



## INDIA CARES 2021 ORATION



# Prioritizing Children's Mental Health in the Backdrop of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The lessons I draw from my leadership experience,  
expertise in psychiatry and interactions with children



Oration by Dr. Bhoomikumar Jagannathan  
Director, Center for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Cambodia

# *India Cares-2021*

- A journey in search...
- Children, Young people's Mental Health (CYPMH) & COVID-19
- CYPMH, Pandemic & India
- Roots & innovative solutions
- Young people as vanguards...



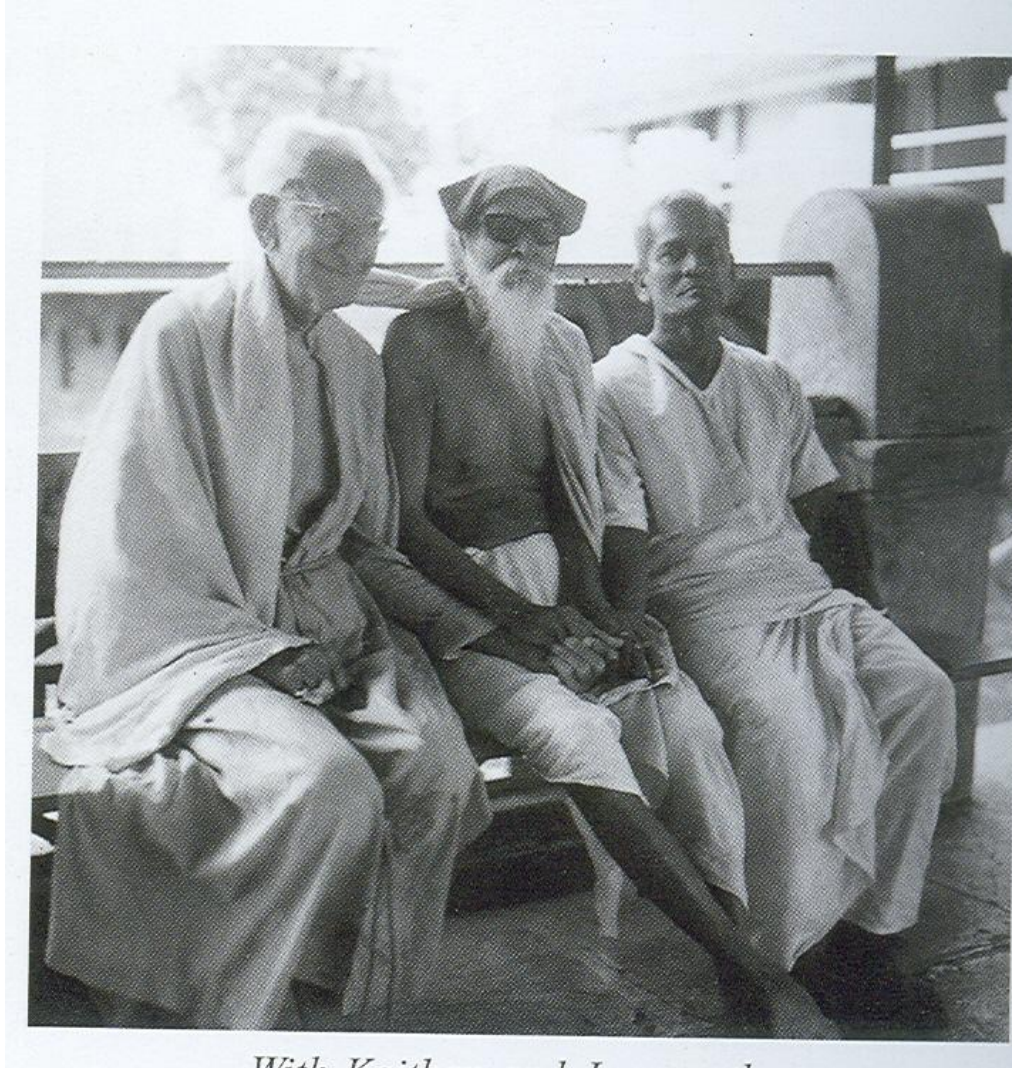


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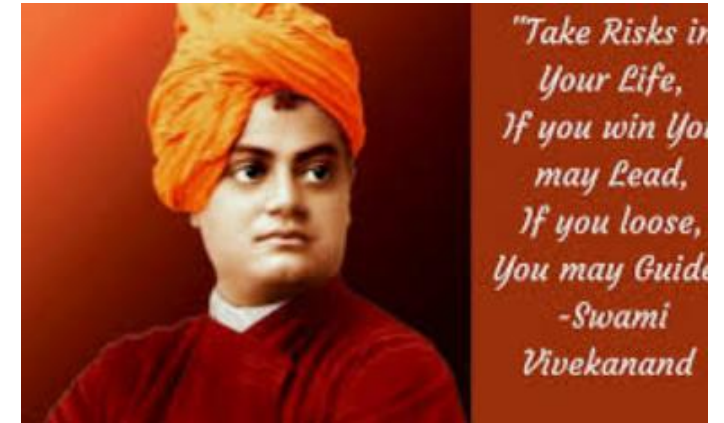
# The three unique early childhood influences



**RR Keithan, Vinoba, Jegannathan**



# RKMV School, A Transformative experience



***A temple where children unfold***





- ‘Medical Nemesis’ -Ivan Illich

## Three books

- ‘Sword and the scalpel’  
– Dr. Kotnis



*India Cares*



- Life and writings of  
Albert Schweitzer

# CAMHS-system development in Cambodia, post-conflict-setting



*Killing fields*



*Inauguration of comprehensive services  
Built with the support of IBSA Trust Fund (India Cares)*



*Guardian Deity  
'Ta Khmau'*



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# Children, young people, vulnerability for COVID-19\*

*The nature and extent of the impact depend on several vulnerability factors:*

- the developmental age, educational status, pre-existing mental health condition, being economically underprivileged or being quarantined due to infection /fear of infection.
- Young children show clinginess, disturbed sleep, nightmares, poor appetite, inattentiveness, and separation problems.

