

COVID-19 UPDATE

Ramgharia Gurdwara Coventry is committed to the continued safety and compliance of our Sangat and premises.

As an organisation we provide a place of worship & education for our congregation & community. Whilst we continue to take steps to provide essential support and assistance during this challenging and difficult time, we are also committed to following UK Government guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

The safety of our congregation, our sevadars and our premises during these anxious times is of paramount importance.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for those attending RST Coventry from Monday 15th June 2020.

Update of latest statement from the government ref Covid 19 and worship guidelines on which our instructions & guidance is based on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic>

The information on this page is regularly updated, so please check back to ensure you have the latest guidance. When major changes are made, we will publish update through the RST Website & Facebook accounts.

The RST Recovery Group's Statement on 10/06/2020 addresses the Government's announcement that places of worship can open up for supervised private individual prayer from 15th June.

We are currently seeking clarification from the Government as to what the extent and nature of supervision for private individual prayer will be.

We would like to assure the Congregation Of Ramgarhia Sikh Temple, Coventry, that we, your Sevadaars will be following and carrying out the guidelines issued by the Government regarding the opening of places of worship, according to Covid 19 requirements.

1) In accordance with Covid 19 updates issued by the Government, We are restricting attendance to the Gurdwara, for Darshan only, from the 15th June 2020.

2) The times of opening have been schedules as follows:

Monday to Saturday 6-8am & 6-8pm

Sunday 8am -11am

1) We are not encouraging the gathering of sadh sangat ji in the main divan to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid 19. Whilst doing Darshan, we ask the sangat to maintain 2m distance in all directions between persons.

2) We are requiring the sadh sangat ji to ensure they are wearing masks when leaving home.

- 3) On entry & exiting the gurdwara sahib, we are asking the sadh sangat ji to sanitise their hands.
- 4) We are requiring the sadh sangat ji, to wear the gloves that will be provided, on entry.
- 5) We are requiring the sadh sangat ji to fill out there details in the visitors log, this is for Contact Information which will be required in the case that a member of the sadh sangat ji is found to be infected with Covid after visitation, and has attended the Gurdwara Sahib, requiring us to contact adjacent members of the sadh sangat ji to get tested.
- 6) We will be requiring the sadh sangat ji to have their temperature taken. The entrance to the temple will be subject to normal temperatures being measured. To safeguard the rest of the sadh sangat ji, anyone showing an above normal temperature will be kindly asked not to attend and to go home & follow Covid procedure.
- 7) We will ask the sadh sangat ji to remain 2m apart at all times, guided by the yellow 2m markers.
- 8) They will be asked to place their shoes in the allocated shoe rack.
- 9) To wash their hands according to Covid guidelines, dispose of the paper towels safely in the bins provided.
- 10) They will then be asked to go up the main stairs following the pathway direction allocated & signposted, for them to do their Darshan, maintaining at least 2m distance with any sadh sangat ji member ahead &/or behind.

- 11) Anyone requiring disabled access will be allowed to use the lift for transfer between ground & first floors, but will be asked to maintain 2m distance at all times.
- 12) We are requiring the sadh sangat ji to remain in the cordoned off area within the rope barriers.
- 13) When performing Darshan, we are requiring the sadh sangat ji, to remain on the plastic covered area, & try Bow and pay respect but to reduce the chances of contact transmission, not to make contact with the plastic area with hands and head.
- 14) We require the sadh sangat ji to collect any Parshad, on the way out of Hall one, this will be prepared and left hygienically on the serving table.
- 15) We require the sadh sangat ji to follow the signs & return to the ground floor via the stairs near the library.
- 16) Anyone requiring disabled access will be allowed to use the lift for transfer between ground & first floors, but will be asked to maintain 2m distance at all times.
- 17) We will require the sangat to collect shoes from the opposite side of the allocated rack.
- 18) We will then require the sangat to leave via the exit near the ladies Toilets and sanitising their hands at the point of exit.
- 19) For anyone wishing to use the Toilets, both Male & Female & Disabled Toilets will be available. We would encourage hygienic use & washing of hands after using the toilets.

We thank the sadh sangat ji, for their full cooperation in following the guidelines that we are adhering to set by the Government. We would also like to remind the sadh sangat ji, whilst your humble sevadaars will be doing their utmost to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid, they are entering the Gurdwara Sahib, at their own risk, for which the Gurdawara Sahib's sevadaars accept no liability.

(We would like to refer you to the section which deals with who should & who should not attend the Gurdwara Sahib for darshan, during this Covid pandemic)

FAQs

The sadh sangat ji & its sevadaars are invited to read the detailed guidance below to ensure all activities are understood and conducted in a safe and hygienic way.

THE RECOVERY GROUP SEVADAARS WILL BE COMPLETING A RISK ASSESSMENT AHEAD OF RE-OPENING OUR GURDWARA SAHIB BUILDINGS.

We can now complete a risk assessment to help us prepare to re-open our buildings. Details of the risk assessment have been shown after this document.

ARE RELIGIOUS STAFF CONSIDERED KEY WORKERS?

