



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING DURING DISTANCE LEARNING.

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OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY:

- Warning signs that kids may be struggling with their mental health.
- Strategies to help kids maintain a sense of normalcy during distance learning.
- Mindfulness and coping mechanisms to support social and emotional health.
- Resources for families who are in need of additional mental health support.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

- Special thanks to teachers, educational assistant's, school staff and administration for an amazing transition during unprecedented times.
- Thanks for your support to families, children and the community.
- We are all getting used to a new normal and learning together everyday.
- We assume everyone is doing the best they can.
- Be gentle with yourself and others.

AN IMPORTANT QUOTE FROM TWITTER:

- “Been homeschooling a 6-year-old and 8-year-old for one hour and 11 minutes. Teachers deserve to make a billion dollars a year. Or a week.”
 - Shonda Rhimes via Twitter 3/16/20

PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO...

- Students who have had anxiety
- Students who have had depression or suicidal ideation
- Students who have learning and attention disorders
- Students whose family have lost jobs or income
- Students with family who are vulnerable to COVID-19
- Students with a parent who is a first responder or in another profession where they are exposed to the virus or are being asked to respond in an intense way
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus>



CONSIDER TRAUMA HISTORY

KIDS WHO ARE LIVING IN A CHAOTIC HOME ENVIRONMENT

KIDS WITH A TRAUMA HISTORY

MAY SEE INCREASE IN SYMPTOMS/MORE WARNING SIGNS.

WARNING SIGNS:

| Preschool age: | How to help: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fear of being alone• Bad dreams• Speech difficulties• Loss of bladder/bowel control• Constipation, bed-wetting• Change in appetite• Increased temper tantrums, whining• Clinging behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patience and tolerance• Provide reassurance (verbal and physical)• Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling• Encourage parents to maintain regular family routines• Avoid media exposure |



WARNING SIGNS:

| School age: 6-12 | How to help: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior• Clinging, nightmares• Sleep/appetite disturbance• Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)• Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest• Competition for parents' attention• Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patience, tolerance, and reassurance• Encourage students to stay in touch with friends through telephone and Internet• Encourage regular exercise and stretching• Engage in educational activities that would be done in class.• Discuss the current outbreak and encourage questions. Include what is being done within your community.• Encourage expression through play and conversation• Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines• Encourage family to limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen.• Clarify misinformation |

WARNING SIGNS:

Ages 13-18:

- Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.)
- Sleep/appetite disturbance
- Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy
- Ignoring health promotion behaviors
- Isolating from peers and loved ones
- Concerns about stigma and injustices
- Avoiding/cutting school



How to help:


- Patience, tolerance, and reassurance
- Encourage continuation of routines
- Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force)
- Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games
- Encourage family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings to enhance health promotion behaviors
- Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen.
- Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during
- Focus on what children *can* do amongst all the uncertainty

DISTANCE LEARNING STRESSORS:

- Being asked to “go” to school in their own homes, bedrooms, play rooms – it's hard being told what to do in your home by someone else
- Lack of structure – workload feels overwhelming
- Isolation from peers
- Learning new technology platforms
- Increased screen time

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

- Encourage a consistent schedule
- Follow set plans and schedules
- Encourage students to do “classes” in similar order to school day.
- Take short breaks- encourage MOVEMENT
- Normalize feelings of stress, being overwhelmed, anxiety and fear.
- Provide praise and encouragement.



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR LIVES:


“WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BEING HOME”?

“HOW ARE YOU STAYING BUSY”?

“HOW IS YOUR WORK LOAD”? TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE?

WHAT ARE YOU FAMILIES MEMBERS DOING WHILE HOME?

[NCTSN.ORG](https://nctsn.org)



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

IMPROVE RESILIENCY!

- REMIND STUDENTS OF THEIR UNIQUE STRENGTHS, QUALITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS.
- MODEL PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- MAINTAIN YOUR CONNECTION WITH STUDENTS, PROVIDE SUPPORT AND REASSURANCE.
- REMIND STUDENTS, HOW DIFFICULT SITUATIONS HELP US GROW- TALK ABOUT THE LESSON, THE GROWTH BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES.
- TALK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL.

MINDFULNESS AND GROUNDING SKILLS

- Utilize 5 senses-
- I see,
- I hear,
- I feel,
- I smell,
- I taste,

LET'S PRACTICE!

- Find a comfortable position.
- Hands and feet in a relaxed state.
- If you feel comfortable close your eyes.
- Take 3 deep breaths- in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Follow along with the mindfulness exercise...





MINDFULNESS AND GROUNDING SKILLS

MODEL BEING CALM DURING CLASS MEETINGS

4 CORNER BREATHING (INHALE FOR 4, HOLD FOR FOUR, EXHALE FOR 4, INHALE FOR 4...

MINDFULNESS VIDEOS (GO NOODLE), STOPBREATHETHINK.COM, CALM.COM, WORRYWISEKIDS.COM

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

GROUNDING EXERCISES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING PANIC (E.G. FIND 5 GREEN THINGS IN THE ROOM)

[M\[HTTPS://CHILD MIND.ORG/ARTICLE/HOW-MINDFULNESS-CAN-HELP-DURING-COVID-19/\]\(https://childmind.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-help-during-covid-19/\)](https://childmind.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-help-during-covid-19/) - LOTS OF GREAT IDEAS: MINDFUL MEAL, BLOWING BUBBLES, COLORING, LISTENING TO MUSIC, BELLY BREATHING



MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Lower your eyes and notice where you feel your breath. That might be the air going in and out at your nostrils or the rise and fall of your chest or stomach. If you can't feel anything, place your hand on your stomach and notice how your hand gently rises and falls with your breath. If you like, you can just lengthen the in breath and the out breath or just breathe naturally. Your body knows how to breathe.

Focus on your breath. When your mind wanders, as it will do, just bring your attention back to your breath. You might like to say 'thinking' when you notice your thoughts and just gently shepherd your attention back to your breath.

This can be done for longer than one minute. However, even for one minute it will allow you to pause and be in the moment. Or you might just like to breathe out stress on the out breath and breathe in peace on the in breath.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- Continue to utilize your school social workers.
- Utilize local mental health agencies.
- Crisis lines and crisis texting options:
 - National Suicide Prevention Hotline-(800) 273-8255)
 - Minnesota Text Crisis Line-Text HOME to 741741
 - Local crisis lines.
 - Check county websites for area specific food and shelter resources
 - Free Meals for Kids Application

RESOURCES FOR COPING SKILLS

- [Changetochill.org](https://www.changetochill.org)
 - Activities, videos, diy projects
- [Very well family](https://www.verywellfamily.com) – coping skills for kids
 - Emotion focused, problem focused
- [Mental Health Delta Division](https://www.mentalhealthdelta.com) – Interactive games

The background is a solid teal color with a subtle gradient. In the four corners, there are decorative white line-art patterns resembling circuit traces or neural network connections, with small circles at the end of the lines.

THANK YOU !

- Any Questions?