

Strategies to help yourself and your children cope with the Coronavirus pandemic

With the recent Coronavirus outbreak, this has caused a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety among many people. With the situation quickly changing around us all, the ongoing news about Coronavirus cases and families and children unable to participate in their normal activities, this is a very stressful time for families. With this in mind, it is **understandable** and **normal** to feel overwhelmed and anxious during this unpredictable time.

We understand that as parents, you are probably concerned about how to best support your children to cope with the Coronavirus pandemic and how to manage you and your children’s anxiety or stress during this difficult time. This information sheet provides quick simple strategies for you and your children to manage stress or anxiety and to support their learning at home. Also there are other resources to further support you and your children’s mental health and well-being.

Stay safe and Stay well,

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Strategies to help your children cope with the Coronavirus pandemic

Limit your children's exposure to watching, hearing, or reading the news about Coronavirus through different news platforms such as TV, online (e.g., ipads, social media), or radio.

Children can feel overwhelmed and worried or anxious about seeing or hearing frightening material. By limiting their exposure to news about coronavirus, this will help reduce anxiety or stress.



Develop a daily routine, ideally collaboratively with your children

Children thrive on routines and during this time, routine will settle children in to normality at home. A good place to start is to think about children's wake up and bed times, eating times, and school learning timetable plan. Importantly, making sure to add in physical activity to maintain good physical health. And of course, family activities such board games or simply watching a favourite children's movie.

Schedule in a mix of fun and calm activities

Adding activities which can bring about enjoyment and/or calmness can help manage you and your children's anxiety or stress.

Stay hopeful and show them you are calm

While it is understandable for parents to feel anxious during this challenging time, children are imitators and tend to look at parents (e.g., emotions, behaviours) as a guide about how to react emotionally, behaviourally, and physically to situations. Aim to talk to your children when you're feeling calm.



Talk to your children openly and honestly about Coronavirus in a child friendly way and making sure to stick to the facts.

Allow them to ask questions that they may have about Coronavirus and answer their questions using language that's simple for your child to understand. Tell them about what is coronavirus, its effects on people, and strategies to keep them safe and as well as others (for example, hand washing, social distancing). Let them know we have doctors and nurses in hospitals that are looking after people who sick and things will eventually return to normal.



Focus on things they can control

As many children feel frustrated and disappointed about being unable to participate in their normal activities, talk to your children about **things they can control** and things they can't control. Let them know that there are many things in life that are out of their control, this will reduce overthinking about things they cannot control. Tell them that they could practice good hand hygiene which is something they can control.



Let your children help around the house

This will give them some sense of responsibility and achievement and give them some control of things, and teach them life skills. Ways they can help around the house include:

- Making their bed
- Setting up dinner
- Help wash and/or put away dishes
- Help with gardening
- Help with cooking
- Pack away after playing with toys or play activities
- Taking out the rubbish

Behavioural strategies to support your children's home learning

1

Catch them being good

Praise them for engaging in learning and trying their best to complete non-preferred learning tasks, this will motivate them to stay on task with learning. Avoid focusing a lot on calling out your child's unwanted behaviours as this can lead them further away from learning.

2

Use transition strategies

Use transition strategies to support transition from highly preferred activities back to learning:

- Offer breaks
- choose an activity to do together before transitioning in learning (e.g., reading a book)
- use verbal or visual reminders before transitioning
- refer them back to their learning timetable
- Use timers (see the next point for details) to help them understand how much time they left with a highly preferred activity (e.g., playing on the ipad).

3

Use a timer

Use a timer to set how much time they have left to complete a learning task or an activity (this also could include breaks) – this will help children stay on task with learning and with work completion and in turn reduce challenging behaviour or resistance (“I’m bored”, “I don’t want to do this”). Children will see that the timer dictates how much time they have left, putting less stress and ownership on parents.

4

Offer breaks

Offer breaks and letting them choose one preferred activity from a variety of preferred activities as a reward.

