

YOU & The CHILDREN: WHEN YOU ARE ALL AT HOME

Strengthen Self-Care

During these anxiety-provoking times, it's important to remember the tried-and-true anxiety prevention and reduction strategies:

1. Get adequate rest & sleep
2. Exercise regularly (include the kids!)
3. Practice mindfulness
4. Get a dose of NATURE
5. Use relaxation methods when feeling overwhelmed

With Youngsters:

- Help kids understand that if you need to work, they should respect that—their 'job' 'work' 'role' is to be a school student or pre-school child.
- Maintain a schedule much like their normal (school) day as much as possible. Curriculum should be available from your local district (or soon will be). Help children adjust to the new modality, get them organized for a new work mode. ROUTINE & CONSISTENCY are the keys for kids. Changes in routine are stressful for children.
- Have 'recess,' lunch, rest time, nap or quiet reading time for younger kids, afternoon class.
- Help children keep in contact with their friends through telephone, FaceTime, messaging; develop a virtual 'play group' with other families; stay connected to your family & friends as well.
- Good Nutrition prepare family meals.
- Regular Exercise has great health benefits from improving mood to physical to immunity health. It's free, non-toxic and anyone can participate! Home calisthenics (jumping jacks, touch your toes, sit ups, stretching, 'chair dancing' for the older adults, etc.) are great ways to get moving; also, partake in nature walks while keeping a safe distance from others.
- Take a break from media coverage of COVID-19.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.

Children and Anxiety

Children sense the anxiety and stress around them; they need good information (in developmentally appropriate terms). Children need the adults around them to exhibit a calm attitude and provide reassurance about safety & health issues in the context of information they can understand and digest. IF a family member is sick, be honest with children; this is a modern reality and at this acute time is actually a part of life.

It is okay to impart an appropriate level of worry & concern to children, because, of course, we're worried if Grandma is sick! ***How the adult imparts the information and level of anxiety transmitted to the child is what is important.*** To avoid feelings of hopelessness in children, find ways for them to participate in simple chores that are actually helpful to the whole enterprise like folding laundry, keeping their own areas neat & clean, help make reminder signs for sinks that say 'wash your hands,' etc.

Responses from children are dependent on several factors such as the age of the child, their language/comprehension abilities and the developmental level of the child, the presence, severity and type of anxiety disorder(s) or other psychiatric conditions, if there is a prior history of trauma or serious illness of loved ones or the occurrence of other recent stressors or major life events (such as parental divorce, death of loved ones, major move, change of school). ***Children who have other major stressors may need more attention that is specialized.***

Do fun things that mitigate stress with children

This is a great activity for adults and kids to do together: fun & informative, it is a [comic](#) for kids and can be 'acted out. [Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus](#)

Model Calmness, Validate and Listen

And remember that the best form of communication to your youngster is your own behavior.

Useful Links:

[Communicating with Your Child: Active Listening](#)

[Relaxation Techniques For Stress Relief](#)

[Take A Deep Breath](#)