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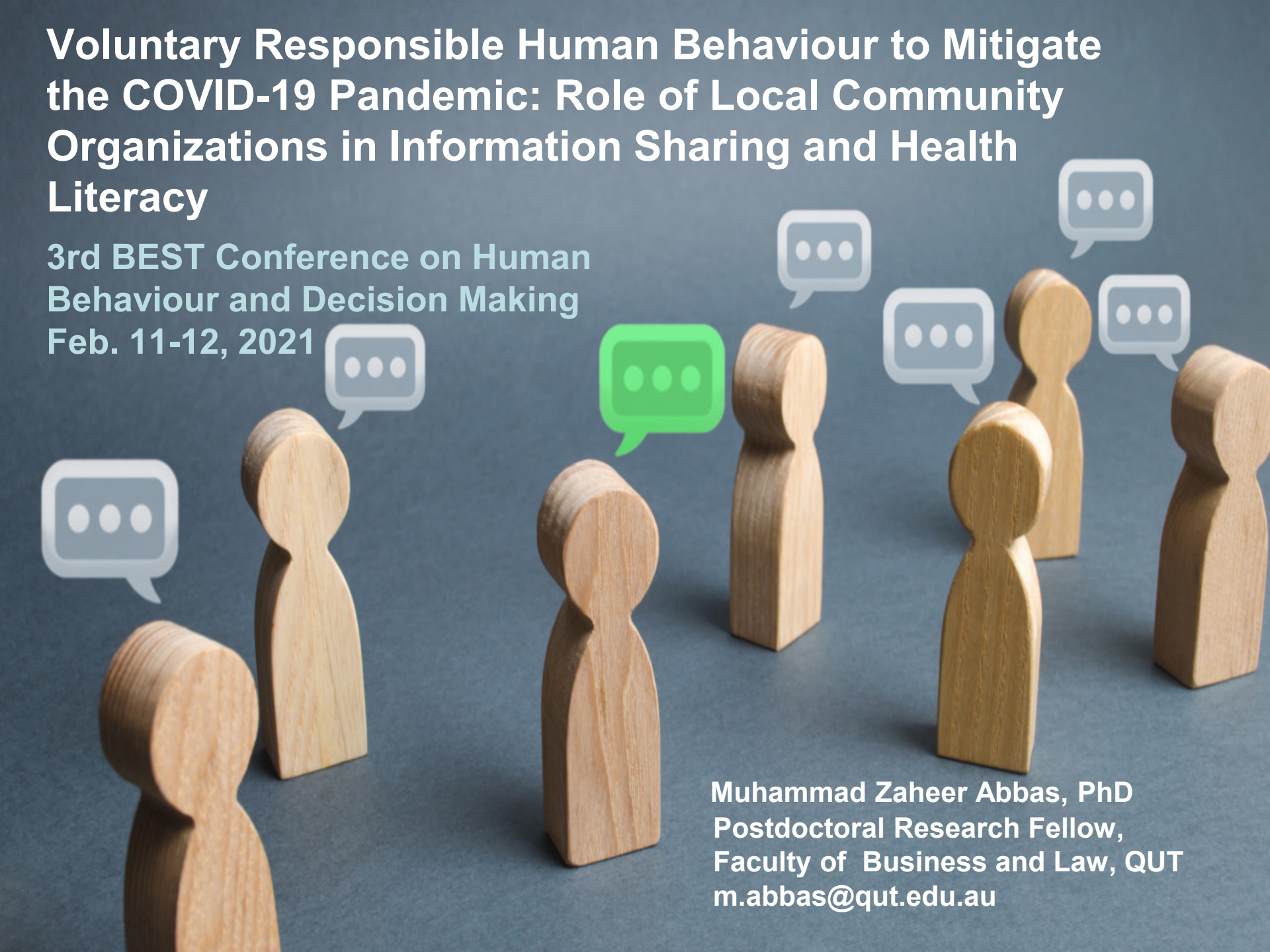
Voluntary Responsible Human Behaviour to Mitigate the COVID-19 Pandemic: Role of Local Community Organizations in Information Sharing and Health Literacy

