



WHO Collaborating Centre for Emergency and Trauma Care
Department of Emergency Medicine
JPN Apex Trauma Centre, AIIMS, New Delhi, India



World Health
Organization
South East Asian Region

**Nurse Led
Covid-19
Tele-Care
Helpline**



NURSE LED COVID -19 HELPLINE

When general public vocabulary upgraded with new terms such as lockdown, social distancing and many more simultaneously infodemic also attacked the general public. People were more confused, stressed, panic and in anxiety with unknown, unseen pandemic name COVID 19.



AIMS & OBJECTIVE

- *Tele consultation for COVID-19 patients for home isolation, minimizing transmission*
- *Tele consultation to allay anxiety and confusion*
- *Tele triaging for suspected patients*
- *Home care guidance*

Salient Features

- . *Low Cost*
- . *High Impact*
- . *24/7 Operability*
- . *No Waiting Time*
- . *User Friendly*
- . *Efficient Service*
- . *Follow up*

Ideation By Nurse:

- In March 2020, the WHO Collaboration Centre of Emergency and Trauma Care (WHO CCET) initiated the first professional nurse-led helpline to address COVID-19-related queries.
- This helpline, entirely ideated and executed by a dedicated nursing team, (Covid Marshals) provided essential support to the general public during the

CALL ANALYSIS

350
Incoming



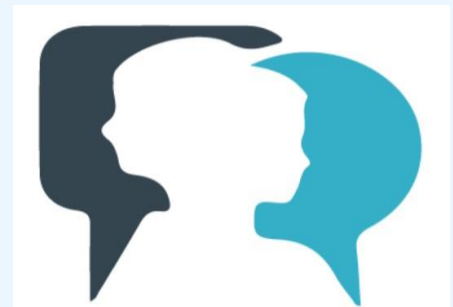
150
Outgoing

500



>4000 minutes*

Calling hours by COVID Marshals



ACT* 8.27 min
*Average Counselling Time

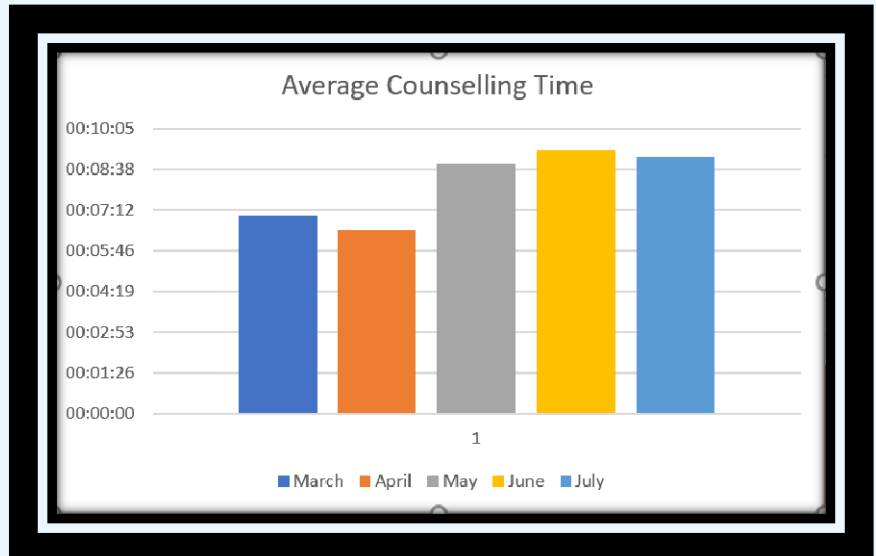


>95%



75%

COVID19 Helpline Data



Helpline received calls from Following states

AP	Bihar	Delhi	Haryana	Jammu
Kolkata	MP	Punjab	Rajasthan	UP

COVID MARSHALS

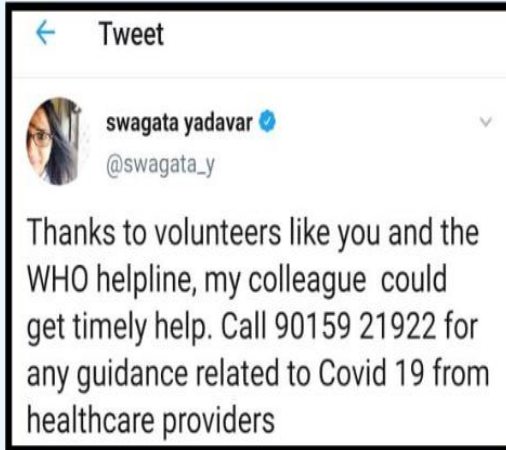


*Thank-You
Covid Marshals*

*"Best way to find
Yourself Is to lose
yourself in the service
of others"*

M.K. Gandhi

Our Patient's Testimony



The Print, 4th July 2020

List out your symptoms, determine your risk

While it is an ever-evolving disease, so far, we know the novel coronavirus may be accompanied by one or all of the following **symptoms**: fever, dry cough, tightness of chest, loss of taste or smell, diarrhoea, breathlessness, fatigue, body ache, nasal congestion, skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