*\*Singh, S et al. (2020). Impact of COVID-19...on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations. Psychiatry research, 293, 113429.*

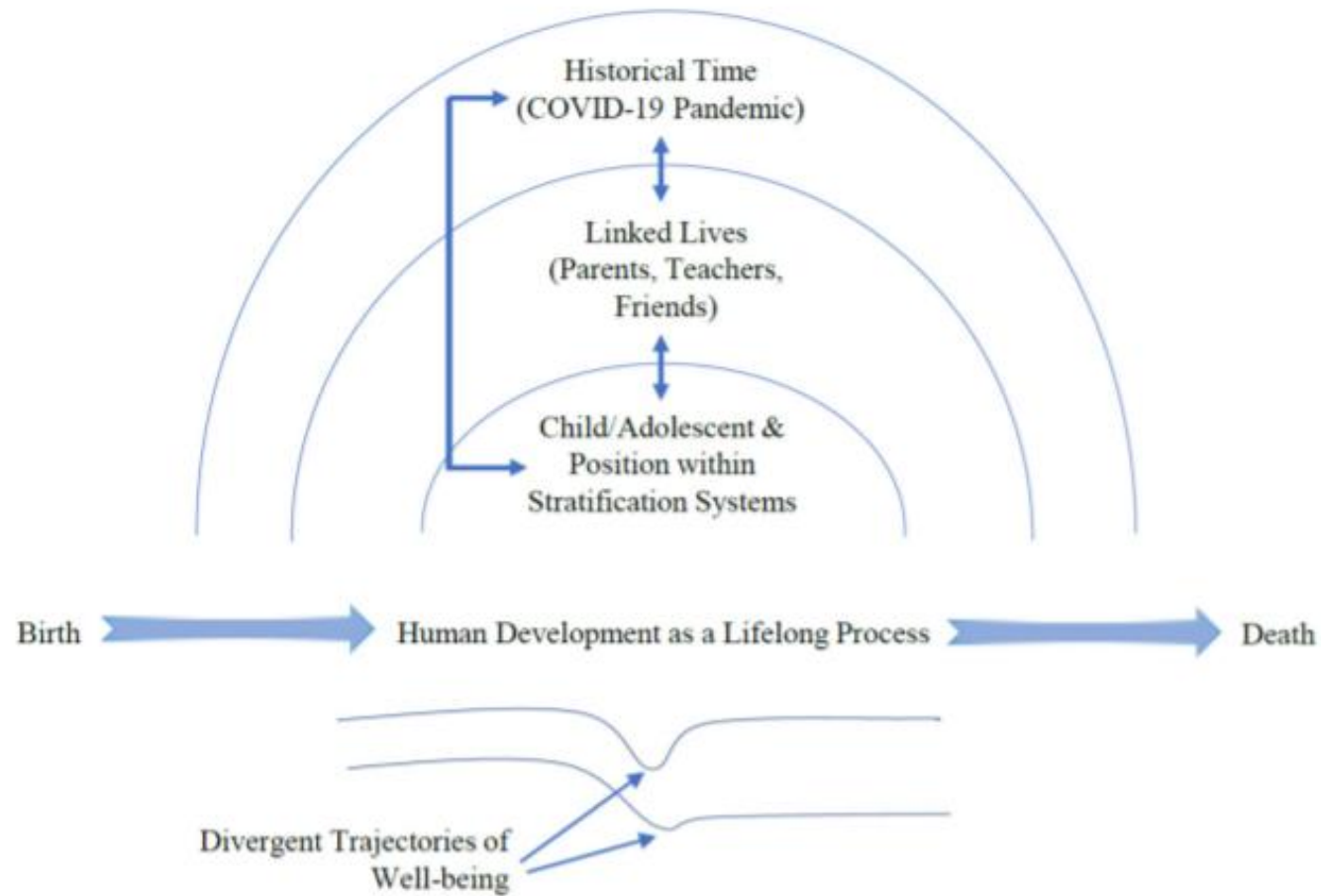
## C&YP are more vulnerable than adults during the pandemic\*

- Immature cognitive and emotional regulation systems
- Tend to show more negative psychological outcomes
- Anxiety, -18% in adults, 22% in Children & Adolescents in China

*\*Li, S et al. (2020). Investigation on the influencing factors for anxiety ...disorders of C & A with home quarantine .... Chinese Journal of Child Health Care, 28, 407– 410*