Schools and childcare providers are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children, including those whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The Government has published a list of categories of workers whose children will be prioritised. It includes “religious staff” – such as Gurdwara Priests whose work is critical to the coronavirus response.

All parents are being asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and schools are remaining open only for those children who **absolutely need to attend**.

WHAT ADVICE IS AVAILABLE IF DOMESTIC ABUSE IS SUSPECTED?

Domestic abuse may affect anyone at any time, but the isolation resulting from COVID-19 is particularly affecting victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

For more information please see the Government advice on safeguarding matters during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have seen people's day-to-day lives drastically altered. These changes are essential to beat coronavirus and protect our NHS.

The government acknowledges that the order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. There is never an excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what the circumstances are.

For anyone who feels they are at risk of abuse, it is important to remember that there is help and support available to you, including police response, online support, helplines, refuges and other services. You are not alone.

The household isolation instruction as a result of coronavirus does not apply if you need to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.

Friends, family, neighbours and community members can be a vital lifeline to those living with domestic abuse. If you are worried that someone you know may be a victim of domestic abuse, reassure them that the police and support services are still there to help and direct them to sources of support.

The government supports and funds several charities that can provide advice and guidance and we are in regular contact with the charity sector and the police to ensure that these support services remain open during this challenging time.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include, but is not limited to:

- coercive control and 'gaslighting'
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

What signs to look for

If you believe that you or someone else could be a victim of domestic abuse, there are signs that you can look out for including:

- being withdrawn
- having bruises
- controlling finances
- not being allowed to leave the house
- monitoring technology use such as social media platforms

Where to get help

If you believe you are being abused, or worried you may commit domestic abuse, please use the services on this page.

If you suspect that your neighbours or those in your community are victims of domestic abuse, we encourage you to report it to the police.

Call 999

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police - the police will continue to respond to emergency calls.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, dial 999, listen to the questions from the operator and respond by coughing or tapping the handset if you can. Then follow the instructions depending on whether you are calling from a mobile or a landline.

If you call from a mobile

If prompted, press 55 to [Make Yourself Heard](#) - this will transfer your call to the police.

Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and does not allow police to track your location.

If you call 999 from a landline

If only background noise can be heard and BT operators cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, then you will be connected to a police call handler.

If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick up again.

When 999 calls are made from landlines, information about your location should be automatically available to the call handlers to help provide a response.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#), which you can call for free, and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which you can book a safe time for a call from the team.

[Refuge's](#) website includes a range of resources on identifying the signs of domestic abuse, and a safety guide for women and children who are living with a perpetrator. It also features a tech abuse chat-bot with step-by-step instructional videos on how to secure devices such as phones and laptops. Look for the pink button in the bottom-right corner.

Women's Aid

[Women's Aid](#) has a range of direct services for survivors, including a live chat service and an online Survivors' Forum. They have developed additional advice specifically designed for the current coronavirus outbreak. You can also find your [local domestic abuse service](#) on their website. They also provide

information on the support helplines available in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Men's Advice Line

The [Men's Advice Line](#) is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them.

Telephone: 0808 801 0327

Galop - for members of the LGBT+ community

[Galop](#) runs the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse specialist helpline.

Telephone: 0800 999 5428

Email: help@galop.org.uk

Hestia

[Hestia](#) provides a free mobile app, Bright Sky, which provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

Chayn

[Chayn](#) provides online help and resources in a number of languages about identifying manipulative situations and how friends can support those being abused.

Sexual assault referral centres

[Sexual assault referral centres](#) continue to provide non-judgmental advice and support services to victims and survivors of sexual assault or abuse.

Interviews, forensic examinations and sexual health and counselling services are offered in a comfortable environment where staff will ensure that victims and survivors will be managed safely to comply with coronavirus guidance. Please call your local sexual assault referral centre to arrange care and support, which may be provided in person or remotely depending on your needs.

‘Honour’-based abuse

If you are suffering abuse from your family or community because they say that you have compromised their ‘honour’, or if they are trying to force you into marriage, you can get help. Karma Nirvana runs the national honour-based abuse helpline.

Telephone: 0800 5999 247

Email: support@karmanirvana.org.uk

BME specialist services

Imkaan

[Imkaan](#) is a women’s organisation addressing violence against black and minority women and girls.

Southall Black Sisters

[Southall Black Sisters](#) offer specialist support, advocacy and information to Asian and Afro-Caribbean women suffering abuse.

Disability specialist services

These services are run by deaf and/or disabled people.

Stay Safe East

[Stay Safe East](#) provides specialist and holistic advocacy and support services to disabled victims and survivors of abuse.

SignHealth

[SignHealth](#) provides domestic abuse service support for deaf people in British Sign Language (BSL).

WhatsApp or Facetime: 07970 350366

Telephone: 020 3947 2601

Email: da@signhealth.org.uk

Economic abuse

If you are concerned about how coronavirus may affect your finances and leave you vulnerable to economic abuse, please see the [advice provided by HM Treasury](#) on what support is on offer.

The charity [Surviving Economic Abuse](#) has also provided additional guidance and support.