3rd BEST Conference on Human Behaviour and Decision Making
Feb. 11-12, 2021



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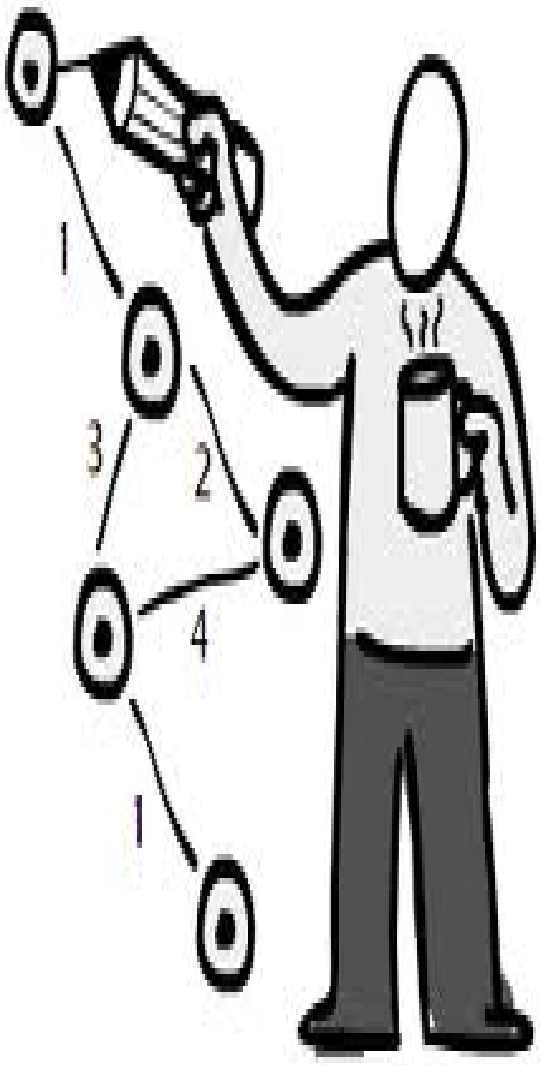
Presentation Overview

PART ONE

Role of Community Workers in Information Sharing

PART TWO

Importance of Visual Communication in a Health Emergency



Voluntary Behavior and Personal Responsibility

- The dissemination of transparent and honest communication, to shape people's behaviour, is key to keeping the pandemic under control.
- Effective communication is important in urging personal responsibility.

Misinformation Leads to Confusion and Panic

- Response to a pandemic situation is informed by local belief systems of communities which are based on their limited knowledge and understanding.
- Misinformed belief systems fuel mistrust, uncertainties and fears during a crisis situation.
- Misinformation adversely impacts the acceptance of public health interventions and compliance with public health advice.

Role of Community Workers in Information-Sharing

- General public may be frustrated because they cope with a sea of information but find it hard to distinguish between genuine information and rumours.
- Local community organizations can play a pivotal role through well-coordinated campaigns for practical and reliable information sharing and health literacy at grassroot level.
- Community workers may process information to refute rumours and to denoise information to facilitate people in overcoming overloads of information.

Role of Community Workers in Information-Sharing

- Local community-based groups are cognizant of the nuanced and complex local dynamics and specific sensitivities of each community.
- Community workers can engage in two-way communication with communities through the most socially acceptable and effective channels.
- Local volunteer groups have acceptability within communities and have ability to communicate in local languages.

