Title

Mental health and the role of social workers and community workers during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) period

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Abstract

Social workers play a significant role in supporting vulnerable families and individuals during difficult time. Social work as a profession is a frontline occupation that is forced to deal with the complex and difficult issues of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Lockdown, self-isolation, the loss of loved ones, the loss of work, and dealing with family issues and children while working at home are emotionally challenging for many. This virus has raised high levels of anxiety, fear, confusion, frustration, hopeless and uncertainty feelings among many people internationally. Many people were isolated from their families and friends as well as from community. Governments in many countries brought in health measures to control the spread of coronavirus. These measures included quarantine, lockdown, social distancing/physical distancing, isolation, travel restrictions, masks, ventilators, respirators, personal protective clothing (PPE), online/remote services, containment, mitigation, sanitisers, flattening the curve, inflammatory syndrome and herbal/organic treatments. In addition to the loss of social connection, the loss of livelihoods and income are psychologically torturing. There were many lives lost because of coronavirus around the world how many. The impacts of coronavirus have been felt across the health, economic, social, and mental health sectors. Social workers were viewed first people to support people while they were going through difficulties. The situation analysis of emergency lockdown in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia demonstrated role of social workers in supporting vulnerable individuals and families during difficult time. The study shows serious impact of lockdown such as mental health, social and economic consequences on people. The impact of COVID-19 lockdown was clearly observed in relation to mental health, social and economic impacts on people. Many residents were psychological impacted and found themselves in tears, frustration, enraged, powerless, hopeless with lack of support. This analysis argues that social workers should be prepared and supported with enough resources to support people during emergency situations. Therefore, the role of social workers and community development workers is very critical in supporting and preparing vulnerable community groups, individuals, and families to cope with emergency events when they emerge. The case example of the COVID-19 emergency lockdown is the lockdown of high-rise towers in the city of Melbourne in Australia. Many people have been seeking support from social workers for emotional support as they are enraged and frustrated by the lockdown.

Key words

mental health, social work practice, coronavirus, lockdown, frustration, hopeless and isolation

Key dates

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Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has brought enormous challenges across the world. The outbreak of the coronavirus in China has rapidly spread across the world. By the time of writing this paper there were more than 204 million people infected by COVID-19 and more than 4.3 million deaths globally (ASWNet, 2021). The multilayers of the impact of COVID-19 were felt by many people in different ways including mental health and wellbeing. It has placed people in self-isolation and quarantine, suburbs, cities and countries have been put in lockdown, and job losses and business collapses have been immense. This paper reflects on the role of social work in both a practical and research capacity. The profession of social work is distinguished from anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines by its focus on induced change (Fraser, 2004). There are many lessons to be learned by social workers in their daily frontline practice with the community. The world has quickly changed concerning international travel, business operations (like education and community connection), and there has been a general changed in social behaviours because of lockdowns. There is enough evidence of how this virus has affected societies socially, economically, and politically. The social work profession, endeavours transform and support vulnerable people closely in their journey through the various difficulties that have arisen (Bai, et al. 2020). Social work education is about empowering society and supporting individuals and families to manage social changes (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014). Social work profession and practice is known in operating at the three key levels, micro, mezzo macro levels. For instance, micro level is direct practice of social work service to individual clients. Mezzo level is practice that focuses on working with groups, while macro level is a practice that focuses on working with communities or community organisations to assist them in development of services (Mupedziswa, 2020). Social work practice is influenced by the activities of early missionaries in many countries around the world. "Social work education in Africa was influenced by the western philosophy and colonisation ideologies that do not consider the Indigenous thinking of humanity and practice" (Abur, 2020, p.1). Many indigenous community groups attempted to decolonise social work practice by including traditional knowledge and understanding of social issues in society to support vulnerable families and individuals with culturally sensitive matters effectively (Osei-Hwedie, 1993).