Welfare benefits and housing advice

The Department for Work and Pensions has published up-to-date [coronavirus-related welfare benefits information](#).

If you are concerned about your financial situation, you can contact [Turn2us](#). They help people to access the money available to them through welfare benefits and grants. Their website has an income-related benefits checker enabling you to check that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

[Shelter](#) provide free confidential housing information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues. They also have an emergency helpline.

Support for children and young people

Witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious impact on a child's long-term health. It is a top priority that vulnerable children and young people remain safe during this uncertain period. If you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm, you should refer this information to children's social care or to the police if you believe the child is in immediate danger.

NSPCC

The [NSPCC](#) has issued guidance for spotting and reporting the signs of abuse on their website.

The [NSPCC Helpline](#) is available for anyone with concerns about a child to contact for professional advice and support.

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline

[Childline](#) is available for children and young people to reach out for help and support by phone or using their online chat service. They also provide specific guidance for young people on how to get help and what to do if they are worried about a friend.

Telephone: 0800 1111

Barnardo's

[Barnardo's](#) provides support to families affected by domestic abuse.

Family Lives

[Family Lives](#) also provide support through online forums.

Information on child contact arrangements

[Rights of Women](#) provides guidance about child contact arrangements relating to coronavirus.

Ramgarhia Wellbeing Sevadar,

for general wellbeing advice & pharmacy advice, signposting to NHS:

R S Bancel 07971141666

Support for employers

If you are an employer, it is important that you signal to your entire workforce that if they are facing domestic abuse you want to help them to get help. Keep in regular contact with employees you know, or fear, may be facing abuse and if you lose contact with them, take swift action to visit them. If you believe there is an immediate risk of harm to someone, or it is an emergency, you should always call 999.

Encourage employees to look out for others who may be facing domestic abuse and signpost them to support. Your staff may also be worried about their own abusive behaviour at this time. There is no excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what stresses you are under and support is available.

The [Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) website has a range of resources to support employers. Business in the Community also have a [toolkit with information for employers](#).

Support for professionals

[SafeLives](#) is providing guidance and support to professionals and those working in the domestic abuse sector, as well as additional advice for those at risk.

Support if you are worried about hurting someone

If you are worried about hurting the ones you love while staying at home, call the [Respect Phonenumber](#) for support and help to manage your behaviour. This is an anonymous and confidential helpline for men and women who are harming their partners and families. It takes calls from partners or ex-partners, friends, and relatives who are concerned about perpetrators.

Telephone: 0808 802 4040

More information

For more advice and guidance on domestic abuse, please see [Domestic abuse: how to get help](#).

SHOULD WE STILL DELIVER PRINTED COMMUNICATION?

Coronavirus COVID-19 may live on paper and cardboard surfaces for up to 24 hours, and so any paper delivery represents a transmission risk. For this reason, the Sangat Ji is encouraged to look to digital communication, and telephone calls to keep in touch.

For this reason we are asking the Sangat Ji, to email us their email addresses to replace the postal list, during Covid 19.

Send the following information to Gurdwara Sahib Email address;

(by sending this email, you are agreeing to share your personal details with the gurdwara sahib, and allowing for them to store this data also).

Email: rst.coventry@gmail.com

Name, address, telephone number home and mobile, Email address.

Once this is complete, the management will begin to send communication safely without risk, by email. For those who do not have an email address, we are asking them to give the agreed details for one of their relatives where they can get access. Failing this, a letter can be collected from the office.

Prayer and worship

CAN OUR GURDWARA SAHIB OPEN FOR INDIVIDUAL AND PRIVATE PRAYER?

From 15 June 2020, the Government has allowed access to places of worship for private and individual prayer.

In preparation for this, we are completing a risk assessment...and see our guidance on opening for private and individual prayer.

We recognise that for all kinds of specific reasons to do with both people and buildings a particular local gurdwaras may or may not be able to open at the same time as others and collaborative working between local gurdwaras is being encouraged.

General questions:

What can we offer when the Gurdwara Sahib opens for individual prayer by members of the public?

It is anticipated that only individual prayer will be allowed when the Gurdwara Sahib is open to the public. No public worship, should take place whilst the building is open to visitors.

What should we do in terms of reminding people about hygiene and social distancing?

We will be putting notices on the door reminding people about hygiene and physical distancing measures, including stressing the critical importance of using the hand sanitizer both going in and going out of the Gurdwara building.

Supplies of hand sanitizer will be available in the main door (or water, soap and paper towels by sink areas). We have considered what can be done in terms of standing space and seating to enable physical distancing. For instance by marking places where people can stand and sit in the case of the elderly.

What about cleaning the Gurdwara Sahib?

The Gurdwara Sahib will be cleaned regularly in line with the guidance note on keeping the Gurdwara building clean.

We will assess how regularly this is done, by the likely numbers of people using the Gurdwara Sahib. We will cordon off parts of the Gurdwara Sahib to limit the area to clean.

Does the Gurdwara Sahib have to be open all the time and do all Gurdwara Sahibs have to open?