To help suspected Covid patients navigate through the barrage of information coming their way, without feeling overwhelmed, healthcare professionals launched a Delhi-based **helpline** in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) in February: +91 9015921922. Close to 60 healthcare workers, referred to as Covid marshals, answer the calls, usually made by panic-stricken people realising either they, or someone in their family is showing symptoms.

The marshals begin their consultation by taking a detailed history of the patient, and their questions can come in handy for anyone trying to make sense of their own symptoms at home. These include: symptoms and their duration, their pattern (whether they are progressing or regressing with time) and, most importantly, whether they or anyone in their family and home is high-risk — that is, have existing comorbidities.

COVID-19
Helpline on Air
22nd March



I am thankful to this helpline which is rendering yeoman service in the time of this publichealth emergency caused by Covid-19. I have personally benefited with Nurse COVID Marshal staying in touch right through when my flat was in a containment zone. It was a period of great anxiety, fear of infection. They daily enquiries & supportive words were a source of reassurance & strength to me. My grateful thanks to all those rendering this service at great risk to themselves.

Sh. Shastri Ramachandaran, Journalist

Please do convey my deep thanks, gratitude and supportive message to the COVID Marshals because they have worked selflessly in the most difficult time.

**~Dr Debashish,
UK**

Thanks for helping me in the most difficult time, immediately after my delivery my whole world shaken with news, that my husband & mother both were COVID positive. We all were staying in one room set. Thanks to COVID Marshals for helping me, guided and counselling me in that difficult time.

~Kanupriya

Our Covid Marshal's Experience

My experience of being a volunteer as a COVID Marshal



COVID-19 has swiped the world making sure that each one of us felt its presence. As a responsible health care worker, I felt that it's my duty to keep providing right information about the infection to all the people I came in contact with. Having my post-graduation in community health nursing, I was in a better position to play the role of a Nurse as a patient educator. So, I started reading a lot about the disease ever since it started in India from authentic sites of WHO, CDC, Ministry of health and family welfare and continuously kept myself updated.

Once the lockdown started and when the whole situation changed, I felt little alarmed yet I started thinking about how can I contribute? As luck would have it, I came to know about the conception of the COVID helpline initiated by WHO CC Emergency and Trauma Care. I have been associated with this initiative since the beginning. I learnt many technical aspects of how a helpline function. It started with few people at the beginning which expanded later on. I personally had lots of learning from this experience. I also contributed to train new volunteers and in parallel to this, I started taking calls.

The frequent changes in guidelines and government advisories owing to this novel disease kept me on my toes and made me read more and more every day. It was very satisfying at times when just by compassionately listening to the caller made them feel less anxious, felt cared for, and felt that somebody does understand their problem. Whereas sometimes it's quite exhausting when you are not able to help the caller that much. So, many learnings and un-learnings all through this journey. Helping others in allaying the fear of pandemic definitely helped me personally in forgetting about my own fears. I am in a better position to help myself and my family to live sensibly without fear of the pandemic.

COVID Marshal Yangchen Dolma (RN)

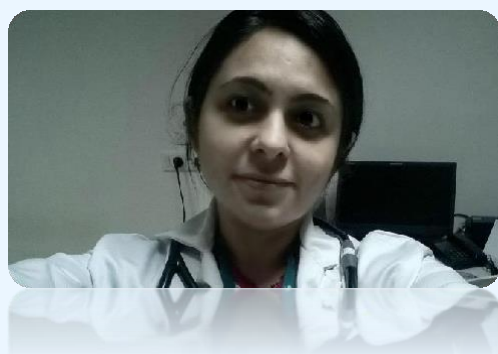
My Tales of Covid19 in 2020



Helping someone in times of distress is bliss. It came as an opportunity of helping people stuck with the doubts in their minds related to COVID 19. I was able to clarify their queries lingering in their minds which if not addressed would have led to mental disorders probably. It was new for all of us namely COVID 19 firstly, me talking as a helpline COVID Marshals secondly and the experiences of patients, their relatives, family & friends to sum it up. It use to start with “Hello”, I am XYZ and I feel I have symptoms of COVID and ending with “thank you very much” I feel relieved! Some of the experiences were so satisfying and exhilarating that I found peace in this task. Every day waiting for my slot to start talking to people, different people all with same concern. COVID, quarantine, isolation, home isolation, Govt. updates etc all became a part of my daily life. And trust me! I was happy to shelter them all in my life as I was a part of removing the distress. WHO CC gave me a wonderful experience of touching lives of people.

