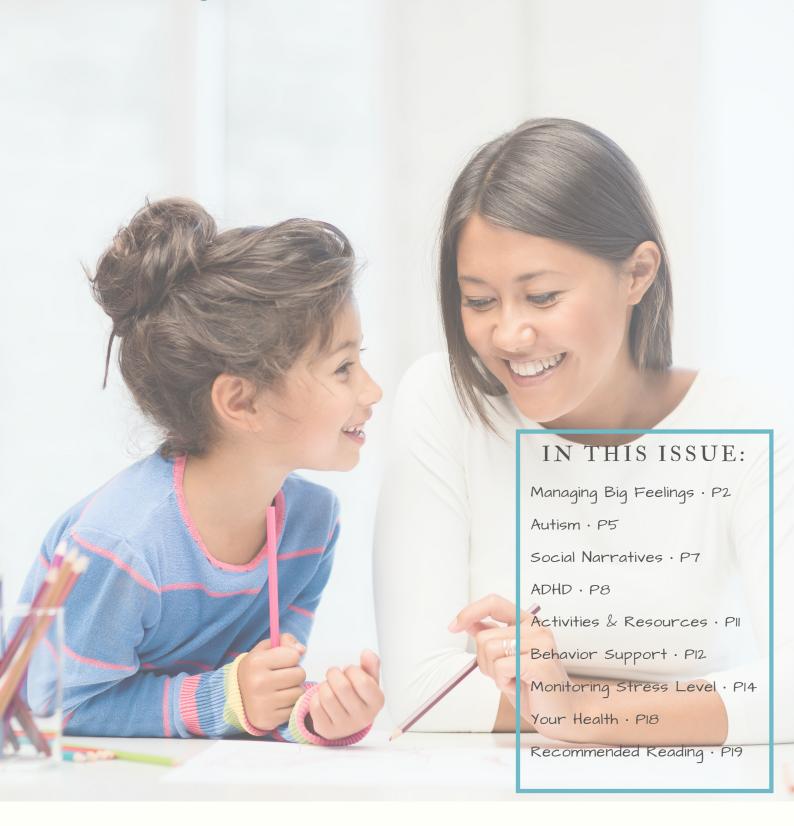


PARTNERING FOR RESILIENCE

Together We Thrive





The outbreak of COVID-19 has presented many of our students with a challenging time. Children may struggle to make sense of all they are seeing and hearing. Additionally, professionals report an increase in insomnia, anxiety, nightmares, and acting out behaviors in children. Whatever changes in mood or behavior take place, it is important for parents to understand that they can help nurture their children's emotional well-being during this time. We want them to know how to feel deeply, to listen to their feelings, respond appropriately, and when to redirect a feeling. If your child seems withdrawn, sad or angry, you may be able to identify a problematic thinking pattern by listening closely. Here are four key styles of negative self-talk.

CATASTROPHIZING

Catastrophizing. One common thought habit is the tendency to jump to the worst-case scenario. Scanning constantly for disaster ahead acts as a huge contributor to anxiety. Catastrophizing often leads kids to avoid people or become reluctant to try new things.

IT'S NOT FAIR!

Interpreting every letdown as a grave injustice – the "it's not fair!" habit – often underlies students' anger and can harm friendships and family relationships.

ZOOMING IN ON THE NEGATIVE

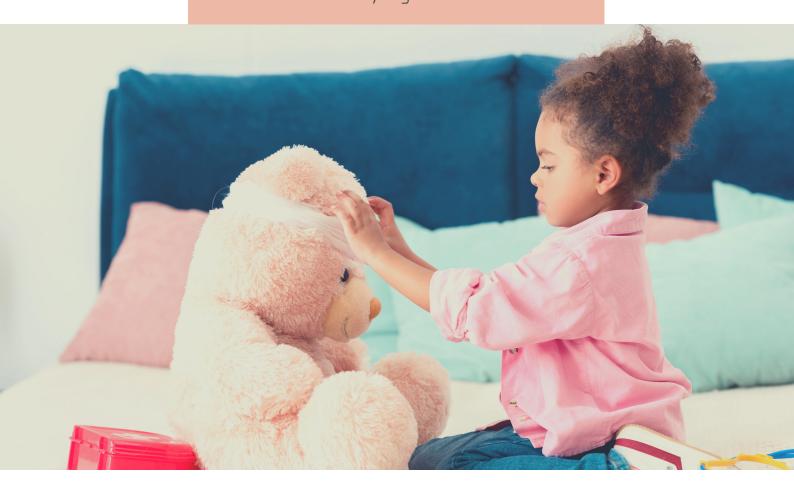
Zooming in on the negative. Ruminating on a disappointment without taking into account the many positive and neutral aspects of one's experience is often associated with sadness and depression.