No, this will be a local decision based on the local situation. There is no requirement to open all Gurdwara Sahib, or to open any Gurdwara Sahibs all the time..

What about lighting candles? The lighting of candles with reusable lighters or similar should not be encouraged, but if they can be lit safely in another way this can be an aid to prayer.

Issues of safety must be considered and leaving candles available is only recommended if the Gurdwara Sahib is being supervised.

Should we leave our toilets open?

We will be leaving our toilets open but we will also be consider cleaning arrangements accordingly.

Before re-opening Gurdwara Sahib for prayer/streaming in our Buildings

- We will ensure that the building interior is appropriately cleaned
- Air the building to minimise mould spores etc.
- Run all the taps (to minimise the risk of legionella) and flush and clean toilets. Run the water from all taps and other hot and cold water-outlets for at least five minutes to ensure the water system has been thoroughly flush through. If you have any concerns seek appropriate professional help/advice
- Consider checking general maintenance items such as Electrical Systems; Emergency Lighting and other lighting; Fire Alarm Systems; Heating Systems; Oil Supply; fridges; Security Monitoring and Access Systems; water systems and toilets

Each time the Building is used

- The hall 1 building will be available only for access at present. The areas that are touched often (doorknobs, light switches etc.) will have been thoroughly cleaned between use
- Each person should bring their own prayer books, for any order of service and take them home with them
- We will make sure hand-sanitizer is available at the entrance door and that everyone cleans their hands upon arrival
- If toilets or washing facilities are available, make sure that there are disposable paper towels, and that there is plenty of liquid soap
- If services are being streamed, the filming should be done either with a fixed camera or by a member of the priest's or lay minister's household
- Lock the building after use
- The advice above also applies if others need to enter the building, for example, workers to undertake necessary maintenance

On an ongoing basis

- Run taps and flush toilets
- Perform a general clean of the building interior paying particular attention to those bits of the building that are touched often (doorknobs, light switches etc.). These areas should be cleaned on a regular and frequent basis, for which a cleaning rota is being designated.

CAN FUNERALS STILL GO AHEAD?

The government has advised that from 15th June funerals may be carried out in Gurdwara buildings.

Please see our guidance on funerals in Gurdwara buildings for more information below.

We recognise how difficult this time is for anyone who has lost a loved one. You may wish to discuss with your vicar or minister the possibility of a memorial service at a date in the future where more people can be present.

COVID-19 Advice for Conducting Funerals

Pastoral Introduction

Funerals present one of the most urgent, difficult and often cruellest tensions that exist between the realities of human need and the demands that must be met if the current COVID-19 outbreak is to be brought under control.

When a loved one dies, our natural human desire is to be surrounded by others in order to experience their comfort and support through presence, touch, prayer and a common acknowledgement of grief and loss.

It is also known that during the current outbreak of COVID19, the very gatherings and contact desired by those who grieve are precisely what must be avoided, or at the very least restricted, if transmission of the virus is to be brought under control. This tension may not be readily acknowledged by those suffering from the bewilderment, pain and agony of grief. The challenge for those leading funerals is with gentleness and compassion to enable those who mourn to find ways though the realities of the current situation that acknowledges both their needs as people who grieve and the needs of the whole community to bring COVID-19 under control. This poses a phenomenal challenge for those charged with taking funerals.

Where possible, the expectations and needs of those who mourn should be satisfied, while at the same time holding in place the good practice needed to enable the safety of the whole community at this time.

This advice follows government guidance which is constantly evolving. Therefore please be aware on reading what is set out below that it may be updated.

Things to think about before the service....

How many people can attend?

Currently we are restricting this to 16 sangat members.

Therefore subject to government advice and direction the number of people attending funerals in a Gurdwara Building will depend on two factors:

- the space available so a safe distance of at least 2 metres (6ft or 3 steps) can be maintained between households at all times during the service, including entering and leaving the building.

Please note the Crematorium will have their own criteria, as to the maximum number of people allowed to attend the funeral. The bereaved will be advised to consult the funeral directors for this confirmation.

Alongside the member of Gurdwara Committee and clergy, Funeral Director and staff, the government has stated that only the following should attend:

- Members of the person's household
- close family members
- Or if the above are unable to attend, close friends.

What if no family or friends can attend?

Where family relatives or friends are unable to attend a funeral service, the gurdwara priest can still take a funeral even if those present are limited to the gurdwara priest and funeral directors.

What about those who may be personally self-isolating or have symptoms?

Sadly, anyone who is showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste and smell) should not attend the funeral due to the risk that they pose to others; remote participation should be considered, for example live streaming. Failing this, a recording could be made which can be sent to anyone unable to attend after the service. Where no audio link can be achieved, officiants may be able to provide an order of service, either by email or post.

We will be asking the bereaved to consider whether a memorial service could be held at some point in the future, which is an opportunity for more people to come together once Government guidance permits.

Managing the Gurdwara Sahib's hygiene precautions?

Hand sanitizers will be signposted, readily available and easily accessible. We will provide notices advising people of correct hygiene practices. We will ask the bereaved to consider the flow of groups in and out of the gurdwara sahib, to minimise any risk of compromising physical distancing, avoiding overlap between different groups while also leaving time for adequate cleaning.

