

Supporting Families to help their children:

A crisis by definition is an incident or experience that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope. I think many will agree that what is going on in this world/country/state/county with COVID-19 and our efforts to control it, in many ways, meets the criteria for a crisis.

What people need in times of crisis; timely, simply-said information that is repeated by multiple credible sources.

We are in unprecedented times and with that comes a lot of uncertainty, fear and anxiety. Getting timely information and tools to help is crucial to calm our worry. While it is vital to receive information on the COVID-19 virus and the steps being taken to mitigate its impact on our state and community, it is just as important to receive information to help emotionally process all this change.

We are creatures of habit and routine. Disrupted routines may create significant distress and throw people into crisis—this is largely dependent on how resilient an individual is along with how robust coping mechanism are.

During this time of restricted mobility and extended school closure, it is critical to create new routines. Some ideas are:

- Dinner every day as a family at the same time. Consider creating a menu together once a week and preparing the meal together as a family. Tasks need to be age appropriate to include everyone.
- At dinner ask everyone to do a quick round of "Best Part and Worst Part" of the day. This provides an opportunity to share how each person's day is going. This should be a time of listening with limited interruption. We do not need to solve or make better someone's worst part—letting them say it out loud helps activate their own coping.
- Break out the old board games or play cards every day. Do a puzzle as a family. You can even watch *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy* together.
- Get outside for some fresh air—sit on the porch or play in the back yard—even in the rain.
- Allow for down time. Every person needs some time away to process thoughts and feelings. It is okay to be alone for a little bit of the day. Be careful not to allow children to isolate for long periods of time.
- Write letters to friends/family and others and send via US postal service; especially letters of gratitude. Studies have shown that gratitude improves relationships and creates a sense of optimism.

Positive mental health is a practice. Please remember to do at least one thing every day that is for your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. Click the link for a worksheet called The 4 Circles of Self Care: <https://www.knowresolve.org/resources>

***If you are in crisis or overwhelmed by the events of the day, consider calling to talk to a trained crisis counselor. Macomb County: 586-307-9100, Oakland County: 800-231-1127, Wayne County: 844-296-2673 or text "Hello" to 741-741—this is a texting crisis service.***

## Web Resources:

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

[https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak\\_factsheet\\_1.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf)

American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress: Helping Children Cope Emotionally with COVID-19

<https://www.aaets.org/helping-children-cope-emotionally-with-coronavirus>

## National Public Radio:

What Kids Want To Know About Coronavirus: An Original Comic: Goats and Soda You may have heard the word "coronavirus" online or on TV. You probably have a lot of questions.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

The National Association of School Psychologists has a parent resource page:

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Detroit Public TV, in partnership with community educators and in collaboration with PBS stations across Michigan, will be providing educational programming and associated digital resources that adhere to Michigan's state curriculum to foster at-home learning across all grade levels.

<https://www.dptv.org/education/education-resources-parents-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

How to talk to your kids:

Detroit Public Television:

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>

Child Mind Institute:

A link specifically about talking to kids about the Corona Virus:

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Crisis Management Institute: A week-by-week link of resources and information for parents:

<https://parents.cmionline.com/>

Action for Health Kids: <https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/healthy-activities-to-do-at-home/>

Activities for home. Fostering healthy behaviors, staying active, and eating nutritiously at home are vital for children's development for many reasons.