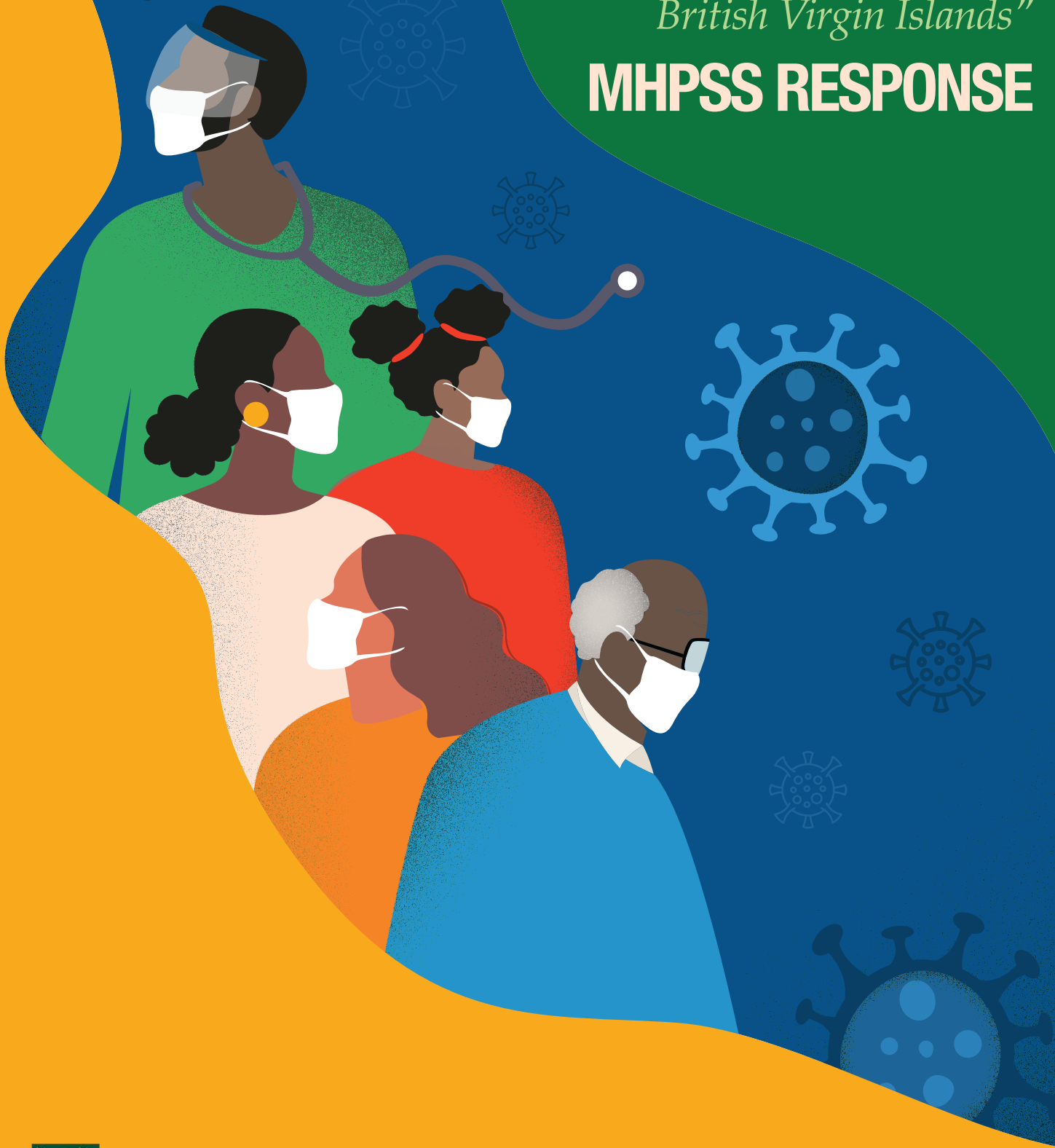


ADAPTATION OF BVI

“Strengthening Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Disaster Management Building Individual and Community Resilience in the British Virgin Islands”

MHPSS RESPONSE




GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS



PAHO





BACKGROUND



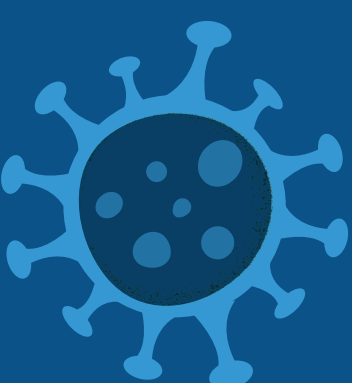
The Government of the British Virgin Islands secured funding from the Caribbean Development Bank to implement a project aimed at addressing psychological and emotional issues directly resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which struck the Islands in 2017. In August 2018, an agreement for the Provision of Technical Services through a project titled “Strengthening Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Disaster Management - Building Individual and Community Resilience in the British Virgin Islands” was signed between the Government of the Virgin Islands, through its Ministry of Finance, and the Pan American Health Organization.