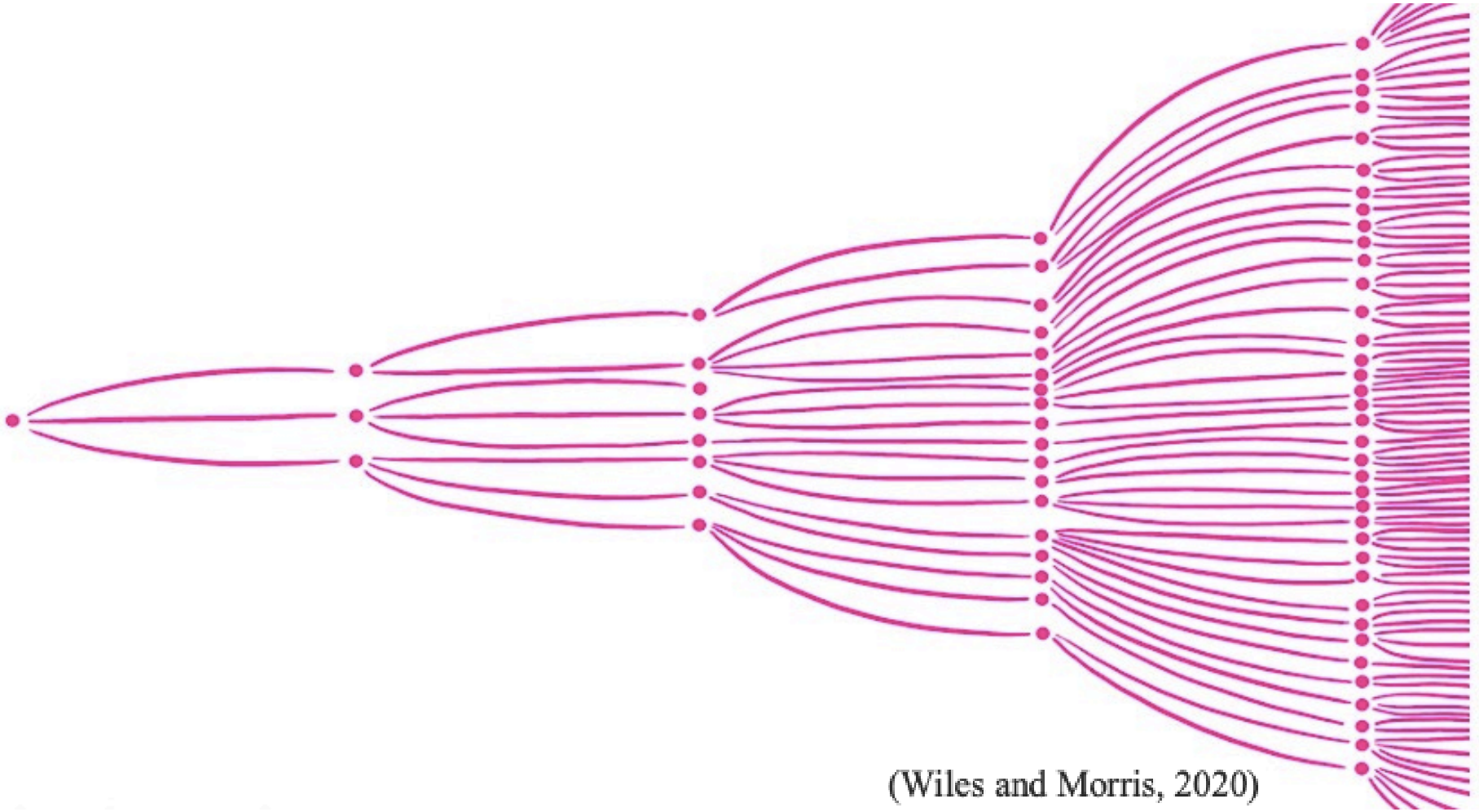
Role of Community Workers in Information-Sharing

- Community organizations can shock people out of their complacency by highlighting the moral, ethical, practical, and legal consequences of non-compliance with the stringent infection-control mandates prescribed by national governments.
- Community networks can use emotional persuasion for compliance with social distancing and hand washing measures by highlighting the sacrifices and efforts of the frontline medical staff.

