

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING OF PARENTS AND KIDS DURING COVID-19



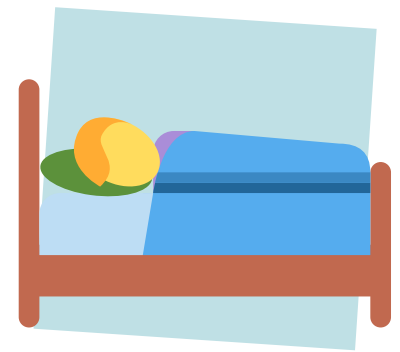
COVID-19 brings with it feelings like anxiety, stress and uncertainty. These emotions can be felt particularly strongly by parents and their children.

We know it may be an especially hard time for parents who are trying to juggle work, child care and self-care, and for children who are spending a lot more time at home.

Here are some tips for parents and kids to maintain mental health wellbeing during COVID-19:

Stick to normal routines.

Changes to routine can be stressful for kids, and convey to the child there is a crisis. Try and stick to usual household routines as much as possible. Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time. Make a schedule that includes time for rest and self-care.



Modify missed activities.

If your child is disappointed about cancelled events, try modifying the missed activity so it can be creatively executed at home. If you've had to cancel a holiday, create a poster board of activities the kids wanted to do on that trip. If the school has cancelled their play, put on the play at home with stuffed toys. If your child is missing their friends, suggest that they can write them a letter!

Model calmness.

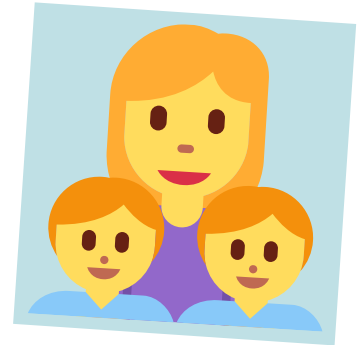
Kids are able to pick up emotions from their parents or caregivers. If you act and behave calmly, you are communicating to your child that there is no need to panic. Taking a few minutes a day to relax may help you model calm for your kids.





Have conversations.

We would encourage parents to not be afraid to discuss the coronavirus, as keeping kids in the dark may make them worry more. Instead, answer your child's questions by sticking to small amounts of information to avoid overloading them with details. Focus conversations on what you are doing to stay safe, as knowing what to do to stay healthy can help your kids feel empowered at this time.



Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance.

COVID-19 is an unprecedented situation, which has caused dramatic changes to our life with working from home with kids in tow. Trying to meet our expectations about work, parenting, and homelife may be extremely stressful. Instead, try practicing what psychologists call "radical self-acceptance". Accept everything about yourself, your life and the current situation without question, blame or pushback. You cannot fail at this – there is no pre-written how-to guide or past example to follow. We are all truly doing the best we can in what feels like an impossible situation.



Stick together in tough times.

It is a difficult time for many people, and we need to stick together to get through this. As psychologists, it is our responsibility and privilege to care for the mental health of people in our community particularly at this time. One way we are doing this is making a commitment to publishing our best tips for mental health wellbeing for kids and adults daily on our social media channel.

Follow us on Facebook at Centre For Effective Living.

