

## TOOL 3

# Facilitation Guide: Engaging Communities On COVID-19 Prevention



## BACKGROUND

There is growing evidence demonstrating that keeping people connected to each other, providing information and communicating with people affected by disease outbreak or natural disasters are among the most important elements of emergency response.

### Purpose of this Guidance

This guide is intended to support teams, community and social mobilisers working directly with communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides general guidance on community engagement to build trust in communities and services, understand community perspectives and share information, and to work with communities to determine actions to keep them safe.





## HOW TO Engage Priority Groups and Individuals

Explain who you are, which organization/ community you come from and what you do in the community. This can include:

- **We work to share accurate information** about the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its symptoms. We also work to share what people can do to protect themselves and their communities from it. To do this, the teams reach out to community members in several ways such as radio, SMS message, posters, billboards, face-to-face visits, and community meetings
- **Introduce yourself and show empathy:** We understand you are all worried about this new disease. We are here to help you understand it and make sure you know what you can do to protect yourself and others
- **Understand what people are saying:** Listen first to what people have to say about the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) before sharing what you know. Collect information to better understand the community and its concerns so that you can adapt your activities and information to better meet their need.



### Addressing Myths, Misconceptions and Rumour

- Myths and rumours often occur when people do not have enough accurate information and understanding about a disease. Myths can occur when there are strong cultural beliefs surrounding the disease or prevention measures
- Myths or rumours can also happen when contradictory messages are coming from different sources
- Myths and rumours can increase fear among communities which can unfortunately keep individuals, households, and communities from practicing the correct prevention and control practices
- This means that providing accurate information to increase knowledge and understanding about transmission of the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) becomes important. Providing accurate information can help address the rumour and misinformation.

**Ensure that there is space to listen to concerns, feedback, myths and rumours about COVID-19 as well as communicating information about the virus.**



## HOW TO Encourage Awareness and Action

Information shared with communities should use simple words and language (don't use acronyms or 'foreign language terms') and include practical advice people can put into action. For example:

- An instruction to follow (e.g. if you suspect you have corona virus symptoms call hotline **number “2019”** or **call your local village health worker**)
- A behavior to adopt (e.g. wash your hands frequently to protect yourself and others from getting sick)
- Information they can share with friends and family (such as where and when to access services, e.g. treatment is free of charge and available at health facilities)
- Information that addresses myths and misconceptions that are recorded in the community (e.g. Everyone in the community must practice corona virus prevention behaviors because corona virus affects everyone and not only rich people)
- Do not only tell people what to do but engage people in a conversation - first listen, to understand key concerns and questions.  
Ask people what they already know, want, and need to know about COVID-19
- Explain few, clear and simple messages to the community (including families/care givers, local leaders) in the language they prefer and avoiding technical terms (i.e. Instead of saying transmission, spreading is easier to understand)
- Make sure everybody has understood your information. Ask questions to check levels of understanding.





## Learn the skill to ask the right question

### Key guiding questions for starting a dialogue with people and communities (translate and adapt to local context).

- What have you heard about this new coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
- What information would you like to know about the new coronavirus?
- Do you know what the symptoms are?
- Do you know what to do if someone in your family or community gets sick with cold-like symptoms?
- Would you be afraid of someone who has the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
- Do you know how to prevent yourself and your loved ones from contracting the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
- Do people in your community wash their hands regularly? If yes, why? And if no, why not?
- Do people in your community keep a safe distance (i.e. 1 metre – 3 feet from another person) and cover their mouths with a tissue or elbow when sneezing? If yes, why? And if no, why not?
- Do members of your household open windows and doors to let fresh air in and thoroughly clean surfaces to kills germs?
- Do you think there is a group or person in your community who is responsible for spreading the virus (to check stigmatizing attitudes)? If people refer to Chinese people and/or Asian people, ask an additional question. Why do you think these people are spreading the virus in your community?



### What to do when you get sick?

If you start having symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, shortness of breath, or fever equal to or greater than 38°C, or signs of fever e.g. shivering, flushed skin, excessive sweating) :

- Isolate yourself from others
- Immediately call “2019 or 393” and describe your symptoms and travel history and follow their instructions.



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