I CAN'T!

Reacting habitually to difficult situations or to new opportunities with "I can't," rather than "I can try," leads to helplessness. Changing the thought to "I can try!" encourages problemsolving and a willingness to be proactive, to take positive action — both keys to being successful and resilient.

HELPING CHILDREN MANAGE BIG FEELINGS

Strategies to Combat Negative Self Talk in Elementary Age Students



IDENTIFY THE FEELING

Help your child describe the situation and the feeling or feelings that arose as a result of the situation. Empathize with them, and let them know that it is normal to feel what they are feeling.

For example: "You're crying because your brother took your toy away. That made you feel sad. That would make me feel sad, too."

HELP YOUR CHILD CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE VERBAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSE

If your child is sad, allow them to cry until they're done (this may come in waves). If they're angry, allow them to express their anger by using words, jumping, squeezing a pillow, or in another non-destructive way.

For example: "I understand that you are angry. That's okay. It's not okay to hit your brother. How can you show your anger in another way?"

ASSESS YOUR OWN FEELINGS

How do you want to respond to your child's feeling? What does this tell you about yourself or your expectations? Try not to base your immediate response to your child's feeling on your own response to the situation.

For example: Your child throws a tantrum. You feel angry and may want to yell in response. Instead, you pause and describe why your child acted that way. You say something like, "You're angry because mommy said 'Don't touch.' Mommy said this because she loves you and doesn't want you to get hurt." Later, spend some time thinking about why the tantrum bothered you. Did you interpret the tantrum as a negative reflection on you as a parent? Were you annoyed with the noise? Did it remind you of something else?

HELPING TEENS & PRETEENS MANAGE BIG FEELINGS

Strategies to Combat Negative Self Talk in Pre-Teens & Teens



RESPONDING INSTEAD OF REACTING

Teens often feel stressed because they overestimate the difficulty of a situation and underestimate their ability to deal with it. When they avoid a situation, they miss the opportunity to correct that perception and recognize their own strength. Two words that can be helpful in helping keep teens in the driver's seat are: "stinks" and "handle."

That really stinks' is a very simple phrase that cuts right through it. It says, 'I hear you and I'm just going to sit here for a moment and acknowledge that what you are up against isn't that great'. Empathy goes very, very far in helping them contain what is upsetting them. Often, there is no simple solution to a stressor, so the next step may simply be acceptance – acceptance of the situation and of their strength to persist through it. It is the ability to say to yourself, 'This stinks, but this is something I can handle.'

BUILD IN RECOVERY TIME

If teens accept that some level of stress is inevitable, they can spend less time worrying about stress and more time focusing on how they can build in recovery time. Having conversations with stressed-out teens about downtime (time away from news, electronics, etc.) redirects the attention away from the stress and toward the recovery. Students can't always control the stressors in their life, but they can have a say over how they choose to restore themselves.

CHECK NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

For parents, the idea is not to squelch the negative thought. Research has found that attempted 'thought stopping' can actually make the idea stickier. Rather, you want your child to face the thought, thoroughly examine it and replace it with a more realistic and helpful perspective. Questions that you might pose to carefully weigh the evidence include: "You miss seeing your friends right now. What actions can you take to reach out? What would you say to somebody else who worries about this?". A helpful replacement thought might be: "It probably will be a little while before I can see my friends again in person but I can reach out to them through social media and phone calls when I feel lonely."

THE RESTORATIVE POWER OF SLEEP

Sleep deprivation is one of the simplest explanations for the rise in anxiety-related concerns. When we are sleep-deprived, we are less emotionally resilient. When it comes to sleep, small changes can make a big difference. Students often need nine or more hours of sleep a night and should try to stick to a consistent sleep schedule. Additionally, because of the melatonin-suppressing effects of blue light emitted from smartphone screens and other devices, teens are encouraged to turn off social media notifications well before going to sleep. But it's not just the blue light. Teenagers will often see something on social media that will keep them up at night, and if you ask them, they'll usually admit this.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS ON THE

AUTISM SPECTRUM



TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD WITH AUTISM ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

During these uncertain times of social distancing and self-quarantine, anxiety and stress are high for many people. However, youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are particularly prone to distress in response to changes or disruptions in their typical routines. It is important to provide your child with appropriate information about the coronavirus as well as steps (such as social distancing and handwashing and taking care of their hygiene) they can take to protect themselves and others around them. You will find some tips on how to discuss the current situation with your child with autism on the following page.



