

CHILDREN & FAMILIES COVID 19

WHAT CAN HELP?

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OBJECTIVES

- IDENTIFY STRESSORS AND POTENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN OUR PATIENTS
- LEARN SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS THAT ARE MOST WORRYING
- LEARN TECHNIQUES AND THINGS CAN HELP MITIGATE STRESS AND ANXIETY
- PROVIDE HELPFUL RESOURCES

ESTABLISHING NEW LIFE-STYLES

**WE'VE ALL HAD TO DEVELOP NEW WAYS OF DOING EVERYTHING
AND RAMPED UP BEING:**

- **ROLE MODELS**
- **ESTABLISHING NEW ROUTINES**

PITFALLS

- **AVOID TOO MUCH NEWS** FOR KIDS; ADULT MIGHT CRAVE UPDATES AFTER WORKING OR BEING BUSY EVERY DAY---CHILDREN SHOULD AVOID TOO MUCH NEWS & IT SHOULD ALWAYS BE AGE & DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL APPROPRIATE
- **WATCH THE NEWS WITH YOUR CHILD.** ASK THE CHILD WHAT HE/SHE HAS HEARD AND WHAT QUESTIONS HE/SHE MAY HAVE. **LISTEN...**

PITFALLS

- **PROVIDE REASSURANCE REGARDING CHILDREN'S SAFETY** IN SIMPLE WORDS, EMPHASIZING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE THERE TO KEEP HIM/HER SAFE.
- WATCH FOR **SIGNS THAT THE NEWS MAY HAVE TRIGGERED FEARS OR ANXIETIES** SUCH AS TROUBLE **SLEEPING, PERSISTENT FEARS, BEDWETTING, CRYING, OR TALKING ABOUT BEING AFRAID**

PITFALLS

CHILDREN WILL KEY EMOTIONAL STATES FROM ADULTS

- **AVOID SHARING TOO MUCH EMOTION** WITH CHILDREN (BUT, OF COURSE WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT GRANDMA & WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP HER...)
- **DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR OWN STRESS**, SO YOUR KIDS CAN KNOW IT WORKS--- YOU BEING IN CONTROL, HELPS KIDS FEEL SAFE

PITFALLS

- PARENTS CAN FEEL MORE 'IN CONTROL' BY GETTING INVOLVED IN LOCAL SCHOOL DECISION MAKING AS NEW PLANS ARE BEING MADE
- SCHOOL OFFICIALS SHOULD KNOW HOW PARENTS FEEL AND THINK ABOUT SCHOOL SESSIONS
- SEEK PROFESSIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE IF NEEDED (PCP)

DIFFERENT STAGES DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

- **PRE-SCHOOLERS:** NEED REASSURANCE FOR SAFETY; INVOLVE THEM **IN LEARNING HAND-WASHING TECHNIQUE AND SURFACE WIPING**
- **EARLY ELEMENTARY:** BRIEF, SIMPLE HEALTHY INFO; REASSURANCE THAT ADULTS ARE KEEPING THEM SAFE; SAFETY TECHNIQUES
- **MID-ELEM:** MORE QUESTIONS: ANSWER HONESTLY & DIRECTLY; HELP TO LEARN FACTS & DISTINGUISH RUMORS AND FANTASY FROM FACT
- **TEEN—HIGH SCHOOLERS:** REFER THEM TO RELIABLE DATA SOURCES ENGAGE IN DECISION MAKING AND SCHEDULING

ADOLESCENTS & TEENS: HIGHER RISK

PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR TEEN IN FOLLOWING WAYS:

- **MONITOR IF STRESS** IS AFFECTING THEIR TEEN'S HEALTH, BEHAVIOR, THOUGHTS, OR FEELINGS
- **LISTEN CAREFULLY** TO TEENS AND WATCH FOR OVERLOADING; CHECK FOR SELF-HARM IF ISOLATING
- **LEARN, MODEL STRESS MANAGEMENT** SKILLS
- **SUPPORT INVOLVEMENT IN** EXERCISE AND OTHER **PRO-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**
(ZOOM-ING WITH FRIENDS)

FEAR AND ANXIETY

- A FEELING OF BEING IN **CONTROL** CAN DISSIPATE ANXIETY & FEAR
- KIDS CAN BE INVOLVED IN UNDERSTANDING THAT **SAFETY MEASURES ARE A WAY TO COMBAT FEAR**
- **MAKE A GAME OUT OF IT**; RULES CAN CHANGE AS FAMILY LEARNS (MINI PRIZES FOR WHOMEVER WASH HANDS TOGETHER; WHATEVER YOU CAN MUSTER)
- **EXPLAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING & WHY IT IS IMPORTANT—**
- **PRACTICE WEARING MASKS AND STAYING APART AT HOME TO PREPARE FOR RE-ENTRY---**
DESPITE IT BEING SERIOUS, WE CAN MAKE A GAME OUT OF IT FOR KIDS.