COVID Marshal Milan

My experience as a COVID Marshal



When Coronavirus hit India in the end of February, panic and confusion was omnipresent. The virus was new for everyone and there were scary reports from Wuhan, Spain, Italy and USA. It was imperative to create a system to address people’s concerns and educate them. We started off as a group of very enthusiastic health care workers, who were ready to talking to people and allaying their fears.

In the beginning, when the cases were not high and the health system was not saturated, we attended calls that were mostly to do with psychological impact, concerns regarding quarantine, prevention, the impact of COVID on migrants and most importantly stigma. Callers were requested not ostracize their fellow neighbors or foreign travelers.

Further, into the lockdown, we had to emphasize on preventive measures and risk stratification of the family. Callers ranged from distressed dialysis patients, pregnant women, thalassemia patients unable to access health care. Hassled callers with unique situations of the crunch of space, money and manpower were dealt with compassion. Testing was encouraged. Along with quarantining in a government facility along with contact tracing. As there’s a tsunami of changing guidelines, we need to be constantly updated and to ensure that, we have regular zoom meetings to update ourselves and to ensure uniformity of the information among ourselves.

As the lockdown restriction was removed in a phasic manner, there was a surge in cases, and the health system crunched. The government emphasized on selective testing and home quarantine for asymptomatic, mild grade illness. This changed the nature of the calls. It was mostly about testing difficulties, hospital admissions and home quarantine. While the hospitals were also adjusting to the overwhelming flow of patients, we tried to act as a bridge between hospitals and patient's relatives, to keep them updated on their patient's condition. We have counselled patients for 30 minutes in our first call and give follow up depending on the situation.

We try to make home quarantine simple, effective and cost-friendly. Callers are prepared for future events by doing a risk assessment to prevent panic. We teach self-monitoring, waste management, disinfection, discourage self-prescription and help people get tested judiciously. I learnt that people who are receptive, willing and calm to take information, generally do very well. Our callers seem satisfied and relieved. Once, on suggesting a caller get a pulse oximeter, she realized she had been given by the local body but was not told about its usage as they didn't

COVID Marshal Dr Shewta Raina



"If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching, Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin, into his nest again, I shall not live in vain."
~ Emily Dickinson

While working as a COVID marshal I did not only feel the lines from the above poetry but I got the chance to live these beautiful moments. The journey began when we started preparing with the core team for setting up this helpline. Attending the training session was fun and all the team members were so generous and polite from day one, that made our learning journey full of happy moments. While working in this area, we eventually realized that it's not only the symptoms of COVID which is bothering the public but the stigma, associated with the COVID 19.

As I started responding to the callers, I have been exposed to the fact that the same problem (COVID 19), has affected the people diversely as per their roles in social, personal and professional contexts. And thus, brought a variety of the doubts that we were supposed to clear. For instance, a housewife was worried about how she'll make sure that the food she's cooking, the grocery she has brought from outside is safe enough. A middle-aged man is worried about his diabetic parents. Being a marshal, I got many opportunities to implement my knowledge creatively and also, it also helped me to understand the different behaviors and respond accordingly. COVID Marshal training has helped me to become a patient listener along with honing my skills of communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork. Regular Professional feedback from the team gave me a chance to improve upon my shortcomings.

A man in his thirties called and was sounding very stressed out, He had a complaint of sore throat and isolated himself in his house, he was worried about what will happen to me. The daily news about the no. Of deaths, increase in no of positive cases all these are very scary. he was very stressed from last 3 days and requested for help restlessly, at the end of the conversation (tele-counselling), he sounded relaxed and confident. It was so satisfying to receive a positive response from the caller and compliments for the information we provided them as COVID Marshal. All these learnings would've been impossible without the efforts of the core team. I thank the core team for giving me this remarkable chance and for allowing me to be a part of such an active group working selflessly for a noble cause.

COVID Marshal Ms Deepika Sharma

My experience as a COVID Marshal



In March 2020, while the world was still trying to come to grips with the pandemic and international flights to India had still not shut down. I came to know about the conception of the COVID helpline initiated by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Emergency and Trauma care at AIIMS, New Delhi. A few of us (nurses and doctors) called up the existing government and state helplines across the country to test their usefulness. Since this was early days, many of the government helpline agents did not have a medical background and were not able to address our queries adequately.

