

Kiran Mental Health Helpline

September 5, 2020

Citing the prevalence of mental health issues and the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has said it will launch a **toll-free helpline to enable access to mental health resources**. The Kiran mental health rehabilitation helpline number, 1800-599-0019, will provide callers **support for early screening, first-aid, psychological support, distress management, mental well-being, preventing deviant behaviours and psychological crisis management**.

Mental Health Helpline

The helpline will **offer services in 13 languages** and it targets to resolve issues of people across the country experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, panic attack, adjustment disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, pandemic-induced psychological issues and mental health emergencies. With **660 volunteer clinical/ rehabilitation psychologists and 668 volunteer psychiatrists**, the helpline will be run from 25 centres by **75 experts who can handle 300 callers per hour**.

There is a **three-level mechanism of support** – the caller will first be connected to the location-based helpline centre, and then as per need referred to rehabilitation/ clinical psychologists/ psychiatrists. Follow-up and support will be extended at the third level.

Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions – disorders that affect the mood, thinking and behavior. Examples of mental illness include **depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors**. Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health

concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms **cause frequent stress and affect the ability to function.** A mental illness can make one miserable and can cause problems in daily life, such as at school or work or in relationships. In most cases, symptoms can be managed with a combination of medications and talk therapy (psychotherapy).