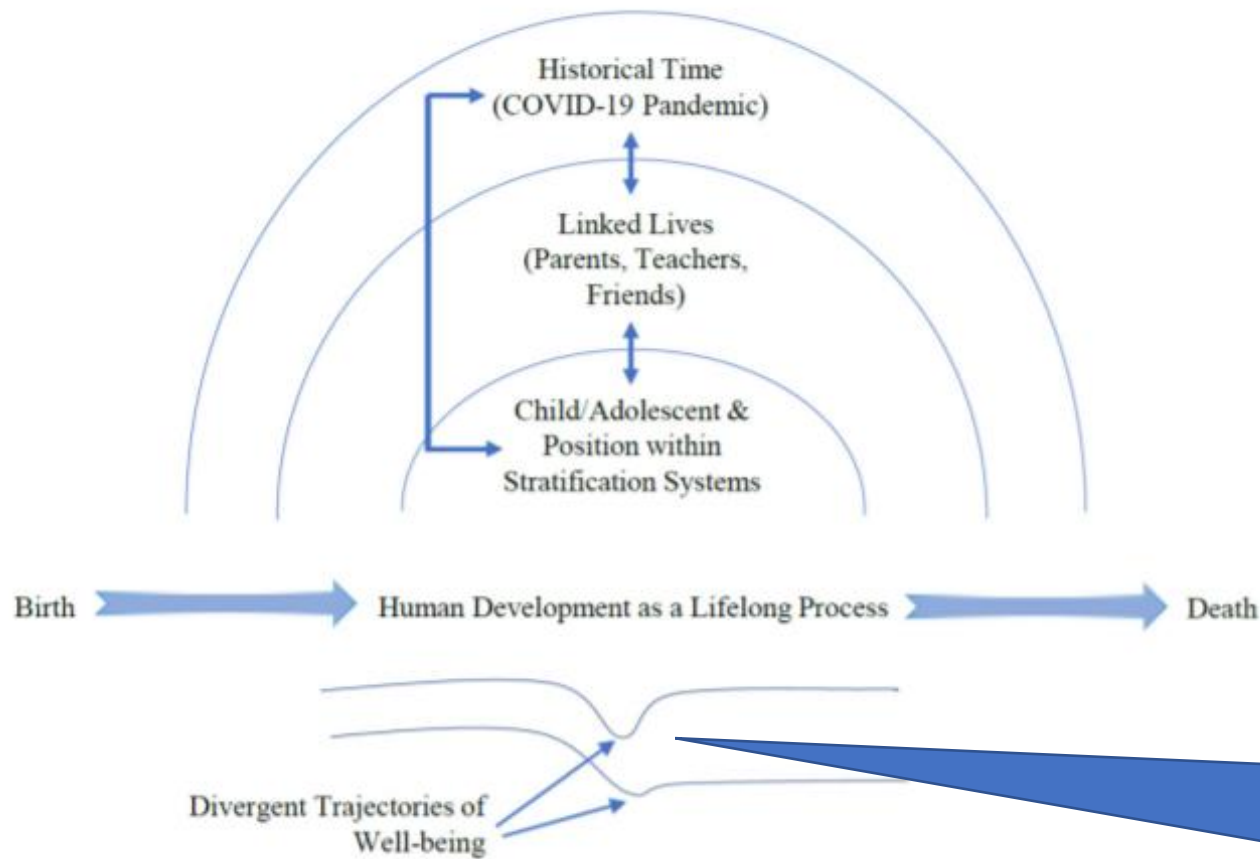


# Life-course theory and COVID-19



*Benner, A. D., & Mistry, R. S. (2020). Child Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic Through a Life Course Theory Lens. Child development perspectives, 14(4), 236–243.*

