

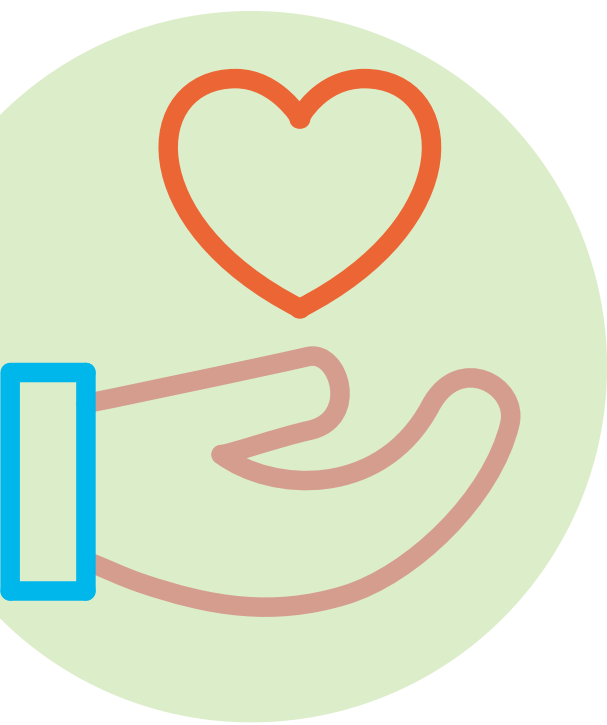
KEEP CALM DURING COVID-19 FOR PARENTS

Western



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Lamoureux, C., Iqbal, U., & Noyes, A. - Supervisor: Dr. Karen Bax, C., Psych., April, 2020



STRESS & COPING DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Impact of a global crisis on mental health:

- Increased stress
- Feelings of sadness
- Worry

These can make it hard to cope. The key to coping is to look after ourselves and calm our fears.

SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE ESPECIALLY STRESSED

- Sleep problems
- Lower appetite
- Fatigue
- Difficulty in concentration
- Mood shifts (e.g., anger)
- Increase in clinginess

(Source: Bologna, 2020)



SIGNS YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING STRESS

- Headaches,
- Low motivation,
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Feeling discouraged
- Difficulty in concentration
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Aggression
- Increase in substance abuse

(Source: Centre for DCP).

KEEPING CALM DURING COVID- 19- FOR PARENTS



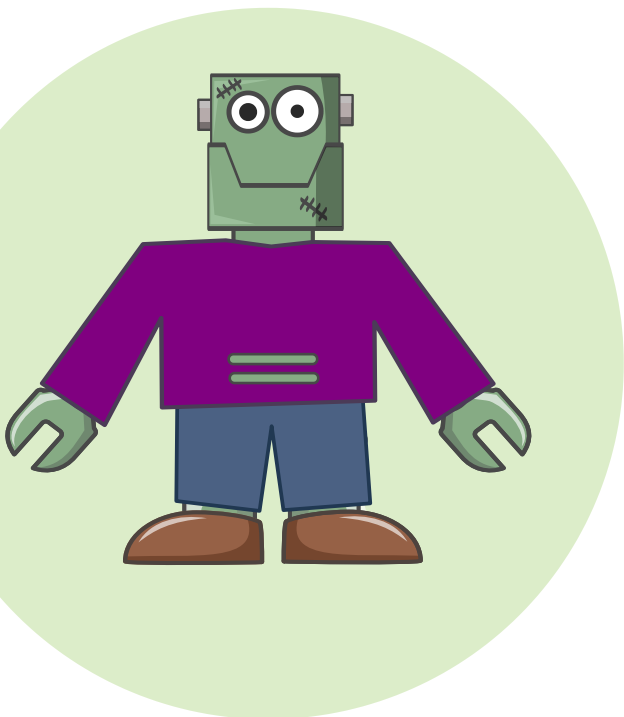
STEP 1: LIMIT EXPOSURE TO MEDIA

Limit reading about the virus to 1-2 times per day (only from reliable sources)

STEP 2: MAINTAIN ROUTINE

A daily routine provides consistency and structure, and helps children know what to expect:

- Create a daily timetable as a family;
- Post it where all can see
- For younger children, set a timer to help transition between activities (Jacobson, 2020).



STEP 3: TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is key during stressful situations. Try:

- Taking deep breaths
- Stretching,
- Meditating,
- Practicing yoga,
- Eating healthy
- Exercising regularly
- Getting plenty of sleep

