



Department of Social Welfare and Development

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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 19
Series of 2022

Subject: **INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE WIRELESS MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY CRISIS SITUATIONS (WiSUPPORT)**

I. RATIONALE

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the worst economic and psychosocial dilemma among communities and individuals around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the paradigm shift towards the “new normal” that is characterized by volatility and uncertain conditions. In which, a lot of people experience stress due to anger, confusion, sadness, grief, and restlessness. Despite the efforts to these concerns, several gaps and challenges remain unaddressed.

Aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, there are crisis situations that affect the mental health and psychological well-being of individuals and families. These include natural, biological, chemical, radiological, nuclear, and human-induced hazards which may result in violence, abuse, loss of lives, loss of the source of income, accidents, and other crisis situations.

In response to the needs of the general public, the DSWD issued Administrative Order No. 3, series of 2020 which contains the Department’s COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Recovery Plan for 2020-2022. One of the key deliverables hereto is the development of a technology-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and modules for individuals, families, and communities with a high number of COVID-19 cases. This initiative was anchored on the provisions of the Republic Act No. 11036 otherwise known as the Mental Health Act including its Implementing Rules and Regulations which mandates the DSWD’s duties and responsibilities to wit:

1. Refer service users to mental health facilities, professionals, workers, and other service providers for appropriate care
2. Provide or facilitate access to public or group housing facilities, counseling, therapy, livelihood training, and other available skills development programs
3. In coordination with the LGUs and the DOH, formulate, develop and implement community resilience and psychosocial well-being training, including psychosocial support services during and after natural disasters and other calamities, and



4. Develop and implement training and capacity-building programs to effectively discharge the agency's role according to this Act.

It is in this context that the Social Technology Bureau together with concerned bureaus, services, and units developed the DSWD WiSUPPORT Project: Wireless Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Individuals and Families affected by COVID-19 and other crisis situations. The project was pilot tested in three areas (Region VII, CARAGA, and National Capital Region) and was assessed to be responsive, relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable in supporting the DSWD's mandate in the MHPSS delivery.

Further, Administrative Order No. 23 series of 2022 that established the DSWD Committee on Mental Health will influence the harmonization of plans, programs, budget as well as performance review and assessment of the Department's Mental Health Program initiatives. The committee shall consolidate all mental health efforts across the various field offices, bureaus, services, and units.

II. LEGAL BASES

A. International Instruments

1. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ICESCR (1966)**. Article 12, Section 1 stipulates that "the States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".
2. **WHO International Health Care Law (1996)** specified under components of mental health and prevention of mental disorders that there should be a promotion of behaviors that contribute to enhancing and maintaining mental health well-being, such as those identified by WHO.
3. **Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC Guidelines on MHPSS, 2007)** encourage all humanitarian actors and the UN Member States affected by, or at sick of, emergencies to embrace and implement the IASC MHPSS Guidelines.

B. National Laws and Issuances

1. **Republic Act No. 11036**, otherwise known as the "Philippine Mental Health Act of 2018" establishes a National Mental Health Policy to enhance the delivery of integrated mental health services promoting and protecting the rights of persons utilizing such services. The law highlights DSWD's roles in providing psychosocial support services during and after natural disasters and other calamities.

2. **National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028** elaborates the overall responsibility of the DSWD as disaster response lead agency, and as implementing partner in the promotion of psychosocial well-being and risk reduction of mental health problems.
3. **Republic Act No. 10121 otherwise known as the “National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010”** brings forth the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework and institutionalizes the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, which also designates the DSWD as the Vice-Chairperson for Disaster Response.

C. Department Issuance

1. **DSWD Administrative Order No. 3, series of 2020 or the DSWD Response and Recovery Plan** outlines the key deliverable of a Technology-Based Psychosocial Support (PSS), a social welfare model of intervention that would aid the needs and concerns of COVID-19 affected individuals, families and communities.
2. **DSWD Administrative Order No. 23, series of 2022 otherwise known as the Creation of the DSWD Mental Health Committee** prescribes the guidelines for the establishment, roles, and responsibilities of the Committee, its Subcommittees, and Regional Committees.