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced leaders and the world to impose restrictions on their citizens. Many people have lost their lives from COVID-19, and others have been left in isolation, living with fear, anxiety, depression, and financial pressure. COVID-19 has also led to a high level of discrimination and racism, where ethnic minority community groups have been blamed for the virus. In Australia, some media outlets were so quick to blame migrant community groups as they people spreading COVID-19 in Melbourne, Victoria. There were racist and discrimination behaviours displayed on minority community groups which added more pressures on their disadvantaged situations. While these changes are continuous issues in many societies, it is time to reflect on intervention approaches where social work can support those individuals and families who are struggling to cope with pressures imposed by COVID-19. Therefore, it is strongly observed and believed that social workers can play a significant role in supporting and advocating for better services on behalf of vulnerable communities and individuals affected by COVID-19. Social workers always consider the diverse needs of people as issues emerge over time. This includes appropriate responses to COVID-19 patients and their families who have experienced depression, anxiety, isolation and financial challenges (Berg-Weger & Morley 2020). There are community groups and individuals who have been severely affected by the lockdown across the world. They have been forced to remain at home by the government and police. It has been hard on those who have breached the lockdown restrictions. Families are forced to stay at home and not to visit their sick family members in hospitals.

Theoretical framework

This study is using a critical social work as a conceptual framework as a way of analysing the impact of lockdown of the Highrise building in Melbourne city, Victoria state, Australia. A critical social work used holistically approach and different skills or lens as way of seeing social issues of clients, families, and community groups' perspective (Abur,2020 and Abur, 2021). Critical social work speaks to injustice issues and encourage marginalised community groups to speak up on the issues that concern their people (Abur, 2021). Critical social work also describes different approaches in social work that are diverse, but which share a common commitment to structural and personal change (Abur, 2021, Pease, Goldingay, Hosken, & Nipperess, 2016). Critical social work theory and social work education as applied in Australia and other parts of the world, supported the voices of vulnerable people, and speak on behalf of their clients through advocacy approach on matters that are affecting society or individual clients (Abur, 2020, Abrams & Moio, 2009; Green & Baldry, 2008).

Method

This study was an observation study method and a situation analysis of the Highrise building lockdown in Melbourne, Australia. The author attended Zoom meetings with community leaders and agency workers and discussed how COVID-19 can be controlled in community. Author made observations with residents while they were interacting with the police as police officers were employed to control moment of residents. They were required to remain in their rooms. The analysis of this study is focusing on the impact of COVID-19 19 lockdown on residents of nine towers in Melbourne and impact was very clear in term of mental health, social isolation and economic, lack of support services as many residents were struggling. It was clearly observed that residents were psychological impacted and found themselves in tears, frustration, enraged, powerless, hopeless with lack of support. Therefore, this analysis examines the role of social workers in supporting and preparing vulnerable community groups, individuals, and families to cope with emergency events when they emerge. The case example of the COVID-19 emergency lockdown is the lockdown of high-rise towers in Melbourne. Large numbers of police officers were deployed to control people to remain inside their high-rise tower rooms. There was no preparation or social workers employed to support vulnerable families and individuals in understanding and coping with the lockdown pressures. The deployment of the police officers frustrated people and caused a lot of anxiety, anger, uncertainty, and strain on residents. The hotspot suburbs with more cases of the virus were locked down, and fines were issued to people who breached social distancing rules and restrictions.

Mental health impacts of COVID-19

People with a high level of social needs are feeling lonely, depressed, socially anxious, and stressed because of the COVID -19 lockdown and restrictions. Findings in the analysis suggest that many residents were struggling with social isolation and would benefit from engaging with social workers through phone conversations to support them in coping with frustration and stress-related issues. Many people were frustrated with government because of restrictions which make some people felt that they were deprived of something important in their lives as humans and that social interaction and connection with their family members and friends. Lockdown makes people more isolated, frustrated, and lonely. Human beings need connection and interaction which is generally the case in any society. However, connection and social interaction has now been taken away by the COVID-19 outbreak from people (Lim, 2020, Takieddine & Tabbah, 2020). Social workers have played significant role in supporting vulnerable individuals and families during pandemic. Social workers known that there are many ways to support people who are affected by COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions. However, social workers could be more pro-active in reaching out to support people and remind themselves that the lockdown situation may be short term, and interventions from social workers would have assist in mitigating mental health and stress related issues. Also, people can still reach out to interact with their relatives and friends by phone, social media and Zoom calls. Virtual interaction is the only option during a total lockdown. In some countries, people were only allowed to speak with their relatives through windows while maintaining social distancing. Societies can overcome COVID-19 challenges through social work intervention. We know that social work is a practice-based profession that promotes social change, social cohesion, empowerment, and the liberation of people who are in difficult situations, like the COVID-19 lockdown of high-rise towers in Melbourne. The residents in the locked-down towers and suburbs clearly need some emotional support and intervention to manage the emotional toll. There was a great need for social work intervention instead of policing the high-rise towers without engaging social workers to assist the community in understanding the importance of lockdown to suppress the virus from spreading. Therefore, this study argue that social workers should be engaged to provide support services and counselling to residents during lockdown. Social work interventions are not about casework processes. Rather, they are about risk assessment related issues like health problems, social problems, recovery processes, and introducing changes (Fraser, 2004). The issues that social work includes bring change to the system to meet the needs of clients or patients in a hospital setting. This means that making changes to policies by imposing intervention strategies for people to access things they cannot access because of system barriers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have been seeking psychological support like counselling. Telephone counselling has operated over extended hours in different countries, including Australia, to support their citizens (Duan & Zhu, 2020). Social workers have the ability and skills to do great work during the difficult times of an emergency. "The ability to exhibit resilience under conditions of high pressure; able to communicate with the service receiver and carer; to diagnose and understand the situation and assess the risks involved; determine priorities in allocating limited resources; decide appropriate courses of action and manage that process; and communicate effectively

