



Champions Against COVID-19: Guide for Champions

Overview:

Each person has the power to do simple things to help themselves and their communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. This Champions Against COVID-19 Guide outlines a series of missions that take place either in your physical or virtual community. This guide contains everything you need to be a “Champion” Against COVID-19. No matter who you are or where you live, you can help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This guide is for individuals who want to lead action in their community to stop the spread of COVID-19 by being a Champion. A Champion can be anyone: a health professional, a student, a teacher, a coach, someone who is passionate about health and safety in their workplace, someone who is part of a team, an organizer, or a religious leader.

This guide provides:

- Useful resources
- Social Media and content ideas
- Activity ideas for different audiences

It also outlines resources for six missions:

- Mission 1: Spreading facts about COVID-19
- Mission 2: Promoting a healthy lifestyle
- Mission 3: Personal responsibility and self-monitoring
- Mission 4: Staying mentally healthy during COVID-19
- Mission 5: Supporting COVID-19 vaccination
- Mission 6: Living with the virus

As a Champion, you will need to share and promote local and national guidelines to help reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Mission 1: Spreading the facts about COVID-19

The mission for week 1 will focus on spreading facts about COVID-19 and managing misinformation.

In the last few months, scientists have been working hard to understand COVID-19, vaccines, and how to prevent it. Until we have a cure or effective vaccination rates, knowing the facts on how to stay healthy is very important.

You probably get information about COVID-19 from multiple sources. These days, there is information everywhere – online, on television and radio, on our phones, from our friends and families. Sometimes it can be confusing, especially when we do not know what is factually correct, and what is not.

Rumours and misinformation can be dangerous to our health. They can stop us from taking the right action to protect ourselves, lead to harmful practices or make us feel stressed because we do not know what to believe.

Luckily, informed individuals like you have the power to reject misinformation and only share information that is factual and helpful. Here are some tips:

1. Be cautious. Do not share or like information if you think there is a chance it is untrue.
2. Choose carefully. Share, like or forward only content from trusted sources.
3. Headlines do not always tell the full story. Read the rest of the information to make sure it's not just clickbait and contain false information.
4. Analyze the facts and evidence. Be critical of the information you receive. Does it seem accurate and draw on scientific research and guidelines? Can you compare what it is saying with other sources, like the World Health Organization and your government?
5. Images or videos could be retouched.
6. Look out for errors. Spelling mistakes can be signs of irreputable sources.
7. Be a good example. Respectfully correct or talk to people in your social networks who spread rumours or misinformation. Refer them to expert organizations for more information.

Could you benefit from adopting any of these habits? Check out [this video about how to protect yourself in the infodemic](#), which provides more detail about how to spread facts and stop rumours.

Have you seen online posts that might be false and potentially harmful? You can report them! Find out [how to report misinformation online](#).

How can you take action?

The first step is as simple as a click! For accurate, reliable and up-to-date information that you can share with your friends, families and communities you can follow:

- [WHO Facebook](#)
- [WHO Twitter](#)
- [WHO Instagram](#)
- [WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific \(WPRO\) Facebook](#)
- [WPRO Twitter](#)
- [WPRO Youtube](#)
- [UNICEF's Facebook](#)
- [UNICEF's Twitter](#)

- [UNICEF's Instagram](#)

For local resources we recommend the following websites and social media accounts:

- [Malaysia Ministry of Health website](#)
- [Malaysia Ministry of Health Twitter](#)
- [Malaysia Ministry of Health Facebook](#)
- [Malaysia Ministry of Health Instagram](#)
- [WHO Malaysia](#)
- [UNICEF Malaysia](#)

Below we have included examples of how you can use these resources to spread awareness and fight misinformation:

- Share graphics and messages from these resources in your social media channels or send them to your family or friends. Encourage them to pass it on so that even more people know how to protect themselves against COVID-19. Alternatively, you can print and showcase these in your community.
- Go live, for example on Instagram or Facebook, or record informative videos/upload stories on social media. In case you need inspiration, these [short videos](#) can be a good way to start. You can also take part in social media initiatives and challenges taking place at the global and national levels that aim to promote health and safety around COVID-19. See one example [here](#).
- To amplify your message and reach larger audiences, you can for example connect with other champions by using the #ChampionsAgainstCOVID19 and work together and find ways to leverage traditional outreach methods, such as radio and television.
- Young people can also sign up for U-REPORT to receive the latest updates of the situation in Malaysia and vital information about COVID-19 and challenges myths including through 'rumor tracking'. You can learn more about how to connect [here](#).
- If you are a teacher and educator, you can also leverage your classroom to spread facts about COVID in an engaging and fun way. For example, you can invite healthcare workers for an information session or teach your students how to read and interpret data with a focus on the misinterpretation of science around COVID-19 and vaccination. In this short [article](#), you can find examples of how teachers around the world have been helping fight the COVID-19 infodemic.
- Maybe you have a relative or friend spreading advice that you know is not correct. If you do, talk to that person about where to look for more reliable information to share, such as the [WHO "Science in 5" podcast and video](#) explainers. Next time you see someone sharing something untrue online, let them know and respectfully direct them to the facts. It can be hard to have a conversation with someone who is saying something false yet believes what they are saying is correct. Some people can get defensive if told they are wrong or that they have made a mistake. Here are some tried and tested ways to have positive conversations that are more likely to lead to someone changing their mind (do not forget to ensure that your advice is adapted to the circumstances):
 1. Ask open questions about why they think the information they are sharing is important: "Tell me more about why you shared this post on Facebook?"

2. Acknowledge their worries and respond so that they feel understood: “I understand that you are worried about COVID-19 and are looking for the right information to keep you safe.”
 3. Celebrate or acknowledge their efforts. “It’s great that you are trying to share what you think you know with others to help keep them healthy too.”
 4. Ask them if you can share some information with them that explains what they have shared might not be helpful. “Can I provide you with some information, based on what you just told me?”
 5. Check if they understand why, it is important to be careful about misinformation “Given what we just talked about, what do you think now about sharing rumours like this?”
 6. Summarise and describe the action they are committing to taking “It’s great that you have decided to double-check if the information is based on facts before you share it with others; this will help you to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy”.
- As a Champion, whether you are a healthcare professional, essential worker, teacher or a student, you can leverage your platform to raise your voice against stigma and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight the danger they pose to society. The WHO Representative Office to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore has developed useful infographics that you can share with your networks.

Mission 2: Promoting a healthy lifestyle

In this second week, we will talk about how to live a healthy lifestyle while protecting ourselves and those around us from COVID-19. The pandemic has altered many of our daily routines and contributed to unhealthier lifestyles among a significant proportion of the population due to physical inactivity, unhealthy eating and sleeping disturbances.

Of particular concern was the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic several public health measures were adopted, including lockdowns and limitations of access to public spaces for physical activity. These measures have had a negative impact on physical activity levels and sedentary behaviour, when they were already insufficient. Regular physical activity benefits both the body and mind and is crucial for people of all ages. It can reduce high blood pressure, help manage weight and reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers - all conditions that can increase susceptibility to COVID-19. Regular physical activity can help give our days a routine and can be a way to stay in contact with family and friends. It’s also good for our mental health - reducing the risk of depression, cognitive decline and delaying the onset of dementia - and improving overall well-being.

How can you take action?