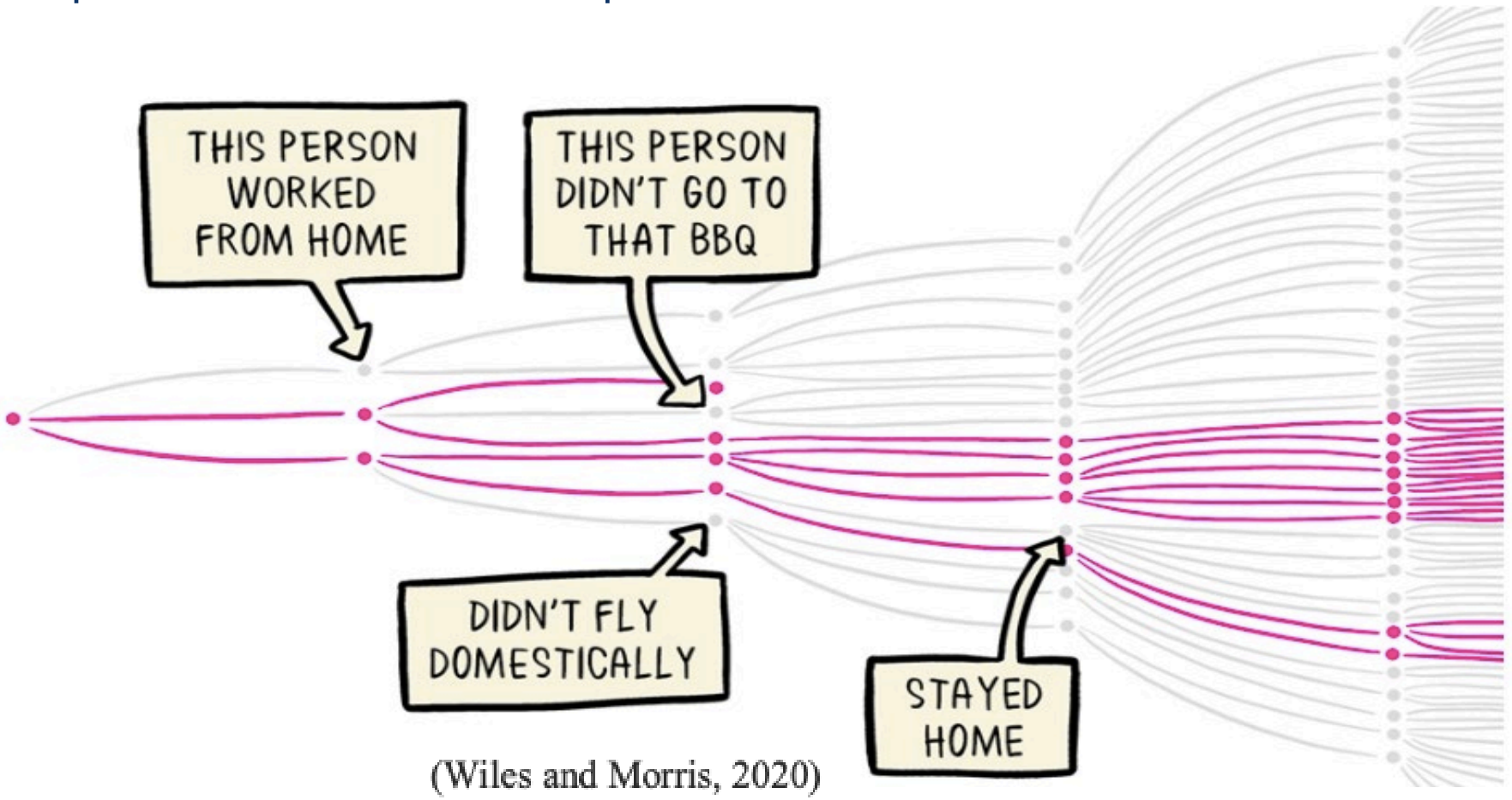
Importance of Visual Communication

- Visuals (cartoon settings, animated characters, and design features) help people to understand the pandemic and guide people what targeted measures need to be taken to fight the pandemic.
- Visualized instructions (complemented by linguistic ones) achieve greater degrees of attention as compared to only textual or verbal ones.
- It is easier for people to assimilate visualized instructions.