5

Encourage your children to follow the Agreed Ways

Encouraging, modelling, and reminding your children the Agreed Ways will help them understand behavioural expectations. This means, telling them what you expect them to do - try avoid focusing on what you don't want them to do. You could try encouraging Agreed Ways using visuals or verbal reminders or modelling.

6



Importantly, try to be patient, understanding and listen to your children's concerns

Importantly, try to be patient, understanding and listen to your children's concerns as they are just children after all and they are still learning a lot of things in life. Parents play a big role in helping children calm down as well as addressing their needs.





Helpful Apps for Anxiety, Stress Relief and Relaxation for Kids and Adults




Free Apps

App Name	Description	Who	Cost
<p>Smiling Minds</p> 	Practice your daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device.	Adults and children	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/smiling-mind/id560442518</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.smilingmind.app&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Mental Stillness</p> 	A guided meditation videos	Children and Adults	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/mental-stillness/id1240081662</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.com.healthed.healthedmentalstillness&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Three Good Things - A Happiness Journal</p> 	Write down three good things that happen to you every day, which bring about happy feelings	Children and Adults	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/three-good-things-a-happiness-journal/id1242079576</p>
<p>Breathe 2 Relax</p> 	This App is a stress management tool, which will help you learn how to perform and use diaphragmatic breathing techniques for stress control	Older children and adults	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/breathe2relax/id425720246</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.t2health.breathe2relax&hl=en_AU</p>

<p>The breathing butterfly</p> 	<p>A breathing app. Offered in 28 languages.</p>	<p>Adults and children</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/the-breathing-butterfly/id975817441</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tok.tip.thebreathingbutterfly&hl=en</p>
<p>Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame</p> 	<p>Laugh and learn as your child helps a sesame street monster friend calm down and solve everyday challenges.</p>	<p>Younger children</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/breathe-think-do-with-sesame/id721853597</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.sesameworkshop.ResilienceThinkBreatheDo&hl=en_AU</p>

Free Apps and Offers In-App Purchases

App Name	Description	Who	Cost
<p>Calm</p> 	<p>On this App there are sleep stories, meditation, music, breathing exercises, nature sounds, body stretching and more.</p>	<p>Children and adults</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/calm-meditation-and-sleep/id571800810</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.calm.android&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Headspace: Guided Meditation and Mindfulness</p> 	<p>Headspace is meditation made simple in just a few minutes a day (Australian).</p>	<p>Adults and children</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/headspace-meditation-sleep/id493145008</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.getsomeheadspace.android&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Stop, Breathe, and Think Kids</p> 	<p>Help kids discover their superpowers of quiet, focus and peaceful sleep with our easy-to-use app!</p>	<p>For children ages 5-10</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/stop-breathe-think-kids/id1215758068</p>
<p>Stop, Breath and Think: Meditation & Mindfulness</p> 	<p>Check in with how you're feeling, and try short activities tuned to your emotions, such as guided meditations.</p>	<p>Children and adults</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.stopbreathethink.app&hl=en_AU</p>

<p>Antistress</p> 	<p>There are 50 different toys/activities to play.</p>	<p>Adults and children</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/antistress-relaxing-games/id1207565651</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.JindoBlu.Antistress&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Relax Melodies Sleep Sounds (Apple)</p> <p>Relax Melodies: Sleep Sounds to Calm & Meditate (Android)</p> 	<p>Discover Relax Melodies: the soothing app that makes sleep easy with soothing sounds, bedtime stories and sleep meditations</p>	<p>Adults and children</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/au/app/relax-melodies-sleep-sounds/id314498713</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ipnossoft.rm.a.free&hl=en_AU</p>
<p>Fluid Simulation</p> 	<p>A beautiful interactive real time fluid dynamics simulation, control fluid flow and stunning colours at the tips of your fingers.</p>	<p>Adults and children</p>	<p>Free and offers In-App Purchases</p> <p>Apple: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/fluid-simulation/id1443124993</p> <p>Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=games.pavel.dogreat.fluidsimfree&hl=en_AU</p>