Whether it is in person or online, there are a number of strategies you can adopt to promote a healthy lifestyle and help your family, friends and community to do the same:

- Instead of practicing physical activity alone, do it with your family, friends or community, either outdoors, in a well-ventilated area, or online. You can use for example WHO mYoga, a yoga app to help people stay active and healthy. It is available for free download on Android devices, and Apple devices.
- You can also try new healthy recipes and share them with your community. On this [page](#) you can find tips for maintaining a healthy diet and for food security during COVID-19. It also includes social media materials that you can share them online to encourage people to adopt

health eating habits. Champions can provide information, namely from [WHO](#) and the [Ministry of Health](#) websites, to raise awareness of the importance of adopting healthier lifestyles, and incorporate best practices into their new routine – remember that you are supposed to be a role model! You can also leverage the Champions Community – for example create content and videos with specialists to share with your network or organize in-person workshops in your community, while adhering to local Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and testing requirements, focused on these different topics.

- Share information on mobile apps, videos and other resources (e.g., mobile fitness apps and games) that will make this transition fun, interactive and less challenging by, for example, promoting challenges for members of your online and offline communities. You can also encourage them to make simple changes in their habits such as promoting walking and cycling instead of driving.

Mission 3: Personal responsibility and self-monitoring

During week 3, your mission will be to identify ways to take personal responsibility and practice self-monitoring for COVID-19 risk and symptoms. You will also seek solutions on how to individually contribute to reducing the number of cases in your community and protecting others, especially those who are vulnerable and high-risk.

As a Champion you should set an example and, therefore, you will need to ask yourself: am I practicing all of the protective behaviours to prevent COVID-19 from spreading in my area? Is there anything else I could be doing to be more careful?

How can you take action?

The first rule of thumb is to continue carrying out the key protective behaviours to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as we are adapting to ‘living with the virus’ and:

- a. Keep a safe distance (of at least 1 metre) if you can
- b. Wear a well-fitted mask fully covering your nose, mouth and chin
- c. Cover coughs and sneezes
- d. Keep hands clean
- e. Open windows when possible
- f. Get vaccinated as soon as possible (or register to receive your booster)
- g. And stay at home, if feeling unwell

If you or a friend/family member feel unwell, here are the steps you must take:

Know the symptoms

- Be aware of the full range of symptoms of COVID-19. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, tiredness, running nose and loss of taste or smell. Less common symptoms include aches and pains, headache, sore throat, red or irritated eyes, diarrhea, skin rash or discolouration of fingers or toes.

Follow TRIIS (Test, Report, Isolate, Inform, Seek)

- Follow the TRIIS procedure: If you have a fever, cough and runny nose, get tested using a self-test kit and report the test result on your MySejahtera immediately. If you test positive, self-isolate immediately and monitor symptoms closely following the home surveillance orders

imposed by the MoH. Inform your close contacts and immediate family members urgently if you test positive. If your condition has worsened while self-quarantining, seek medical advice by calling your health care provider or hotline and follow their directions and advice. Have someone bring you supplies.

Stay informed

- Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as [WHO](#) or your local and national health authorities, namely the [Ministry of Health website](#) and social media pages mentioned above. Local and national authorities and public health units are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves and their communities.
- If you are a teacher, you can work with the education community to promote a health-promoting school to improve the health and well-being of your students. You can consult the [Global Standards for Health-promoting Schools](#) resource package.

Mission 4: Staying mentally healthy during COVID-19

In week 4, we will learn how to stay mentally healthy during COVID-19 and support the well-being of people around you. If you have found the past two years challenging, stressful or isolating, you are not alone. In times of such uncertainty when things are so hard for so many, it is really important for us to look after our mental health. Fortunately, there are many things we can do to look after our well-being. By practicing these things regularly, we can build mental and emotional resilience that will help us in hard times.

How can you take action?

Some of these are the same things we do for our physical health like getting enough sleep, meditating, exercising regularly, eating well. You should limit the time you spend watching stressful news, stories, and read and share positive or hopeful news stories instead. It can also help to talk to someone you trust and stay connected to your friends and family, through phone calls and social media for example, especially those who may be far away or living alone.

