How to Talk to Your Child About COVID-19

During this time, with Covid-19 concerns, many parents wonder how to talk to their children in a way that will be reassuring and not cause unnecessary worry. For expert advice refer to the following video links.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhVad8ToCiU&feature=emb_share&fbclid=IwAR0lhUqBjF0G7qtkC9QOQn80MtIA6KjqrkUueZMzYZVr4oB_Qcji8dpJ4

The CDC has also provided helpful guidelines for talking to your child.

PBS has compiled videos from their children’s programming to teach about germs and healthy habits.
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus

Help for ANXIETY

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.”
--Fred Rogers

Encourage your children to focus on the good that’s happening every day, especially in times of uncertainty. Write down three gratitudes daily and share. Exercise, enjoy the sunshine and fresh air. Eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water. Take advantage of the opportunity to spend time together; turn up the music and dance, play games, go for walks - make it a scavenger hunt. Limit screen time. It’s important to connect with each other and move your body.

Mindfulness is a proven coping strategy for people of all ages. Students in grades K-6 were taught Mindfulness practices earlier this year. Videos are available on our district website that are designed specifically for parents to learn about the Mindfulness practices their children have learned. You can use this resource with your entire family to help with practicing Mindfulness.
https://www.nsanpete.org/d0-parent/counselor-s-corner.html

Below are a couple of stress reduction tip articles and a list of great resource books on video.
Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

What You Should Know

When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease such as Ebola, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress—even when the outbreak affects people far from where you live and you are at low or no risk of getting sick. These signs of stress are normal, and may be more likely or pronounced in people with loved ones in parts of the world affected by the outbreak. In the wake of an infectious disease outbreak, monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones. Know how to relieve stress, and know when to get help.

Know the Signs of Stress

What follows are behavioral, physical, emotional, and cognitive responses that are all common signs of anxiety and stress. You may notice some of them after you learn about an infectious disease outbreak.

YOUR BEHAVIOR:

▪ An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
▪ An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
▪ An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
▪ Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
▪ Crying frequently
▪ Worrying excessively
▪ Wanting to be alone most of the time
▪ Blaming other people for everything
▪ Having difficulty communicating or listening
▪ Having difficulty giving or accepting help
▪ Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

Know When To Get Help

You may experience serious distress when you hear about an infectious disease outbreak, even if you are at little or no risk of getting sick. If you or someone you know shows signs of stress (see list at left) for several days or weeks, get help by accessing one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him- or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.
Know How To Relieve Stress

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:
Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak. You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where many people have gotten sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.

GET THE FACTS:
Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information. Learn from them about the outbreak and how you can protect yourself against illness, if you are at risk. You may turn to your family doctor, a state or local health department, U.S. government agencies, or an international organization. Check out the sidebar on the next page for links to good sources of information about infectious disease outbreaks.

KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY:
- Eat healthy foods, and drink water.
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
- Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Get physical exercise.

YOUR BODY:
- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

YOUR EMOTIONS:
- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

YOUR THINKING:
- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions
USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO RELAX:

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, wash your face and hands, or engage in pleasurable hobbies.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family.
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends often.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY, FEELINGS, AND SPIRIT:

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of thinking and feeling about this event, and think of how you handled your thoughts, emotions, and behavior around past events.
- Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty, or angry is common after an event like an infectious disease outbreak, even when it does not directly threaten you.
- Connect with others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak. Talk about your feelings about the outbreak, share reliable health information, and enjoy conversation unrelated to the outbreak, to remind yourself of the many important and positive things in your lives.
- Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need.

Sources for Credible Outbreak-Related Health Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333-4027
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
https://www.cdc.gov

World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-974-3000
http://www.who.int/en

Take care of your physical health to help lower your stress. Take a break to focus on positive parts of your life, like connections with loved ones.
SO YOU’VE GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT Coronavirus

What is Coronavirus?
Coronavirus or COVID-19 is a virus that affects the respiratory system (lungs, nose, mouth, throat, bronchi, and all other body parts involved in breathing). It is passed from person to person through droplets from sneezes, coughs, runny noses, and saliva. So if someone sneezes on their hand and touches a bathroom door handle, and then another person touches that same bathroom door handle and then touch their face, they can become infected with the virus. This is why it is so important to wash our hands and avoid touching our faces!

