

# Finding Calm in the CHAOS

*"Most young kids will remember how their family home felt during the coronavirus panic more than anything specific about the virus. Our kids are watching us and learning about how to respond to stress and uncertainty. Let's wire our kids for resilience, not panic." —Unknown*

## OUR BODIES

- ◆ Headaches or other pains
- ◆ Stomachaches or diarrhea
- ◆ Appetite changes
- ◆ Sweating or having chills
- ◆ Tremors or muscle twitches
- ◆ Being easily startled

## OUR BEHAVIOR

- ◆ Change in activity levels
- ◆ More irritable or argumentative
- ◆ Difficulty sleeping or relaxing
- ◆ Frequent crying
- ◆ Excessive worrying
- ◆ Wanting to be alone most of the time
- ◆ Blaming others for everything
- ◆ Difficulty communicating or listening
- ◆ Difficulty giving or accepting help
- ◆ Difficulty enjoying fun activities

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF STRESS

*Our brains find uncertainty to be highly stressful, which may show in all kinds of ways.*

## OUR THOUGHTS

- ◆ Trouble remembering things
- ◆ Feeling confused
- ◆ Trouble concentrating or thinking clearly
- ◆ Difficulty making decisions

## OUR EMOTIONS

- ◆ Being anxious or fearful
- ◆ Feeling depressed
- ◆ Feeling guilty
- ◆ Feeling angry
- ◆ Feeling invulnerable
- ◆ Not caring about anything
- ◆ Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

*This is new for all of us, but we are better together. There is bravery in the ability and willingness to adapt.*

- ◆ Be patient with your children, and remain calm and reassuring. And cut yourself some slack too!
- ◆ Remind your children that everyone is working together to keep them *safe and healthy*.
- ◆ Provide age-appropriate facts—asking your children what they want to know may help to fill in the gaps while not overwhelming them with unnecessary information.
- ◆ Make yourself available to listen to their questions and talk about their fears. It is alright not to have all of the answers; your children may just need to feel heard.
- ◆ Teach your children positive preventative measures to give them a sense of control over the situation. Practice good hygiene, eat a balanced diet, stay active, and get adequate rest to stay as healthy as possible.
- ◆ Normalize your children's emotions and feelings of uncertainty—it is okay to not be okay. Ask yourself, is this thought or feeling useful? Recognize what you have control over, and release what you do not.
- ◆ Consider maintaining as much of a daily routine as possible, but be prepared to adapt as necessary.
- ◆ Encourage positive activities. Deep breathing, listening or dancing to music, drawing or journaling about experiences, and doing things to help others may help to relieve stress and minimize anxiety. There are several apps and websites that can help with this!
- ◆ Avoid excessive blaming and negative comments made toward others.
- ◆ Monitor TV viewing and social media, and find a balance between staying up-to-date with the news and becoming immersed in it.

# Resources

**“Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource” – National Association of School Psychologists** [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

**“Care for Your Coronavirus Anxiety” – Shine**  
<https://www.virusanxiety.com/>

**“Talking With Children: TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS DURING INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS” – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**  
[https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/pep20-01-01-006\\_508\\_0.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/pep20-01-01-006_508_0.pdf)

**“Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks” – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**  
<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>

**“How to Talk to Kids About Coronavirus” – NY Times**  
<https://parenting.nytimes.com/childrens-health/coronavirus-kids-talk>

**“Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus” – National Public Radio**  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

**“12 Ways to Effectively Parent During Crisis (Part 1)” – Psychology Today**  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/here-there-and-everywhere/202003/12-ways-effectively-parent-during-crisis-part-1>

**“12 Ways to Effectively Parent During a Crisis (Part 2)” – Psychology Today**  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/here-there-and-everywhere/202003/12-ways-effectively-parent-during-crisis-part-2>