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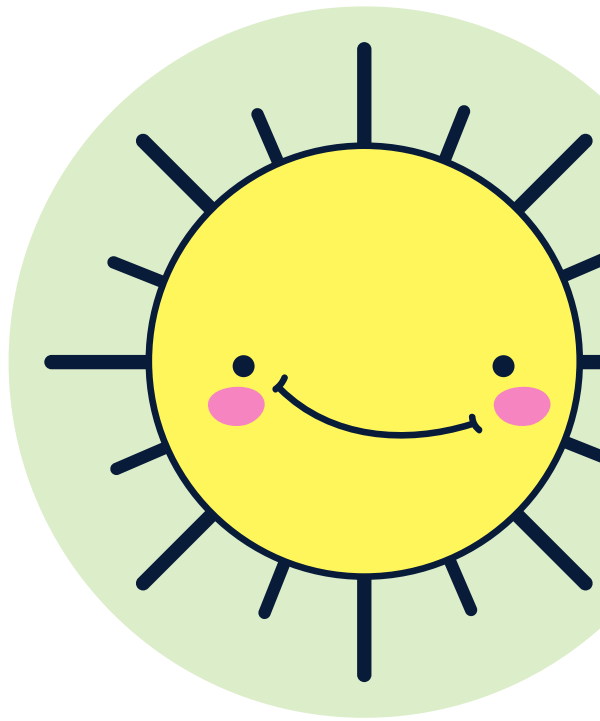
STEP 4: CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Feeling stuck or overwhelmed by negative thoughts? Try flipping the thought. For example, "we are stuck inside!" to "we get to spend time together!".

STEP 5: MODEL OPTIMISIM

A positive outlook helps reduce stress. When children express fear, reassure them and focus on what you can do now (Tait, 2020).

- For example, spend time as a family, or write a list of things you are grateful for today.



STEP 6: PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

Deep breathing, meditation, or taking a mindful walk help to calm by lowering the body's stress response (Matousek, Dobkin, & Pruessner, 2010).

STEP 7: VIRTUALLY CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

But avoid talking only about fears and worries related to the virus.



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Mindfulness Apps!

SMILING MIND

Includes topics aimed at supporting children and families during the crisis include: SOS mediation, Gratitude and Joy, Respond Rather Than React.



HEADSPACE

Section on 'Weathering the storm' with calming meditations, at-home exercise ideas, and strategies for improved sleep.



MINDSHIFT

Topics include strategies for managing feelings of anxiety. Tools include healthy thinking, chill zone (e.g. breathing strategies), and taking action (e.g. healthy habits).



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Breathing Techniques

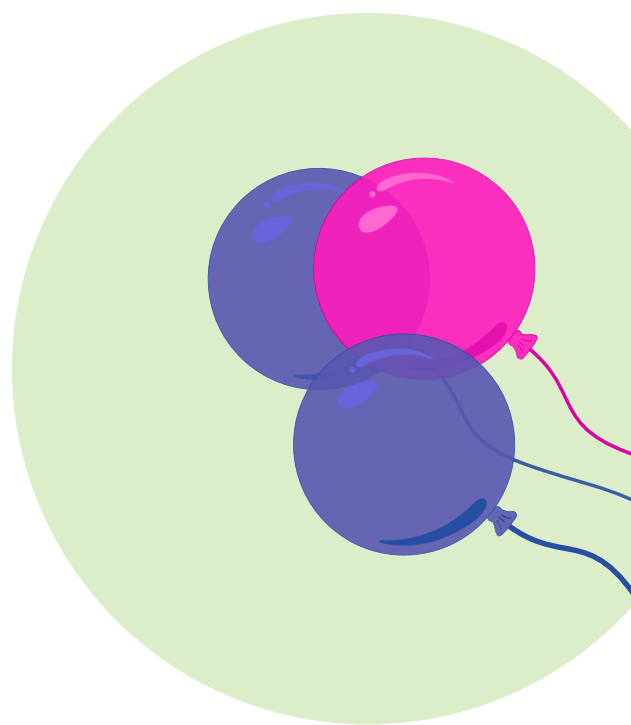


MORNING BREATHING: RAINBOW BREATH

"Sit up and let your spine grow tall. Bring your arms out straight to the sides, palms down. Inhale and sweep your arms up over your head, palm to palm. Exhale and bring your arms back straight out to the sides, palms down. Repeat 3 times"

BEDTIME BREATHING: BALLOON BREATH

"Lie down on your back and let your hands rest by your sides, palms up. Inhale through your nose and imagine filling your body with breath like a big balloon. Exhale and blow the air out through your mouth. Repeat 3 times"



CALMING BREATHING: COUNTING BREATH

"Sit up and let your spine grow tall. Take a deep breath in, counting silently 1...2...3. Then let your breath out, counting silently 1...2...3. Repeat 3 times."

Resources

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kids-mental-health-signs-coronavirus_l_5e7e2867c5b6cb9dc19f37ff

Child Mind Institute. childmind.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-help-during-covid-19

Jacobson, R. (2020, March 30). How mindfulness can help during COVID-19. Child Mind Institute. childmind.org/article/supporting-kids-during-the-covid-19-crisis

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Matousek, R. H., Dobkin, P. L., & Pruessner, J. (2010). Cortisol as a marker for improvement in mindfulness-based stress reduction. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 16, 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctcp.2009.06.004>

Tait, V. (2020, April 1). The Pandemic Toolkit Parents Need: 8 expert tips to help families stay regulated. Psychology Today.
[https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/pulling-through/202004/the-pandemic-toolkit-parents-need?](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/pulling-through/202004/the-pandemic-toolkit-parents-need?_r=0)