with professional colleagues who can contribute to those processes" are essential skills (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014, p.15). Addressing psychological issues was one of the roles taken by social workers to support individuals and their families. This is one of the important roles in assisting people who are in crisis and have no options available for them to help themselves. Therefore, it is very important to acknowledge that many social workers play a significant role in supporting clients who are affected by COVID-19. As a result, some people have been experiencing increased signs of mental health problems like feeling down and overwhelmed, as well as having low energy, fear, nervousness, worry, and thoughts of self-harm or aggression (Duan & Zhu, 2020). Many have sought counselling and mental health support as they could not cope well with the pressures imposed on them and their families by COVID-19. Some governments tried their best by releasing a mental health package or funding to support communities. The psychological intervention model was used by some social workers to support their clients.

There was a clear need of psychological intervention to assist people with emotional issues during lockdown. The intervention is mostly used in assessing and addressing mental health issues with clients and their families/network. Kinderman (2005) argued that "psychological models of mental disorder, therefore, address different sorts of mechanisms than exclusively biomedical theories, but also strive to encompass more than the mere mechanics of any individual system and to look at interactions and interrelationships" (p. 2). However, it is important to know that psychological intervention is not for cognitive reasons exclusively. It is also important in social and emergency interventions. Psychological intervention is used in crisis situations, such as public health emergencies. The question up for discussion here is: Are social workers well-prepared to deal with the COVID-19 crisis? The answer is no; nobody could be prepared for this crisis. This is a reason why there was no vaccine for COVID-19. Many researchers were under pressure to find a vaccine to rescue the world from COVID-19. This applied to social workers who needed to improve their skills and ways of supporting clients and communities that are in crisis. COVID-19 affected people from many countries and many geographical locations. However, many people are blaming others because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Social workers support the message from the World Health Organisation (WHO), saying that people should not be interacting when they are infected by the disease. "When referring to people with COVID-19, do not attach the disease to any particular ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to all those who are affected, in and from any country. People who are affected by COVID-19 have not done anything wrong, and they deserve our support,

compassion, and kindness" (World Health Organization, 2020. p.1). in other words, people who are affected by COVID-19 must be treated with compassion and kindness without attaching the stigma to their lives while they are going through treatment. Therefore, it is critically important to separate people from having an identity of COVID-19 to reduce stigma.

The psychological impact of COVID-19 is already felt directly and indirectly across the world. Mental health issues are rising due to the social and economic effects of the pandemic. Many who have health problems remain in isolation with fears (Lim, 2020). This will have a long-term impact on their mental health and wellbeing in the future (Holmes et al., 2020). There has been a rise in anxiety and uncertainty when people are locked down and isolated from their families and social networks. Isolation alone has mental health consequences like depression and anxiety. Further, people are more likely to engage in self-harm behaviours since they are not coping in a healthy way (Holmes et al., 2020). The economic fallout has had a downturn on peoples' mental health, and it is felt across the globe. This is especially true in developing countries and poor community groups, directly and indirectly. Some of the consequences and risks associated with social and physical distancing measures imposed on people because of COVID-19 include suicidal thoughts, self-harm, alcohol and substance misuse, gambling, and domestic and child abuse. The psychosocial risks or impacts are social disconnection, lack of meaningful moral values or anomie, feelings of being a burden, financial stress, loss and bereavement, unemployment, relationship breakdowns, homelessness, cyberbullying, and feeling trapped (Holmes et al., 2020). The vulnerable groups for COVID-19 include elderly people and people with pre-existing health conditions like mental and physical health problems. The level of social isolation imposed by the pandemic increases the level of risks associated with these populations globally. Societies are faced with challenges in determining the best ways to deliver mental health support services to vulnerable individuals and community groups. The challenge is to identify better ways of reaching out online to support people. There is a need to come up with some intervention strategies like delivering services remotely to vulnerable people and supporting frontline workers. Their wellbeing matters to society since many frontline workers are dealing with the critical challenge of saving lives.

