Preventing COVID-19: Information for Faith-based Organisations and Communities

Infographic: June 29, 2020

Faith-based Organisations and Faith Leaders continue to play a valuable role in preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and supporting the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerations for preventing COVID-19 infection in faith-based settings include these actions below.

★★ Prepare ★★

- Assess and analyse the risks that can contribute to the potential spread of COVID-19 based on your organisation’s practices and services.
- Develop a COVID-19 Response Plan.

★★ Reconfigure/Reconstruct for social (physical) distancing ★★

- Limit number of persons in attendance at gatherings such as faith services, funerals, etc.
- Keep duration of the faith gatherings to a minimum to limit contact (based on national guidelines).
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure persons remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Limit physical contact (hugging, kissings) during gatherings.
★ Assign teams to promote healthy hygiene practices

- Provide hand washing stations or hand sanitiser with 60 to 80% alcohol content (either ethanol, isopropanol or a combination).
- Encourage proper sneeze and cough etiquette.
- Display signs on COVID-19 protective measures and proper hygiene practices.

★ Yield/conduct faith activities virtually

- Consider making services or events available online.
- Conduct outreach visits by phone or online.
- Keep community contact lists up-to-date and check on those living alone, the elderly, and the vulnerable.

★ Encourage the use of face masks

- Promote the use of facial masks among staff and congregants based on national health authority’s guidelines.

★ Routinely clean and sanitise

- Routinely clean and sanitise worship spaces immediately before and immediately after all gatherings.
- Schedule services far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces, prayer mats, prayer aids, etc.

★ Limit sharing of worship materials/items

- Temporarily limit the sharing of frequently touched objects, e.g. prayer rugs, prayer books, etc. Encourage members to bring their own, if possible.
- Modify the way financial contributions are received e.g. use stationary collection box, or online methods of collection.
Plan for when a member becomes sick

- Establish procedures for safe movement of persons to an isolation area in the faith-based facility and transporting anyone who becomes sick at the facility to their home or a healthcare facility.
- Notify local health officials if a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been at your facility.
- High-risk groups for severe COVID-19 illness, such as, persons over 60 years old and persons with underlying conditions such as a chronic illness, e.g. diabetes, and cancer, should limit attendance.

Educate community on COVID-19

- Assist with minimising panic, fear and stigma by educating communities on COVID-19 infection.
- Share factual information provided by CARPHA, PAHO/WHO, and national health authorities.

Don’t forget!

Continue to review your national authorities’ guidance and instructions on COVID-19 prevention activities relative to your community and modify accordingly.

The full document on Interim Guidance for Faith-based Organizations and Communities of Faith during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Caribbean can be found here.

To access the WHO mass gathering religious addendum risk assessment tool in the context of COVID-19, click here.

To access the WHO Decision tree for risk assessment tool for Religious Leaders and Faith-based Communities in the context of COVID-19, click here.

References:


www.carpha.org