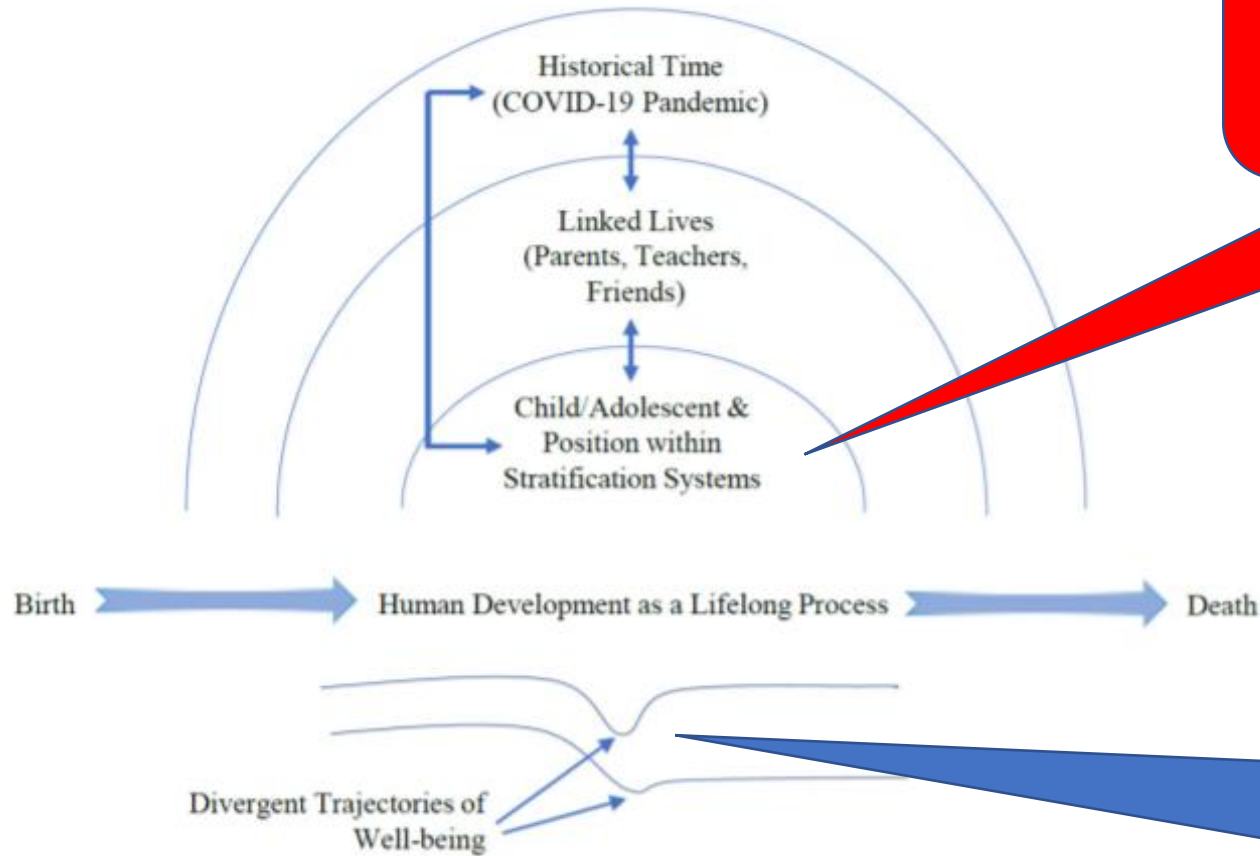
# Life-course theory and COVID-19



Dip or just a Blip  
Lost opportunity  
Stress, Trauma



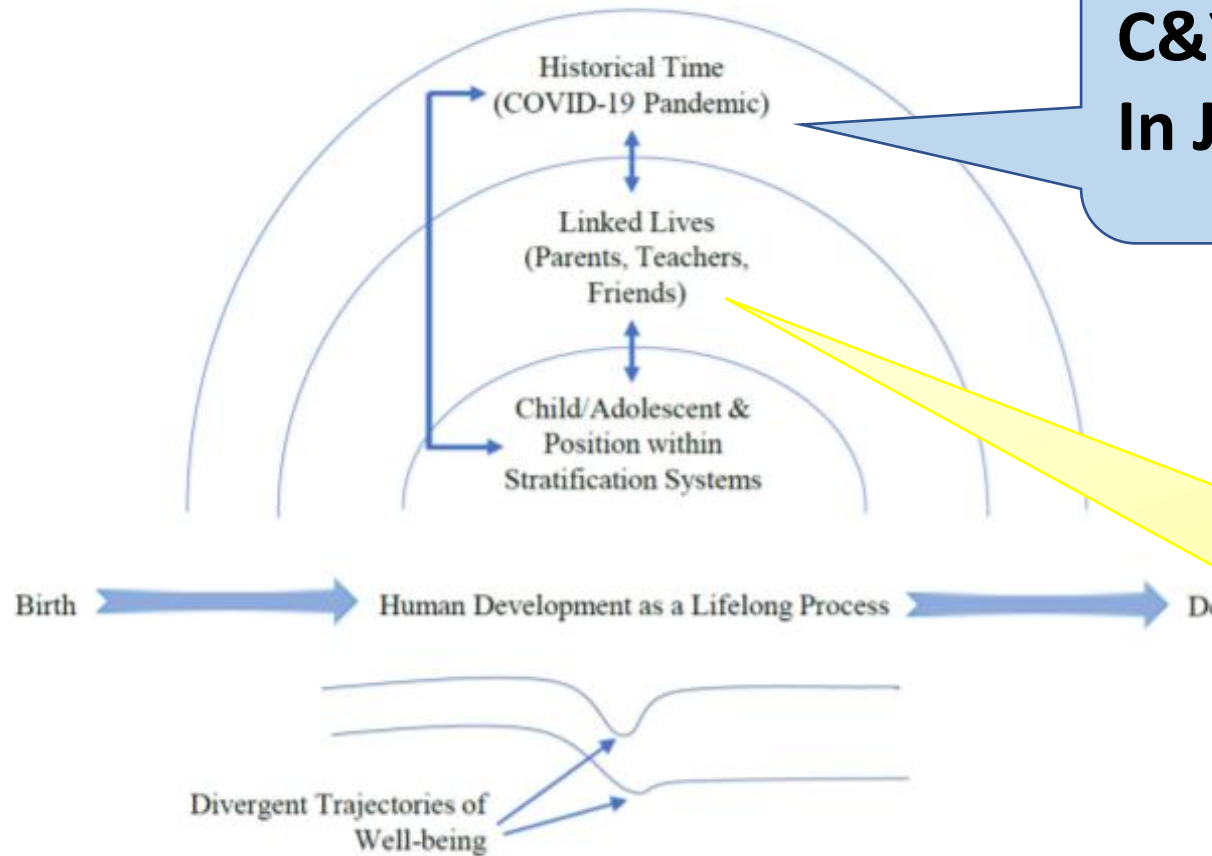
# Life-course theory and COVID-19



Social-strata, where the C & YP are embedded in

Dip, just a Blip  
Lost opportunity  
Stress, Trauma

# Life-course theory and COVID-19



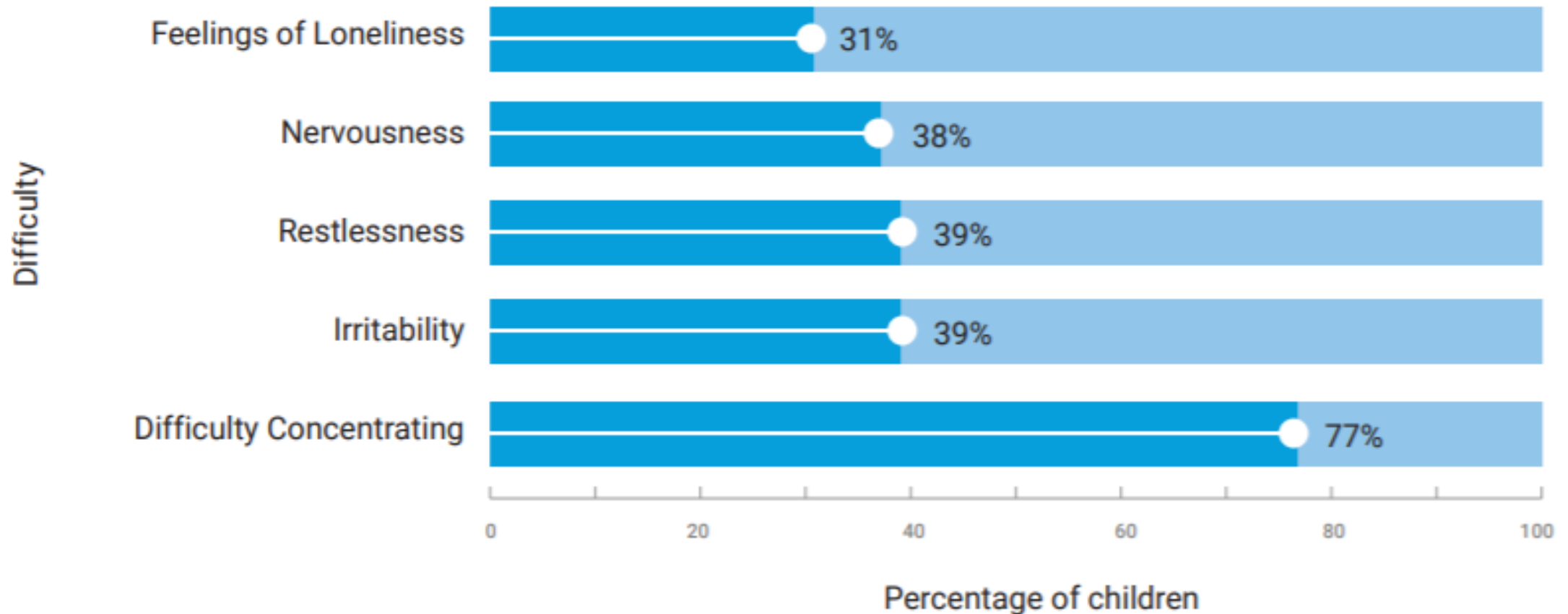
**C&YP in times of John Snow/  
In Jocenda Arden's**

**Loss of play/safe space  
Missed parent-teacher link  
Lack of peer-interaction**



# Children's difficulties during COVID-19

Parents' reports of children's difficulties during COVID-19 confinement (Italy and Spain)