I’m a kid. Doesn’t that mean I can’t get Coronavirus?
No. Some people have been saying that kids aren’t affected by Coronavirus. Scientists believe that Coronavirus may not make kids as sick as adults. But kids can still become infected with the virus.

Why are we staying home from school?
All of the adults at school want you and your family to be safe and healthy. Scientists are recommending that we stay home and avoid being in crowds or large gatherings (like a classroom full of friends!). We are staying home from school to slow the virus from spreading.

What should I do to stay safe?
1. Wash your hands often and before you eat. Wash them for at least 20 seconds and make sure you get the space in between your fingers and the backs of your hands clean!
2. Try to avoid touching your nose, mouth, eyes, and whole face with unwashed hands.
3. Practice healthy habits! Eat healthy foods, drink lots of water, get some exercise, and get plenty of sleep.
4. If you need to sneeze or cough, sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
5. Follow directions from the trusted adults in your life. They want to take care of you!
WHAT CAN I DO IF I’M FEELING worried?

Circle of Support
1. Talk about how you are feeling with the people you trust at home.
2. If you have questions, ask the people you trust to help you understand.
3. Keep in touch with friends, even if you’re not seeing them at school every day.
4. Video chat or call loved ones who don’t live near you.

Breathe it Out
If your body is feeling restless or keyed up, take some time to sit and slow your breathing. Try these easy exercises by tracing your finger over the lines and breathing along with them. Repeat at least 5 times!

Set Small, Daily Goals
Keep your focus on real things you can do! Set small, daily goals for yourself and keep track of your goals. Set a goal about how much you will read each day, how long you’ll practice your free throws each day, how many nice things you’ll say to family members each day, or something else that’s important to you!

Look for the Fun
Shift your focus away from the worries and do something fun!
1. Play a board game with your family.
2. Have a dance party.
3. Paint, draw, write, or create!

Let the Worries Go
Having trouble letting go of the worries? Try these strategies:
1. Set a 3-minute timer. During those 3 minutes, think about the worries all you want. When the timer goes off, worry time is over! Get up, move to a new space, and think of something else!
2. Write your worries on a piece of paper. Tear or wad it up and toss it in the trash can.

Remember, it’s okay to have worries. Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling!
YouTube Book List

Germs:
**Germs Are Not for Sharing - Elizabeth Verdick**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCq3Ft_s-5s
**I am a Booger...Treat Me With Respect - Julia Smith**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_doBYlf7w80

Improving your mood:
**Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses - James Dean**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJCG1Ls7a9c

Worry:
**Jonathan James and the Whatif Monster - Michelle Nelson-Schmidt**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmNQuic7pPI
**After the Fall - Dan Santat**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUKt1a6I3yw
**Wemberly Worried - Kevin Henkes**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkuXc0htNGk

Kindness:
**Have you Filled a Bucket Today? - Carol McCloud**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EuemNAo6XE
**What if Everybody Did That? - Ellen Javernick**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=811dQ_OisK0
**Be Kind - Pat Zietlow Miller**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6NUJ2JZz50
**Do Unto Otters - Laurie Keller**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKzM3CZoWqY&t=46s

Creativity:
**Beautiful Oops - Barney Saltzberg**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8C3JAbIkBds&t=2s
**What do you Do With an Idea - Kobi Yamada**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0We9zl5J7hQ
**Ish - Peter Reynolds**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKuXo5cIRtI
**The Most Magnificent Thing - Ashley Spires**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM8oN4yzJqw
**Cloudette - Tom Lichtenheld**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J11V5bRIVZs

Confidence:
**Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon - Patty Lovell**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0PJbx6cUFo

Emery School District Counseling Services are available by request. Please contact jthomas@emeryschools.org; ashleyj@emeryschools.org; feliciadj@emeryschools.org or your school to schedule.