

Religions for Peace Philippines
YOUTH COMMITTEE

A MULTIRELIGIOUS YOUTH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

RATIONALE

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). On 16 March 2020, by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 929, the Philippines was placed under a State of Calamity due to the COVID-19. The same proclamation placed the whole island region of Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine, with all residents asked to stay in their homes and only essential movement was allowed.

All students are now staying in their homes because the classes in schools and universities have been suspended until 14 April 2020, or when the Enhanced Community Quarantine is lifted. As a simple contribution to fight the spread of the COVID-19, the *RfP* Philippines Youth Committee implemented a small, no-cost, project to raise awareness on the pandemic. The main goal was to provide accurate and reliable information on social media through infographic materials.

Social media is a powerful platform to raise awareness since most Filipinos are using social media to communicate and to get information. It is also an effective way to communicate messages across a large audience, while at the same time ensuring compliance with the physical distancing measures implemented by the government. The project utilized the free/available time of the *RfP*-PH Youth Committee members and harnessed their skills to help bring information to those in need.

The materials shared on the *RfP* Philippines Facebook page are both in English and Filipino, allowing Filipinos to easily understand the materials, while at the same time making them understandable for other youth across the globe.

THE PROJECT

The project is composed of a series of infographics (informational graphics) which are visual representations of information. The series include: **Proper Handwashing and Use of Masks; Myth Busters; How to Take Care of Mental Health; and Compilation of Donation Drives.**

Proper Handwashing and Proper Use of Mask

It has been repeatedly emphasized that the primary way to deal with this pandemic is by preventing the transmission of the virus. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Health (DOH) of the Philippines as well as countless organizations have released information on the proper handwashing techniques. Thus, the team released publicity materials showing step-by-step instructions to properly clean the hands. It also included the ample duration recommended by the WHO and the DOH.



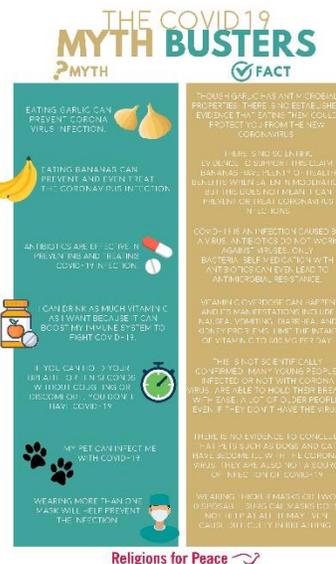
Aside from the handwashing techniques, it was also deemed important to release an infographic material about the proper use of a surgical mask. At the onset of the outbreak, many Filipinos had bought bulk supplies of surgical masks to the point that many stores got out-of-stock. Unfortunately, this led to the scarcity of supplies for the healthcare workers and other frontliners who are in most need of masks. It has also been noted that lay people did not exactly know how to put on and dispose of the mask which was potentially dangerous due to the risk of contamination. Hence, the materials that the team released included first and foremost the list of people who would need a mask.



This was to show that not everyone needed to wear a mask daily and to hopefully encourage those with surplus supplies to donate the masks to hospitals or those who needed it. Secondly, it contained information on the proper way to wear it, highlighting that it is important to avoid touching it as this could lead to contamination and further spread of the infection. Lastly, it was reiterated that proper hand hygiene was necessary before and after using and disposing a surgical mask.

A. Myth Busters

Social media has been a great platform to disseminate information. However, it has also been used to spread misinformation, fake news, and unhealthy opinions presented as facts. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague the world, a lot of dangerous and unproven claims have been made about its prevention, treatment and cure as well as misinformation about its transmission and diagnosis which are believed by many. This is a threat which can ultimately endanger life or create a false sense of safety leading to carelessness.



The team, therefore, came up with a poster presenting the different famous speculations of Filipinos and compared them to established scientific facts from the WHO, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other medical information databases and journals. This information can help in preventing the further spread of myths and it can also be a reminder that not everything posted on social media is reliable and that fact-checking is still needed.

B. How to Take Care of Mental Health During an Outbreak and Quarantine



The frontliners are vulnerable not only to health issues brought about by the CoVid-19 but also to mental health issues. The WHO released a document with information on mental health considerations during the CoVid-19 Outbreak (WHO, 2020). Moreover, many Filipinos were heavily affected by the enhanced community quarantine - work arrangements changed, classes and even online one's were suspended, and people needed to stay at their homes.

With this, the team collated resources on how people can take care of their mental health during an outbreak and while they are in quarantine. A bi-part infographic was released showing information on

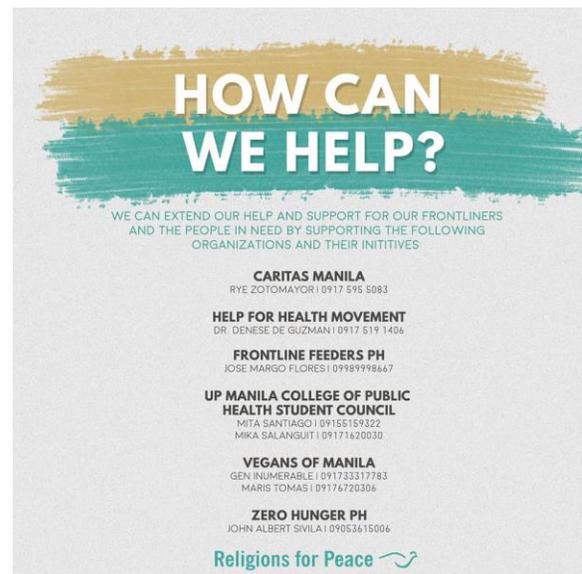
how the frontliners can take care of their mental health amidst the continuously increasing demands of their work. Specifically, it showed the importance of breathing exercises and social support.

Moreover, information on some coping strategies that citizens could use while they are in quarantine were also included. All of these were done with the goal of helping the people affected by the pandemic. Both infographics were released in English and Filipino in order to make sure that there is a broader reach to people.

C. Compilation of Donation Drives - Response to CoVid-19 Crisis

With the pressing need to assist the frontliners and Filipinos marginalized by the CoVid-19 crisis, cooperation among the non-government groups, medical institutions, and other organizations were deemed needed. Fund-raising activities which aim to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to the frontliners and medical staff and several donation drives which aim to assist Filipinos who are affected by the enhanced community quarantine began and were promoted through social media platforms.

The team coordinated with six (6) organizations namely: Caritas Manila, Help for Health Movement, Frontline Feeders PH, UP Manila College of Public Health Student Council, Vegans of Manila, and Zero Hunger PH. The team collated and re-uploaded in Facebook the publicity materials of the aforementioned organizations which aim to help raise funds and basic needs to the frontliners, medical staff, street vendors, PUV drivers, senior citizens, and financially challenged people were released in their social media accounts. The team also released its own publicity material with all the collated information about the donation drives.



RfPPH Youth Committee – COVID-19 Project Team Members

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