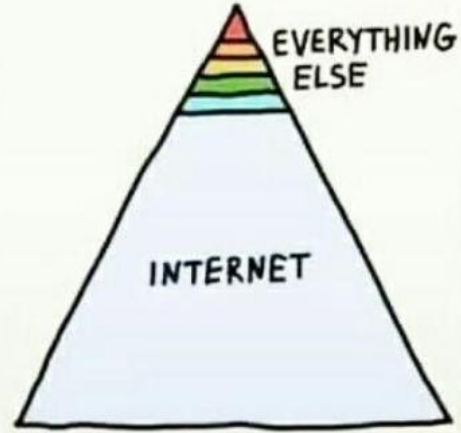


# human needs

BEFORE COVID



AFTER COVID



Irina Blok



# Internet Addiction and Related Psychological Factors Among Children and Adolescents in China During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Epidemic

Huixi Dong<sup>1\*</sup>, Fangru Yang<sup>1</sup>, Xiaozi Lu<sup>2</sup> and Wei Hao<sup>3</sup>

- 2.68% addictive Internet user, 33.37% problematic Internet users
- Internet usage grown during the COVID-19 epidemic (both frequency, duration and stay-up Internet)
- Female\*, age, depression, and stress, were correlated with the IA

*\*14 years, girl, cultural divide from parents, sleep disturbance, grades went down...*



# The impact of COVID-19 and childhood obesity\*

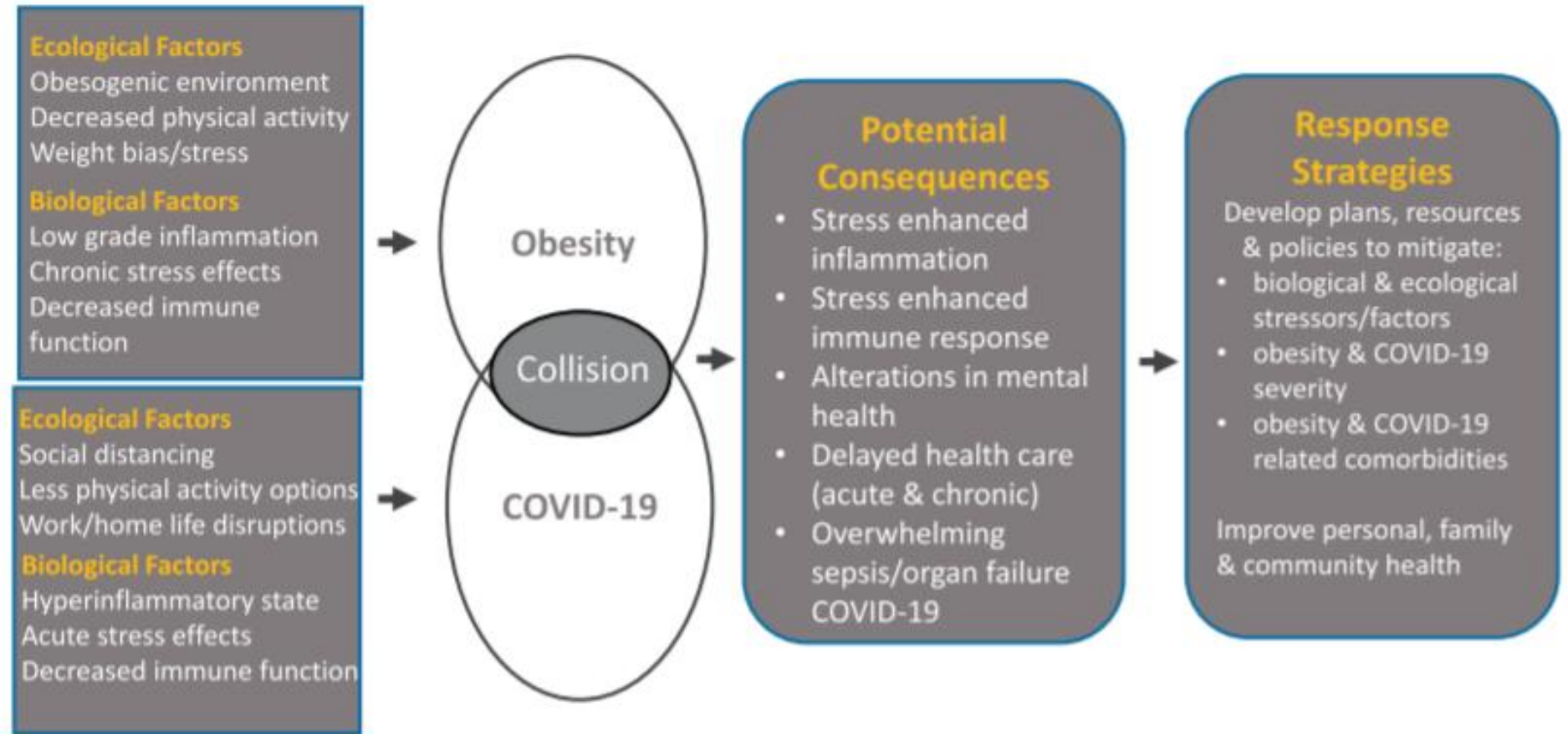


Fig. 2. Collision of obesity and COVID-19 pandemics.

\*Browne, N. T. E al. (2020). When pandemics collide: The impact of COVID-19 on childhood obesity. *Journal of pediatric nursing*, S0882-5963(20)30653-9.



