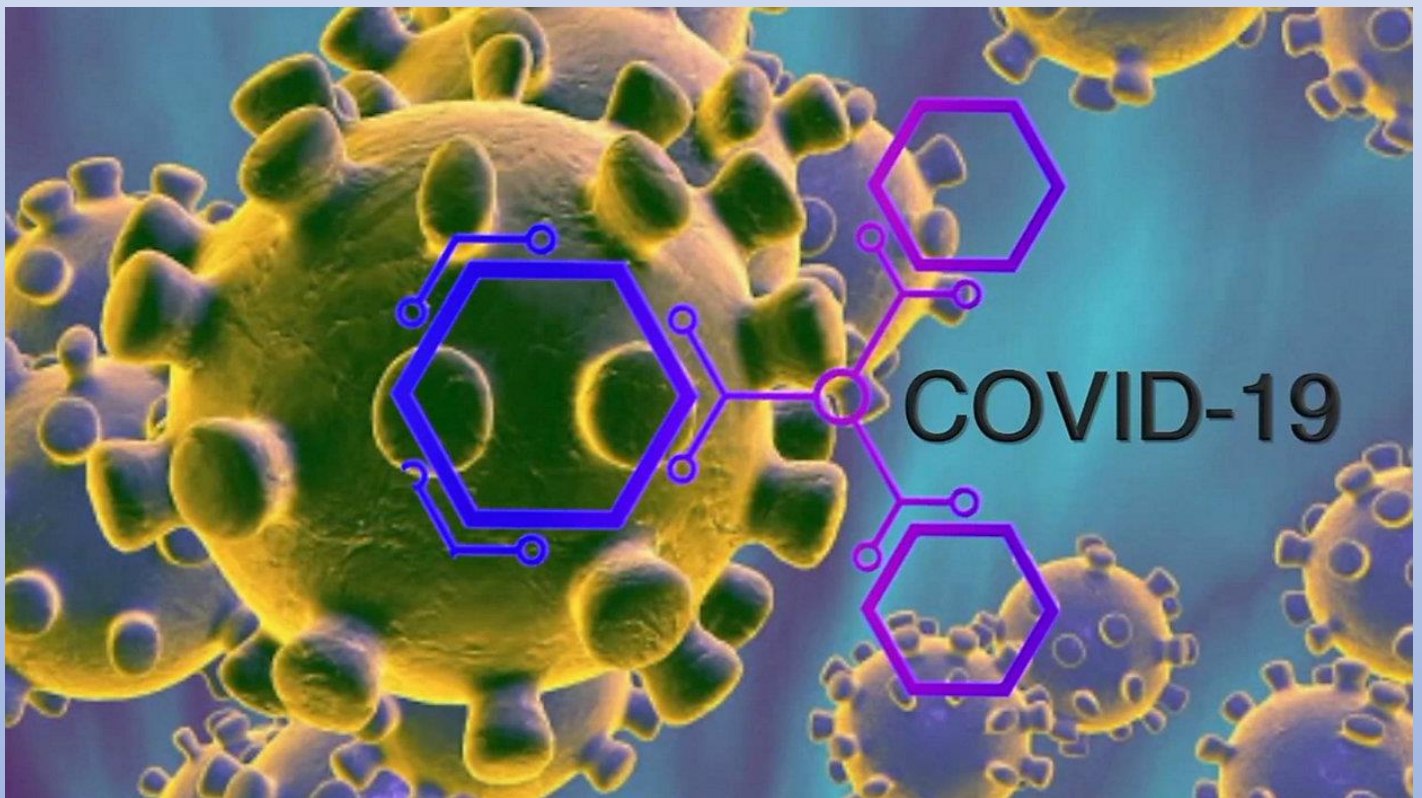


Overview of Activities of Staff of National Library and Literacy Services



COVID-19 Presented By

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A Circular dated 19th March 2020 from the Ministry of Education was brought to administration and staff regarding the closure of all schools in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas on 23rd March 2020. Work Rotation due to the outbreak of Covid-19 around the world. At this point, there was no case in The Bahamas. On April 2020, The Bahamas saw its first case and the first death on 2020. There has been a steady increase in confirmed, recovered cases, and fatalities ever since. Many are uncertain when there would be a peak in the number of cases and a flattening of the curve.

