

ARPPI News

Association of Rehabilitation Psychologists and Professionals (ARPP-India)

www.rehabilitationpsychologistsindia.org

Message from the President



Dear Association Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as President of the Association of Rehabilitation Psychologists and Professionals - India. I am looking forward to continuing the great responsibility that this group has given me and will continue to work diligently.

I am extremely delighted to release the first volume of our association's newsletter. Work on forming the association started in January 2020. We

now have a National Committee made up of very dedicated members from different parts of India, and who have answered the call to do more for the group. The first National Committee meeting was held on 24th February 2020 in Delhi where we launched the logo of the association and elected our office bearers.

Our National Committee has done and continues to do an outstanding job of relaying information to the members and keeping the website up to date with the association activities. Our committee is working hard to follow through on their commitment to offering workshops to increase education and learning opportunities for the members.

Many committees are in their inception and require new members. You can find the list of committees and the chairs to contact on the website if you wish to get involved. This association could not exist without the hard work put in by all the volunteers in various committees. Getting involved is the best way you can help the association.

I would love to hear from you in case you have any queries or concerns. I look forward to what this year will bring and thank you again for the opportunity to serve all of you in this capacity.

Dr Atla Srinivas Reddy
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Message from the Vice- President

Dear Members,

I am very happy to share this inaugural message addressing all the Rehabilitation Psychologists of India.

ARPP-India aims to strengthen expertise among Rehabilitation Psychologists across the country. The formation of this association is a proud moment for all of us. This has expanded the scope of Rehabilitation Psychology enabling us to reach various rehabilitation fields such as cardiac rehabilitation, autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, de-addiction centres.



In years to come, my vision for ARPP-India is to enhance our knowledge and expertise by collaborating with related organisations internationally.

I would also like to take this opportunity and appreciate the needful services being offered by our Rehabilitation Psychologists during the COVID-19 crisis throughout the country. In this context let's promise to dedicate ourselves for the service of the society which is no less than service to the nation.

Wishing you all the best

Dr T. S. Rao

From the desk of our National General Secretary

- Dr Rajiv Nandy

Dear members,

It gives me immense pleasure to write an inaugural message for our association. Rehabilitation Psychologists as licensed psychologists are much in demand today. But, unfortunately, we had no association to take care of our specific needs, welfare and growth. Today with a lot of pride, I would say that, our association will help in bringing together a range of skilled fellow professionals working in various settings of rehabilitation i.e acute care hospitals, pain clinics, cardiac rehabilitation, child & adolescent, autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, adult settings, de-addiction centres etc. We are also happy to have identified very accomplished licensed Rehabilitation Psychologists working all over the country and are very well known.



Some of our colleagues and members have excellent research competence and have come up with booklets, interesting videos and thoughtful solutions during the lockdown, owing to the COVID-19 crisis. This is indeed a process of serving the nation, and nation building, when the lockdown is eased. Our colleagues at universities, government hospitals, private hospitals, private practice and entrepreneurs are a source of continuous support, when we look forward to their experience to guide us at times of need.

ARPP-India intends to highlight and bring glory to this hugely niche area of expertise among psychologists all around the country. We also would like to highlight the awesome work being done by our colleagues in every corner of our country. We are in the process of identifying gaps where Rehabilitation Psychologists need to tread further and will have the full backing of the association for development.

Our collaboration with sister organisations all round the globe will help us to update and learn from our international colleagues. The annual national conference at Delhi scheduled later in the year will provide us the platform to share knowledge, expertise and encourage each other for professional development.

Wishing you all the very best!

Long live ARPP-India!

About ARPP-India

Current Status of Rehabilitation Psychology in India:

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) anticipates the growing demand for Rehabilitation Psychologists with the increasing population and the growing awareness of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Currently, there are more than a thousand RCI registered Rehabilitation Psychologists in India working either in various rehabilitation centres, health care settings for special needs population, hospitals, or as private practitioners.

Association of Rehabilitation Psychologists and Professionals, India (ARPP-India):

Association of Rehabilitation Psychologists and Professionals, India (ARPP-India) is a professional organisation formed as per the guidelines of RCI. ARPP-India consists of a collaborative group of trained and licensed Rehabilitation Psychologists across India with the objective of advancing the concepts of psychosocial rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and chronic health conditions. ARPP-India aims to enhance the importance of Rehabilitation Psychology as a clinical specialty and bring about an evolution of this profession in India.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to develop and evolve standards of care, help create human resource and guide policymakers in the field of Rehabilitation Psychology in India

Our Vision

- To formulate and disseminate evidence-based practice guidelines of psychosocial rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities and chronic health conditions.
- To promote research in the field of Rehabilitation Psychology.
- To draft educational and training standards in the field of Rehabilitation Psychology.
- To be a trusted partner and think tank for the Government of India in policymaking.
- To create community awareness regarding the need for psychological rehabilitation for persons with disabilities or chronic health conditions.