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# The paradox of online education during the pandemic



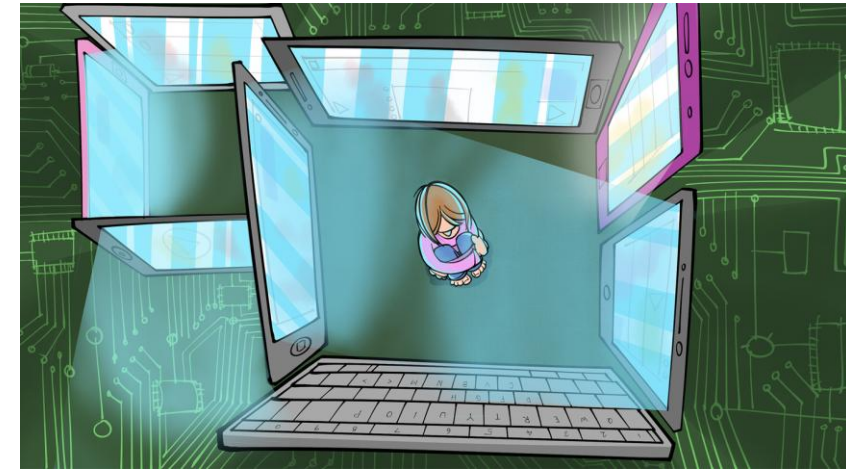
## Education Crisis

**6M** children out of school  
&  
**Economic insecurity**  
of parents will increase this  
number



## Digital Divide

Only **1 in 4**  
children have access  
to digital learning



## Internet Addiction

74.5% moderate users  
**0.7% addicted** with high  
scores on **anxiety &**  
**depression**



## Focus on the vulnerable\*

- **Gaming,-an unhealthy coping mechanism** among the vulnerable
- **Post-pandemic persistence of excessive gaming** and resultant negative consequences.
- **Vulnerable groups, require the mental health care** during the pandemic.
- **Early identification and help** overcome the mental health challenges

*\*Amin, K. P. et al. (2020). Online Gaming During the COVID-19 Pandemic in India: Strategies for Work-Life Balance. International journal of mental health and addiction, 1–7.*

# The Pandemic and India



## Violence and sexual abuse

Covid-19 has exacerbated the **pandemic of physical and sexual violence** against children in India



## Increased poverty

Poverty is making families resort to negative coping mechanisms like **child labour, marriage** and **institutionalization**



## Child marriage

*"My parents' financial situation became tough due to COVID-19, so they decided to get me married. I was forced but I didn't want to get married. I wanted to study."*

Niketa, **16 years old**



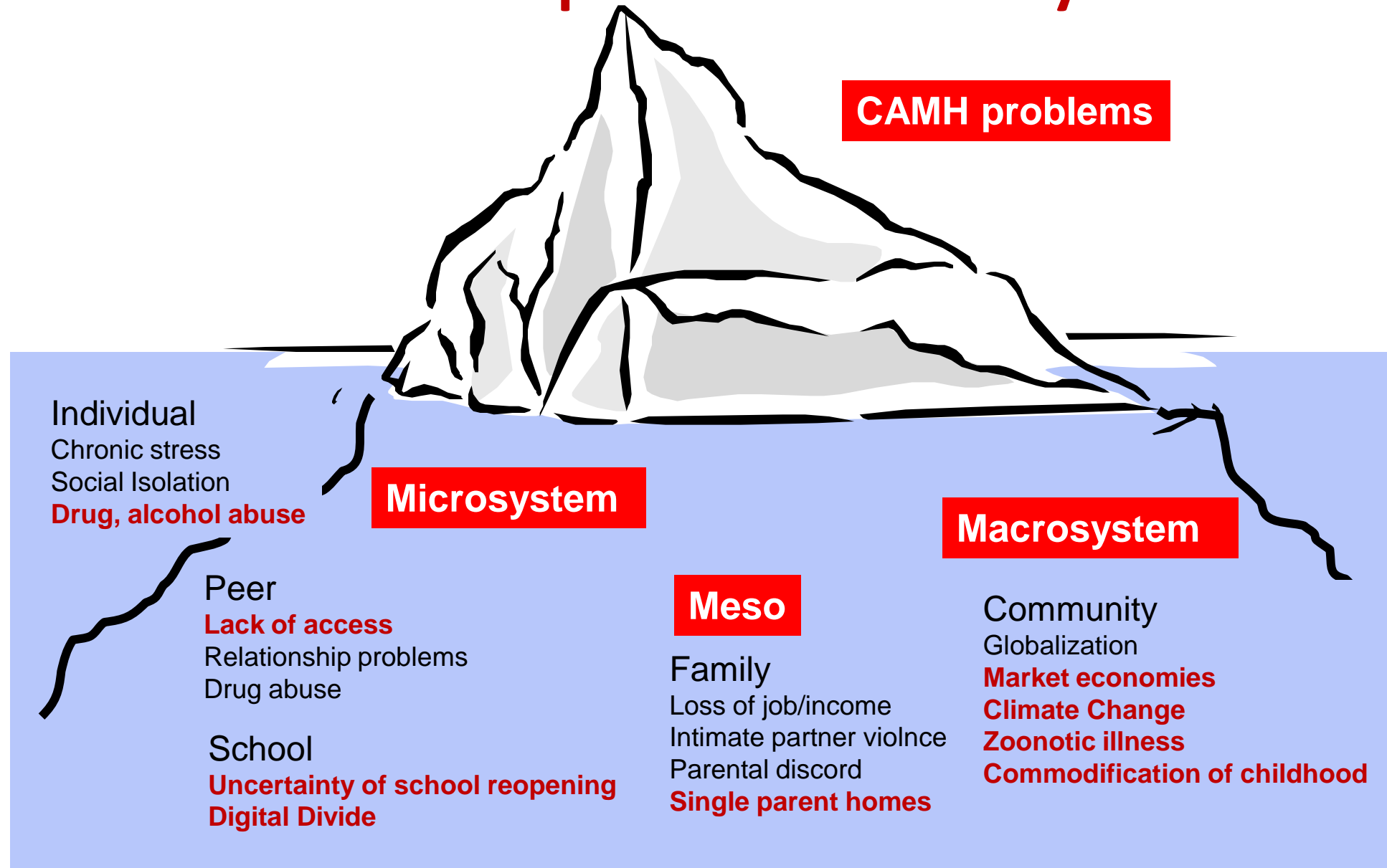
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# CYPMH, -systems perspective to Fathom the pandemic and beyond



# Making mental health more accessible in light of COVID-19: Scalable digital health with digital navigators in low and middle-income countries

Elena Rodriguez-Villa <sup>a</sup>, John Naslund <sup>b,\*</sup>, Matcheri Keshavan <sup>a</sup>, Vikram Patel <sup>b</sup>, John Torous <sup>a</sup>

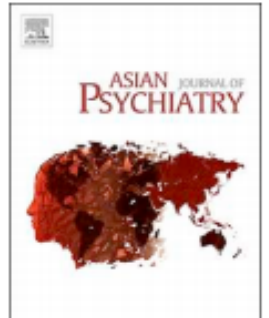


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Asian Journal of Psychiatry

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ajp](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ajp)