Supporting poor community groups

Many people in poor communities with no resources to support themselves have been affected by COVID-19, including newly arrived migrant community groups, who are struggling to settle in

their new countries (Liem et al., 2020). These community groups are surviving on their daily activities of small businesses or casual jobs for survival. Poverty is often linked to health problems in poor communities. When COVID-19 has spread, it has negatively impacted poor community groups. The finality caused by COVID-19 might be linked to poor health, low education levels, and little wealth. The poorer you are, the more likely you or someone in your family will not get COVID-19. However, the more likely you are to die from this disease. The only luck or difference is the country you are living in, based on resources located by the government for the people or what action is taken by the government to keep poor communities in the safe zone. For example, in Australia, the government has focused on how to protect Indigenous Australian community groups from COVID-19. In New York City in America, more than 1,200 residents in public housing died, and more than 6,000 were infected with COVID-19. "I have lost my job and income, and now we are locked in our homes" said one of Melbourne's residents, lashing out when police asked him to remain inside his home. In Melbourne, more cases were reported in public housing. This has caused a complete lockdown with police controlling the lockdown areas. These lockdown suburbs have one thing in common; people who are living there are poor and vulnerable with many health and wellbeing issues. They find it hard to stay at home compared to the wealthy suburbs where residents can afford to do so. The Highrise buildings are also overcrowded houses and poorly run by the governing body. Some people are content with the lockdown to better contain COVID-19, rather than separate around the city and state. Some people feel that it was not helpful to place restrictions on people. It is invading peoples' rights. They have even called for the human rights commission to say something about the lockdown.

Lessons learned during COVID-19

What can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic? Once again, COVID-19 has brought significant impacts and challenges to many of us around the globe. As human being, we have learned that the pandemics such as COVID-19 challenged us emotionally, socially, and economically. During the pandemic like this, many of us find themselves in very vulnerable position psychologically and socially. COVID-19 threaten health of people globally as well as putting pressure in economic field which led to financial stress for many people. Pandemic taught that we human being are vulnerable, but the same time, we can manage some difficult situations we are well prepared psychologically. This is a work of social science such as social work to prepare individuals and community groups to be ready for any forthcoming or unforeseen challenges. The pandemic has transformed the way community service organisations run their activities. The pandemic also has placed a serious demand on community services like social work services in the community. Many people were seeking for counselling support services, food and medical support services. Therefore, there are many lessons and opportunities to learn from the challenges imposed on people due to COVID-19 restrictions. Social workers and other professional workers can gain new knowledge and awareness, regarding preparation and responding to the COVID-19 lockdown. Social workers can prepare themselves with a set of skills that will assist them in the future to deal with crises similar to COVID-19. We know that COVID-19 presented health, social, economic, and political challenges in many societies across the world. It is wise for any social worker to reflect and assess the approach used during the COVID-19 crisis for improvement. Social workers and health professionals can learn from this lockdown and the challenges it has imposed on people socially and financially (Berg-Weger & Morley, 2020). Social workers are in good space to research the experiences of people and document their experiences. This might improve social work training and the building of evidence-based tools to better inform practice in the field of social work. Developing and adapting evidence-based practices and intervention strategies to address mental health and social isolation should be a leading part of the research for social workers to undertake (Berg-Weger & Morley, 2020). Social workers should also work with other health professionals collaboratively to support clients by conducting a holistic assessment of social, health financial, and mental health issues.

