

NOT ALL CHILDREN AND TEENS RESPOND TO STRESS IN THE SAME WAY. SOME COMMON CHANGES TO WATCH FOR INCLUDE:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, Toileting accidents or bed wetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



REFERENCES

Brooks, Candace. “Dealing With Stress During the Outbreak.” *Brown Medicine*, Apr. 2020, www.brownmed.org/

Cole, Bianca Miller. “18 Tips On How To Cope With Children During Quarantine.” *Forbes*, *Forbes Magazine*, 23 Mar. 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/

Markway, Greg. “Seven Types of Self-Care Activities for Coping with Stress.” *Psychology Today*, *Sussex Publishers*, 16 Mar. 2014, www.psychologytoday.com



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

RESOURCES

Offering 24/7 support via Telehealth & over the phone. Please do not hesitate to call with any questions or concerns.



24/7 Crisis/ Behavioral Health Line:
Child & Family Services
(508) 996- 3154

HOW TO HELP CHILDREN & TEENS COPE DURING QUARANTINE



Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Tips & Tricks to help your child cope
- Coping Skills/Self-Care Strategies for the Whole Family
- Available Resources



TIPS & TRICKS

COPING STRATEGIES /

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

1. Create a Consistent Schedule

It is easy for children to get bored or fretful if they are facing a day without structure, and anxiety can thrive under those circumstances. Structure a week for your child that replicates a school week. You can foster a sense of collaboration and control for them by creating a list of activities and allowing your children to pick when they happen.

2. Set Expectations

I advise you to set the ground rules early on with regards to expectations around school work and playtime. Establishing a routine that involves exercise, regular meals and healthy amounts of sleep are crucial to regulating our moods and our worries.

3. Help Your Child Stay Active

Encourage your child to play outdoors—it's great for physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride. Use indoor activity breaks (i.e., stretch breaks, dance breaks) throughout the day to help your child stay healthy and focused.

4. Try to Model Healthy Ways of Handling Anxiety

There are multiple ways you can help kids handle anxiety by letting them see how you cope with anxiety yourself. Kids are perceptive, and they're going to take it in if you keep complaining on the phone to a friend that you can't handle the stress or the anxiety. I'm not saying to pretend that you don't have stress and anxiety, but let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.

5. Recognize & Validate

Recognize that feelings such as loneliness, boredom, fear of contracting disease, anxiety, stress, and panic are normal reactions to a stressful situation such as a disease outbreak.

Sensory: When you feel stressed and need a calm mind, try focusing on the sensations around you—sights, smells, sounds, tastes, touch. This will help you focus on the present moment, giving you a break from your worries.

- Breathe in fresh air.
- Snuggle under a cozy blanket.
- Listen to running water.
- Sit outdoors by a fire pit, watching the flames & listening to the night sounds.
- Take a hot shower or a warm bath.
- Cuddle with a pet.
- Pay attention to your breathing.
- Burn a scented candle.
- Wiggle your bare feet in overgrown grass.
- Stare up at the sky.
- Lie down where the afternoon sun streams in a window.
- Listen to music.



Mental/Mastery: You can also give yourself a boost by doing a task that you've been avoiding or challenging your brain in a novel way. This can also boost self-confidence.

- Clean out a junk drawer or a closet.
- Take action (one small step) on something you've been avoiding.
- Try a new activity.
- Make a list.
- Immerse yourself in a crossword puzzle.
- Do a word search.
- Read something on a topic you wouldn't normally.

Emotional: Dealing with our emotions can be challenging when we're coping with stress. We tend to label emotions as "good" or "bad," but this isn't helpful. Instead:

- Accept your feelings.
- They're all OK. Really.
- Write your feelings down.
- Here's a list of feeling words.
- Cry when you need to.
- Laugh when you can. (Try laughter yoga.)
- Practice self-compassion.

Physical: Coping with stress by engaging the body is great because you can bypass a lot of unhelpful mental chatter. It's hard to feel stressed when you're doing one of the following self-care activities.

- Try yoga.
- Go for a walk or a run.
- Dance.
- Stretch.
- Go for a bike ride.
- Don't skip sleep to get things done.
- Take a nap.