III. OBJECTIVES

This guideline aims to institutionalize the Wireless Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to Individuals and Families Affected by COVID19 and Other Crisis Situations, otherwise known as the DSWD WiSUPPORT, as a regular program of the Department along with the provision of MHPSS through the established technology-based platforms.

Specifically, this institutionalization guideline aims to:

- a. Delineate the functions of the different bureaus and offices that will play key roles in the national implementation of the WiSUPPORT; and
- b. Support the operation of the DSWD Central and Field Offices in providing psychosocial support to the individuals and families affected by crisis situations through the developed systems and platforms that will facilitate intake, responding, referral, and recording of cases.

IV. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The DSWD WiSUPPORT Project is a social welfare model of intervention that seeks to establish a systematic response to address the mental and psychosocial needs of individuals and families affected by crisis situations. It also envisions to mobilize and capacitate WiSUPPORT service providers at the national and regional levels and intends to make MHPSS intervention more accessible to its intended clients through the utilization of technology-based platforms, in compliance with the minimum health protocols.

Target Clientele:

The DSWD WiSUPPORT Program caters to the psychosocial needs of Individuals and Families affected by crisis situations. Clientele categories are as follows but are not limited to:

- Overseas Filipino (OFs) in Distress;
- Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (WEDC);
- Family Heads and Other Needy Adults (FHONA);
- Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP);
- Senior Citizens (SC)
- Persons with Disability (PWD)
- Children and families in situations of armed conflict;
- Individuals involved as First Responders/ Caregivers to Crisis Situations and their families; and
- Other Individuals and Families in Distress

Components:

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- DSWD ensures proper management of cases by enhancing knowledge, skills and attitude of service providers on understanding crisis, mental health and psychological well being and in providing online psychosocial support

WISUPPORT SERVICE PROVISION

- Trained DSWD staff in pilot regions are available from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Mondays to Fridays (except holidays) for Psychosocial Support and Consultation Sessions
- Clients are provided with options on the conduct of sessions such as video conference, landline or mobile calls, emails and text messages



PLATFORMS FOR THE ONLINE PSS CONSULTATIONS

- DSWD provides the public with easy access to various communication tools to talk with the WiSUPPORT Service Providers
- This includes electronic mail, web portal, WiServ or text messaging, mobile application and DSWD Agency Operations Center Hotline

REFERRAL PATHWAY

- DSWD will also refer clients needing professional help from psychiatrists and psychologists through the referral networks established



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V. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The DSWD WiSUPPORT Program implementation shall be guided by its Program Manual, duly approved by the Undersecretary for Standards and Capacity Building Group. The Program Manual shall be fully aligned with all the provisions hereto and shall be issued after the approval of this Memorandum Circular.

In order to effectively and efficiently implement the program, the following roles and responsibilities need to be undertaken by the DSWD Committee on Mental Health and the implementing Offices, Bureaus, and Services. to wit:

A. MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Mental Health Committee adopts the DSWD WiSUPPORT as the flagship program of the Department in the provision of mental health and psychosocial support in accordance with the roles and responsibilities highlighted in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Mental Health Act.

The adoption of the program is relative to the function of the committee in shepherding the harmonization of plans, programs, and budgets as well as the performance review and assessment of the Department's mental health initiatives. Specifically, for the WiSUPPORT program, the committee shall perform the following:

- a. Monitor the implementation of the program in the Department;
- b. Spearhead evaluation activities with regard to the implementation of the WiSUPPORT; and
- c. Review and recommend policies that will further support the implementation of the program.

B. IMPLEMENTING OFFICES, BUREAUS AND OFFICES

The roles and responsibilities of all concerned Offices, Bureaus, and Services as well as the Field Offices relative to the WiSUPPORT implementation shall be as follows:

A. Program Management Bureau (PMB)

- a. Lead and manage the full implementation of the program in the Department and ensure completion of the program outputs;
- b. Serve as resource persons and providers of Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation to the Field Offices on the implementation, as needed;
- c. Implement and provide psychosocial services utilizing the WiSUPPORT platforms through the Crisis Intervention Unit/s per DSWD Memorandum

Circular No. 11 series of 2019 and come up with inputs and recommendations as to the basis for the enhancement of systems and materials;