The project objectives are:

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- 1) to build local capacity for the delivery of MHPSS in disaster preparedness, response and management within the health sector, other agencies outside the health sector and the broader community;**
 - 2) to develop a community resilience program and establish action plans for emergency preparedness and response at the community level; and**
 - 3) to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to assess the impact of the project.**



On March 11th, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, which is putting enormous strain on the public health systems of affected countries.



Given the potential impact of the pandemic on people and economies, it is natural for individuals to feel stressed and worried. People can be fearful about becoming ill and dying, losing livelihoods, being socially excluded and separated from loved ones and caregivers. The situation can create feelings of anxiety, panic, helplessness and uncertainty about the future. Current physical distancing measures are forcing family members to spend intensive time together, or apart, and social supports and dynamics are being strained. Health and frontline workers are also facing unprecedented stressors. A psychosocial lens is therefore an important component of the response to the impacts of COVID-19 on people, communities and the economy, and for improving emergency programming.

On top of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, inhabitants of BVI face the additional burden of the current hurricane season (June to November), which according to predictions, is anticipated to be active. For this reason, the project and its proposed adaptations represent a key opportunity through which to address the present urgent and multilayered MHPSS needs in BVI.

ADAPTATION PROPOSAL

In light of the current situation, key stakeholders at the Ministry of Health and Health Services Authority of BVI, in consultation with PAHO, decided that there is value in reprogramming some project activities to provide urgently needed MHPSS as part of the overall response to the current and impending impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. PAHO has prepared this adaptation proposal based on those discussions.

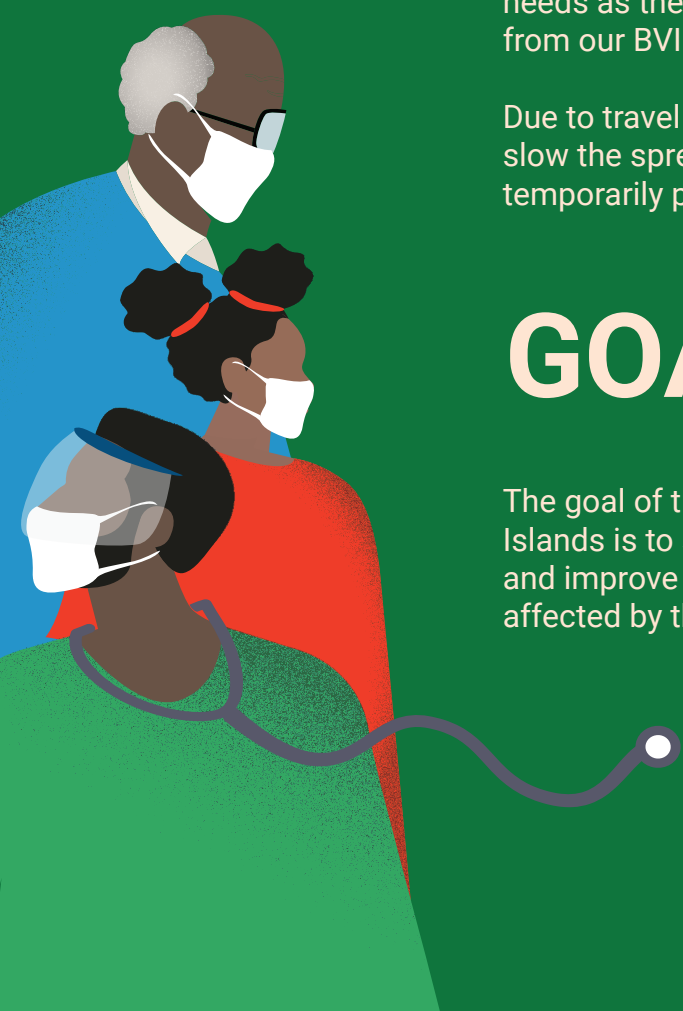
Importantly, supporting the provision of MHPSS services in the context of COVID-19 remains aligned with the original project objectives of building local capacity for the delivery of MHPSS in disaster management within the health sector, other agencies outside the health sector, and the broader community; and developing community resilience.

