

Healthy Coping During COVID

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Overview

- Effects of COVID on Families
- Screen Time
 - How much?
 - Tech Tips
- Anxiety/Depression
 - Typical vs. When a concern
 - Mindfulness
- Socializing
 - Family and friends
- Quotes
- Questions
- Resources

Opening Question: In what ways has COVID affected your family? How has your family coped with these changes?

Effects of COVID on Families

- Psychological
 - Worry
 - Fear
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
- Social
 - Quarantine
 - Loneliness
 - Isolation
- Educational
 - Distance Learning
 - Motivation
- Financial
 - Job Loss



Tech Tips for Families



Limit Screen Time

- Create moments without the intense pace of information coming at us - news is stressful right now
- Create breaks to assess the impact - “feeling when we forget our phone”
Can we leave the screens?
- Screen Free Zones in the house (bedroom most important)
- Have kids write by hand, helps with memory
- Incorporate natural surroundings and movement when possible

“Boredom” is Important

- Kids can’t be creative when mind is overstimulated
- We need moments to “be still”
- Meditation/Mindfulness can help with our attention span

Transitions Away from Technology

- Set the example
- Firm boundaries for screen time (incorporate their ideas in the plan)
- Time between getting away from screen and doing chores, homework, etc.

Anxiety - Reducing the Worry

Help kids realize worry is normal

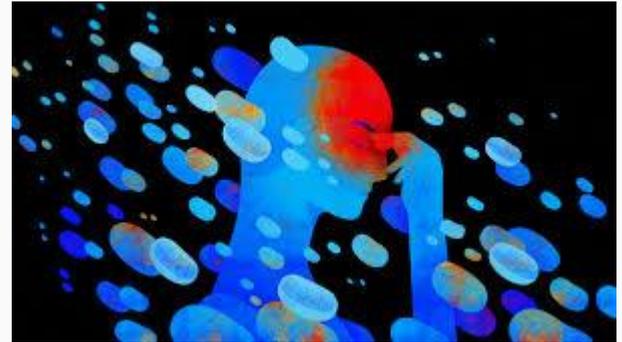
- You are not alone
- It's ok to feel what you are feeling - lots going on right now
- We will never get rid of all worries
- Model appropriate response - kids take cues from parents

Stop Thought Tornadoes and Catastrophic Language

- “Are you making this bigger than it is?”
- “What is the worst that can happen?” and “what is the likelihood the worst happens?”
- Ask open ended questions “tell me more” or “what helps your worry?”

Help Teach Problem Solving

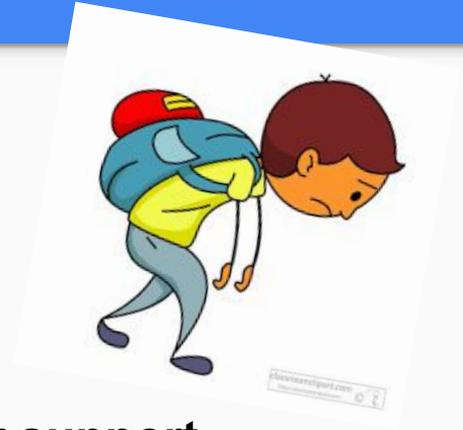
- Identify the problem, what's causing the stress? - Covid-changes in normal routines, news, elections?
- Set a goal with a plan to reach - Reaching the goal helps build confidence
- Problem solving vs. continuing to worry - is it helpful to worry about things we can't control?
- Create a list of coping skills that help - different things work for different kids



When Does Anxiety Become a Concern?

Does it interfere with Daily Life and Functioning?

- school work
- avoidance/refusal of school or other activities
- frequent complaints of illness



If yes, then very appropriate to seek outside counseling for support

Anxiety - GAD (criteria for mental illness diagnosis)

excessive worry more than 6 months hard to control the worry

3+ Symptoms: on edge keyed up easily fatigued irritability tension sleep issues

Children often may start with high anxiety and can move into depression, common to see together - **presents differently in different students**

Depression

Symptoms

- Feeling negative/worthless
- Sadness/anger
- Loss of interest in normal activities- impacts daily functioning
- Decreased energy, increased fatigue
- Poor performance or attendance in school
- Irregular sleep/eating habits
- Hard to diagnosis in teens

Causes

- Chemistry/Hormones
- Genetic traits
- Learned patterns of thought -irrational beliefs
- Trauma



Depression

What Parents Can Do

- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Talk to your kids - don't discount feelings
- Provide safety and security
- Teach thinking and coping skills
- Know when to seek help



Mindfulness



- Being Aware of the Present Moment
- Mind - Body Connection
- Mindfulness with Kids/Teens
 - Not as intuitive
 - Can become intuitive (practice will turn into habits)
 - Different ways to practice
 - Set a goal to encourage kids

[Mindfulness Resources](#)

Socializing

- Parents
 - Extra time and attention
 - If separated (e.g. hospitalization, work travel), make a plan to stay in touch
 - It's okay to say no
 - Keep an ongoing conversation about gatherings
- Peers
 - Connect through technology
 - Strike a balance
 - If gatherings do happen, make sure everyone is on the same page
- Grandparents
 - Connect through technology
 - Find ways to safely teach regarding technology
 - Letters
 - Holidays may be difficult

Overall Protective Factors:

- Being responsive
- Emotional support
- Exercise
- Mindfulness
- Socializing

“Tough times never last, but tough
people do.”

- Robert Schuller

“If you don’t like something, change it; if you can’t change it, change the way you think about it.”

- Mary Engelbreit

Questions?

Thanks!

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Resources

Spark and Stitch

- [Do Screen Time Rules Matter in a Pandemic?](#)
- [Ways to Stay connected during Stressful Times](#)
- [Social Media and Mental Health](#)

[CDC Guidance](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[RTOR.ORG](#)