Clearly, there are many lessons learned from COVID-19. The challenge is how society will utilise what they have learned from COVID-19 for their future benefit and preparations. Some developed countries with resources take the wellbeing of their people seriously by locating resources or funding mental health services to assist people with mental health issues. Caring for one's emotional wellbeing during a complex and difficult situation is a very critical task of social workers. The lessons learned include a lack or loss of access to mental health support services for vulnerable community groups. There has been a consistent increase in mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, uncertainty, loss and bereavement, and trauma. Therefore, there is a great need to think of better ways to deal with emergency situations. This preparation must be considered in all disciplines, such as healthcare, economic, mental health, and social work when dealing with a crisis. Social workers can assist in areas of mental health and social engagement when people are agitated and psychologically affected by the consequences. Providing skills in emergency management and support people who are affected by

COVID-19 can strengthen social workers' role in handling people in a crisis. We all need to learn from the COVID-19 crisis to empower social workers to support vulnerable individuals and families. Empowering and advancing skills in social work is always helpful to vulnerable people in society (Leece & Leece, 2010). Social workers are there to support vulnerable people and improve their lives by advocating on their behalf and sourcing resources. There is no better way to describe the role of social workers in a vulnerable community than this: "Social workers are well connected to the people they serve, know about their unique locations, are familiar with community resources and leadership potentials and are equipped with the necessary knowledge base for addressing issues at micro, mezzo and macro levels" (Mathbor, 2007, p. 367).

Research and practice in the field of social work

Researching social and wellbeing issues is a very critical part of a social work role in contemporary society. Social work is essential in society at many levels, such as personal, economic, political, and social. It empowers people to participate directly and indirectly in discourses on issues concerning the community (Mathbor, 2007). In other words, social work aims to improve the lives of people by contributing to sustainable development. This work can be advanced through research on social issues and formulate better ways of improving social issues in the community by coming up with new knowledge. The new knowledge and theories often emerge in research that aims to inform policies and service delivery in the community (Gilligan, 2000; Mathbor, 2007). The exchange of knowledge and research agendas has been a positive and progressive activity in the community welfare era. Therefore, knowledge is exchanged via research in social work. For instance, new knowledge and a new body of research have emerged due to COVID-19 experiences and difficulties. This comes from interdisciplinary fields like health, social work, economics, sociology, and anthropology. All these disciplines have conducted incredible research to find solutions on issues affecting vulnerable individuals or community groups to improve their general standard of living. Therefore, social work plays a significant role in research to support social workers in the field by producing research knowledge and improving practices. Social workers work with people who have complex issues of wellbeing and mental health in society. The role includes working with, elderly, people with mental health-related problems, children and vulnerable parents who needed support services to raise their children, and in addressing wellbeing and mental health issues (Gilligan, 2000; Mathbor, 2007).

Role of social workers, community workers and community development workers

In pandemic and emergency crisis, social work practitioners have critical role to support their existing clients and emerging clients in society. Some easy supports such emotional coaching or support are very important for clients that having emotional and psychological challenges because of pandemic outbreak. Social work, as a profession, offers lessons by conducting critical social research to help understand and prepare social workers to deal with current and future crises like COVID-19. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many social workers on the frontline have dealt with this crisis through supporting service users. There is a great need for social workers to think and advance their practice skills beyond their general practice skills when working in a community. That is, social workers must think and sharpen their skills when working in emergency situations, like a disease outbreak. This is also true for many other disaster situations like bush fires, earthquakes, conflicts, war displacements, etc. Social work is a profession that assists people with underlying issues like medical problems, social problems, and mental health problems (Bergman, 1976, Dearing, 2009). As such, well trained social workers might be more useful in supporting people who are affected by COVID-19 and other emergency crises. Thus, social work students should be prepared and informed of examples of emergency situations when completing their studies at university. Social workers can be effective in supporting people to build their resilience before and after a crisis (Mathbor, 2007). An example of such is the outbreak of COVID-19 in Melbourne. High rise towers were locked down, and residents were quarantined for weeks. This caused an emotional toll on vulnerable families and individuals living in the high-rise towers. Many polices were deployed to control the area. Residents were not allowed to visit their loved ones in the next building or sick family members in hospital. The relationship between police and residents was volatile. The presence of police officers and military personnel caused feelings of alarm, anxiety, and uncertainty in the locked-down suburbs. Media reporters witnessed residents crying for help as they were lockdown and restricted to remain inside their residents. However, the police were not able to assist them because their job was to control the area and keep residents in their buildings. What was not done well by the government in this situation was neglecting the emotional toll on poor families and individuals to deal with a difficult situation such as dysfunctional families with people misusing drugs and substances, people with poor mental health conditions that need support from services or their relatives and close friends. These are groups people that can be supported by social workers to manage their situations better. One of the lessons learned

during lockdown periods is for social workers to remain vigilant in supporting the vulnerable families and individuals despite impediment of the lockdown. This can be done through phone calls, zoom meetings and other technologies ways of communications. They failed to employ social workers to support residents and prepare them to calmly deal with the emergency. Yes, in some countries, the situation of COVID-19 was handled poorly compared to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. The leaders have done an amazing job in trying to contain the virus by putting major restrictions in place to control the community's movement.