COVID-19 Task Force for Psychological Support

- Dr Atla Srinivas Reddy

It is indeed a frightening time. We are amidst a worldwide pandemic, with cities and even entire countries shutting down. Some of us are in areas that have already been affected by the coronavirus, others are bracing for what may come. And all of us are watching the headlines and wondering, "What is going to happen next?" For many people, the uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus is the hardest thing to handle. We don't know how exactly we'll be impacted or how bad things might get. And that makes it all too easy to catastrophize and spiral out into overwhelming dread and panic. Fears about COVID-19 can take an emotional toll, especially if an individual is already living with an anxiety disorder. But there are many things you can do - even in the face of this unique crisis—to manage your anxiety and fears.

"You're not powerless. Know that feeling anxious about the coronavirus is OK and normal. We need to learn new coping skills and adapt ourselves to be resilient in such an anxiety-provoking situation."

ARPP India has organized 'free tele-counselling services' during the lockdown due to novel coronavirus (COVID - 19). The tele-counselling services are being offered to people who are getting affected emotionally, are feeling anxious and those who want to know how to effectively deal with the pandemic and lockdown.

The COVID-19 ARPP, India Psychological Support Task Force consists of Rehabilitation Psychologists and professionals providing psychosocial counselling and remedial-aid to people in distress due to COVID-19 crisis in India via telephonic or video counselling. This is a pro bono service to the people in the country and restricted only during this pandemic. Details of the task force are available online on [ARPP-India official page](#) and [webpage of RCI](#).

Answering difficult questions - COVID-19

- Dr Neerja Thergaonkar

“Resilience, the will to survive a crisis and to reach out is one of the biggest strengths we humans have. If we use this quality to our advantage, we can not only help ourselves, but also help our community by becoming responsible citizens.”

Sometimes simple answers are all that are needed to handle difficult questions. Here are a few questions commonly asked by clients during sessions related to COVID-19. A compilation of information has been made to provide you with answers to a few them.

How can I support a loved one who is very anxious?

The first thing to remember is that everyone responds to a crisis differently. If you have a family member or friend who is worried or scared, try to listen to and empathise with them. Some people may want to vent their fears or anger at the situation, find fault in the system while others may want to problem solve.

Share the facts simply and straightforwardly and ask how you can help (make sure you get your facts from approved sources). It is important to keep your cool and avoid confrontation if you aim to help. Be in touch with the person from time to time to make sure their stress levels and mental state are not getting worse. Always keep the lines of communication open.

At the same time, ensure you take care of yourself and limit the amount of time you devote to supporting others. It is okay to say that you also need a break from fear and anxiety. Sometimes the support may be mutual, in which case it is important to respect each other's ability to help.

I have a friend who can't stop talking about it and gives the worst-case scenario. How do I deal with it?

Sharing stresses with colleagues, friends or family members can be helpful. However, be mindful that others may be feeling very stressed or anxious themselves, and may not be coping well. Hearing about your anxieties may make them more anxious.

Information shared by others may not necessarily be accurate. Hence you must check facts from reliable sources which are endorsed by the World Health Organization or the government. It's ok to distance yourself from people in whose company you feel stressed out.

How do I deal with feeling lonely in self-isolation?

Self-isolation can make you feel very lonely. While in self-isolation, remember to continue to physically isolate from your friends and family, to ensure the virus does not spread to others. It's important to remember, that this isolation no matter how difficult it may be, is important not only for you but for your loved ones too. However, self-isolation is only for physical proximity so remember to stay connected with your family and friends through social media.

Though being with self is a good time to self-introspect, it becomes a daunting and boring task when done in repetition. It is important to make a schedule for yourself, maintain a healthy diet, engage with nature by going out to the balcony or the garden, switch activities from sedentary activity to a physically active one, stay connected with your family and friends, limit news intake, be mindful of the content of the media exposure and avoid getting into the negative 'what if, why me' thought cycle (Read coping with stress and worry for more details and refer to the WHO's and national guidelines on self-isolation).

Due to lockdown remedial sessions of my child have shut down. What do I do?

Many of us have children with special needs and situations like lockdown and closed remedial centres challenge mental as well as emotional regulation of the child as well as the caretaker. However, online home-based remedial management activities are being provided by many organisations including ours, you could contact them. In the meantime, it is advised to have a structured schedule for your child, do not change the sleep pattern, make a visual time table with each to-do activity listed (make sure you include activities related to gross motor, fine motor, the activity of daily living, receptive-expressive language, cognitive, social & emotional skills), plan for indoor physical activities focusing on gross and fine motor skills, choose activities that your child likes and take out time for yourself.

I have done everything but still my anxiety and fear doesn't go. What do I do?

Sometimes, stress and anxiety do not reduce even with our best efforts and we continue to struggle. If you feel that despite your efforts, distress around COVID-19 persists and you feel that you are not coping well, you may need extra support from someone like your doctor or a psychologist, or other health professional. Many free helplines are available, you should reach out and take help.

How do I communicate with my children?

Handling children's fears can be challenging sometimes. It is important to acknowledge their fear. Explain the overall risk of getting the virus and what happens if they do get sick (be mindful of explaining according to the child's age). Clearly define the steps you are taking to keep them and yourself safe during this pandemic.