It is important for PAHO to build on the current country response and support existing MHPSS resources and services, with the aim of not only supporting BVI in its MHPSS needs and actions during this difficult time, but also of helping the country to build back a stronger and more resilient mental health system after the pandemic. This proposal is a working document, which will adapt to local MHPSS needs as the pandemic shifts, with regular consultations and input from our BVI colleagues.

Due to travel restrictions and safety procedures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, pending project activities have been temporarily postponed or made virtual.

GOAL

The goal of the Project Adaptation for COVID-19 in the British Virgin Islands is to support the Government in its efforts to reduce suffering and improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of people affected by the pandemic.



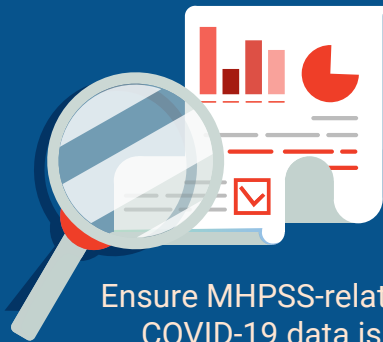
COVID-19 INTEGRATION CONSIDERATIONS



Provide effective communication about COVID-19 that promotes mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and reduces stigma and discrimination.



Integrate MHPSS within health and social services and support the establishment of an MHPSS Technical Working Group.



Ensure MHPSS-related COVID-19 data is collected and analyzed to inform action.



Strengthen community-based interventions, social support and interventions for people in isolation and quarantine.



Address the MHPSS needs of vulnerable groups.

WORK PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	STATUS	PROPOSED CHANGES	TIMELINE
OBJECTIVE 1: To build local capacity for MHPSS in disaster (including in response to COVID-19) management within the health sector, other agencies outside the health sector and the broader community.	Activity 1.1: Conduct two mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide (mhGAP-HIG) trainings.	Fully implemented	No adjustment	Completed
	Activity 1.2: Conduct two mhGAP-IG training of trainers (ToT).	Partially completed (1 training pending)	No adjustment	Virtual consultations to review implementation:
	Activity 1.3: Capacity building in PFA and stress management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct two Psychological First Aid (PFA) and stress management workshops. • Support additional online training sessions targeting health care providers on issues such as mindfulness and self-care; managing stress; and stigma and discrimination. • Provide technical guidance for online training of humanitarian and frontline workers, including non-health workers, on essential psychosocial care principles 	Partially implemented (2 PA workshops completed, additional online training and technical guidance awaiting completion)	Adapted to integrate COVID-Response	July-October 2020
	Activity 1.4: Provide guidance on adjusting MHPSS interventions to virtual means (Tele-MHPSS) that are evidence-based.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID -19 response	July-December 2020
	Activity 1.5: Support the development of capacity for mental health leadership, establish a Technical Working Group for the implementation of MHPSS, and provide guidance to the MHPSS.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID -19 response	July 2020--May 2021

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	STATUS	PROPOSED CHANGES	TIMELINE
OBJECTIVE 2: To develop a community resilience program (which also incorporates building resilience in the face of COVID-19) and establish action plans for community preparedness and responses at the community level.	Activity 2.1: Conduct two community resilience building workshops.	Fully implemented	No adjustment	Completed
	Activity 2.2: Develop and implement “Bounce Back Stronger Together” public education campaign.	Partially implemented (campaign launch pending)	Adapted to integrate COVID-Response	July-November 2020
	Activity 2.3: Support the promotion/ expansion of BVI’s psychosocial support line.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID-19 response	July-September 2020
	Activity 2.4: Assist in the development of support groups/ maintain social support, especially for those in isolation via WhatsApp and social media.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID-19 response	July-October 2020
	Activity 2.5: Develop and disseminate MHPSS communication materials (see Appendix 1). Ensure that these materials are made available to persons with disability and pregnant women.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID-19 and hurricane response	July 2020-May 2021
OBJECTIVE 3: To develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and associated tools for the project and additional COVID-19 activities.	Activity 3.1: Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the capacity building activities (Objective 1), including COVID-19 activities.	Ongoing throughout the project	Adapted to integrate COVID-Response	May-July 2020: Virtual M&E interviews and focus groups completed
	Activity 3.2: Monitoring and evaluation of the community resilience-building program, including COVID-19 activities and communications materials (Objective 2).	Ongoing throughout the project	Adapted to integrate COVID-Response	May-July 2020: Virtual M&E interviews and focus groups completed
	Activity 3.3: Support a rapid appraisal of MHPSS and COVID-19 needs, coping strategies and resource gaps with a vulnerable groups approach that is gender sensitive.	Awaiting implementation	New activity for the COVID-19 response	July-August 2020: Rapid appraisal of MHPSS and COVID-19

MHPSS COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

» **Note:** A timeline for the development and dissemination of these materials is being developed in consultation with BVI. The rapid appraisal (activity 3.3) will also help to determine which materials are considered priority.