We felt that this was a gap that needed urgent attention. But none of us had really done this sort of a project before. Coordinator from WHOCC figured out the technology backend needed for such a system and set it up. Then we had regular web meetings to discuss the calls we attended and how they were addressed and what could be done better. We developed a protocol and checklist for call formats so that we don't forget key things to do while on calls. We also decided our scope of the area include advice/guidance/counselling and not telemedicine service.

From the beginning, we aimed to meet three key principles

Human touch – All calls would be directly answered by a nurse or a doctor. There would be no intervening screeners or automated IVRS systems. We also tried our best to avoid dropped calls. We gave each caller enough time and attention and did not rush through calls.

Correct information – Since the information on COVID is changing constantly we would try our best to give only correct information, often this meant calling back the patient with correct information.

Going above and beyond – Sometimes we received calls unrelated to COVID. Such as for food relief during lockdown or help for non-COVID conditions. In these cases, members of the team used their networks to mobilize help and support for people in need.

COVID Marshal Dr Sonali Vaid

My experience as a COVID Marshal



It was 8th April 2020 when I got enrolled as a COVID marshal for the WHO Collaborating Center for emergency and trauma care. The cases were on the rise and being a dentist, I wanted to do something for my nation. I wanted to help people fight this pandemic. The human inside me ached to see so much panic, suffering, and a dreaded chapter open up in our country.

To help people via telecall was a blessing in disguise which I could do within the confines of my home. I saw my friends circle fearful and overwhelmed with a barrage of information. With everything under lockdown, there was a lot of mistrust and miscommunication on the ground. This helpline helped me come forward as a duty to the people in my country. I was more than willing to give my days and nights for the cause. Our training session was fantastic increasing our knowledge and awareness. As different cases popped up and new guidelines were made on almost a daily basis, our team meetings updated us with all new guidelines. We were up to date thanks to the helpful information by doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals working on the frontline.

We were trained to take a detailed history so we know what we are dealing with and how we can help the caller. We even had a WhatsApp group where we could discuss the case and assess with feedbacks from healthcare workers. It was an absolute honour to listen and counsel the panic-stricken people across the line. New horizons were discovered with our discussions and new areas opened up where work and information were much needed. An example being plasma donation SOS calls information on where tests are being conducted, criteria, connection with state infrastructure, etc.

Making the patient satisfied gave a new meaning on the telephone. The amazing technology which helps soothes two people across the line without seeing or meeting each other was humbling. My heart swelled with happiness knowing I could help counsel even if I couldn't go out and meet the person personally. Helping one caller included his/her whole family- their care and concerns. The helpline took us literally to the frontline where we were immediately bonded with an invisible love, care, and concern for our caller.

Our helpline boosted the quality and integrity of healthcare professionals helping the public. I am very fortunate to be a part of this humanitarian approach and personalized care for everyone irrespective of caste, creed, religion, and region. This is what one nation truly should stand for. It was a marvellous approach by the people for the people and to the people. Jai Hind!

COVID Marshal Dr Jueria Reemi

MY EXPERIENCE AS COVID MARSHAL



When all the policeman, doctors and nurses are giving their services in the hour of this calamity, how can I sit at home without doing anything? Whenever I used to read or hear these lines through television or social media, a strange wave arose in me that I should also help people. “Let’s bow our heads in gratitude to honor those nurses who won our hearts with their selfless attitude. “In a world full of selfish people, you have made a mark, by giving a helping hand to someone in a period so dark.” “The dirty dishes in our kitchen have a story to tell, because of the vegetable sellers delivering essentials door to door, even in this pandemic we are eating well”.

I learned a lot during this Lockdown period. Being a COVID Marshal I taught people a lot, whenever we had to have online training, I used to be ready ahead of time. The training was very interesting and informative for me, every day I got to learn something new from my team. Whenever I used to get a call from the caller, despite being busy most of the times, I did not miss any of the calls. I used to listen to their problems keenly and used to give them the right information. I was happy that when a caller called our helpline, I was able to give them information related to COVID -19 and make the caller satisfied with our reply. Through the discussions that our COVID MARSHAL friends used to have in the group, I got to learn a lot. Being a COVID MARSHAL I got all the people in my neighborhood get the right information and told them about the mask and hand sanitizer, how to wash hands properly when to wash. I shared all these things with my neighbors also.

I want to thank all my COVID MARSHAL team who always helped me.

COVID Marshal Mr Avesh Ansari



Sincere Thanks to All Covid Marshal (Our Team)



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