Reassure them that young children tend to get a mild form of the virus, but at the same time do not undermine the importance of taking the required precautions.

Make sure to discuss any questions your child might have. This may require you to read up from correct resources and have patience as children will have a lot of queries, answers to some which you might not have. It's ok to tell them that you do not know the answer but you could find out and let them know.

I am scared that I will get infected by my neighbour who is a doctor working with infected patients. What do I do?

Though the fear of getting infected might be a natural reaction, stigmatising those who are working towards making our life easy may not be fair. Being isolated by stigma hurts everyone and by creating fear or anger towards other people, social avoidance or rejection, denial of healthcare, education, housing or employment, Physical violence, we are harming ourselves and prolonging the treatment process. Stopping stigma is thus important to making communities and community members resilient.

- Everyone can help stop this stigma by knowing the facts and sharing them with others in your community. Knowing and sharing facts can help stop stigma (from reliable resources)
- Speak up against negative behaviours, including violence, negative statements on social media.
- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Resist the temptation to repost every message you get on social media without verifying it.

COVID-19 has made us shift from the regular face-to-face individual sessions to tele sessions. Though some may be familiar with the practice of tele-counselling, it is important as mental health care provides that we are well informed, are mindful of ethical practice, follow guidelines of tele-counselling, take consent from the clients and practice within legal boundaries.

A Glimpse into the Realm of Rehabilitation Psychology

- Ms. Aparna Vemuri

Rehabilitation has been described as a process that uses a combination of interventions to empower, enhance and restore abilities required for daily living in persons with disabilities and chronic health conditions.

In India, rehabilitation took its course from being family and community-oriented to managing the disabled population in an organized manner. Presently, we have specific laws catering to the wellbeing of persons with disabilities. The need to focus on the holistic development of persons with disabilities and chronic health conditions was felt which led to this specialized field in psychology.

It has been almost two decades since the recognition of 'Rehabilitation Psychology' as a clinical speciality in psychology by Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). Rehabilitation Psychology is a branch of psychology that is related to the study and application of psychological knowledge, social principles and skills development for persons with disabilities and chronic health conditions. A Rehabilitation Psychologist is clinically trained to develop individualized intervention plans that maximize physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive and social wellbeing; enhance or restore abilities for independent functioning; improve the quality of life and restore hope and meaning across the life span of individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions*.

Training to become a Rehabilitation Psychologist involves pursuing M.Phil in Rehabilitation Psychology from the institutions recognised by RCI. Presently, individuals who have completed the M.Phil program from RCI recognized institutions are eligible to apply and be registered as Rehabilitation Psychologists. Registration with RCI culminates with a Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) number as a Rehabilitation Psychologist. To maintain professional progress and academic excellence, RCI mandates renewal of licence every five years**.

As per RCI 1992 act, it is mandatory for all professionals working in the field of disability to be registered and have a license from the RCI. Rehabilitation Psychologists actively work with the special needs population; therefore, it is the prime responsibility of all practising professionals to ensure they are registered under RCI.

*More information on the history and scope of Rehabilitation Psychology, role and functions of a Rehabilitation Psychologist is available on [ARPP-India website](#).

**More information on licence renewal is available on [RCI website](#)

How do I become a member of ARPP-India?

To become a professional member of ARPP-India, one needs to have a Central Rehabilitation Registration (CRR) number from the RCI as a Rehabilitation Psychologist. Once you have the CRR no, visit the official website of ARPP-India and fill the registration form. After you make the payment in your chosen category of membership, send us a mail.

ARPP-India Activities

- The founding members officially met in Delhi on February 24, 2020. This meeting was officially documented as the 1st Executive Committee meeting.
 - The official logo of the association was released and the upcoming activities for the year discussed.
 - The official task force approved by RCI for COVID-19 was prepared and published on www.rehabilitationpsychologistsindia.org 30th March 2020.
 - The official website of ARPP-India www.rehabilitationpsychologistsindia.org was published on 1st April 2020.
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ARPP-India National Committee members

President

- Dr Atla Srinivas Reddy

Vice President

- Dr TS Rao

General Secretary

- Dr Rajiv Nandy

Joint Secretary

- Ms. Aparna Vemuri
- Ms. Neeta Jain

Treasurer

- Mr. Rajpal Kaushik

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- Dr Neerja Thergaonkar

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- Ms. Aparna Vemuri
- Ms. Vaishnavi Kulkarni

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Design and creation - Dr Neerja Thergaonkar

Content - Editorial Team

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Ms. Anandita Mukherjee

Dr Seema Zutshi Kaul

Ms. Archana Singh Bansal

Dr NR Nappinnai

Dr Chand Trehan

Dr Vandana Patil

Dr Sabeer AP

Ms. Usha Rani Pakeerabad

MEMBERSHIP

Membership comprises of 2 categories-

Professional Life Membership
Professional Annual Membership

Membership Fee-

Professional Life Membership	- INR 5000/- (one-time payment)
Professional Annual Membership	- INR 1000/- (Renewed Annually)

For more information, visit

www.rehabilitationpsychologistsindia.org

