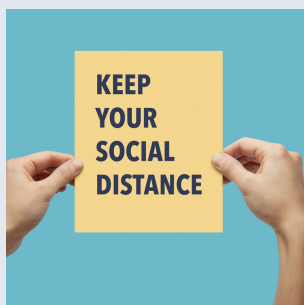




# A WAY OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

## Stress and the Pandemic

Tips to Promote Child Well-Being and Resilience



### Adjusting to a New Normal

When the COVID-19 Pandemic forced the world to retreat indoors and our usual daily life to grind to a halt, most of us found it challenging to adjust to this different way of life. Children were no exception, as their lives changed drastically and they turned to parents and caregivers for cues and support as to how to manage with these adjustments and emotions.

### What is Stress?

- Stress is a normal part of life that can either help us learn and grow or can cause us significant problems.
- Stress releases powerful neurochemicals and hormones that prepare us for action (to fight, flight, or freeze).
- If we do not take action, the stress response can create or worsen health problems.
- Prolonged, uninterrupted, unexpected, and unmanageable stress is the most damaging.
  - Think of how long we've been experiencing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic - it's important that we take steps to protect the health and wellbeing of both ourselves and our children.



### The Pandemic's Impact on Children

#### Physical

- Gross/fine motor development impacted
- Limited exposure to sensory input
- Housing and job insecurity
- Malnourishment
- Lack of doctor visits

#### Cognitive

- Delays in communication skills
- Reduced learning and academic success
- Cognitive distortions

#### Emotional

- Mental health disorders (anxiety/depression)
- Frequent anger/irritability
- Impaired focus/concentration
- Household dysfunction
- Increased risk of neglect/abuse

#### Social

- Delays in social skills
- Social isolation/becoming withdrawn
- Changes in understanding of friendships

# Signs of Stress

## Children

- Eating Problems
- Sleep Issues
- Physical symptoms
- Withdrawing/isolating
- Anxious/worried
- Changes in behavior
- Clinginess
- Focus/concentration issues
- Chaotic behavior
- Conflict with peers/siblings

## Adults

- Physical symptoms
- Withdrawing/Avoidance of people
- Increased irritability
- Abrupt mood swings
- Depression/anxiety
- Impaired executive functioning
- Disturbed eating/sleeping patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decrease in work performance



## What Can We Do?

The key is to develop resilience practices using coping skills & self-care strategies to ensure the wellbeing of both you, as a parent/caregiver/teacher and the wellbeing of the child.

### Ways to Cope with Stress:

- Create and maintain a self-care routine
- Make a list/prioritize tasks
- Take time to relax - schedule it if need be!
- Focus on what you can control
- Set realistic expectations for yourself and your child/family
- Establish boundaries that can be maintained and protect your wellbeing
- Stay emotionally connected

### Helping Children Cope with Stress:

- Relationship is the key in helping children cope: young children learn self-regulation through co-regulation
- Be a consistent, predictable support system
- Teach coping skills
  - Children learn best through modeling
  - Repetition is very important
  - Use reflections while engaging
  - Incorporate mindfulness techniques



### Adjusting to the Pandemic Changes:

- Communicate with children about the change
- Provide extra affection
- Establish and main a routine
- Encourage social connection
- Encourage children to engage in play
- Focus on the positives



Scan for Resources



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