The premises will be well ventilated, by opening windows and doors where possible.

What about cleaning the Gurdwara Sahib?

We will ensure that processes are in place to allow a suitable time to appropriately clean the area in which the service has taken place both before and after each service, paying attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, using regular cleaning products.

What about mourners who are self-isolating due to a possible case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their household?

Key mourners of the deceased person may include those who are self-isolating due to another member of the household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). Where the funeral is scheduled before the period of household isolation has been completed (14 days from the first person in that household showing symptoms) mourners who are self-isolating should be facilitated to attend.

Mourners who are from a household that is self-isolating should:

- Not attend if they have any symptoms of any kind, even if these are very mild
- maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between themselves and others
- advise the other mourners that they are otherwise self-isolating at home, and communicate that their presence means that others who are extremely clinically vulnerable should not attend
- practise careful hand and respiratory hygiene:

Washing their hands more often - with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds or by using a hand sanitizer.

Avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, as well as covering their coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin which should be clearly sign-posted and readily accessible.

- Mourners who are from a household that is self-isolating are advised to use their own transport where possible.

What about mourners who are extremely clinically vulnerable?

Mourners who are in an extremely clinically vulnerable group should be facilitated to attend, should they decide to do so. People who are clinically extremely vulnerable should have received a letter telling them they are in this group or been told by their GP. Mourners who are in an extremely clinically vulnerable group have been advised that they should minimise their contact with others for their personal protection.

However, they may decide to attend a funeral despite the additional risk this poses to them and should be facilitated to do so. They are not advised to attend a funeral if there are others attending

who are self-isolating due to another member of the household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, as they could be incubating disease.

Mourners who are extremely clinically vulnerable should follow the general social distancing advice for the clinically vulnerable mourners and should maintain a distance of 2 metres away from others as a minimum.

Actions to reduce their risk of infection could include:

- advising other attendees that there is an extremely clinically vulnerable person attending and reiterating the need to stay at home if they are unwell, and to be respectful of the vulnerable person's need to avoid close contact at any point
- advising the mourner to travel to the venue via the safest route possible, preferably in a car by themselves, or with someone from their household
- considering the additional risk involved if attending the funeral requires travelling by public transport
- ensuring that mourners who are in a clinically vulnerable group do not attend the same ceremony as mourners who are in household isolation

During the Service Can we have singing?

Hymns and singing are not advised as this may encourage droplet and aerosol spread.

Recorded music should be encouraged as the next best option.

Can we shake hands; can I touch the bereaved as a gesture of comfort?

While it is contrary to human instinct and normal pastoral practice, it is important to advise mourners that there should be no physical contact including shaking hands, hugging or outside their own households.

CAN WEDDINGS STILL GO AHEAD?

Currently there can be no weddings in gurdwara buildings until further notice.

Please note this is currently for planning purposes only and could be subject to change.

It is not currently possible under English law for a wedding to take place using video conferencing technology without the couple, priest and witnesses being physically present.

Guidance on mental health and wellbeing

Guidance on mental health and wellbeing and Coronavirus Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current Coronavirus (Covid 19), can be scary and can affect our mental health.

This is true within the Gurdwara context. However often we think that our faith should get us through alone. But the reality is, we are all human and subject to both physical and mental ill health. This is true of congregations and of their priests. It is easy to be so busy looking after others' needs that we forget our own!

This guidance aims to help us all to be aware of our mental health and wellbeing and the need to try to stay both physically and mentally well at this time.

Here are some tips based on ones the Mental Health Foundation has produced that will help clergy, pastoral teams, and other members of the Gurdwara and community to look after your mental health at a time when there is much discussion of potential threats to our physical health.

Try to avoid speculation and look up reputable sources on the outbreak

- Rumour and speculation can fuel anxiety. Having access to good quality information about the virus can help you feel more in control.
- You can get up-to-date information and advice on the virus here: [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Alternatively, if you can't access the internet, ask a trusted friend to look for you. 2. Follow the Government advice on staying safe
- Follow hygiene advice such as washing your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds with soap and hot water (sing 'happy birthday' to yourself twice to make sure you do this for 20 seconds). You should do this whenever you get home or into work, blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food. If you can't wash your hands straightaway, use hand sanitiser and then wash them at the next opportunity.
- You should also use tissues if you sneeze and make sure you dispose of them quickly; and stay at home if you are feeling unwell.
- Follow appropriate advice on social distancing and self-isolation 3. Try to stay connected
- At times of stress, we work better in company and with support. Try and keep in touch with your friends and family or contact a helpline for emotional support.
- It is a good idea to stick to your daily routine. You may also like to focus on the things you can do if you feel able to: stress management keep active eat a balanced diet
- Stay in touch with friends on social media but try not to sensationalise things. If you are sharing content, use this from trusted sources, and remember that your friends might be worried too.
 - Talk to your children

- Involving our family and children in our plans for good health is essential. We need to be alert to and ask children what they have heard about the outbreak and support them, without causing them alarm.