The number of cases grow exponentially in infectious diseases if people continue their daily business as usual.

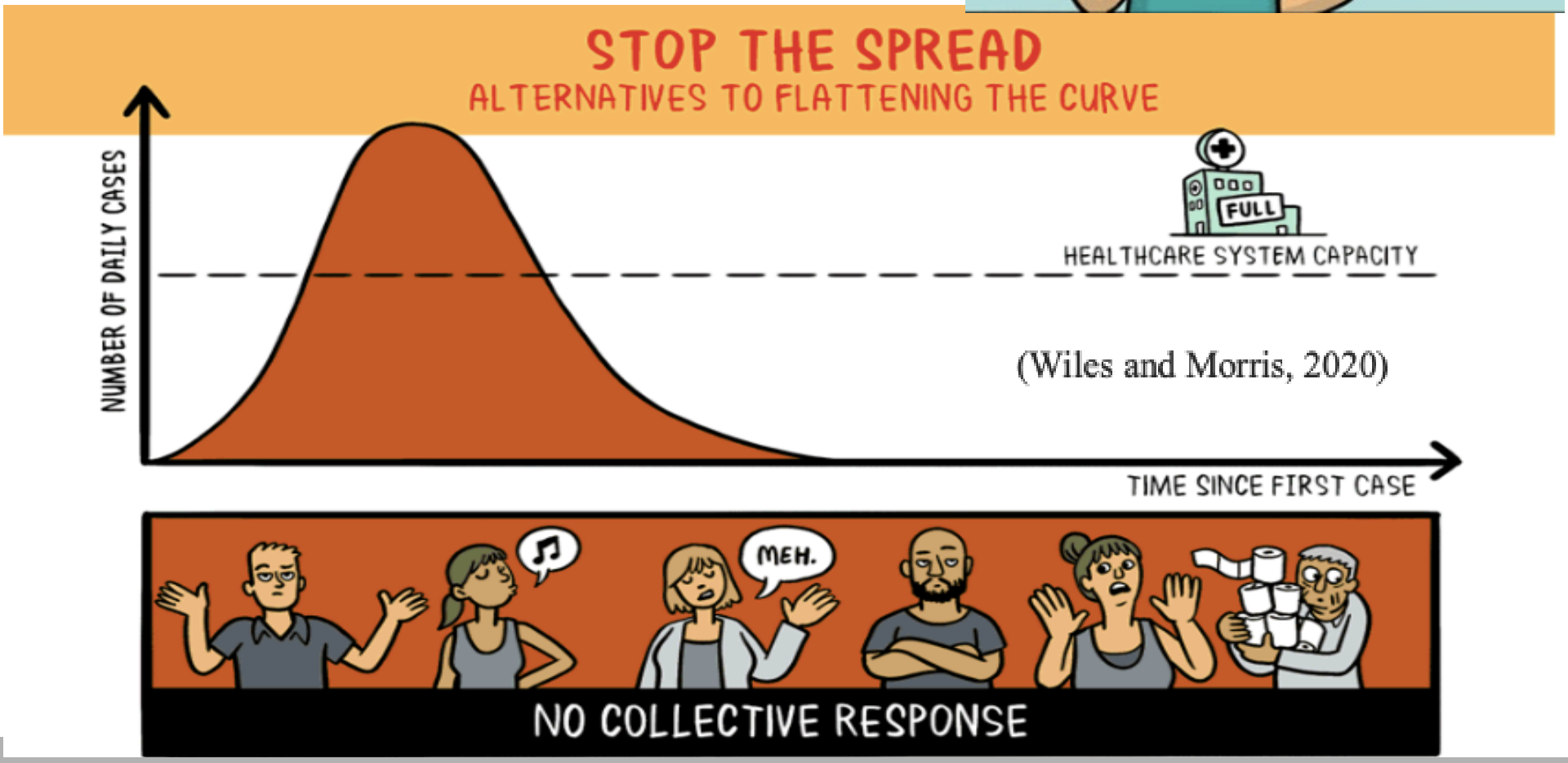


Behavioural changes in people can stop these chains of transmission. Responsible behaviour by one person in the chain can stop a whole series of subsequent infection.

