

## Helping Students in these Stressful Times

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In these difficult and uncertain times with stay-at-home orders, we need to be concerned for our students, especially the most vulnerable ones. They are forced to be home, often-times separated from necessary support systems such as school counselors and outside therapists. Even the best of families is starting to feel the strain and we are just beginning this process.

We need to be concerned about our most vulnerable students. We all know students who are riding that fine edge of being able to hold it together and maybe starting to teeter over the edge. These are the ones with mental health issues, especially those with depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. If possible, please reach out to them. Consider emailing, texting, or calling these students. Attempt to keep in touch. Let them know they are not alone and that someone cares about them. Offer them ways to help them deal with these new situations. Some examples are listed below.

In addition to reaching out to our most vulnerable students, work with your administration to send out suggestions to parents on ways to help them deal with their children and to get help for themselves. (Some of the websites listed below may be helpful)

In terms of the stress we are all feeling, there are ways we can help students and families. One of the best ways is to exercise. If the weather is nice, go out for a walk. Just be sure to keep six feet between you and anyone else. Inside, try jumping jacks, marching in place, dancing, yoga (try a yoga video). Just move around. Getting enough sleep is helpful. Laugh out loud. Be creative--draw, write, dance, etc. Even coloring is helpful. Trying mindfulness activities. Think of something that makes you happy. Take deep breaths--(fill up stomach) and then let it out slowly. Repeat this several times. Give yourself permission to take a break if you feel overwhelmed.

In this time of 24-hour news, it is important to limit how much news children and teens hear. Even adults may wish to do this. Sometimes too much news can cause anxiety and increase stress. In addition, limit young people's time on social media.

Most importantly don't forget to take good care of yourself and manage your time and commitments as well. Give yourself permission to take a break.

### List of helpful websites:

- This website has a comprehensive list of stressors for children and ways parents can help <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002059.htm>
- For some other stress relief techniques watch this video that teaches meditation relief for kids and adults <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Wellness/video/kids-stress-free-meditation-57447364>
- For mindfulness activities for children <https://www.merakilane.com/mindfulness-activities-for-kids-17-ways-to-raise-mindful-children/>

- For mindfulness activities for teens <https://leftbrainbuddha.com/mindfulness-for-teens/>
- For an explanation about mindfulness and its benefits- <https://psychcentral.com/blog/the-benefits-of-mindfulness-meditation-for-teens/>
- Coping with Stress in the Time of Infectious Disease Outbreak- <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>
- Spanish- <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks-Spanish-/sma14-4885spanish>
- <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006>
- In Spanish - <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks-Spanish-/SMA14-4886SPANISH>
- An article from The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress entitled “Helping Children Cope Emotionally with COVID 19” <https://www.aaets.org/helping-children-cope-emotionally-with-coronavirus>
- From Child Mind Institute- Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus- <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>
- From the World Health Organization- Downloadable book explaining COVID- 19 and how to handle difficult emotions- in a number of different languages <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/09-04-2020-children-s-story-book-released-to-help-children-and-young-people-cope-with-covid-19>
- Helping with anxiety and COVID -19 <https://www.austinanxiety.com/recommendations-for-children-and-parents-coping-with-covid-19/>
- For Parents and Caregivers on providing emotional support children and teens <https://www.locke-psychotherapy.com/post/providing-emotional-practical-support-for-a-child-or-adolescent-during-covid-19>
- Coping with Social Distancing <https://www.pittwire.pitt.edu/news/five-mental-health-experts-coping-social-distancing>
- 6 Tips for Social Distancing for Parents <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/6-social-distancing-tips-for-parents>

- Warning signs of Suicide in children  
<https://www.psycom.net/children-and-suicide>

#### 24 Hour Suicide & Crisis Hotlines

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255); 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish)
- Friendship Line (Adults 60+, their caregivers, or younger adults/disabilities): 1-800-971-0016
- California Youth Crisis Line: 1-800-843-5200
- Teen Line: 1-310-855-4673; 1-800-852-8336; or text 839863
- The Trevor Project (LGBTQQIA): 1-866-4-U-TREVOR; 1-866-488-7386; Text “Trevor” to 1-202-304-1200
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860
- Stop the Hate: 1-844-9-NO-HATE -in variety of language-social and legal help