Coping with Kids

NAMI Minnesota is offering a number of online trainings and online support groups

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Taking Care of our Mental Health while Protecting our Physical health

• While Shelter in Place is an important safety measure, it may introduce new stressors to our families
  – Disruption of routine
  – Isolation
  – Too much “togetherness”

• It is still important that we take care of our mental health
Signs that your Child is Experiencing Stress

- **Toddlers:**
  - Increased bad habits such as thumb-sucking, hair twirling, nose picking
  - More frequent tantrums/tears

- **School-aged children:**
  - Lying, bullying, defiance
  - Increased clingingness
  - Over-reaction to minor problems

- **Teens:**
  - Withdrawal from family and friends
  - Suddenly changing friend-groups
  - Excessive hostility towards family

- **All ages:**
  - Changes in sleeping or eating habits
  - Irritability
  - Feeling sick
Tip 1: Create Structure and Routine
Why is this so important?

• Fights boredom and uncertainty
  – These can lead to problem behaviors and anxiety
• Helps children know what’s next
• Creates a new “normal”
How can I create structure and routine for my family?

- Keep consistent sleep schedule
- Create a schedule that includes school, creative time, free time, exercise, meals, and quiet time
- Let children help create schedule

### Daily Schedule

- **8:00-9:00am**: Breakfast/30 Minute TV Show, Morning Hygiene and Clean Bedroom
- **9:00-10:00am**: Academic Work (Supplied by School or Choose 1 Activity Below)
  - Read
  - Watch a History/Science show (approved by a caregiver)
- **10:00-11:00am**: Creative Hour (Choose 1 Activity Below)
  - Art/Music
  - Minecraft
  - Legos
  - Baking
- **11:00-12:00pm**: Academic Work (Supplied by School or Choose 1 Activity Below)
  - Read
  - Online Math Games/Quizzes
- **12:00-1:00pm**: Lunch/FREE TIME
- **1:00-2:00pm**: Academic Work (Supplied by School or Choose 1 Activity Below)
  - Online Vocab/Grammar Games
  - Online Academic Videos (Ex: Crash Course on YouTube)
- **2:00-3:00pm**: PE! (Choose an Activity Below)
  - Walk the Dogs
  - Play Catch
  - Family Run
  - Basketball
- **3:00-4:00pm**: Creative Hour (Choose 1 Activity Below)
  - Board Games
  - Art
  - Lego
Resources Related to Creating Structure and Routine

- [https://childmind.org/](https://childmind.org/)
- [https://www.uth.edu/news/story.htm?id=e5c159f0-11af-4091-9f1d-342b5a64583a](https://www.uth.edu/news/story.htm?id=e5c159f0-11af-4091-9f1d-342b5a64583a)
Tip 2: Manage Anxiety
Why is this so Important?

• Children pick up on their parents’ anxiety

• Helps us manage fear and uncertainty
How do I Manage my Own Anxiety?

• Focus on what you can control
• Be mindful of the present, avoid “what if’s”
• Avoid too many articles about Corona Virus
How do I Help my Children with Their Anxiety?

- Model calm
- Talk to them about Corona Virus
- Increase self-efficacy
- Check in regularly to see how they are feeling
- Let them know that you are there and they are safe
Checking in with your Children

• For young children, use feelings chart
• Think of a specific topic/question
• Start with your own feelings
• Validate feelings
• Be open about your own mental health
• Leave door open, but don’t shove them through
Do’s and Don’t’s

• Don’t:
  – Try to start a conversation after a fight or while they are doing something fun
  – Give advice if they don’t ask for it
  – Try to change their feelings or tell them to “look at the positive side”

• Do:
  – Pick a time when child is relaxed and not busy
  – Listen attentively, ask permission before giving advice
  – Validate their feelings, let them know it is okay to feel this way
Resources Related to Managing Anxiety

- [https://childmind.org/](https://childmind.org/)
Tip 3: Perform Self-Care
Why is This so Important?

• Avoid burnout

• Helps you manage your own stress and anxiety

• You can’t take care of others unless you take care of yourself
How can I Perform Self-Care?

• Eat, sleep, exercise

• Practice mindfulness or meditation

• Take some alone time

• Share your calming activities with your children
How can I Help my Children with Self-Care?

• Model good self-care

• Schedule in time for exercise, outdoors, and relaxation

• Share self-care activities
Resources Related to Self-Care

- CALM App
- Kid Yoga videos on YouTube
Tip 4: Stay Connected
Why is this so Important?

• Humans are social creatures
• Showing affection and receiving it lowers stress and anxiety
• Isolation can lead to feelings of depression
• We all need support!
How Can I Stay Connected?

• Set up outdoor activities that still adhere to social distancing
• Video calls, texting, phone calls
• Online game nights
• Join an online support group
How can I Help my Children Stay Connected?

- Set aside time for child to video call friends
- Find outdoor activities child can do with neighbors while maintaining 6ft distance
- Encourage them to write letters
- Have family members read them books through video call
Resources Related to Staying Connected:

- [https://psychcentral.com/blog/the-importance-of-staying-connected-while-practicing-social-distancing/](https://psychcentral.com/blog/the-importance-of-staying-connected-while-practicing-social-distancing/)
- [https://www.livingroomconversations.org/host-your-own-living-room-conversation/](https://www.livingroomconversations.org/host-your-own-living-room-conversation/)

- Video calling apps: WhatsApp, Facebook, Google+, Zoom, Skype, Facetime
- [https://namimn.org/support/nami-minnesota-support-groups/](https://namimn.org/support/nami-minnesota-support-groups/)
Tip 5: Look for the Positives
Why is this so Important?

• Gives us hope

• Prevents us from getting caught in a cloud of negativity

• Allows us to make the most of this time
How can I Help Myself Look for the Positives?

- Think about one good thing that happened each day
- Look for some of the benefits you’re seeing from staying home
- Do activities you now have time for because of staying at home
How can I Help my Children Focus on the Positive?

• Praise positive actions
• Tell children about one fun or positive thing they did that day
• Read/tell stories about people coming together during adversity
Resources Related to Finding the Positives

Watch out for Warning Signs of Mental Illness

• Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
• Reckless behavior
• Losing interest in favorite activities
• Major changes in mood, behavior, eating or sleep habits
• Excessive worrying
• Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren’t real
• Alcohol or drug use
• Self-harm
• Talk of death, dying, or suicide
Professionals that Can Help

• Primary doctor
• Nurse practitioner
• School-linked mental health professional
• Therapist
• Crisis Textline: 741-741
• Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
• County Crisis Team (dial **CRISIS if in Minnesota)
• If an emergency, call 911
Remember…

• There will probably be times that you feel anxious, sad, angry, or unsure

• We are all going to have bad days

• Things probably won’t go as planned

• But despite all this…
YOU GOT THIS
What We Do

- Education classes, booklets, and fact sheets
- Suicide prevention
- Support groups, Helpline
- Public awareness presentations
- Legislative advocacy
- NAMIWalks
Support NAMI Minnesota

• Advocate for a better Mental Health System
• Attend an event
• Sign up for a newsletter
• Join an affiliate
• Be a sponsor
• Volunteer
• Become a donor
Contact Information

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