Letter to the editor

**Tele-yoga for stress management: Need of the hour during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond?**



# Tele-CAMHS collaborative network, Cambodia

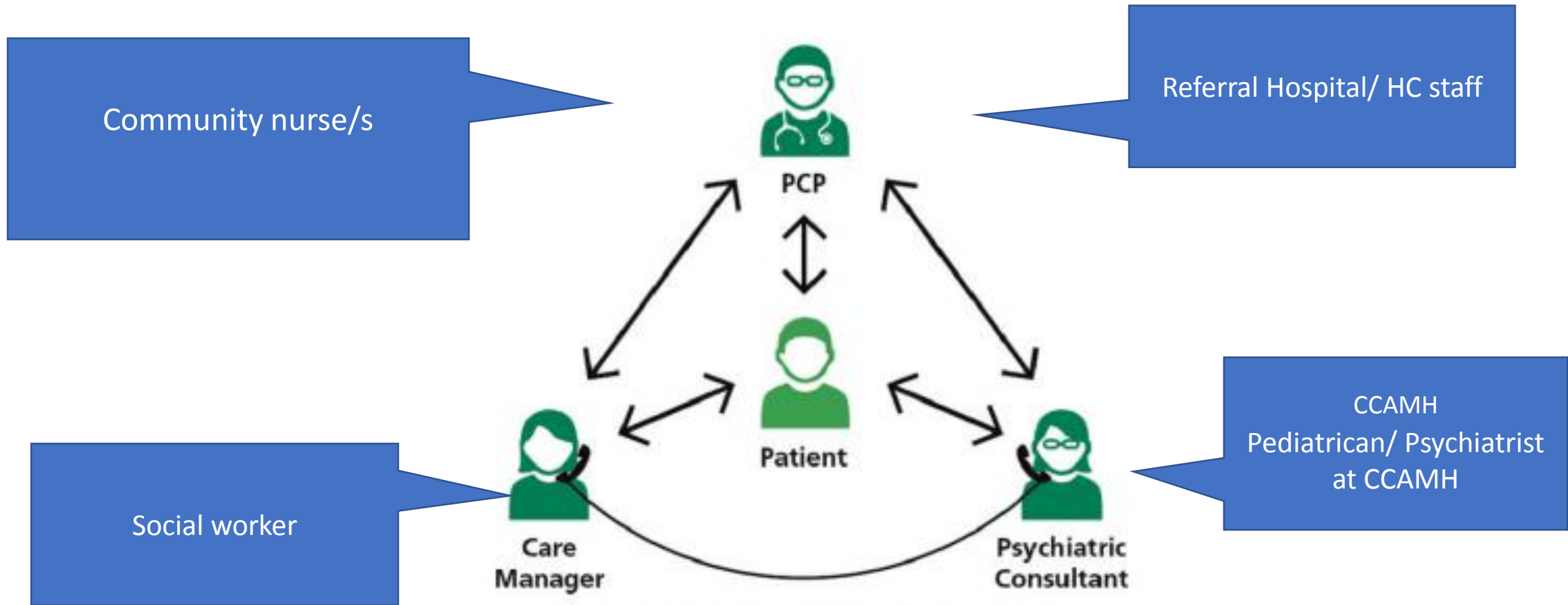


Figure 2. Telepsychiatry collaborative care model.



# Innovation and creativity in helping children



**A COLLECTION OF MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN  
AGED 3-5 YEARS**



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## **young people's views**

### **On their role during the pandemic \*...**

- Concerned about their future, family and broader society
- Want to be active participants in social recovery (including views on returning to school)
- Require appropriate information and a means to be heard
- Roles as pawns or pathfinders were discounted

*\*Larcher V et al. (2020). Young people's views on their role in the COVID-19...  
Arch Dis Child 105, 1192–1196*



# Possible action by young people at multi-levels



*\*Cheng TL et al.(2020) Shoring up the safety net for children in the COVID-19 pandemic. Pediatr Res. 88(3), 349-351*



