

COVID-19 Psychological Support

Ultimate Goal:

To provide free and universally the necessary psychological support in this scenario of pandemic and isolation, understanding each individual in the balance of her/his mental functions, by professionals or university students in the field of psychology.

Context:

Due to Covid-19 these are times of prophylactic isolation and quarantine at home for many of the Portuguese people. This social distance, the lack of contact with family, friends and the community, led to a change in everyone's routines and daily lives. These social and behavioral changes can also have an impact on everyone's mental health. To help maintain everyone's wellbeing, psychological counseling needs to be much more present than it has been up to now.

In fact, there are a number of ongoing initiatives, which have been born out of group movements on social networks, which aim to fill this need and still support those who need it most, as examples are:

- <https://www.instagram.com/adistanciadeumclique/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2524269891155335/>

However, there is the fear associated with these groups due to lack of certainty in the veracity of the information conveyed, as well as the uncertainty of the professional skills of those who provide these services or informations.

On the other hand, official communication channels for this purpose have already been created (or are being created), however mostly by telephone, so the interaction ways are more reduced and impersonal; examples:

- https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/linha-sns-24-vai-ter-servico-de-apoio-psicologico_a1212418

In other cases, access to these resources is restricted to a community only, and access to this cannot be democratized; examples:

- <https://www.p5.pt/covid-19/psicologico/>
- <https://www.psicologia.ulisboa.pt/linha-apoio-psicologico/>

This idea is being shared between me and Professor Jácome Cunha of the University of Minho, in order to bring the help of qualified people to the whole community. Professor Jácome is already in contact with the Psychology Association of the University of Minho as well as the “Ordem dos Psicólogos”.

It should also be noted that Professor Jácome has already led a curricular unit in which the OutSystems platform was used for the development of projects in partnership with OutSystems, thus being aware how much this technology could accelerate the development and arrival of this aid to the community.

Proposal:

Development of a mobile application in which professionals or university students in the field of psychology can provide psychological support to those who need it. In this application people get centralized overview of the professionals that are willing to freely help them.

The application must allow:

- each professional must be able to:
 - register in the application
 - enumerate schedules and availability to provide help
 - take and send help notes to the person being helped
- each person needing help:
 - schedule a contact with a qualified person
 - make a video call with the qualified person

Risks:

There is a risk of a shortage of specialized know-how available on the platform, so the mitigation of this risk is already being put into practice by the contacts of Professor Jácome Cunha with Ordem do Psicólogos and Psychology Association of the University of Minho.