

SUPPORTING STRESS, EXCESSIVE WORRY AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

Participants Guide

TOPICS WE ARE GOING TO COVER: OBJECTIVES

1. Fears, Excessive Worry and Anxiety
2. Eight Tips on Managing COVID-19 Related Stress
3. Helping Students Cope
4. Supporting Children with Existing Mental Health Challenges
5. Resources/Referrals you can turn



Age Group	Reactions
Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased fear of being alone • Increased bad dreams • Increase in or changes to of loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting • Changes in appetite • Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors
School Age (ages 6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability, whining, aggressive behaviors • Clinging, nightmares • Sleep/appetite disturbances • Physical symptoms (headaches/stomach aches) • Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest • Competition for parent's attention • Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school
Adolescent (ages 13-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical symptoms (headaches/stomach aches/rashes) • Sleep/appetite disturbances • Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy • Ignoring health promotion behaviors • Isolating from peers and loved ones • Concerns about stigma and injustices • Avoiding/cutting virtual school



8 TIPS ON HOW TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

- #1 Remain calm
- #2 Lay a Foundation
- #3 Be Honest & Accurate
- #4 Be Reassuring
- #5 Create a Plan for Safety
- #6 Avoid Blame & Lookout for Stigma
- #7 Stick to Routines
- #8 Be Developmentally Appropriate

Age Group	How to Help
Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and tolerance • Provide reassurance (verbal and physical) • Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling • Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements • Encourage families to plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime • Encourage regular family routines • Avoid media exposure
School Age (ages 6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience, tolerance, and reassurance • Encourage staying in touch with friends through telephone and internet • Regular exercise and stretching • Engage in educational activities (workbook, educational games) • Encourage students to participate in structured household chores • Set gentle but firm limits • Discuss the current pandemic and encourage questions • Encourage expression through play and conversation • Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines • Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard
Adolescent (ages 13-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience, tolerance and reassurance • Encourage continuation of routines • Encourage discussion of pandemic experience with peers, family (but do not force) • Encourage staying in touch with friends through telephone, internet, video games, safely getting together • Encourage participating in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviors • Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school

- Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Make time to unwind
- Remind students to separate what is in their control from what is not
- Help them to create plans to do what helps them feel a sense of safety
- Challenge yourself to stay in the present. Challenge students to stay in the present
- Help students connect with others. Have students talk to people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
- Connect with school resources
- *Practice asking the following questions:*
 - Are you okay?
 - How can I help?
- *If you are concerned about safety:*
 - Are you thinking about killing yourself?
 - Are you thinking about suicide?



RESOURCES

The information presented comes from:

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Centers for Disease Control
- Child Mind Institute
- Unicef
- Effective School Solution Practices

Additional Resources

- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline texting TalkWithUS to 66746
- The Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK
- Autism Response Team 9am to 5pm in all time zones at 1-800-AUTISM2 In Spanish at 1-888-772-9050
- Make a list of local resources
- Effective School Solutions <https://www.effectiveschoolsolutions.com/covid19>

Satisfaction Survey

Your voice matters. Please complete the satisfaction survey by using the link provided or scan the QR code.

To use the QR Code:

Hold your mobile device over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your device's screen. When you correctly hold your device over a QR Code, the phone automatically scans the code and the link to Survey Monkey will appear. Tap the link to start the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PQH2PQF>



“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.”

————— THICH NHAT HANH

