



Helping your  
children **COPE**  
during a Crisis.

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# Addressing our own **EMOTIONS**

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Dealing effectively with our own emotions is essential when working to help those around us. Naming our emotions (labeling)— is an important first step in dealing with them effectively.

- Fear
- Frustration
- Concern
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Panic

Addressing our **own** fears about the emotional distress of the Coronavirus with ourselves and our loved ones is healthy and therapeutic



# A Beacon of Hope...

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Students often rely on the adults in their lives for a variety of different supports:

- Emotional Guidance
- Information
- Comfort
- Acceptance
- Companionship

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events.



# Knowledge is Power

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- Students may need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and about how to avoid infections and spread of disease.
- Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

The background of the slide is a repeating pattern of stylized tropical leaves, possibly palm fronds, rendered in black outlines on a light beige background. The leaves are scattered across the frame, with some pointing towards the center and others pointing outwards.

**STEPS**  
for  
**POSITIVE SUPPORT**

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# Remain Calm....

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- Children react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about the Coronavirus, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your child's anxiety. Be cognizant of your words.
- Remind your children that you and the adults in their lives are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.
- Reassure them that it is ok to be scared, angry, frustrated, worried, etc.



# Make yourself available.

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- Your children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you that you love them, care for them and give them plenty of words of affirmation.



# Avoid excessive blaming.

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- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone or something (e.g. the government, China, the millennials, etc.).
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus or stereotyping who may have the virus.
- Center on solutions and what your children CAN control (their routines, hygiene, etc)
- Avoid focusing on “what if’s” ...





# Adjusting to a “new” normal

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- Exercise and stay physically active
- Limit “screen time”
- Find ways to make alternative connections
- Keep to a regular schedule or set a new schedule
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork (but allow for flexibility)
- Acknowledge their emotions/feelings and the fact that there has been a great deal of change



# Be Honest and Accurate

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- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don't ignore their concerns
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself by washing your hands often.
- It is ok to share factual information with them. We will not cause panic and fear but rather raise awareness on how our students can safeguard themselves.



# Coping Skill

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- SELF SOOTHING (Something to touch, smell, listen to or taste)
- DISTRACTION (Puzzles, Box, Exercise, home projects, music, movies)
- OPPOSITE ACTION (Inspirational, funny)
- EMOTIONAL AWARENESS (Charting our emotions, journaling, art)
- MINDFULNESS- (Grounding ourselves; Mediation, Yoga, Breathing Exercise)
- CRISIS PLAN (Who is your support system)



# Important Tips

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- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media.
- Speak to your children about how many stories about the virus on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in our younger students.
- Encourage your children to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.
- Reassure them that although things are stressful and there are a lot of “unknowns” we will get through this!!!!



# Remember...

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- We all deal with our emotions differently... There is not a right or wrong way! Be vigilant and look for signs that a student may need additional support.
- It is OK not to have all the answers! Many times our children are not looking for an answer but merely need to talk about their feelings and emotions and need your emotional support.
- Our families will be impacted by this crisis in a variety of ways:
  - Health
  - Financial
  - Necessities
- **Be Flexible, Be Kind, Be Supportive, Be YOU!**



# Emotional Support

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- *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: **1-800-985-5990** or text **Talk With Us** to 66746.*
- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-8255***
- DCF's Substance Abuse and Mental Health webpage. Under the title "***Find Local Services by County***", click on a drop-down menu and select the county of residence this will take you to a page with resources for your county.

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/get-help.shtml>