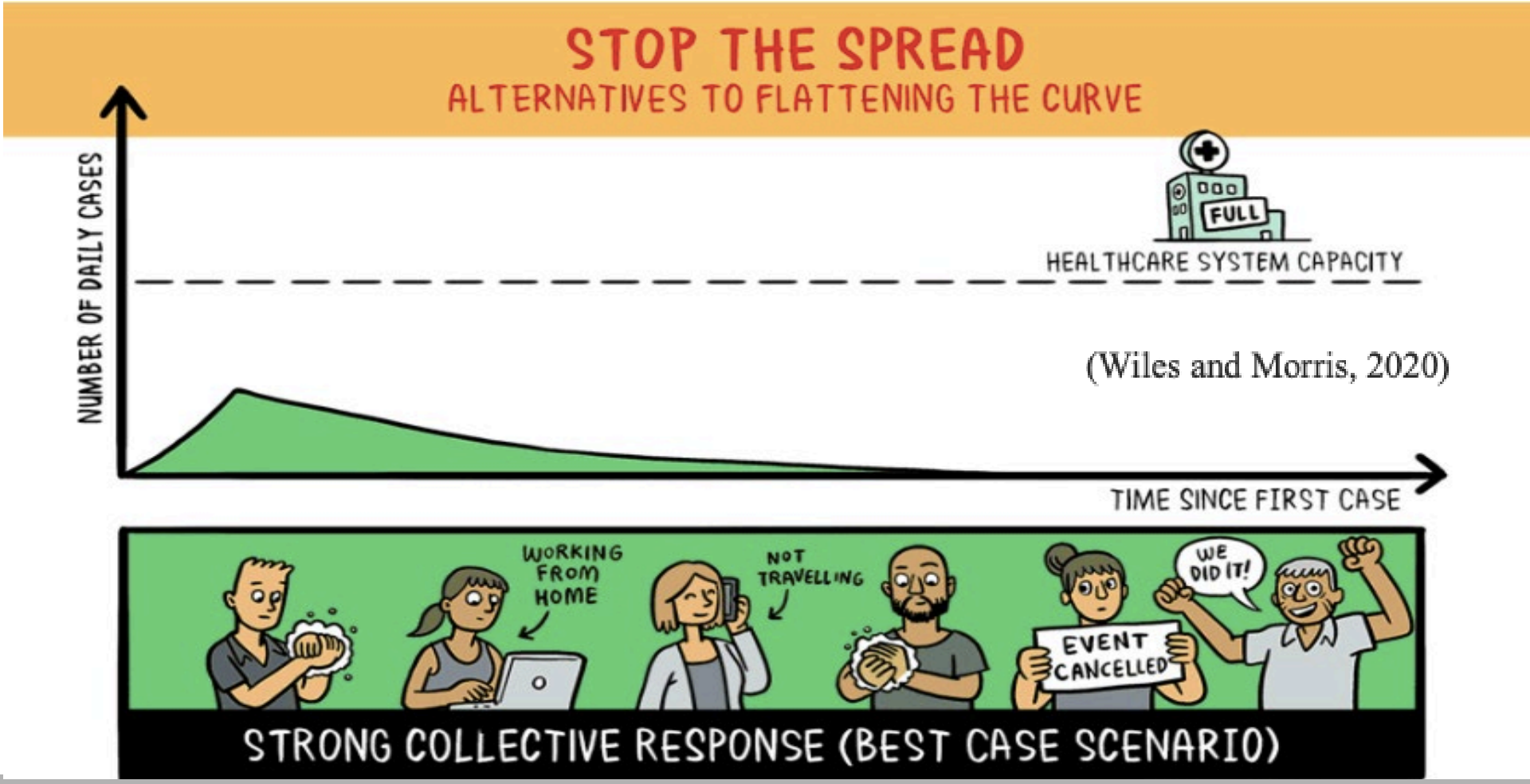


(Wiles and Morris, 2020)

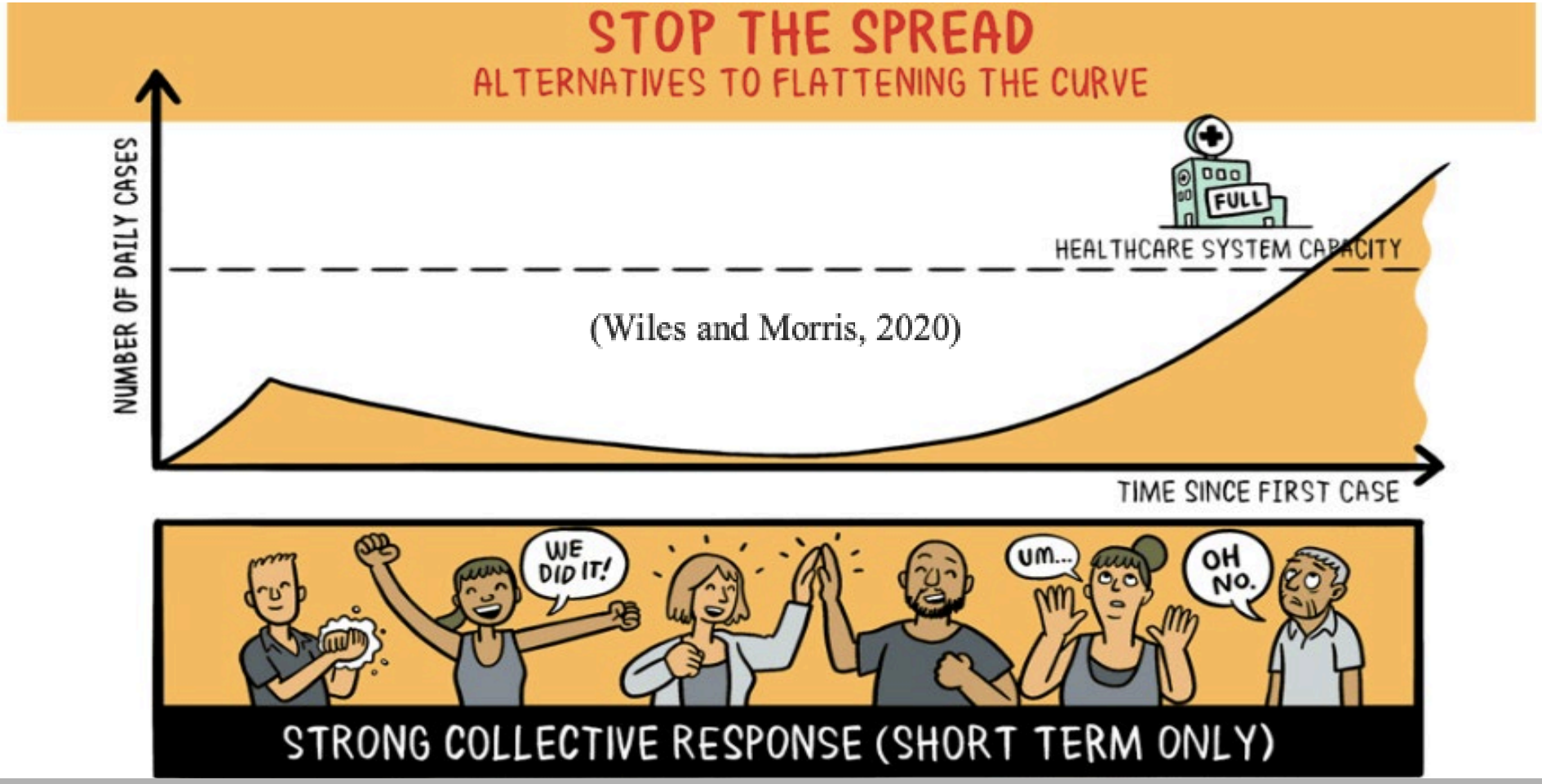
If people take the virus too easy and do not change their behaviour, the number of cases will be too high to manage by healthcare systems.