- We need to minimise the negative impact it has on our children and explain the facts to them. Discuss the news with them but try and avoid over-exposure to coverage of the virus. Be as truthful as possible.

- Let's not avoid the 'scary topic' but engage in a way that is appropriate for them. We have more advice on talking with your children about world news. 5. Try to anticipate distress

- It is normal to feel vulnerable and overwhelmed as we read news about the outbreak, especially if you have experienced trauma or a mental health problem in the past, or if you have a long-term physical health condition that makes you more vulnerable to the effects of the coronavirus.

- It's important to acknowledge these feelings and remind each other to look after our physical and mental health. We should also be aware of and avoid increasing habits that may not be helpful in the long term, like smoking and drinking.

- Try and reassure people you know who may be worried and check in with people who you know are living alone.

6. Try not to make assumptions

- Don't judge people and avoid jumping to conclusions about who is responsible for the spread of the disease. The Coronavirus can affect anyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity or sex.

7. Try to manage how you follow the outbreak in the media

- There is extensive news coverage about the outbreak. If you find that the news is causing you huge stress, it's important to find a balance.

- It's best that you don't avoid all news and that you keep informing and educating yourself, but limit your news intake if it is bothering you.

8. How should people deal with being in self-isolation or in quarantine?

- If there's a chance you could have coronavirus, you may be asked to stay away from other people (self-isolate).

- For people that are in self-isolation or are in quarantine, this may seem like a daunting prospect. It will help to try and see it as a different period of time in your life, and not necessarily a bad one, even if you didn't choose it.

- It will mean a different rhythm of life, a chance to be in touch with others in different ways than usual. Be in touch with other people regularly on social media, e-mail or on the phone, as they are still good ways of being close to the people who matter to you.

- Create a daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself. You could try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, trying new relaxation techniques, or finding 3 new knowledge on the internet. Try and rest and view this as a new if unusual experience that might have its benefits.

- Make sure your wider health needs are being looked after such as having enough prescription medicines available to you. 9. Responding to those with mental illness issues

- Gurdwara Congregations often become aware of individuals who are experiencing mental ill health and who need specialist help and support. Ensure you have contact details for the relevant NHS mental health providers, the Samaritans and any other specialist local support services that may be relevant. Ensure those who are offering pastoral care are aware of not going beyond their remit and expertise in offering advice and support, and to recognise when to ask for help in dealing with an individual.

Looking after your spiritual health

- It is important to look after your spiritual health as well as your physical and mental health. This is as important for clergy as lay people in these challenging times, when the danger is to be so busy looking after everyone else's spiritual needs that we may forget our own.

Find ways to pray, read the Guru Granth Sahib, or Gutkas; talk to other Sikhs maybe by phone. Speak to you wellbeing officer who you can keep in touch and support you. Maybe you could buddy with someone as a prayer partner etc.

There are resources available on the Sikh.Net website for daily prayer and other spiritual support.

During this time, most of us need inspiration. Many of us may be in self-isolation to stop the spread, or in a self-quarantine due to the contraction of COVID-19. Regardless of your current circumstance, we would encourage you to become an explorer of Sikhi from the comfort of your own home:

- **Online Courses: Gurbani-focused**
 - <https://courses.sikhri.org/>
- **Resources: articles, research reports, and webinars**
 - <https://sikhri.org/resources>

We truly believe that you will find inspiration and the connection to sangat that will be most helpful at this time. We can continue to emotionally connect and be there for each other. Faith is not always a feeling. It can be a whisper, a flicker, a small step. Let's rise above the fear and feel ourselves broaden. We have it in us, we can do it with wisdom, love, and grace.

- You may find it helpful to memorise a verse or passage of scripture that you can use when you feel anxious, such as:

Chaupai sahib: Translation and Transliteration

Benti Chaupai:

Translation and Transliteration in English

PRAYER COMPOSED BY SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI

Ik ou(n)kar sri vaheguroo jee kee fateh. Paatshaahee dasvee kabiyobaach bentee.

chaupe-ee.

God is One, All victory is the victory of God. A hymn by the tenth Guru. To be read like a poem.

Hamree karo haath dai rachhaa. Pooran hoé chit kee ichhaa. Tav charnan man rehai
hamaaraa. Apnaa jaan karo prat(i)paaraa. (1)

Please guard us with Your Hands. All my heart's desires are fulfilled. My mind is focused on Your Feet.
Sustain us as Your Own. (1)

Hamré dustt sabhai tum ghaavho. aap haath dai mohé bachaavho. Sukhee basai moro
parvaaraa. sevak sikh sabhai kartaaraa.(2)

Destroy all my enemies*¹. With Your Hands protect me. In Bliss remains my household*², servants, sikh, O
Creator! (2)

Mo rachhaa nij kar dai kariyai. sabh bairan ko aaj sanghariyai. pooran hoé hamaari
aasaa. tor bhajan kee rahai piaasaa.(3)

Give me your personal protection. Restrain all my adversaries, Today. You've Fulfilled my Wishes. My
Thirst for Your Worship grows. (3)

