



Supporting Children and Yourself During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic can make for a very scary and isolating time for children, teens, and adults alike. There are many unknowns and everyone is out of their daily routines. Kids who have experienced previous losses and trauma are especially vulnerable. There are some things you can do to help ease anxiety and stress during this time.

1. Try to establish some type of daily routine.

This does not mean you have to plan minute by minute. Rather, try to set times for meals, activities, and bedtime. Children especially feel more secure knowing what is going to happen each day. Consider using a chalkboard, whiteboard, or even paper to write down the goals or general plan for the day.

2. Reassure children that you are here for them and are doing everything you can to keep them safe and healthy.

Acknowledge that you may not have all the answers but that you will give honest information to their questions.

3. Get moving.

Go outside if you can to walk, run, play, or soak up the sun. Sometimes, going outside may not be possible because of weather, health limitations, or safety. Instead, do some fun movements inside together: Musical chairs, move like your favorite animals together, bang pots and pans in a marching band, do some yoga poses or stretches, have a jumping jack contest, host a dance party... be creative together!

4. Use the coping skills that have worked in the past.

Think of how you and your children have handled big feelings and worries before. Listening to music, art, writing in a journal, making a worry box, talking to a trusted person all are great options. Remind yourself that you and your child have already handled hard stuff before and have the ability and resources to handle this too.

5. Ask for help when you need it.

Whether it is help with providing meals for your family, paying your rent, or you need a friend to talk with, be willing to reach out to get the help you need. If you have a therapist or counselor, ask about remote sessions. Many mental health professionals are offering support via telephone or computer. You can go to your child's school district website to find free breakfast and lunch pick up locations.

6. Limit everyone's social media exposure and screen time when possible.

Watching the news and taking in all the information and misinformation on social media can be too much. Constantly taking in COVID-19 updates can raise our anxiety and is not helpful.

7. Give yourself a break.

Realize that you are not superhuman and cannot perfectly balance all the demands placed on you from work, home, and kids right now. It's okay to stay in pajamas sometimes and eat snacks all day. Take time to slow down if you can and practice gratitude for what you have.

Questions or concerns? Contact us.

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