak out against negative behaviors including negative comments about special groups especially on media and social media.
5. Show compassion and support for individuals and communities more closely impacted.
6. Find opportunities to amplify positive stories of people who have recovered or who have supported a loved one and are willing to share their experience.
7. Recognize the efforts of health care workers in supporting people affected with COVID-19 and acknowledge the role they play to save lives and if possible, communicate the protective measures taken to protect health care workers.
8. Encourage media to only share facts and accurate information about the disease.

## References

- IFRC, UNICEF, and WHO. COVID-19 Global Response, Risk Comination & Community Engagement (RCCE) STRATEGY.
- IFRC, UNICEF, and WHO. Social Stigma associated with COVID-19.
- UNICEF. RCCE COVID 19 Message Matrix. Version 1.
- UNICEF. Inspirational Models for COVID-19.



Europe and Central Asia

**UNICEF Europe and Central Asia  
Regional Office**

5-7 avenue de la Paix CH-1211  
Geneva 10 Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 909 5111

[ecaro@unicef.org](mailto:ecaro@unicef.org)

[www.unicef.org/eca](http://www.unicef.org/eca)

April 2020