Children Resources

Resource	Simply click the link or copy and past the link on to your web browser
<p>Melbourne Zoo – allows you to watch live video recordings of animal feedings and more things.</p>	<p>https://www.zoo.org.au/animals-at-home/</p>
<p>A bunch of activities for kids</p>	<p>https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Evacuation-activities-for-children-and-adolescents.pdf</p> <p>https://thestir.cafemom.com/big_kid/181945/indoor_activities_kids_crafts_winter</p> <p>https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/stuck-at-home-activities</p>
<p>Free activity books to help children learn about Coronavirus</p>	<p>https://together.stjude.org/content/dam/together/en-us/other/covid-19/coronavirus-for-kids-together.pdf</p> <p>https://www.northshoremums.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Time-Capsule.pdf</p> <p>https://nosycrowcoronavirus.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Coronavirus_ABookForChildren.pdf -A book about coronavirus</p>
<p>Timer apps</p>	<p>https://www.common sense media.org/lists/top-time-management-apps</p>
<p>Resources to support your children’s learning at home</p>	<p>https://www.common sense media.org/resources-for-families-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic</p> <p>https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-keep-kids-learning-when-theyre-stuck-at-home</p> <p>https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/en/stories/five-top-tips-parents-supporting-children-remote-learning</p>
<p>This is an all-rounder resource to support you and your children’s mental health</p>	<p>https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/</p>

Parent Resources

<p>Managing worry and anxiety</p>	<p>https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/53f35a80-8a72-48fa-a5db-e09e1feb5335/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Isolation-P2_1.pdf</p> <p>https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/3821ed7a-1a8a-4e1d-b303-2943ea9ae6b7/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Public-P2_2.pdf</p> <p>https://d2p3kdr0nr4o3z.cloudfront.net/content/uploads/2020/03/27134648/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-gb.pdf</p> <p>https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Families-tip-sheet.pdf</p> <p>https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/</p>
<p>Managing anxiety among older adults</p>	<p>https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/5f9cc6d4-ad5c-4b02-8b7f-d4153cb2ba2b/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Public-Older_adults.pdf</p>
<p>Raising Children: Coronavirus family guide</p>	<p>https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide</p>
<p>Mental Health Resources provided by Department of Health and Human Services</p>	<p>https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19</p>
<p>How to find a psychologist via telehealth online</p>	<p>https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/0c1ece8a-7fce-4d0f-ad44-833ed9dba71a/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Public-Telehealth-P2_1.pdf</p>

Help Lines for mental health support and financial support.

<p>Online and phone mental health support for children, youth and parents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling Kids helpline also offer a Parent Helpline: https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/how-parentline-can-help-you?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5Lman-6x6AlVy6qWCh0FhA8EEAAYASAAEgKiMvD_BwE ▪ Headspace: https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/ ▪ Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/national-help-lines-and-websites ▪ Lifeline 13 11 14 https://www.lifeline.org.au/ ▪ 1800Respect: 1800 737 732 https://www.1800respect.org.au/ ▪ Parentline Victoria: 13 22 89 https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx https://parentline.com.au/kids ▪ Maternal Child Health Advisory Line: 132 229 https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/default.aspx ▪ Family Relationships Advice Line: 1800 050 321 https://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/talk-someone/advice-line ▪ SANE Australia Mental Health Helpline: 1800 187 263 https://www.sane.org/
<p>Services offering financial crisis support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lost your job or income please click here: https://www.vic.gov.au/lost-your-job-or-income-due-coronavirus-find-support ▪ Vincent Care: https://www.vincentcare.org.au/our-services/financial-hardship/ ▪ Salvation Army: https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/ ▪ Community Information and Support Victoria: https://www.cisvic.org.au/getting-help/financial-hardship ▪ Anglicare Victoria: https://www.anglicarevic.org.au/what-we-do/strengthening-communities/crisis-aid/ ▪ Food Bank: https://www.foodbank.org.au/?state=au ▪ Department of Health and Human Services: https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/hardship