MENTAL HEALTH WORRIES

HIGHER RISK IF:

- **PRIOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**; KIDS WITH **DISABILITIES**; OTHER RELATIVES THAT NEED CARE
- **PRIOR TRAUMA**
- **FAMILY INSTABILITY**
- **LOSSES, NEW TRAUMA**
- **SOME WOMEN & CHILDREN HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN ABUSIVE SITUATIONS**
(KNOW THE RESOURCES IN YOUR AREA THAT ARE HELPFUL; SEE RESOURCES)

MENTAL HEALTH WORRIES

- **PRE-SCHOOLERS:** REGRESS, THUMB-SUCKING; BED-WETTING, CLINGING, SLEEP PROBLEMS, FEAR OF DARK, APPETITE CHANGES, WITHDRAWAL
- **ELEM. AGE:** IRRITABILITY, AGGRESSIVENESS, SCHOOL AVOIDANCE, POOR CONCENTRATION, WITHDRAWAL, ISOLATION
- **ADOLESCENTS:** CHANGES IN SLEEPING & EATING, INCREASE IN CONFLICTS, PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS, UNMOTIVATED, DELINQUENCY, POOR CONCENTRATION.

GOOD FOR ALL OF US ALL THE TIME

- EXERCISE AND EAT A **REGULAR GOOD DIET**.
- HAVE A GOOD SLEEP ROUTINE AND **GET ENOUGH SLEEP**
- **AVOID EXCESS CAFFEINE:** CAN INCREASE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND AGITATION.
- **AVOID DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE, INCLUDING TOBACCO: THESE ARE HEALTH-HARMFUL MALADAPTIVE COPING MECHANISMS.**
- LEARN **RELAXATION EXERCISES** (ABDOMINAL BREATHING AND MUSCLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES--- GO TO THE INTERNET...)

NEW SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

- **DEVELOP ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING SKILLS** FOR EXAMPLE, STATE FEELINGS IN POLITE, FIRM, AND NOT OVERLY AGGRESSIVE OR PASSIVE WAYS: ("I FEEL ANGRY WHEN YOU YELL AT ME." "PLEASE STOP YELLING." "PLEASE MOVE FARTHER AWAY FROM ME FOR SAFETY")
- **REHEARSE AND PRACTICE SITUATIONS WHICH CAUSE STRESS.** ONE EXAMPLE IS TO PRACTICE SAFETY SKILLS WITH KIDS: WEARING A MASK; WASHING HANDS; COUGHING INTO ELBOWS, CLEANING SURFACES
- **LEARN PRACTICAL COPING SKILLS.** FOR EXAMPLE, BREAK A LARGE TASK INTO SMALLER, MORE ATTAINABLE TASKS. DECREASE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK: CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS - WITH ALTERNATIVE, NEUTRAL, OR POSITIVE IDEAS: INVOLVE THE KIDS IN PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

NEW SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

- GIVE YOURSELF, YOUR PARTNER AND CHILDREN **A BREAK**
- **FIGURE OUT SOMETHING FUN!!**
- THIS IS **HARD FOR EVERYONE**; EVERYONE CANNOT BE AS STRUCTURED AS WE WISH; **DEVELOP TOLERANCE**
- BE POLITE; **BE KIND** AND TEACH CHILDREN AND OTHERS HOW TO **BE POSITIVE AND PROBLEM SOLVE**; **DEVELOP RESILIENCE**
- **RE-INFORCE NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION** TECHNIQUES (LESS STRESS THAN CONFLICT!!)

RESOURCES

- **FOOD BANKS:**

[HTTPS://WWW.NEEDHELPPAYINGBILLS.COM/HTML/NEWARK_FOOD_BANKS_AND_PANT
RIES.HTML](https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/newark_food_banks_and_pant_ries.html)

TIPS FOR FAMILIES: [HTTPS://WWW.CHILDCARENJ.GOV/CHILD-CARE-FOR-COVID-19/ESSEX](https://www.childcarenj.gov/child-care-for-covid-19/essex)
(CHANGE COUNTY TO SUIT)

- [HTTPS://WWW.NJ.GOV/DCF/CORONAVIRUS_FAMILIES_YOUTH.HTML](https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus_families_youth.html)

- VISIT THE [NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE EXTERNAL ICON](#) OR CALL 1-800-799-7233 AND TTY 1-800-787-3224; [HTTPS://WWW.WOMENSHELTERS.ORG/CO/NJ-ESSEX](https://www.womenshelters.org/co/nj-essex)

RESOURCES

- [HTTPS://WWW.NJ.GOV/DCF/CORONAVIRUS.HTML](https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus.html)
- ARC RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES WITH MEMBERS WITH **DISABILITIES**
- [:HTTPS://THEARC.ORG/COVID/?UTM_SOURCE=CC&UTM_MEDIUM=EMAIL&UTM_CAMPAIGN=FUSION](https://thearc.org/covid/?utm_source=cc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=fusion)
- CALM.COM
- THERE ARE LOTS OF **KID-FRIENDLY CARTOONS** FOR KIDS ABOUT COVID 19 ON INTERNET
- VIDEO: [HTTPS://DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM/FILE/D/1 YS6F-6SDPB4HSEIUOVYHDF LA BC488/VIEW](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YS6F-6SDPB4HSEIUOVYHDFLA/BC488/view)