Stress is one sign that your mental health might be suffering. Have you experienced any of these feelings, thoughts or behaviours lately? If you have, then it's especially important to do things that help you to cope and build resilience for the future, rather than waiting until stress becomes a problem. There are other signs and symptoms to look out for like feeling troubled or threatened, struggling to focus, crying often, getting angry easily, having difficulty sleeping or feeling sad, guilty, worried or very tired.

For people with existing mental health conditions, COVID-19 might have made it more difficult to manage or triggered new symptoms. It's important for people with existing conditions to keep taking any medication they are on, stay in contact with your health care worker, and draw on the skills you have used in the past to manage your feelings and cope.

There are also simple techniques that you can practice for just a few minutes a day to reduce stress and improve your wellbeing, like [this grounding exercise](#). It can help you cope with difficult thoughts and feelings. Find more practical exercises on this.

It's important to get help from a professional if you start feeling very overwhelmed or are not able to function as you normally do. Contact your family doctor, local healthcare services or a social worker. Talk to your family, friends or another trusted person in your community if you need help finding a service. If you can't see someone in person, there may be telephone-based or remote options available. The [website of the Ministry of Health](#) provides contact details of mental health psychosocial support services. Additionally, the [Reach Out initiative](#) offers a helpline with support provided in Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil.

Here are some suggestions for how you could support others:

- If you can, offer to listen to someone whom you think may be struggling, and share suggestions of things that have helped you in the past. For example, if you have an older adult in your community who lives alone and is socially isolated, make sure to check on them either in person, if the situation allows, or make regular phone calls. [These calls can help reduce loneliness and depression in older adults!](#) The ['Let's Talk' \(Ministry of Health\) tips](#), namely those on how to [listen with empathy](#) can help you get started.
- Look for community resources that provide psychosocial support for people living with mental health conditions and share them on social media and with your community. Initiatives created by the government that can help you start your journey as a mental health champion include the 'Let's Talk Healthy Minds', 'Healthy Minds School' dan [KOSPEN \(Komuniti Sihat Pembina Negara\)](#). More information and resources can be found on the links provided.
- Share information on social media to help others learn about protecting their mental health. You can find relevant tips on the following websites: [WHO Malaysia - COVID-19 and mental health](#), the ['Let's Talk' campaign](#) and the [Reach Out Initiative](#).
- Teenagers and younger people can also adopt these [strategies to protect their mental health](#): (1) Recognize that anxiety is common, (2) Create and practice hobbies, (3) Find new ways to connect with your friends.
- For parents and caregivers, these [parenting resources](#) created by [WHO](#), [UNICEF](#) and other partner organizations provide useful tips and advice. These are currently available, for free, in English and [Malay](#).

Mission 5: Supporting COVID-19 vaccination

In Week 5, we look at how to support ongoing COVID-19 vaccination programmes. Used together with the other protective measure, vaccination against COVID-19 is an important tool to help stop the pandemic. However, vaccine hesitancy remains high among many groups, which puts progress toward ending COVID-19 at risk.

Ensuring communities have access to up-to-date public health information from trusted sources and are not misled by misinformation is essential to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Luckily, informed community members like you can help fight the infodemic around COVID-19 vaccination and support the rollout of the vaccination campaign.

How can you take action?

Below are a few resources and actions you can take to ensure your community is safe and protected:

- Share with your community information about the vaccination campaign in Malaysia. For example, if you know someone who is not yet vaccinated or is eligible to receive their booster shot and is unable to book their vaccination appointment you can help them register on the MySejahtera mobile application. You can also accompany them to their appointment if they have limited mobility and are unable to reach the vaccination site.
- As Malaysia starts the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme for children, it is important to debunk myths to ensure parents and caregivers vaccinate children. This [statement from WHO](#) can be a good place to start. As news about COVID-19 vaccines spread, young children might have questions. On this [webpage](#), you can find kid-friendly resources to help them understand how vaccines work.
- If you are a healthcare worker, you can play a crucial role in building vaccine confidence. This [Social Media Toolkit for Healthcare Practitioners](#) aims to provide healthcare workers with the tools, skills and content needed to effectively share authentic and reliable information online. Centered around three core vaccine confidence messages, Vaccine Safety, Vaccine Development and Vaccines Reduce theRisk of Sickness; this toolkit sets out three ways you can help build vaccine confidence and address misinformation among your community: creating your own social media posts, posting the images and videos provided in the toolkit, or resharing vaccine information from trusted sources.
- Leverage social media to share resources (see the [WHO website dedicated page to COVID-19 vaccines](#)) and discuss the importance of getting vaccinated. For example, you can participate in the [UNICEF campaign “#Vaccinated”](#) to help spread the word those vaccines are safe and effective in preventing severe disease and death and encourage others to get vaccinated. Offline, you can work with community leaders to define strategies to tackle this problem. You can also connect with other champions in your area to combat misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines. Similarly, to other successful [initiatives](#), this can be done by creating a positive impact offline, sharing your positive experiences, reassuring the public by raising awareness on the safety and efficacy of vaccines and assisting the elderly to register to receive their vaccine.
- Educating and warning individuals about the harm of mis- and disinformation can help build up resistance to misinformation. It can take the form of simple text-based warnings or short videos, as well as appealing online games. For example, the free-to-play [Go Viral! game](#) confronts players with myths surrounding COVID-19 in a playful manner and prepares them for real dangers.
- Sign up to become a COVID-19 volunteer through the [MySukarela platform](#) and assist in the rollout of the government’s vaccination program. MySukarela aims to recruit willing individuals above the age of 18, who will be deployed as part of the vaccination team, either as a general volunteer or medical volunteer, throughout the country.
- Teachers and non-teaching staff and students can also play an important role in promoting vaccination and addressing hesitancy. In this short [article](#), you can find examples of innovative ways in which teachers around the world have been helping fight the COVID-19 vaccine infodemic.

Mission 6: Living with the virus

In this last week, we will summarize the key behaviours necessary to carry on with our lives while protecting ourselves and others from COVID-19. People everywhere have had to change their behaviours and lifestyles to protect themselves and each other from COVID-19. Many people know someone close to them who has become sick, and others have lost loved ones. Almost all of us have had to follow challenging and sometimes isolating measures to stay safe. We know it hasn't been easy.

The fight against COVID-19 is far from over and we will have to learn to live with the virus. We are all adjusting to new ways of living and working. Things aren't going back to how they were before the pandemic any time soon. It's important for us to find ways to adapt so that we can stay healthy while enjoying life and getting back to school or work.

To choose the action you want to take this week to adapt to 'living with the virus', reflect on and answer the following questions:

- How is your daily life different now?
- What changes have you found hardest?
- What new ways have you found for doing things differently?
- What can you do to make things more manageable, and even enjoyable while still practicing protective behaviours against COVID-19?

Now pose these questions to others. Talk to your friends, family and members of your community to hear their ideas or start a conversation with your followers and other champions on social media.

As you have your discussions with others, you will get ideas about the difficulties others are facing and how you can help address them. Put the best ones into action and encourage others to do the same!

How can you take action?

Here are some ideas to get you started:

The problem:	Possible solutions:
People are not practicing protective behaviours (e.g., wearing masks in public places) anymore or are still resistant to getting vaccinated	Find creative ways to reach individuals in your community and on social media with information about how to stay safe
Older and at-risk people in my neighbourhood are having difficulties accessing medicine and other necessities	Offer to pick up and deliver groceries and medicines to their homes
People might not feel safe returning to work	Encourage your employer to provide water, soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer and regularly clean your working space
People are sad about missing big celebrations and gatherings	Help a friend or family member to host an online party or send messages to mark those occasions
Friends are organizing parties, and their safety is a priority	Suggest organizing it outdoors if the weather permits. If indoors, open windows to ventilate

	the room since the risk of transmission is high in crowded, closed and close-contact settings
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