

#Day1 Lockdown SA:

A call for change in behaviour

Marius Meyer

It is with sadness that this article is written immediately after the devastating news was received that the first patient died of the corona virus in South Africa this morning. On Day 1 of the National Lockdown, we have now also exceeded 1000 infections. Yet, we see pictures on television and social media of thousands of people going to shops and standing in queues without any social distancing all over the country. It is evident that most people think they either cannot get the corona virus, or they simply don't care. This raises a few important questions:

- What is the current level of awareness about the corona virus?
- Will people really change their behaviour?
- Will the lockdown really make a difference?
- What does it help us to simply move from work to home to shops to spread the virus in our communities and shops?
- Can we show our individual and collective discipline and stay at home by limiting interaction with other people?

As President Ramaphosa said we can only win the war against the virus if we all work together. We now need serious behaviour change, every day, every hour, every minute. While government and other stakeholders are busy mobilising resources to fight the virus, ordinary citizens should change their behaviour with a few very simple and clear actions as recommended by the World Health Organisation, and as the basic rules of the national lockdown announced by the President:

- Stay at home!
- Wash your hands continuously for at least 20 seconds;
- Clean surfaces properly;
- Maintain social distancing, don't touch other people.

Notwithstanding the expectation that the defence force and the police should be more visible to enforce the Disaster Management Act and all regulations pertaining to the movement of people, it actually starts with all of us. Rule number 1 for all of us is to change our behaviour: Stay at home. Protect yourself and protect your family so that we don't spread the virus. There is only one way of ensuring that you don't get and spread the virus, and that is to not have any physical contact with other people. As social beings, it is not easy to isolate ourselves from other people. This is the time to change our behaviour: Improve your personal hygiene. Stay at home. Stay healthy. Stay alive.

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For more information on the Corona virus visit www.sacoronavirus.co.za or World Health Organisation: www.who.int