In light of this, the government has declared a state of emergency in the country enforcing lockdowns and curfews. Countries around the globe had to adjust and identify expedient ways to do business as hotels, workplaces had to be closed, travel bans were implemented to curtail the spread of this vicious virus.

Globally, employers and employees are searching for alternative ways of conducting business by turning to online platforms, a wider use of social media and significant increase in the use of innovative technologies and methods of communications in the face of social distancing.

Libraries and literacy centres are also increasing their use of technologies in countries near and far and The Bahamas is no exception. There is a strong need to serve the people and especially students as schools are closed throughout the nation. The Ministry of Education has put in place the Virtual Classroom for students to continue their learning

along with educational platforms utilizing channels 295 and 296 on Cable Bahamas. Librarians can assist by supplementing this learning forum by directing students to read e-books and accessing databases and other learning tools on the National Library and Information Websites at www.nlis.bs Adults with literacy challenges may explore our facebook pages and blogs and video programmes for tips to improve their literacy skills although they are not able to meet physically with their tutors.

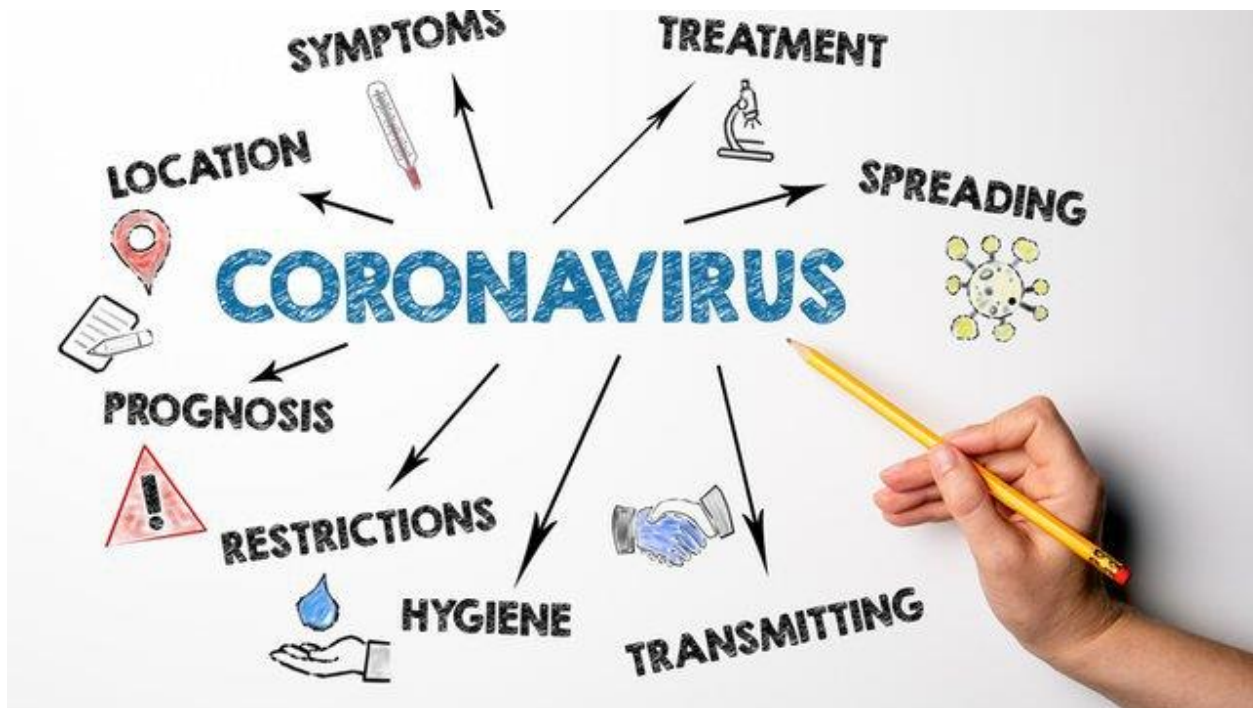


Image courtesy of iStock

The novel coronavirus is a deadly and is a highly contagious disease to all humans in over 180 countries around the world to date. On April 15, 2020, The Guardian reported

2,0616,020 confirmed cases, 130,528 deaths and 445,912 recovered. It is said to have originated in Wuhan, Hubei, China in 2019.