- d. Provide personnel in the implementation of the program particularly in the provision of psychosocial support and program management;
- e. Facilitate hiring of personnel (Psychologist, Information Technology Officer, Project Development Officer) based on the criteria set as indicated in the program manual;
- f. Conduct capacity building of newly hired or designated service providers following the WiSUPPORT Training Manual and through the utilization of the E-learning course;
- g. Convene coordination meetings among members of the TWG and Referral Network;
- h. Prepare implementation reports, formulate a Work and Financial Plan (WFP);
- i. Update contents and enhance designs for the technology-based platforms in partnership with the ICTMS and STB;
- j. Maintain the Referral Network established for the referral system of clients in need of specialized intervention;
- k. Facilitate the periodic review and evaluation of the program as a basis for improvement of operational procedures;
- l. Submit reports and other documents as requested by the DSWD Committee on Mental Health; and
- m. Spearhead meetings and other activities related to the implementation of the program as Lead of the Technical Working Group (TWG)

B. Agency Operations Center (AOC)

- a. Serve as the receiving office of WiSUPPORT service requests received through its different platforms;
- b. Designate personnel, preferably a registered Social Worker, who will be in-charge in the implementation of the program particularly on receiving and referring clients to Service Providers utilizing the WiSUPPORT System and based on the Flowchart for Referral;
- c. Provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) to clients with MHPSS related concerns and assistance to clients with non-MHPSS related-concerns raised in the WiSUPPORT Platforms (e.g. queries on other DSWD programs); and
- d. Participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

C. Social Technology Bureau (STB)

- a. Provide technical assistance on the conduct of Learning Development Interventions for the WiSUPPORT service providers who will be trained on the program's implementation;

- b. Develop a Program Training Manual for the capability-building of WiSUPPORT service providers in the provision of MHPSS, as needed;
- c. Develop the Program Manual and Guidelines based on the pilot-testing experience and facilitate the enhancement of such as necessary;
- d. Develop an E-learning Course on WiSUPPORT based on the Training Manual and ensure its inclusion in the SWIDB Learning Management System as a method of capacity building for service providers;
- e. Provide technical assistance on the creation of positions for the start-up in the national implementation of the WiSUPPORT;
- f. Organize the National Launching of the program in collaboration with Social Marketing Service prior to its national implementation;
- g. Assist in the promotion of the program to Local Government Units and other stakeholders through the conduct of social marketing activities;
- h. Recommend impact evaluation of the program to Policy Development Bureau after 5 years of national implementation; and
- i. Participate in meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

D. Information, Communications, and Technology Management Service (ICTMS)

- a. Assist in the finalization of the Terms of Reference for the hiring of the Information and Technology Officer to be hired for the national implementation of the program;
- b. Supervise the Information and Technology Officer hired for the program;
- c. Enhance and maintain the technology-based platforms (web portal, WiSERV, and mobile application) for the implementation of the WiSUPPORT;
- d. Provide technical assistance to ICT-related concerns of the project;
- e. Provide support in the conduct of learning and development interventions on the use of wireless and online platforms;
- f. Ensure the inclusion of features and functionalities in the system that will support compliance with Republic Act No. 10173 otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to protect the individual personal information that may be collected, processed, and/or shared through the information system based on the Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), Data Privacy Manual and other privacy-related documents that will be developed by the Business Owner;
- g. Provide technical assistance for hosting of the web, text messaging, and mobile applications;
- h. Facilitate review and evaluation of the Data Privacy Manual on a yearly basis or as deemed necessary. Privacy and security policies and practices within the organization shall be updated to remain consistent with current data privacy best practices; and
- i. Participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the progr

E. Disaster Response Management Bureau (DRMB)

- a. Designate and authorize staff to be trained as WiSUPPORT service providers who will be mobilized in the delivery of the program's intervention;

- b. Provide technical assistance and support in the implementation of MHPSS based on the existing MHPSS module that the DSWD and Department of Health co-developed; and
- c. Participate in the meetings and other related activities relative to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

F. Social Marketing Service (SMS)

- a. Organize the National Launching of the program prior to its national implementation in collaboration with the Social Technology Bureau;
- b. Provide technical assistance and support in the development and implementation of the program's communication plan and promotional advocacy materials;
- c. Spearhead the periodic evaluation of the program's Communication Plan; and
- d. Participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