Have a talk with your child and find out what she or he has already heard about the pandemic. It is important for you, as a parent, to give them the opportunity to describe and share with you what they know and how much they are willing to share with you. It is also important for you to validate their feelings as they want to feel heard. This will definitely create a safe environment and will give you a sense of what they understand and feel about the current situation as well as an opportunity to provide them with appropriate and correct answers. Also, if possible, limit your child's exposure to the news/media reports as they may bring about unnecessary anxiety.

BE CLEAR & DIRECT

Try to use simple and easy language with your child. It is important for them to understand what you are trying to say, and be considerate of your $child's \quad communication \quad (nonverbal \quad vs. \quad verbal,$ cognitive levels to name a few), and use clear and direct language when explaining what CoronaVirus is and what it means to self-quarantine. You want to be honest with them and avoid using any sarcasm or metaphors, especially as it can be confusing to a child with autism.

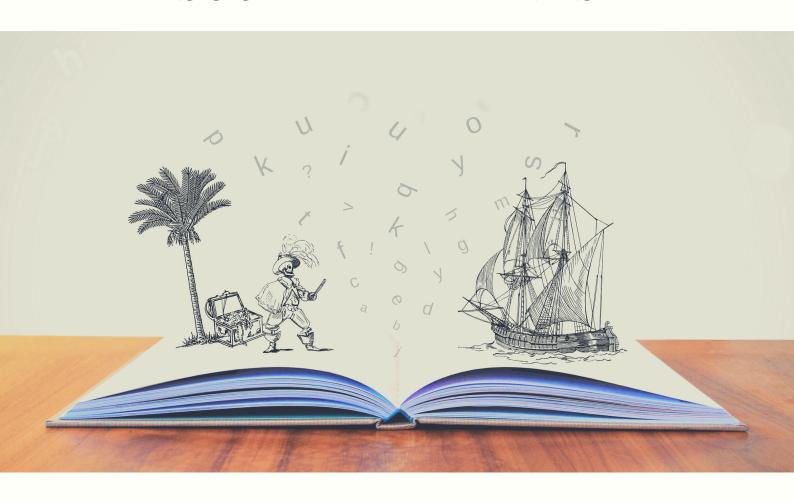
As much as possible, try and monitor your own anxiety and stress. Your anxiety in regards to changes in routine, closing of schools, closing of parks, and having limited access to the outside world is reasonable and understandable. However, if you appear highly anxious to your child, they will most likely sense your anxiety and frustration and you may find it difficult to explain to them the effects of Corona Virus effectively. It may help you if you use some of your own coping strategies and calming skills to manage your anxiety, such as taking deep breaths or going out for a brief walk or talking on the phone with your friend.



VISUAL SUPPORTS

Use visual supports and stories. If you convey information using their preferred method of communication, they will find it helpful and beneficial. Some of the things that could be aided by a visual support or story include explaining what the coronavirus is, how to properly wash hands, why school is closed, rules for social distancing, and the new homeschooling schedule.

SOCIAL NARRATIVES



Individuals on the autism spectrum benefit from receiving information in multiple formats. Therefore, using a social narrative is an effective way to help clarify a situation and possible responses through different text, photos, or the use of technology.

Click on the link below to find several examples of social narratives that have been specifically developed to address issues relating to COVID-19. It is advised that these narratives be read to and with the individual with autism regularly across several days.



