Key Strategies for Staying Calm and Allaying Anxiety in Yourself and Your Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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A Stress and Anxiety Pandemic Also is Happening with COVID-19
A Group Who Sees the Silver Lining of the COVID-19 Epidemic
Why COVID-19 is Triggering Mental Health Issues

Quarantine makes it more difficult to distract oneself from existing and potential mental health issues

- Feelings of despair
- Fear for loved ones
- Decreases job security
- Increases loneliness
- Mindset switch from “thriving” to “survival”

- Triggers feelings of hopelessness
- Increases anxiety
- Decreases financial security
- Promotes social withdrawal
- Disturbs sleep
Responses to Stress
How do you feel physically when you are stressed, anxious or depressed?
How do you feel emotionally when you are stressed, anxious or depressed?
Too Much Stress, Anxiety or Depressive Symptoms can Interfere with your Functioning

This is the point where you need some help.  
*Do not hesitate to ask for it!*

Contact our Employee Assistance Program (800) 678-6265 or OSU’s Student Counseling & Consultative Service at 614-292-5766
Role Modeling for Your Children

Remain calm

Routinely practice strategies to reduce your own stress and anxiety
Healthy Evidence-based Ways to COPE with Your Own Stress and Anxiety

What Works?

Mindfulness

Gratitude

Sync your breathing with this

go.osu.edu/justbreathe

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/ Skills Building

Deep Breathing:
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/Skills Building is the Best Evidence-based Treatment for Mild to Moderate Depression and Anxiety

The thinking/feeling/behaving triangle
OSU’s MINDSTRONG Program Teaches CBT Skills and the ABCs
Email: MINDSTRONG@osu.edu to participate

STRESSOR (Antecedent or Activator event)

↓

NEGATIVE THOUGHT TO STOP (Belief)

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REPLACE THE NEGATIVE WITH A POSITIVE THOUGHT

↓

POSITIVE EMOTION & BEHAVIOR (Consequence)
Write down an example of your own automatic negative thoughts

• Hint: Think back to a recent time you felt dysphoric, depressed, or angry.

  o What was the trigger? (you couldn’t control that)
  o Your automatic thought?
  o Your feeling?
  o Your general way of behaving when you feel that way?
  o How could have you have stopped the negative thought and turned it around to feel better?
Catching your automatic negative thoughts

• When you notice your mood has changed or intensified, or is going in a negative direction or you are noticing bodily sensations associated with negative emotions, ask:

  What was just going through my mind?
Thought Stopping Skills

• Visualize a stop sign

• Rubber band on the wrist/ snap

• Visualize watching the negative image on TV and change the channel

• Use imagery skills to switch to a pleasant image
Problem Solving Skills

- What is the problem?
- What are the possible causes of the problem?
- What are 2-3 solutions to the problem?
- Pick the best one and ACT on it!
Program Your Brain with Positive Thoughts

Positive Thoughts IN

Positive Thoughts OUT
Practice Positive Self Talk 10x in the Morning & 10x at Night

- I’m going to stay calm
- I am healthy and strong
- This won’t last forever
Stay “In the Present Moment”
THE PRICE OF TOO MUCH
social media exposure
Positive Ways to Deal with Your Own Stress and Anxiety

Take Care of Yourself and Take Time to Unwind
Other Strategies for Preventing and Dealing with Stress, Anxiety & Depression

- Engage in physical activity (at least 30 minutes 5 days a week)
- Eat healthy: light and often; avoid “junk food”
- Manage your energy: build in frequent recovery breaks throughout the day; sit less; stand more
- Stay in the present moment (*The Present* by Spencer Johnson is a great book to help)
- Get enough sleep at least 7 hours
- Practice guided imagery
Other Strategies for Preventing and Dealing with Stress, Anxiety & Depression

- Read 5 to 10 minutes every morning in a positive book
- Socialize regularly with family/friends through Facebook and other social media channels
- Have an attitude of gratitude- write your blessings down daily
- Take 5 deep breaths when feeling early symptoms of stress
- Make a plan for how to deal with what is causing stress
- Talk to someone you trust about how you feel
Other Strategies for Preventing and Dealing with Stress, Anxiety & Depression

• See the cup half full instead of half empty

• Take one bite of the chocolate elephant or bundle of carrots at a time

• Know your limits; do not feel guilty about saying “no!”

• Seek help if symptoms persist more than 2 weeks and interfere with functioning; There is hope; depression and anxiety are very treatable and everyone has these issues at some time in their lives
Stress Management Apps

**Mindfulness and guided meditation**
Premium now free for healthcare providers through the end of the year.
https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19

**Cleveland Clinic Stress Free Now**
- Day and Night Mindful Breath
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness of Being
- Loving Kindness Meditation
- Mountain Meditation

**Available to all benefits eligible OSU employees**
- Daily 5 min sessions
- Mindfulness
- Sleep
- Emotional Intelligence and more

**Sanvello** (free version available)
- Mood Tracker
- Guided self-help paths
- Meditation Tools
Discussing COVID-19 with Children

- Ask “What do you know about the coronavirus and what is worrying you?”
  - Keep information age and developmentally appropriate
    - Answer questions honestly and simply
- Provide reassurance that your children are safe and that doctors, nurses and leaders are doing everything they can to prevent the spread of the virus and to get people better
  - Avoid frightening images
Recognizing Signs of Anxiety and Stress in Young Children

- Restlessness/hyperactivity
- Temper tantrums
- Nightmares
- Clinging behaviors
- Difficulty Separating
Recognizing Signs of Anxiety and Stress in Older School Age-Children and Teens

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Restlessness/hyperactivity
- Anger
- Worry
- Physical complaints, such as headaches or stomachaches
Tips for Helping Children Deal with Anxiety

- Share feelings/emotions
- Take time to listen
- Write in a journal
- Provide structure
- Help them to replace negative thoughts with positive ones
Tips for Helping Children Deal with Anxiety

Encourage physical activity

Work on coping/cognitive behavioral skills

Build future life skills

Stay socially active while apart
Build these 9 Resiliency Skills

- Composure
- Patience
- Optimism
- Gratitude
- Acceptance
- Kindness
- Sense of purpose
- Forgiveness
- Connection

—Amit Sood, Mayo Clinic
Plan Family Activities

1. Take walks together/play games outside (e.g., a scavenger hunt)
2. Have dance parties
3. Cook healthy meals together
4. Read together- download ebooks
5. Engage in on-line yoga
6. Learn a new hobby
7. FaceTime with friends, grandparents, loved ones


Share your ideas! go.osu.edu/copingwithcovid19
Reduce the Spread of the Virus

• **Stay away** from people who are coughing, sneezing or sick.
• Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue that is immediately thrown away.
• **Wash your hands thoroughly**: use soap and water for 20 seconds.
• Be sure to wash hands before eating or touching food and after using the bathroom, blowing your nose and sneezing or coughing.
  • **Stay home** if you feel sick.
• Try not to put your hands and fingers in your mouth or on your face.
  • Practice **physical distancing**: 6 feet between people.
When to Call a Healthcare Provider

Symptoms
Fever (100.4° or higher)
Cough
Fast Breathing
Signs of Dehydration

Go to the ER or call 911 if your children:
- Have breathing problems
- Are turning blue
- Are confused or very sleepy

Ohio Department of Health’s hotline, open between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.,
1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).
Keep Up with Reliable Sources of Information

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/features/coronavirus

The Ohio Department of Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Let’s Maintain Hope
Rainbows Follow Rain

go.osu.edu/copingwithcovid19
Contact Information

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