On the 11th February 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the official name would be Covid-19. According to NewScientists.com, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses refers to it as “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus2” because it is related to the virus that caused the SARS outbreak in 2003. In order to avoid confusion with SARS, the WHO calls it the Covid-19 virus. It was declared a pandemic on 11th March by WHO. The Bahamas to date reported 49 cases, 6 recovered and 8 deaths (Ministry of Health Dashboard).

Some of the most commonly reported symptoms are fever, dry cough, runny nose, sore throat and tiredness. In more extreme cases, persons with the virus can develop difficulty breathing, leading to organ failure and even death. On the other hand, the virus can also be described as asymptomatic, showing no visible symptoms in some people. However, these persons can spread the virus. The term ‘super spreaders’ is used to describe people in this category.

It is strongly recommended that to help one from contracting the disease and to prevent the spread of the virus to others, we must

- Wash our hands regularly and for 20-30 seconds with soap and water or alcohol- based sanitizers**

- **Use disposal tissue to cover our nose and mouth or flexed elbow when we cough or sneeze, masks are now recommended to be worn by all persons in public spaces**
- **Practice social distancing and keep at least 6ft apart when standing in a cue or interacting with others**
- **Stay home and self- quarantine or isolate if one is not feeling well or display symptoms of the virus**
- **Keep one's hands away from the face**

NLIS/ NLS IDEAS and Suggestions for work during the COVID-19 Period

- Explore and complete free basic library courses online at IDAHO Library Commissions
[https://libraries.idaho.gov/continuing-education/able/-](https://libraries.idaho.gov/continuing-education/able/)
- Apply for paid online courses at Bluegrass College, University of Kentucky, USA (See what scholarships are available through MOE. Lyford Cay, Organization of American States (OAS), local Foundations, like One Eleuthera etc).
- Apply for the University of the West Indies Online Bachelor's Degree or Masters Degree in Librarianship or Library and Information Science Degree. Ask the Director

of Libraries, NLIS of The Bahamas for additional information.

- Conduct daily research in local newspapers, e.g. The Nassau Guardian, 242 Tribune or regional or international articles research online with students research and study topics in mind. If you have access to physical newspapers at home, you may cut a few articles to add to the vertical files at work. Articles on COVID-19 would be in high demand in the future.
- Explore your own National Library and Information Services of The Bahamas Website at www.nlis.bs (Bear in mind that we are revising this website and some information about some libraries are still missing also other information in certain areas would be populated in short order).
- Compile topics that students are requesting to complete the National Exams for BGCSEs and BJC's, homework assignments and to support their virtual learning online provided by the Ministry of Education at www.bahamasministryofeducation.com, click on Virtual School.
- Participate in the National Library Month- March pamphlet/ booklet competition on the history of NLIS and

your individual branch library which was interrupted due to the novel coronavirus/COVID-19.

- Supervisors/Managers are required to contact staff regularly to provide guidelines for work at the branch library and at home.
- Supervisors/ Managers during the rotation period at the library, locate emails of patrons and direct them to our National Library and Information Services (NLIS) website and in particular the databases for research and the *Ask the Librarian* feature when it becomes activated.
- Library System may partner with Social Services Department in Bahamas to view free Webinar on Social Work Students and Public Library Partnerships on 29th April 2020 at 3-4pm Eastern Standard Time. A follow up activity to establish a closer bond with Social Services and Urban Renewal Development in the country.
- Plan for special online programmes for seniors and those that have a challenge with literacy.
- Literacy Services tutors would examine online Literacy website and direct students to the programmes to stimulate interest in Adult literacy activities etc.

- Reactivate: “Programmes formerly played on Cable Bahamas, “Literacy for Life”.
- Literacy tutors to contact students by phone or online to encourage them to continue with their reading books and completing literacy assignments despite not being able to physically meet with their tutors.