UNC FPG Autism Team

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS WITH

ADHD



Families everywhere are struggling to care for (and homeschool!) children cut off from their normal routines and activities during the coronavirus crisis. Kids with ADHD may need extra structure and support to manage attention and behavior challenges and keep on track with learning in this challenging situation. Here are suggestions from ADHD experts for helping kids with ADHD weather this storm:

KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN WITH THE SCHOOL

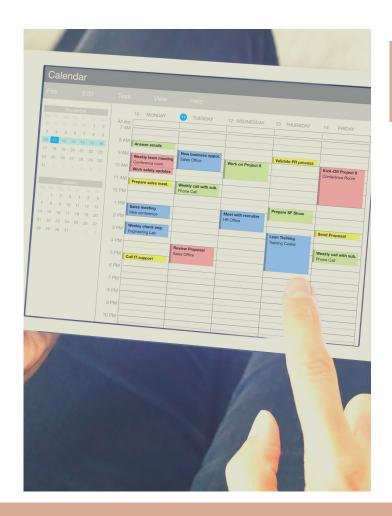
It's important for you to know what supports your child has been getting in the classroom, and how you might maintain continuity at home. Ask teachers and/or school staff how much of a role you should have in keeping your child or teen organized, focused and on task. Frequent and consistent communication with school staff will go a long way in easing this transition for both students and parents. All parents, and especially parents of children with ADHD, should feel comfortable asking questions like:

"What has worked for my child in the past when they needed to focus?"

"How much assistance should I be providing during schoolwork?"

"Who is in charge of monitoring assignment

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ADHD



STRUCTURE THE DAY

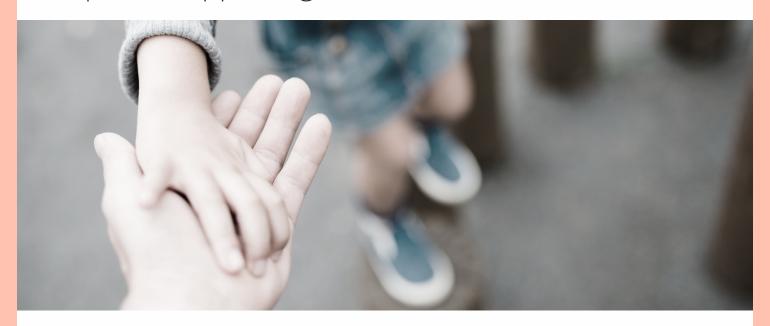
All kids will benefit from structure in this unsettling time, but those with ADHD need it even more. "A child with ADHD often doesn't deal well with uncertainty, long delay of gratification, and not knowing when the activities they will find more rewarding are going to occur," notes David Anderson, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. "So, especially with the younger kids, it's important to have a schedule that's posted somewhere in the home that shows what they're going to be doing at any given time of the day." Instead of thinking of a school day devoted to learning running from 9am to 3pm, it will be good to think in terms of learning bursts, as research shows that children can only really focus and work effectively for 45 minutes at the most. Kids with ADHD in particular benefit when parents are able to set clear expectations in advance for how long each chunk will last and what they are to do in that time period, and then follow up to see if they did the work as expected.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Think about what motivates your kids, our experts suggest, and alternate activities that are less appealing to them - which may include schoolwork — with those they enjoy more. "It will help for parents to stagger the schedule and activities based on less preferred things being followed by highly preferred things," explains Stephanie Lee, PsyD, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. So, if they're expected to do 45 minutes or an hour of work a teacher has sent home, it can be followed by a favorite snack, a walk or playing video games. "With any kid who has a short attention span, you just want to be thinking, how do I pepper in the stuff that's going to be reinforcing for them as the reward for getting the other stuff done?" says Dr. Anderson.



Tips for Supporting Students with ADHD at Home



Use Positive Attention

AND MAKE IT BIG

We know that positive attention is the most powerful motivator we have for influencing children's behavior, and with kids who have ADHD it's helpful to make that attention as powerful as possible. "Kids with attentional and impulse control difficulties need their feedback big, bold, immediate and intense," explains Dr. Lee. When we think about attention, she adds, we shouldn't just be thinking in terms of whether our feedback is negative or positive. We need to think about how long we give the positive attention, how close we are when we give it, how specific we are, and the tone of voice.

USE ATTENTION AS A MOTIVATOR AND REWARD

When everyone in the family is confined to the home, children are going to be seeking their parents' attention a lot, which will be a challenge, especially for parents needing to work remotely. So setting kids up to earn parental attention can be an effective way to get them to focus on school work or activities that they can do independently. As an example, Dr. Lee suggests: "You might let them know, for instance, 'I'm going to be doing work on the computer while you're playing with your Magna-Tiles. And when you're playing with your Magna-Tiles, if you play safely and you don't interrupt,' then we can play Magna-Tiles together." Dr. Lee recommends making that expectation visual. It might be using two drawings of a traffic light and saying, "When Mom is on red, she is not available. She's doing work. But when Mom's on green, it's her chance to play with you." If you have another caregiver in the mix, maybe Dad is on green while Mom is on red, she adds. "It can give parents an opportunity to ration their attention, if you will. Parents often think of a reward as time on the iPad, when what the child really wants most is their attention."

