



**Office of the Proctor
VISVA-BHARATI**

Memo No.

Date: 11.05.2020

Health and Safety Advisory for Student-Boarders

Dear student-boarders of Visva-Bharati Hostels,
Hope everything is well with you and your family and you are **safe, cheerful and healthy**.
This is addressed also to the over hundred student-boarders who are staying in our hostels
during the lockdown.

1. Remember, we are all set to radically alter our lifestyle around this crisis and this newly found lifestyle will be in place for a long time to come. Welcome this cautionary lifestyle rather than resisting and denigrating it.
2. We have to build/improve our immunity power. Think of what you can do to improve and maintain a healthy immune system.
3. Keeping one **physically and mentally safe and healthy** are of highest priority.
4. Please do exercise and practise yoga to build/improve immunity. Physical activity helps one cope with stress and improves sleep quality. Exercise has the capacity to protect and even enhance the immune response.
5. Are you harming yourself with your diet? **Examine your diet**. Avoid fast food and eat home-cooked food; discuss and encourage your family members in favour of a low-oil/salt healthy diet for a healthy life. (This is a rare chance as all outside fast food shops are closed).
6. We must internalise and assimilate the fact that wearing masks and gloves and maintaining social distancing and hand sanitisation should continue even after the lockdown ends.
7. In order to live in isolation perfectly we need to share information among ourselves. Presently our world is technologically in a better condition in this respect. Let us involve ourselves in sharing some information.

We, the human species, singularly and as a whole, have to fight against this aggression of Covid-19. We have to prepare ourselves for this fight and we have to turn all disadvantages into advantages:

8. You are now forced to stay at home and there is plenty of time. Think of how best you can utilise this opportunity. Help your **family** and bond with the members of your family: this extended lockdown maybe a blessing as you are able to spend so much time with the people who care for you; if you have pets/domestic animals, please take care of them too. Help in household chores and activities. Think of the wide range of activities that you are supposed to do. Prioritise them; because of your academic pressures you might not be getting time to do some of your dream-activities during your stay in the universities. Make a definite plan to start activities to fulfil those dreams.

Lockdown may be a blessing as you are able to spend so much time with your nearest persons who care for you. Remember that 'Family that plays together, stays together'. Find joy in innovative ways of performing personal and household works.

9. Remember that the number of disadvantaged persons is far more than the number of persons more advantaged than you. This may make you realise the true character of the society you live in and this will help in turning you into a responsible citizen and you may develop a sense of fulfilment in you which is essential in building a strong character.
10. **Do not be anxious** about the future: this anxiety about something that is happening at a global scale and over which you/we have scant control will only raise your stress level and affect everyone else in your family. Keep calm and meditate. The central and university administration has your academic and professional interests in mind and is working to neutralise/stabilise the effects of this lockdown.
11. **De-stress** by reading books, watching movies/documentaries/sporting events, listening to music, enrolling yourself in the many online free courses/tutorials on offer, taking virtual museum tours, browsing the various e-libraries and e-resources, etc. Do **light yoga** daily for freeing yourself from stress and anxiety. Two links may be helpful:
 - (i) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd4uJ_8oE4g
 - (ii) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw2oBIrQGLo>
12. **Study**: that is your calling in life as of now. Do not see this lockdown and the new academic policies coming in its wake as detrimental to your academic and professional career. See this as an opportunity to study: online classes, reading material, e-resources, e-libraries, academic videos, audio lectures are the bedrock of the near future. For terminal semester students: you do not have to worry, the administration has your interests at the top of their agenda.
13. **Exams and submissions** will take place as soon as it becomes feasible: jeopardising the health of all stakeholders in an academic institution, especially students, is not desirable and will not happen; do NOT worry. Kindly note that this is a global phenomenon; exams will not victimise anybody; **everyone will emerge a winner**.
14. **Mental health**, like physical health, is as (if not more) important: do not believe in the taboo and superstition associated with asking for mental support. We all know that there are formal ways of dealing with stress, particularly when it is severe. Interventions such as seeing a counsellor or other mental health professionals and the use of adjunctive medications such as antidepressants and related drugs can be very helpful. Most of us feel, however, that we are not in need of formal intervention and are looking for less formal modalities to help us achieve spiritual harmony. In reality these techniques are quite ancient and the product of timeless wisdom. Mind-body exercises such as Tai Chi and yoga, when practiced faithfully, have been linked with numerous salutary health benefits. Exercise can also help achieve spiritual harmony if engaged in mindfully, and particularly when performed in groups. The most exciting area to me in stress modification is mindfulness training, also known as meditation. They generally are 15-20 minutes, and in a scientific study, they demonstrated that doing the practices 3 - 4 times per week was highly effective at reducing stress and improving wellbeing!
15. Visva-Bharati and various free platforms – internet- and telephone-based – have **qualified and professional counsellors and support staff** to answer to all your

queries, discretely of course with full confidentiality, regarding anything that is bothering you. No issue is too small or too insignificant.

Do visit the website of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

Practical tips to take care of your **mental health** during the lockdown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHB3WJsLJ8s&feature=youtu.be>

Minding our minds during the Covid-19 pandemic

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/MindingourmindsduringCoronaeditedat.pdf>

Various **health experts** on how to **manage mental health** and **well being** during the Covid-19 outbreak

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuKhtSehp24&feature=youtu.be>

Behavioural Health: Psycho-Social Toll Free Helpline – 080 46111 007

The following are the three counsellors associated with the Proctor's Office, Visva-Bharati who will help you:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--|
| a) Sonia Ghosh | 97321 32300 | soniya.soniya@gmail.com |
| b) Mondira Banerjee | 98363 88021 | mondira.banerjee@gmail.com |
| c) Dr Saugata Bandyopadhyay | 89815 18433 | drsaugatabandyopadhyay@gmail.com |

Indian Psychiatric Society also offers daily free psychiatry helpline for Covid-19.

For West Bengal please contact **Dr. Rajashree Roy 83358 32818**

The Officers of the Proctor's Office, Visva-Bharati: The Proctor and the five Deputy Proctors and the Deputy Manager (Production), Proctor's Office, are always there should you require any assistance. They may be contacted at their email IDs given below. Please note that as we are not trained counsellors we will not be able to handle certain focussed issues; for everything else, please feel free to drop in a line of query:

proctor@visva-bharati.ac.in;

[sankar.majumder@visva-bharati.ac.in;](mailto:sankar.majumder@visva-bharati.ac.in)

[ganeshchandra.malik@visva-bharati.ac.in;](mailto:ganeshchandra.malik@visva-bharati.ac.in)

[sudevpratim.basu@visva-bharati.ac.in;](mailto:sudevpratim.basu@visva-bharati.ac.in)

[mahua.banerjee@visva-bharati.ac.in ;](mailto:mahua.banerjee@visva-bharati.ac.in)

[surjya.saikia@visva-bharati.ac.in;](mailto:surjya.saikia@visva-bharati.ac.in)

[nilanjana.das@visva-bharati.ac.in;](mailto:nilanjana.das@visva-bharati.ac.in)

ashis.pathak@visva-bharati.ac.in

If you have pets/domestic animals, please take care of them too.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours

The Proctor's Office

Visva-Bharati

11.05.2020

Santiniketan