G. Social Welfare and Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB)

- a) Include the E-learning course on WiSUPPORT in the SWIDB Learning and Management System;
- b) Provide technical assistance in the design and development of LDI plans that will reinforce learning;
- c) Provide technical assistance on the enhancement of the WiSUPPORT Training Manual as necessary; and
- d) Participate in meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

H. Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB)

- a. Provided technical assistance and inputs in the program indicators in the Harmonized Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation System (HPMES) of the Department;
- b. Ensure inclusion of updates regarding the WiSUPPORT implementation in the Department-wide reports and other reportorial requirements regarding the implementation of the DSWD along with its mandates on RA 11036 or the Mental Health Act; and
- c. Capture accomplishments in the Recalibrated Strategic Plan for Mental Health and capture/ highlight of the accomplishments during the Mental Health Committee Meetings.
- d. Lead in the impact evaluation of the program after five years of implementation.
- e. Participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

I. Human Resource Management and Development Section (HRMDS)

- a. Ensure the conduct of care for the Caregivers/ Support Providers by providing regular sessions and psychosocial support to the WiSUPPORT service providers at the Central Office in collaboration with the Psychologist hired for the program and with the HRMDS counterpart in the Field Offices;
- b. Provide technical assistance in the development of the Competency-based Job Descriptions and in the hiring of the WiSUPPORT program staff based on the approved Terms of Reference (TOR) both at the Central Office and Field Offices;
- c. Assist in the widening of the Referral Network of the WiSUPPORT through maintaining contact with institutional networks and professionals to support the implementation of the DSWD's programs on Mental Health; and
- d. Participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation and periodic evaluation activities of the program.

J. General Administrative Services

The General Administrative Services composed of the following Services of the DSWD shall provide logistics support in the implementation of the Program including its regional counterparts at the Field Offices. The specific functions of the concerned Services are as follows:

- a. **Financial Management Service** shall provide support and advice in the Financial Management funds for the implementation of the program;
- b. **Administrative Service** shall provide support and assistance relative to the procurement of services and shall assist in the processing of other logistics needs such as communication load allowance of the WiSUPPORT Service Providers and other program administrative requirements.

The concerned Services shall participate in the meetings and other activities related to the implementation of the program per invitation as Resource Person and Technical Assistance Provider.

K. DSWD Field Offices

- a. Facilitate the hiring of staff requirement based on the approved Terms of Reference (TOR);
- b. Designate and authorize additional staff to be trained as WiSUPPORT service providers who will be mobilized for the delivery of the program's interventions;

- c. Designate a Focal Person from the Program Management Unit/Division or its equivalent as the lead in the implementation of the program who shall coordinate activities to be conducted in the region;
- d. Establish a regional Project Implementation Team composed of, but not limited to the following divisions/units: PMU, STU, CBSU, SMU, CBU, RICTMU, HRMDD, DRMD and other concerned units/ divisions to ensure systematic and coordinated project implementation;
- e. Designate a RICTMU focal person who will provide technical assistance along with IT-related activities and project concerns (i.e. on the web portal, WiServ, mobile application, and other online MHPSS platforms);
- f. Mobilize external partners both from the government agencies, non-governmental organization and members of ABSNET who can be tapped in the provision of MHPSS and serve as members in the WiSUPPORT Referral Network;
- g. Submit reports and other documents as requested by the Regional Committee on Mental Health and to the Policy Development and Planning Bureau in accordance with the Harmonized Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation System through the implementing Unit/Division at the Field Office;
- h. Facilitate the signing of the Non-Disclosure Agreement of all internal staff who are involved in the client's data collection, storage, and disposal;
- i. Facilitate the signing of Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) and/or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), whichever is applicable, among members of the Regional Referral Network in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012; and
- j. Participate in all activities relative to the implementation, periodic and impact evaluation of the program


VI. EFFECTIVITY

This issuance shall take effect immediately upon approval.

Let copies of this Order be issued to the Central Office and Field Offices for their information and guidance

Issued in Quezon City, Metro Manila.


ERWIN T. TULFO
Secretary
Date: 04 SEP 2022

Certified True Copy

Ramil R. Egamino
Administrative Officer V 24 OCT 2022
Records and Archives Mgt. Division