

Tips for Parents:

Self-Care During the COVID-19 Crisis

This pandemic puts an extraordinary amount of pressure on parents to cope with our own reactions, keep households running, and manage childcare while school is canceled. On top of that, many of us are worried about how the pandemic is affecting our kids' behavioral health.

While there are many helpful recommendations on how to talk to your children about COVID-19 and help them manage anxiety in this time, it's just as important that you model healthy coping mechanisms yourself. It's OK to show your kids you're worried, but then show them how to manage those feelings in a healthy way, so they will be able to as well.

Things You Can Start Doing Now

- **First and foremost: be kind to yourself.** This is uncharted territory for most of us, and no one expects any of us to know how to do this yet. We're going to mess up, we're going to feel stressed, and we're all doing the best we can.
- **Remember coping strategies that have worked for you in the past:** distraction, deep breaths, exercise, meditation, hobbies, positive self-talk, playlists, etc.
- **Set small, achievable goals.** It can be overwhelming to think of trying to maintain these routines for weeks or longer. Instead just focus on your plan for today. "One day at a time" remains timeless wisdom.
- **Remind yourself you have good parenting skills.** You have been caring for your children for years. You will get through this! Don't hesitate to reach out to your support network to ask for advice, vent, or to take a break. And if you need more support, reach out for additional help. Look at the box below for resources.
- **Find time for yourself, even if it comes in small chunks.** It can be incredibly helpful to remove yourself from the hustle of the current reality to reset your brain. Step outside for a few minutes, shut yourself in the bathroom with a book, call a friend - whatever relaxes you or makes you happy.
- **Maintaining social connections is essential for both you and your kids.** Find ways to stay connected to friends and loved ones. Phone, video conference (Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, etc), email, and even paper mail are all good options.

Help is Always Available.

You don't need to be in a crisis to reach out to one of the resources below.

Reach the **Crisis Text Line** by texting **ACT** to **741741**.

Contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**