Be Present

WHEN YOU'RE PRESENT

We know many parents are juggling childcare responsibilities with remote work and, when there are two caregivers, often they're trying to work in shifts. Dr. Anderson notes that this strategy only works if kids are convinced that when work time is finished and you step away from the computer that they're actually going to get your attention. So stick to that boundary and avoid checking your phone or email during the moments when you have promised them your undivided attention. "The goal is that when you go back to work, hopefully their gas tank is full to the point where they can sustain themselves for those periods of time where you need to have that call or you need to work."

Don't expect instant success! It's going to take time to figure out how to work best with attention-challenged kids to enable them to really be productive in online schooling. So it's important to manage your own expectations. "It's good to at least keep the bar low at first to kind of get into a rhythm and figure out how this is going to work for everyone," suggests Dr. Anderson. Dr. Anderson also recommends that you think of it as a process of trial and error. If you set an expectation and the child does not meet that expectation, it's good to reframe your goals for the following day to make them a little bit more achievable. You don't want kids to feel like online school is a source of conflict and failure for them — you want them to feel like they are having success.

Related Reading on childmind.org



Activities & Resources for Students at Home



Schools worldwide have closed in response to COVID-19, leaving parents and caregivers scrambling to find daily activities for their children that are educational, creative and entertaining. If you're facing this challenge for the first time, there are many online resources that you can turn to during this uncertain period of self-isolation, social distancing and quarantine. Please see below for some helpful resources.

Khan Academy, a free online learning resource offering lessons, exercises and quizzes, has daily schedules for organizing athome learning for students ages 4 to 18 years. On weekdays, Khan Academy is also offering daily livestreams on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to help parents and educators best utilize the website's tools and resources.

Crash Course is a YouTube channel offering engaging educational videos suitable for high school students. The channel features a wide range of subjects, from anatomy to world history and it can be found very educational for teens.

In response to school closures, many companies that produce educational materials have made their resources available as free subscriptions; you can find links on the Kids Activities website. Links to free K-12 educational resources such as audiobooks, e-books, videos, multimedia materials and more are also available on the **Open Culture website.**

Head of the Class: Scholastic launched a Learn at Home website with daily lessons that combine videos, stories and prompts for drawing and writing activities. Grade levels include pre-K and kindergarten, grades 1 and 2, grades 3 to 5, and grades 6 and up.

PBS KIDS and PBS LearningMedia are offering tools to help support learning at home, including educational videos and games from favorite series, and related skill-building offline activities.

Subscribe to **Time Magazine's Time for Kids** for elementary and middle school students, digital subscriptions are free for the duration of the school year. This is the first time that the magazine is fully accessible at home so take advantage of this great subscription!



8 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

- 1. Keep Your Expectations Realistic
- 2. Plan Ahead
- 3. Clearly State your Expectations in Advance
- 4. Offer Limited, Reasonable Choices
- 5. Use "When...Then" Statements
- 6. Catch Your Child Being Good
- 7. Stay Calm
- 8. Use Neutral Time

Click on the link for examples on how to implement each tip: *Positive Solutions For Families*

MODELING BEHAVIORS & REWARDS

Bring Out The Best In Your Children- Provides brief information on the importance of modeling behaviors, providing reinforcement (implementing a reward system), how to give your child instructions, and children's behavior after a traumatic event.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)

When events disrupt normal routines, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a highly effective way to build children's social-emotional-behavioral skills and reduce challenging behaviors in the home setting. Click on the following links for recommendations on how to use PBIS at home.