Tumhé chhaad koe avar naa dhiyaao(n). jo bar chon so tum té paaoo(n). sevak sikh
hamarai taareeahé. chun chun satr hamaaré maareeahé. (4)

Leaving You, may I never worship another. All my needs, I get from You. You save my Sikhs & Devotees.
One-by-One you demolish my foes. (4)

Aap haath dai mujhai ubariyai. maran kaal ka traas nivariyai. hoojo sadaa hamaaré
pachhaa. siree asdhuj joo kariyo rachhaa. (5)

With your Hand guard me. destroy my fear of death. Always side with me. With your Sword protect me. (5)

Raakh laiho muhé raakhanharai. saahib sant sahaaé piyaaré. deen bandhu dusttan ké
hantaa. tumho puree chatur das kantaa.(6)

Save me, Dear Saviour. Beloved, Helper of Saints.O Merciful, Destroyer of tyrants. You are Lord of
fourteen worlds. (6)

Kaal paaé brahmaa bap dharaa. kaal paaé shivjoo avtaraa. kaal paaé kar bisan
prakaasaa. sakal kaal kaa keeaa tamaasaa. (7)

Time came, Brahma was born, then Shiva was incarnated and then Visnu, Arose. It's all Tricks of the
Temporal Lord. (7)

Javan kaal jogee siv kee'o. bedraaj brahmaa joo thee'o. javan kaal sabh lok savaaraa.
namaskaar hai taahé hamaaraa. (8)

Temporal Lord created Yogi Shiva; Brahma, the Utterer of Vedas. Temporal Lord, fashioned the entire
Universe. I salute Him alone. (8)

Javan kaal sabh jagat banaio. dev dait jachhan upjaayo. aad ant eikai avtaaraa. soee
guru samjhiyaho hamara. (9)

Creator of Time made the Universe; the angels, demons and yakshas. Start & End only with Him. He alone
is My Guru. (9)

Namaskaar tis hee ko hamaaree. sakal prijaa jin aap savaaree. sivkan ko sivgun sukh
dee'o. satran ko pal mo badh kee'o. (10)

I bow only to Him. Creator of all entities & subjects. Gives all merits & tranquillity to His devotees. Destroys enemies at once. (10)

Ghatt ghatt ké antar kee jaanat. bhale bure kee peer pachanat. cheetee té kunchar asthoolaa. sabh par kripaa dristt kar phoola. (11)

Intimate Knower of all our feelings. Recognises the anguish of all creatures, good or bad. From ant to elephant, He protects and cares for all.(11)

Santan dukh paae té dukhee. sukh paae saadhan ké sukhee. eik eik kee peer pachanai. ghatt ghatt ké patt patt kee janai. (12)

When His saints suffer, He is pained, and feels happiness when they are happy. Each one's pain he recognises. Everyone's, every feeling He Knows. (12)

Jab udkarakh karaa kartaaraa. prijaa dharat tab deh apaaraa. jab aakarkh karat ho kab'hoo(n). tum mai milat deh dhar sabh'hoo(n). (13)

When the Creator, projected Himself, His creations appeared in physical forms. Whenever, Creation is dissolved, all physical forms merge back into Him. (13)

Jaitai badan sristt sabh dhaara. aap aapnee boojh uchaara. tum sabh'hee té rehat niraalam. jaanat baid bhed ar aalam. (14)

created numerous forms and bodies. They utter Him as they can think, what He is. You remain detached from them all. This distinction the wise ones and the religious books know. (14)

*Nirankar nribekaar nirlambh. aad aneel anaad asambh. taa kaa moorr uchaarat bhedaa. jaa kau bhev naa paavat bedaa. (15)

Formless, Stainless and Self-reliant. Primal, Blemish-less, Endless and birth-less. Only a Fool can discuss your bound. Your Limits even the Vedas do not know. (15)

Taa kau kar paahan anumaanat. mahaa moorr kachh bhed naa jaanat. Mahaadev ko kehat sadaa siv. nirankaar kaa cheenat nehe bhiv. (16)

The fools consider Him a stone, for He does not know the Profound Mystery that is God. He calls Shiva, The Eternal Lord, and does not know the secret of the Formless Lord. (16)

Aap aapnee budh hai jete. barnat bhinn bhinn tuhé tete. tumraa lakhaa naa jaaé pasaaraa. keh bidh sajaa pratham sansaaraa. (17)

Every one according to his understanding, describes You differently. The limits of Your creation cannot be known, nor how in the beginning You created the Universes. (17)

Eikai roop anoop saroopaa. runk bhayo raav kehee bhoopaa. andaj jeraj setaj keenee. ut bhuj khaan bahor rach deenee. (18)

You are One, manifest in varied forms, as a poor man, rich manor, a king. You create beings that are egg born, the sweat born, earth born and the foetus born. (18)

Kahoo(n) phool raajaa havai baitaa. kahoo(n) simmatt bhayo sankar ehkaitaa. sagree sristt dikaaé achambhav. aad jugaad saroop suyambhav. (19)

