

Meaning-making towards positive well-being

To the Editor,

In a recent article published in this journal, it was noted that the pandemic has caused stress and illness among people.^[1] The global health crisis has continued to facilitate even more suffering, leading to greater inequalities between the rich and the poor. Aware of the detrimental effects of stress caused by COVID-19, this paper proposes ways through which the most vulnerable societies can cope with stress and maintain their well-being to avoid further accumulating illnesses.

Victor Frankl advocated “logotherapy” as a way to heal the soul.^[2] By cultivating the ability to find meaning in life even in the face of hardship and suffering, people are better able to cope with difficult situations. Deliberate meaning-making and reflecting upon the purpose of life can help facilitate mental health and positive well-being for some poor people,^[3] especially as immediate and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines is becoming increasingly difficult.

A sense of meaning can be found even under the direst of circumstances. Frankl suggested that humans are driven by a deep desire to find meaning in life, which he called the “will to meaning.” Three distinct ways of finding meaning in life are described by Frankl’s logotherapy: 1) by doing good deeds, 2) by having meaningful encounters with others, and 3) by keeping a positive attitude despite difficulties.^[2] Table 1 illustrates these distinct ways are evident in societies.

Although the pandemic poses a significant threat to human life, vulnerable societies can find ways to overcome the challenges and transform themselves into more positive environments. This can be done by motivating oneself to do a higher purpose, find meaning, and virtues in life.^[5] The ability to cope and live a meaningful life is enhanced by reaching out to others and having a positive attitude. Therefore, creating meaning in the COVID-19 health crisis is absolutely crucial for creating hope and inspiring people to rise up to make a difference.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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Table 1: Meaning-making and concrete experiences

Distinct ways	Societal experiences ^[4]
Doing good deeds	Outbreak of generosity; Cooking for medical professionals; Institutions offering themselves as a safe haven for front-liners.
Meaningful encounters	Tackling misinformation on Covid-19 among community members; Accompanying the most vulnerable members of the society.
Positive attitude	Coordinating awareness initiatives with local authorities; Supporting members of the community.

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