Supporting Families with PBIS

Encouraging Positive Behavior

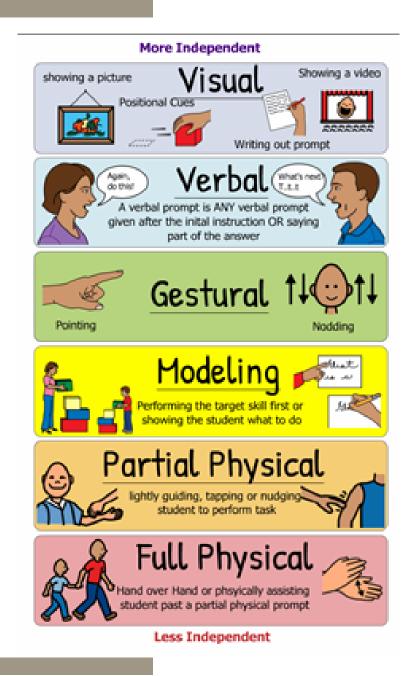
MANAGING AND EXPRESSING ANGER APPROPRIATELY DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME



<u>https://www.crisisprevention.com/CPI/media/Media/download/PDF_Parent-Manage-Anger.pdf?code=EBIT01MAP&src=Resources</u>

PROMPTING HIERARCHY

A prompting hierarchy orders the level of prompting based on how intrusive the prompt is. Our goal as educators and parents should be to use least intrusive prompts, whenever possible, to support and build our child's independence. At the top of this image are the least intrusive prompts, and at the bottom are the most intrusive prompts.





ADDITIONAL TOOLS/APPS

Timers to use with kids to help with focus and scheduling https://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/

Apps with Timers

Flora (free)- watch a tree grow every time you start the timer and do not look at your phone

Focus (free)- tracks your progress, suggests timed breaks, syncs to smart watches, provides motivational quotes

Reinforcer Checklist

 $\underline{https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Reinforcer-Checklist-3360719}$



MONITOR YOUR STRESS LEVEL

Parents, acknowledge your own feelings of anxiety, fear or sadness during this time of crisis.

Take the time to talk to friends, family members or other trusted people that are part of your life since the 'Coronavirus Crisis' is evoking a lot of feelings as it is life-changing in many ways, albeit only on a temporary basis. However, although it is normal to be feeling overwhelmed during this challenging time, if feelings persist and are interfering with your everyday functions, it might be advisable to seek out mental health services.

Despite your level of anxiety and/or worry, remember that, as parents, it is okay to let your children know that you are upset, while also letting them know that you believe things will get better. Furthermore, past experiences lead us to believe that we can more easily support our children during crisis situations when we are able to express our own emotions in a productive manner. As role models, it is part of our responsibility to work through our own feelings so that we can be more present and helpful in lessening our children's anxiety and fears.

5 Senses

For Stress Reduction

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you have only a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.





WHAT ARE THINGS YOU CAN SEE?

Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on the wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knickknack in the corner of a room.



WHAT ARE THINGS YOU CAN FEEL?

Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.



THINGS YOU CAN HEAR?

Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

WHAT ARE



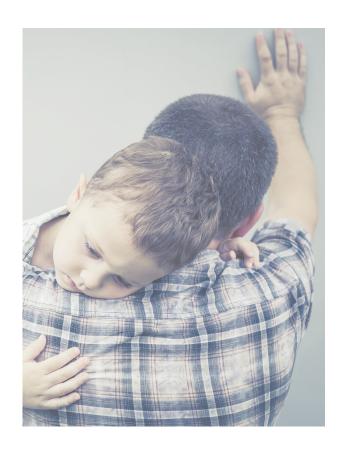
THINGS YOU CAN SMELL?

Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing trash can or sewer.



THING YOU CAN TASTE?

Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.



The numbers for each sense are only a quideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

STAYING SANE WHILE PRACTICING 'SOCIAL DISTANCING'

As everyone adjusts to their new reality of having children at home 24/7, sometimes working remotely from home, possibly losing a job, and practicing social distancing, stress and anxiety are likely to increase. It is important for parents to recognize that, in addition to caring for their children, they need to also care for themselves. Hopefully, the following tips can help alleviate some of the stress:

CREATE A SCHEDULE FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Creating a schedule will give some structure to the day. Schedules provide children with predictability and increase a sense of security. This will reduce stress in the home. When creating a schedule, have your kids make it with you. If they have input, they will be more likely to follow the schedule. Make sure to include fun breaks in the schedule.

LIMIT WATCHING, READING, OR LISTENING TO NEWS STORIES ABOUT COVID-19

While keeping informed is important, too much repeated information can increase anxiety and stress.

IF WORKING FROM HOME, CREATE A WORKSPACE FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR CHILDREN

By creating a workspace for yourself and for your children, you can limit distractions when trying to work from home. If your children interrupt you when you are trying to work, you can set a timer for them, so they know when they can come into your space.

