

## GENDER IMPACTS

What we know about the potential gender impacts of COVID-19:

- ▶ *Emergencies are likely to exacerbate inequalities*, including socio-economic, gender, and other disparities.
- ▶ In many countries, women bear the burden of household responsibility. As more women enter the workplace, *women—including those with jobs—do more housework and have less leisure time than their male partners*. Researchers refer to this as the “second shift:” buying groceries, cooking, cleaning and doing dishes, plus the invisible work of planning, coordinating and anticipating needs.
- ▶ With *schools closing and caregiving tasks increasing, workloads are increasing*, and gender norms generally relegate this work to women.
- ▶ Women’s heavy caregiving burden could cause their *physical and mental health to suffer* and impede their access to education, livelihoods and other critical support.
- ▶ Taking on additional care work may force a caregiver to leave his or her job. Because gender norms have led to today’s situation in which women earn less than men overall, the practical choice of who will leave their job may often be women, and *dropping out of the workforce, even temporarily, could hinder their future career and earning potential*.
- ▶ In both rich and poor countries, *domestic violence rates could rise during lockdown periods*. Stress, alcohol consumption and financial difficulties are all considered triggers for violence in the home, and the stay-at home measures being imposed around the world will increase all three, while also shutting down routes to safety and support.

## CONSIDERATIONS AND PRACTICES

Given existing gender disparities in most organizations, CRS offers the following considerations and practices to help alleviate gender inequalities among staff as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. These suggestions are based on our experience and that of our partners.

- ▶ *Consider providing access to psychosocial services* for female and male staff, particularly those who are in isolation or quarantine. HR managers can disseminate this information to all staff and share links and other resources.
- ▶ Consider *flexible working schedules* that allow both male and female staff to accommodate increased domestic and care work.
- ▶ *Encourage male staff to help with care work* at home.
- ▶ *Consider raising staff awareness of the above gender norms and their effects* via an online staff meeting, an email, or other effective communication method, led by senior leadership. Encourage a gender balance in the responsibility for communicating these messages.
- ▶ *Consider making accommodations for both men and women to share responsibilities* for care work at home equitably.

## SELF CARE

The following positive messages of self-care could be shared with both male and female staff during *discussions and awareness raising sessions*:

- ▶ ***Listen to the experts.*** Too often, we see individuals ignore advice because they want to *be* the expert. This is a time to listen to and heed public health experts. Your community depends on it.
- ▶ ***Ask for help if you need it.*** If you are feeling sick, call your doctor. If you need help with childcare, with anxiety, with anything, don't hesitate to ask for it.
- ▶ ***Share your emotions.*** We're all anxious right now. It is advisable to be open about how you are feeling. It will help you connect with others.
- ▶ ***Be a leader and a teammate.*** Leadership is essential in times of crisis, but leadership doesn't mean "do it my way." Leadership means listening, understanding, and serving as a calm guide.
- ▶ ***Connect with your community.*** Make the effort to connect on the phone or video with friends and family. Check in on friends.
- ▶ ***Rest and recharge.*** You are no use to anyone if you are exhausted or frazzled. Take time to take care of yourself and stay healthy. Your community needs you healthy right now more than ever.
- ▶ ***Parent with compassion.*** Parents are being called upon to guide our children through unprecedented times. We urge you to listen to your children's needs and to show up as a parent.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ From The Lancet: [COVID-19, the gendered impacts of the outbreak](#) (March 2020)
- ▶ From CARE: [Gender Implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks In Development and Humanitarian Settings](#) (March 2020)
- ▶ From MenCare—A Global Fatherhood Campaign: [Taking care of others and yourself. Guidance during COVID-19 and beyond](#) (March 2020)