Sometime You joyfully appear in the form of Brahma expanding the creation, and some time in the form of contracting and dissolving Shiva. He shows His miraculous deeds to all His creation of the Universe. He, the Primal Power, born of Himself is since the beginning of beginning. (19)

Ab rachhaa meree tum karo. sikh ubaar asikh sangharo. dustt jite utvat utpaataa. sakal

malechh karo rann ghaataa. (20)

O Lord, now keep me under Your protection, encourage my followers to flourish [in intellect and wisdom] and destroy my enemies (negative thinking). All the evil doers who arise (in my mind), fight with them and destroy them there and then. (20)

Jé asdhuj tav sarnee paré. tin ké dushtt dukhit havai maré. purakh javan pug paré tihaaré. tin ké tum sankatt sabh taaré. (21)

O Mighty Lord of the Sword (Knowledge)+, whosoever seeks Your protection, his enemies (evil passions) suffer, pain are destroyed. The persons, who fall on Your Feet, You remove all their afflictions and maladies. (21)

Jo kal ko eik baar dhiyai hai. Taa ké kaal nikatt nehé aihai. Rachhaa hoé taahé sabh kaalaa. dustt aristt taré(n) tatkaalaa. (22)

Those who meditate even once (with complete devotion) on You, the Supreme Destroyer, the Death cannot come near them. They remain protected at all times. All their enemies and sorrows are removed instantaneously. (22)

Kripaa dristt tan jaahé nihariho. Taa ké taap tanak mo hareho. Ridh sidh ghar mo sabh hoee. Dushtt chhaah chhavai sakai naa koee. (23)

With your blessing & compassion, Bliss is obtained. All their Sins are removed. They are blessed with all the earthly and spiritual treasures, and no evil doer [deadly passions and sickly instinctual drives] can even touch their shadows. (23)

Eik baar jin tumai sambhaaraa. Kaal phaas té taahé ubaaraaa. Jin nar naam tihaaro kahaa. Daarid dustt dok té rahaa. (24)

If once they remember You. You remove the noose of Death. Whosoever meditates on Your Name. They are spared Poverty, suffering and adversity. (24)

Kharag kait mai sarann tihaaree. Aap haath dai leho ubaaree. Sarab thor mo hoho sahaaee. Dustt dokh té leho bachaaee. (25)

O The Lord of Sword, I seek Your protection. With Your Hands you have guarded me. At All Times be my Support. Save me from wickedness and pain. (25).

Kripaa karee ham per jag mata. Granth karaa puran subh raataa. kilbikh sagal deh ko hartaa. Dustt dokhiyan ko chhai kartaa. (26)

The Mother of the world has been kind towards me and I have completed the book this auspicious night; The Lord is the destroyer of all the sins of the body and all the malicious and wicked persons.402.

Siree asDhuj jab bhae dayiaalaa. Pooran karaa granth tatkaalaa. Man baa(n)chhat phal paavai soee. Dookh na tisai biaapat koee. (27)

When Mahakal became kind, He immediately caused me to complete this book; He will obtain the fruit desired by the mind (who will read or listen to this book) and no suffering will occur to him.403.

ARRIL

Sunai gung jo yaahe so rasnaa paavaee. Sunai moorr chit laaé chaturtaa aavaee. Dukh darad bhau nikatt naa tin nar ké rahai. Ho jo yaakee eik baar chaupe-ee ko kahé. (28)

The dumb, who will listen to it, will be blessed with the tongue to speak; the fool, who will listen to it attentively, will get wisdom; The suffering, pain and fear of the person will depart who recite Chaupai even once.(28)

CHAUPAI

Sambat satrh sahis bheNije. ardh sahis phun teen kaheje. Bhadrav sudee ashtmee
ravivaraa. Teer sat-drav granth sudaahraa. (29)

It was Bikrami Samvat 1753; This book was completed on the banks of Sutlej on Sunday, the eighth Sudi of
the month of Bhaadro.

SVAIYAA

Paa(n)e gahe jab té tumré tab té ko'oo aa(n)kh taré nehee aanyo. Ram rahim Puran
Quran anak kahai mat eek na maneyo. Simrat shaastr badh sabh bohu bhedh kahai
ham eik na janyo. Siree asipaam kripaa tumree kar(i), mai na kahyo sabh tohé
bakhaanyo. (30)

O God ! Since I have held your feet, none other has entered my vision; Ram, Rahim, Puranas, Quran and
many others recite, but I don't believe in even one. The Simritis, Shastras and Vedas describe many
mysteries, but I don't recognise even one of them; O Sword-wielder God! All this I write, with your
blessings, is not what I know but what you have shown me.

DOHRAA

Sagal duaar kau chhaad kai, gahe'o tuhaaro duaar. Baa(n)he gahe kee laaj as Gobind
daas tuhaar.

O Lord ! I have forsaken all other doors and chosen your door. O Govind, you have taken my arm; cared
and protect your servant's honour.⁸⁶⁴

Footnotes

- ¹ diseased passions, instincts, impulses, evil thoughts, etc.
- ² mind
- ³ Intellect and varied other organs