LIMIT MULTI-TASKING

Don't try to do too much at once. Try to focus on one thing at a time. Prioritize and don't be hard on yourself If you are not able to get everything done. Do remember to congratulate yourself for getting through the day.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE BREAKS AND TAKE SOME TIME FOR YOURSELF

Get some fresh air and sunshine, and do calming activities such as taking a walk, listening to music, watching a favorite show, playing a game with the kids.



Since many of us feel a lack of control and certainty about the current crisis. This clearly sets the stage for much of the anxiety we feel. Therefore, it is helpful to distinguish between things that we can control versus those we cannot, as described below.

I CAN NOT CONTROL

If others follow rules for social distancing

The actions of others

Predicting what will happen

Other people's motives

The amount of supplies, food and provisions that stores carry

How others react

How long this will Last



I CAN CONTROL

My positive, 'can-do' attitude

Finding fun and meaningful things to do at home for all of us

My own social distancing and health precautions

My outlook and overall attitude about the whole situation

Keeping myself healthy, nourished, well-rested and physically OK

My role-modeling for how my kids observe my response and coping with this.

How much attention I give to the news and social media

Relax to Relieve Stress

Set aside some time during the day that is only for you. Since we know that 'chronic stress' can affect one's general health and immune functions, we need to learn to relax. The following are some ways to keep yourself calm and, relatively stress free: deep breathing; warm baths, exercise, work on a hobby, playing an instrument or listening to music; dancing, reading a book or watching a T.V. show that you enjoy (not the news). Also, there are classes that one can now take on-line which are free of charge...a good website to visit is "Skill Share" where you can learn to paint, take a photography class and learn about other leisure activities or hobbies which you may have never considered.



NUTRITION

Eating right may lower your chance of developing a chronic disease. There are many articles and books written about 'eating right to stay healthy.' Also this could be a time for you to learn more about the nutrients in various foods and the medicinal value in the many herbs that we use in cooking. This is a good time to try out some of the more exotic recipes that you always wanted to try but were always, too busy to do so. You do not have to buy books on these topics because there is so much on line to choose from. Get your children to help plan these meals. Also, telling them about the culture of those countries could turn out to be a lesson in Social Studies.



MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

Exercise

Do not feel that because you currently cannot work out at a gym, or take the dance or yoga lessons that you usually do, that you should wait until 'social distancing' is behind us before you resume your physical activities. Keep in mind that every system in our body - circulatory, respiratory, digestive, nervous, skeletal and muscular - works at top efficiency when we exercise.

On 'You Tube,' one can find videos for all types of exercise programs, from stretching, to yoga to cardio and from the 'novice level' to 'workouts for experts.' There is something for everyone. However, if you have never participated in an exercise program on a regular basis and always wanted to do so, this may be a good time to think about that or else just start by 'walking around the block in your area,' if that is safe to do. Walking is a particularly good way to start getting in shape since it does not require special equipment nor does it entail learning a new skill. Start easy, say, walking at a good pace for fifteen minutes or so a day, then gradually increasing both speed and distance as you begin feeling more fit. Then you can add stretching and strength training for a more complete workout.

SLEEP

Try and get a 'Good Night's Sleep - Benefits of Getting a Full Night's Sleep

- Sleep Can Boost Your Immune System.
- Gaining Zzz's Can Help Prevent Weight Gain.
- Sleep Can Strengthen Your Heart.
- Better Sleep =Better Mood.
- Sleeping Can Increase Productivity.
- Lack of Sleep Can Be Dangerous.
- Sleep Can Increase Exercise Performance.
- Sleep Improves Memory.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Power of Now

ECKHART TOLLE

Best Selling Author & Renowned Spiritual Leader Teaches us to 'Live in the Moment'

You can read his book or listen to his video on YouTube, where he talks about living in the moment rather than thinking negative thoughts such as a lot of the "what if's" of our current situation. Being realistic is fine, but according to Eckhart Tolle, worrying about situations that have not yet happened takes away the possibility of experiencing the joy of the present moment and causes us to live in fear.

ECKHART TOLLE REMINDS US

The most precious thing in the world is the present moment.

Wherever you go, ensure that you are there, 'totally.'

Say yes to the present with the purpose of focusing on positive things rather than negative.

Don't complain, adapt.

Let go of your past so that it does not ruin your present or your future.

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^{*}APA formatting was used as it is consistent with the field of behavioral and social sciences.