Format	Product Description	Primary Audience	Use In
Animated videos	<p>Adaptation of PAHO/WHO animated videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Recommendations for dealing with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic • 4 recommendations for coping with stress and mental well-being during isolation or quarantine • Helping children cope with COVID-19 • Helping older adults cope with COVID-19 <p>*Development of additional videos based on need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise videos specifically adapted for different groups 	General public, parents, caregivers	Disseminate on social media, government websites (MoH, etc.)
Facebook Live	<p>Facebook Live sessions on topics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tips for social distancing and isolation; • the psychological impact of isolation/quarantine; • coping with stress during COVID-19 and the upcoming hurricane season 	General public, parents, adolescents	Facebook Live (MoH, other government accounts).
Radio spots	<p>Radio Spots on GIS radio report (MoH slot) and radio talk shows on topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following safety restrictions; • managing stress/staying healthy in quarantine; • preparing for the double burden of COVID-19 and natural disasters; • talking to children about COVID-19; • balancing demands (working from home, children out of school); • taking care of older adults; • considerations for persons with disability; • reducing stigma and discrimination (e.g. against migrants, healthcare providers, people who test positive) 	General public, parents, older adults, persons with disabilities, caretakers, health care providers	Schedule on GIS radio report MoH slot, reserve spots on other radio stations. Disseminate recording online after.

Format	Product Description	Primary Audience	Use In
TV interviews	Develop questionnaires for and record additional parts of GIS Report with mental health experts (Dr. June Samuels, Dr. Virginia Rubaine). With concurrence from PS and CMO.	General public	Share online (YouTube, Facebook, gov. websites)
Brochures/ Flyers	Print materials for older adults and people in isolation/quarantine on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy habits at home (exercise, healthy diet, hobbies) • Information on local resources (basic needs, health care, daily activities assistance, etc.) • Staying connected to family and friends 	Older adults and their caretakers, people in quarantine	Make available for circulation in BVI coordinated by MOH and other government ministries.
Webinars	In Coordination with PAHO technical unit, schedule Interactive virtual trainings (webinars, Q+A sessions) for health care providers/first responders on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic psychosocial skills • Managing the mental health of health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic • Doing what matters in times of Stress Virtual trainings (webinars, Q+A sessions) for media and journalists on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible reporting related to COVID-19 	Health care providers, frontline responders, the media, employers, shelter managers and community emergency response team	Advertise webinars through government ministries, websites. Make recordings available online.
Audio Files	Short audio files on topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological coping during disease outbreak and natural disasters • Self-care 	Health care providers, frontline workers.	Make available online or relevant employers can share the files with personnel.
Social media cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt PAHO/WHO social media cards that are relevant/useful • Develop additional social media cards based on need: for employers and persons working from home (teleworking); coping with stress; social distancing; staying healthy at home 	General public, healthcare providers, adolescents, parents, caretakers	Share on web, Facebook, WhatsApp.
Infographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt PAHO/WHO infographics that are relevant and useful • Develop additional infographics based on need (on topics including gender-based violence, drug and alcohol use, etc.) 	General population	Disseminate via government websites, WhatsApp, social media.

Format	Product Description	Primary Audience	Use In
Digital posters/ billboards/ radio PSAs	Materials to promote BVI's psychosocial support line (as an open and confidential place to "talk" about anything that is stressful during this time) Use WHO publication: Doing What Matters in time of Stress.	General population	Utilize available (electronic) billboard space; place digital posters and Radio PSAs.
Handouts	Children's game/trivia/coloring sheets on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing/social distancing • Grief/Loss • Missing school, family, friends • "My Hero Is You" IASC COVID-19 storybook 	Parents and young children	Disseminate at health centers, markets. Make available online to print from home.
Audiobook or video recording	BVI community members/leaders reading "My Hero Is You" to be listened to by parents with their young children.	Parents and young children	Shared on web and social media and read on public media such as TV, radio, live stream on Facebook.
Audiobook	Doing What Matters in Times of Stress	General Population	Shared on web and social media and read on public media such as TV, radio, live stream on Facebook.