

Psychological support for children and parents coping with Covid-19



Psychological Support for Children Coping with COVID-19

Tips for conversations about COVID-19 with children and young people:

- **Ease your own anxiety first.** Children/young people will follow their parent's example. So remain informed by reliable sources and know when to 'switch off' from news and social media.
- **Learn what the child/young person knows already.** This will inform you as to what information you need to share with them.
- **Have the conversation promptly.** Inform your child about Coronavirus in an age appropriate way (some of the resources below will help with this) and explain the reasoning for changes in daily life e.g. social distancing. However, with younger children it may be more useful to reinforce what to do e.g. wash your hands whilst singing 'Happy Birthday' twice.
- **Be understanding of their concerns and remain empathetic.** Validate the child/young person's concerns and don't dismiss them. Help to mitigate their concerns by providing reassurance.
- **Provide fact-based information and encourage good hygiene.** Sticking to the facts will help to minimise any confusion and this will reinforce the reasoning behind good hygiene.
- **Watch your child's stress levels moving forward.** Changes in a child/young person's behaviour may be as a result of difficulties in expressing their concerns verbally. A tip for dealing with this is remaining present and engaged during conversations and see what the child/young person may be trying to tell you. E.g. are they expressing frustration/ fear/ withdrawing?

Sources: British Psychological Society; verywellmind

Support for Parents

Our top tips for self-isolation with your family (adapted from an article on BBC news)

Our children respond so much to ourselves and our leadership. Especially now when things are being so disrupted. As a parent the best thing to focus on before you go down rabbit holes looking for curriculum is to think about how to support yourself first because you are that bedrock. It's not just the children who may be impacted parents too could find it a challenge. When people are faced with uncertainty or worry, having some certainties, for example through a bit of structure, could really help:

- Children and adults really thrive on predictability, especially when life is changing around them, it's about getting a balance - having a structure and integrating some fun!
- YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE IN SCHOOL TO LEARN!
- Create a daily schedule for school-age children, children will love being involved in this and it will give them some control
- Creating weekly or daily activities and then read the plan out or "stick it on the wall."
- Distinguish weekdays and weekends and have a balance between calm vs active activities (similar to school)
- Have a choice of activities for children to choose from. Creative time, artwork, time in the garden, digging and getting muddy, planting bulbs etc. Focus on ticking off tasks each day
- Display your arts and crafts in a window for others to see when they are walking past
- Draw a map of your local area, workout where friends live, make some postcards and post them through letterboxes
- Give children jobs to do so that they feel part of the routine – get them to wash the car and help them earn extra pocket money
- Accept they are going to watch telly and DVD's because we all do...and we all need it!
- Any schedule should be more like a "flow" - rather than something strict.
- A lot of siblings will not be used to being together all day, and that's a lovely opportunity to build and strengthen your family relationships - but it will come with some bumps in the road
- Maybe Wednesdays have a family film afternoon. Or give teenagers some private time to Skype or WhatsApp their friends
- Contact with the outside world is also vital, as well as exercise, such as going for a walk where you won't bump into anyone. If you are self-isolating after having symptoms, the NHS advises not going for a walk.

For Parent's Sanity!!

- Even just opening a window and taking 10 deep breaths, doing a free three-minute meditation or writing down 10 things you're grateful for
- Limit how much news you're taking in each day e.g. morning news might be better than watching it before bed!
- This is a time we need to prepare for our houses to be a bit messier. Having kids about all day, it's going to get messy

Useful Resources to explain COVID-19's potential impact on mental health:

- This website provides useful information on how mental health might be affected during the coronavirus outbreak and advises how to manage this:
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

Techniques to Cope with Anxiety and Intense Emotions:

SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE GROUNDING

with anxiety + intense emotions

 body lay on the ground, press your toes into the floor, squeeze playdough	 5 senses wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils, make a cup of tea	 self-soothe take a shower or bath, find a grounding object, light a candle
 observe describe an object in detail: color, texture, shadow, light, shapes	 breathe practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8	 distract find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s, say the date

THE GROWLERY

MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY

 **For You**

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

For Kids

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

For Quarantine/Isolation

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

BlessingManifesting

Deep breathing using your hand.



Star Breathing



Coping Strategies for Managing the Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health:



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HOW TO FEEL YOUR FEELINGS:

A THING that SOUNDS OBVIOUS BUT TOTALLY ISN'T.

1. AN UNPLEASANT FEELING ARISES.
2. YOUR MIND Launches into WHATEVER INNER STORY ACCOMPANIES this FEELING

"I'M UNLOVABLE... I'M A LOSER... I RESENT MY FACE"
(JUST FOR EXAMPLE)

STOP! YOU ARE THINKING YOUR FEELINGS.

3. REDIRECT your MIND AWAY FROM THESE THOUGHTS & into the SENSATIONS in your BODY. MENTALLY NAME THEM (my chest is TIGHT etc.)

4. BREATHE INTO the FEELING/SENSATION & ALLOW IT. (RY, SHAKE, etc. (if you're not, like, in Target.))

5. YOUR MIND WILL REALLY WANT to GO BACK into THOUGHT-STORY-MODE. When THIS HAPPENS, REDIRECT your AWARENESS BACK into YOUR BODY.

6. TAKE DEEP BREATHS. KEEP FEELING into your BODY. Let the FEELING EXIST and TRUST that IT WILL LEAVE. OBSERVE IT CHANGING. WATCH IT move. NOTICE that YOU HAVE SURVIVED.

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Surviving isolation

Isolation during COVID-19 can be a stressful time for families. We have produced this guide to help maintain psychological health. Please refer to NHS and Public Health advice for physical health advice



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board

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Prepare:

- Let children know what is happening, encouraging them to think of it as an opportunity to have family time and learn new things
- Avoid fake news and social media – only looking to NHS and Public Health guidelines for advice
- Model and encourage resilience by thinking what you can do, rather than what you can't
- Take time to think about what you will find difficult to cope with, talk to someone you trust and make a plan for support
- Plan as a family and make a daily timetable of activities
- Get contact numbers for family/friends so you and your children can still talk/whatsapp
- Get what you need for family projects in advance: gardening, arts and crafts, projects, DIY, cooking

Daily routines:

- Stick to daily routines, a time to get up and bedtimes are really important
- Get washed and dressed as normal
- Stick to a daily activity timetable
- Eat regularly and at set meal times
- Get exercise and air – open windows, go into the garden, do exercise videos
- Open curtains and windows to get natural light
- Limit screen time
- Try things from the activity list here, mix up the activities by having busy and active times, followed by quieter sitting activities similar to how the school day is structured

Activity list:

- Make a den
- Create new things out of old
- Do school work
- Do some gardening; plant vegetables/flowers to grow in spring
- Spring clean
- Hold a fashion show
- Bake cakes/try a new recipe
- Learn something new: a dance, a skill, a song, a language
- Read a book
- Talk to a friend/family member
- Doodle and draw
- Put on music and dance
- Watch 'Go Noodle', 'Zen Den', 'Joe Wicks workouts' on YouTube
- Look at old photos, make an album
- Listen to audio books/podcasts

Activity list:

- Reminisce about nice family memories
- DIY – do painting, repairs
- Write letters to family/friends
- Paint family portraits
- Look after pets
- Plan and research future adventures
- Have a 'children in charge day' where they are the parents and teach you new things
- Try new hair styles
- Learn a relaxation technique
- Learn and practice mindfulness techniques
- Play board games
- Learn a new card game
- Play musical instruments – make your own!
- Write a story/play you can act out
- Plan and have film nights

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

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Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog. Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight

**BETTER
TOGETHER**



Best of luck