Flattening the epidemic curve is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is to end the pandemic. It requires a strong collective response.

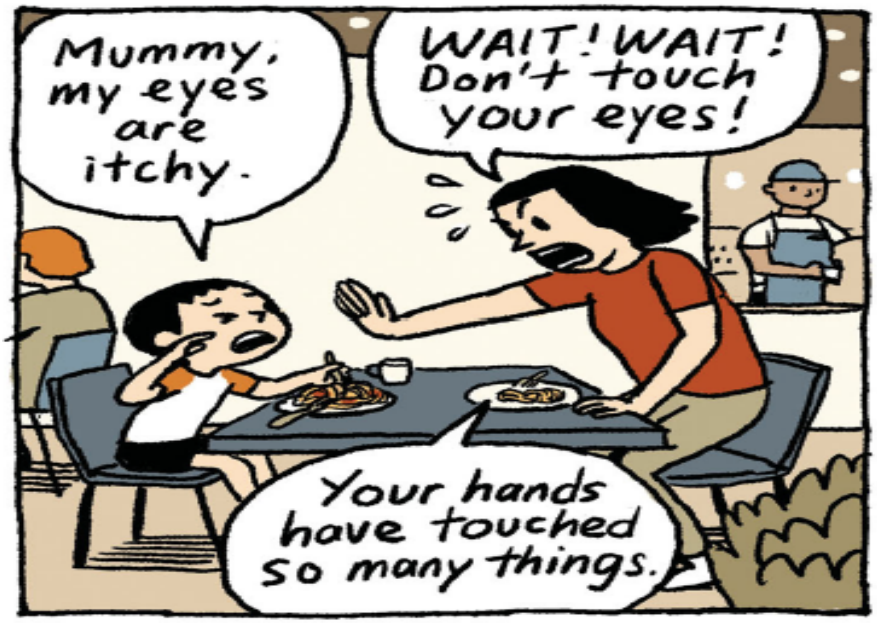


The strong collective response should not be short term only. It will allow the virus to come back with a possibility of exponential spread.



Contact-free greetings as alternate behaviours can reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Washing hands is one of the superpowers to vanquish COVID-19.



Social distancing is key to stopping the spread of virus.

(Kearns, 2020)

Be aware of the droplets.

(Graphic Medicine, 2020)

(Gharib, 2020)

Visual nudges add emotional impact to the message.

Panic buying and hoarding are not the best approaches to wade through the pandemic.

(Kearns, 2020)

It is important to tackle harmful myths about COVID-19 in a simple and clear form.

(Kearns, 2020)

Be courteous and considerate of the COVID-19 protocols.

(Gharib, 2020)

(Venkatesan and Yuvan, 2020)

CONCLUSION

- More informed communities are more receptive to the implementation of the prescribed preventive measures.
- Campaigns of local community groups to inform societal response to the pandemic can play a crucial role in building up voluntary preventive behaviours.
- Visual communication helps people to understand the pandemic and more effectively guides their actions in response to the pandemic.