Are social workers prepared to look after residents? Social work assists people with underlying issues like medical problems, social problems, and mental health problems (Bergman, 1976). As such, well trained social workers are and can be more useful in supporting people who have been affected by COVID-19 and other emergency crises. Social workers have the capacity and capability to communicate calmly with affected people and mentally disturbed individuals as part of their field practice in society. The communities affected by COVID-19 would benefit from engaging social workers for support while they are faced with challenges. We know that the role of social work education and training is to equip social workers with relevant skills to assist individuals, families, and community groups. For instance, social work plays a role in communication, emotional support, and relationship building (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014). Social workers support to people to enhance social functioning in disaster situations through offering psychosocial support, relief from distress by linking the vulnerable people such as elderly people, minority groups, refugees, vulnerable children to relevant helping agencies. This could have been helpful methods to be useful by the statutory agencies in Melbourne to offer support services to residents that were lockdown. Social work brings unique skills such resilience and other strengths while working closely with community populations that were deeply affected by many structural problems such as unemployment, racism and discrimination, poverty, and chronic health issues (Abur, 2020)

Implication and recommendations

When there is a crisis in society, social workers, community workers and community development workers support people who are affected by crisis events. This brings a huge challenge to social workers in many ways, including having a lack of resources and an emotional toll. Due to the consequences of COVID-19, the world will not operate the same way as it was before COVID-19 for the foreseeable future. Human loss and financial loss have been felt severely in many societies, unemployment and mental health problems are increasing. Clearly, communities and governments should focus on reducing the mortality and control of the virus in communities. The second part of work is the engagement of communities to empower people to change their behaviours in the hotspot areas of COVID-19. Social work can assist in engaging community groups and in the emotional wellbeing of individuals and families that are or were affected by the coronavirus restrictions. Therefore, the following are recommendations for social workers to consider during emergency crises:

- Social workers and community development workers to assist the community in preparation for emergency crises.
- Social workers and community development workers to participate in policy making in anticipation of emergencies and contribute to designing policies in areas of mental health and wellbeing.
- Social workers and community development workers to engage in supporting individuals, families, and community during and after emergency crises.
- Social workers and community development workers to assist people with mental health issues during emergency crises and after emergency crises.

Conclusion

With the consequences of COVID-19, our mental health and social connection as humans is not the same anymore as we used to interact socially. There are many restrictions or rules about social distancing. We know that many businesses are not operating in the same way they were run anymore. Both human and financial cost has impacted severely in many countries across the world. The pandemic has many implications for social work practice and development as many people are struggling with bereavement, loss of incomes due to unemployment. Mental health problems are increasing because of traumatic experiences imposed on people by COVID-19 pandemic. There are many challenges brought by the COVID-19 including health problems, social and economic problems. Many people are left vulnerable emotionally and financially because of the lockdown and restrictions. This paper is calling for social workers to prepare themselves for emergency situations. We know that social workers can and always play significant roles in supporting vulnerable community groups, individuals, and families who are in crisis. However, preparation for any emergency or crisis can be incredibly useful for

social workers and affected community groups. Therefore, preparation can be done for both financial resources and the skilling of social workers who can handle an emergency in issues such as the COVID-19 outbreak. There is no doubt about the huge cost of COVID-19 in many countries across the world. These costs include health, social, psychological, and economic harms. They are detrimental to society in many ways. Thus, it is critical and important for society and social workers to consider the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis. It would be ignorant if there are no lessons learned. The consequences of isolation, quarantining, and lockdown have serious impacts on many people's lives. Many businesses have been closed, and many have lost jobs and incomes. Social workers and community development workers can support communities, families, and individuals based on its professional practice and rigorous research that underpin teaching and practice in the field. Social work education and practice promote resilience skills to support individuals and community groups with coping strategies to deal with difficult situations and issues such as trauma, stress, anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty during and post coronavirus. This critical role of social work practice and education is also applied to other emergency situations in society where people are affected emotionally and are not able to cope well with challenges.

Data statement

This study is a situation analysis study based on observation. There was no data collected or associated with this project.

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There is no potential conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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