



12 MAY, 2020

Spike in calls to helpline centres

The Sun, Malaysia

*Pandemic spikes calls
to helplines*

page
2



12 MAY, 2020

Spike in calls to helpline centres

The Sun, Malaysia

Spike in calls to helpline centres

BY IAN MCINTYRE
 newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: Helpline operators have been working overtime to field distress calls as anxiety rises in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic impact.

The main issues that callers have raised are risk of infection, the economic impact of the outbreak and concerns about healthcare.

Employers are introducing more cost-cutting measures to counter the significant drop in revenue and these include pay cuts, forced unpaid leave and retrenchments.

The Asia regional director of the

► Economic impact of outbreak, fear of job loss, health and family wellbeing among top concerns of callers

International College of Clinical Hypnotherapy Practitioners, Synthia Surin, said there are now more calls from those who are concerned over the health of the economy, their jobs and the financial wellbeing of their families.

She said another factor that has kept parents worried is the failure of young children, especially those aged

nine and below, to understand why they must remain indoors most of the time.

"The stress is starting to show. Young children have begun to act up and families are struggling to keep them occupied."

Up to 300 people have already reached out for help regarding these issues since the college began a tie-

up with Wawasan Open University last month to offer helpline services to the public and university students.

A spokesman for the Befrienders helpline centre in Penang also observed that a sense of loneliness has descended upon the people, particularly those who have lost their jobs.

This has led to a higher number of anxiety-related calls and there are concerns that some callers may exhibit suicidal tendencies, said the spokesman.

A psychologist in private practice confirmed that there is a surge in the number of such cases in relation to the pandemic and the economy.

There are concerns about health care too. The psychologist said anxiety has forced stress levels to rise, adding people fall ill more easily when they are highly stressed out.

He said the best approach is to encourage those who are troubled to seek counselling and to keep calm.

Economist Charles Santiago, who is also Klang MP, said Malaysians must accept that the economy will slide as a global recession is now emerging as a result of the pandemic.

The government needs to intervene in most circumstances to salvage the situation as the private sector is obviously reeling from the ill effects of the recession, said Santiago.



12 MAY, 2020

Spike in calls to helpline centres

The Sun, Malaysia

Page 3 of 3

SUMMARIES

Pandemic spikes calls to helplines page 2

GEORGE TOWN: Helpline operators have been working overtime to field distress calls as anxiety rises in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic impact. The main issues that callers have raised are risk of infection, the economic impact of the outbreak and concerns about healthcare.