# Systems to engage with...

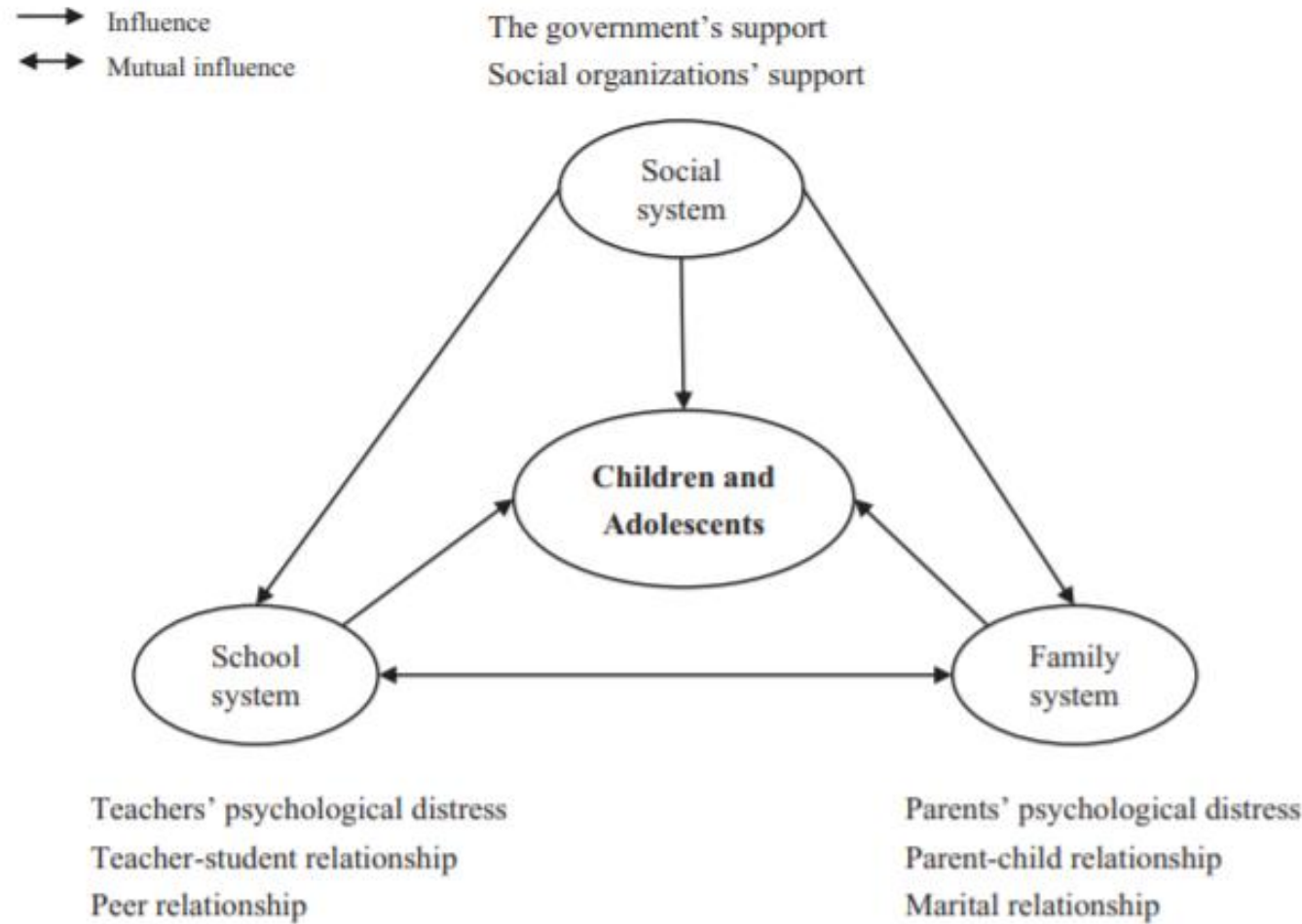
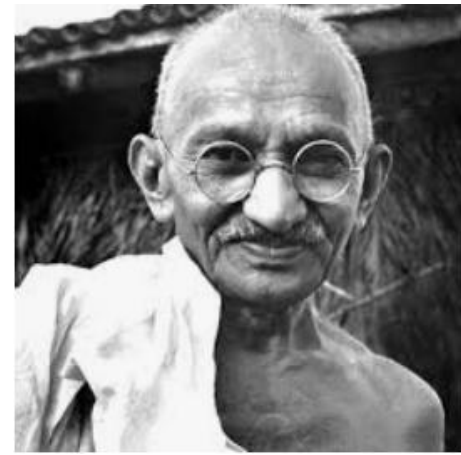


Figure 1. Cooperative model of psychological services provision to children and adolescents.

Zhou, X. (2020). Managing psychological distress in C & A following the COVID-19 epidemic: A cooperative approach. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S76-S78

# Reflections on Martyr's Day



- Humanity at crossroads and the pandemic is a wake-up call
- Important to understand the broader issues, beyond the medical model
- Overall education and health system changes to meet need of C&YP in future pandemics
- Focus on the 'last person' (Unto the Last), -Gandhi's 'Talisman' to the health policy makers & planners
- 'Be the change', will be Gandhi's advice to young people of India



**Ramalakshmi Ammal**

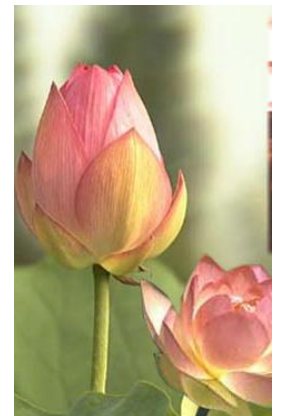


**Dr. Minoti Aram**



**Women of immense  
Compassion, Care & Action**

**Nagammal**







ந ண் றி

**Thank you!**

## **Child friendly educational videos on COVID-19**

1. School closure - <https://youtu.be/ShKXojIm6w8>
2. Hand wash dance - <https://youtu.be/dwVVhj6wZ-4>
3. Parent's guide to safe home -  
<https://youtu.be/q8dm9ptcBWQ>
4. Visual schedule for children with autism -  
<https://youtu.be/bgCNxdU4Ing>

## Child friendly educational videos (Contd...)

5. Khmer New Year-2020 in the times of COVID-19 -  
<https://youtu.be/rYLDlLzWl3s>

6. Child abuse prevention during the pandemic -  
<https://youtu.be/8mkpqYb4v1U>

7. Promoting physical activities while at home during the Covid-19 pandemic-  
<https://youtu.be/bddBfgs4GWs>

# 'Triage-model' to prioritize essential services during COVID-19

- **Category 'A'**: Need to attend the clinical services without which may face health complications, *e.g. children receiving anti-epileptic medication*
- **Category 'B'**: May choose to attend or postpone, the decision left with parents, *e.g. children receiving neuroleptic medication.*
- **Category 'C'**: Advised to come in Sep. 2020 for follow-up



*Temperature check  
on entry (BTB)*

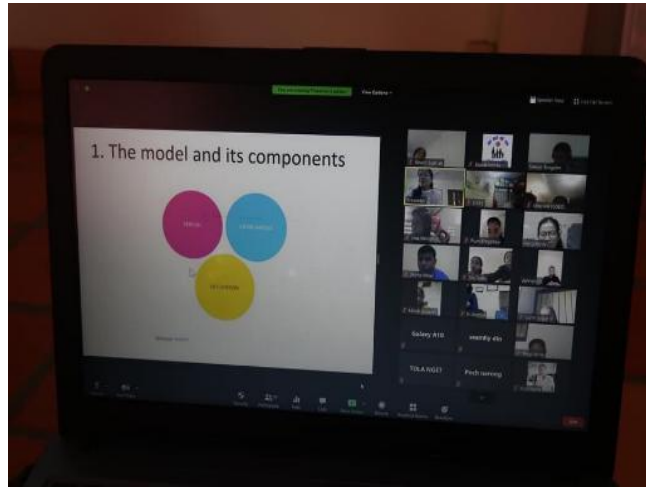
*Physical distancing-  
registration (BTB)*



*Covid-19  
education (KC)*



# Continued knowledge & skills sharing during the pandemic



Screen-shot of  
Webinar participants



Discussion at practicum  
(BTB)



Online sessions delivered  
from CCAMH