

## Keep Physically Distant, but Stay Socially Connected

### Take care of yourself and your family during this time:

- **Stay socially connected** while maintaining safe physical distance. Humans need to feel connected. Catch up with friends & family via phone or video. Talk about how you are feeling and any worries or concerns. Create a social community online sharing photos, playing virtual games, video conferencing book or craft club.
- **Take care of your body**. Drink lots of water, eat healthy, and continue with your normal exercise routine. Nutrition, exercise, and sleep are the trifecta for health.
- **Make time to relax**. We are being inundated with messages via the media. Constant vigilance is not good for our bodies. To counteract it, use your relaxation coping skills like yoga, meditation, breathing, journaling, art, or listening to music.
- **Limit intake of media**. The news media works on the strategy of repeating stories hourly or more often. Repeated exposure to the same stressful event can exacerbate our stress response. It's good to stay in the know, but consider reducing your ingestion of news media, especially if you are starting to feel overwhelmed.
- **Set up a routine for yourself and family**. Have some general guidelines of what you want your day to look like including self-care, work/study, fun activities, and exercise.
- **Take appropriate precautions to keep you and your family healthy**. Follow the CDC guidelines prevention: wash your hands regularly, avoid touching your face, and avoid contact with people known to be sick. For more info, check out <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>
- **Remain hopeful**. If you find that you are having a difficult time coping or are feeling overwhelmed, please reach out.

Highlights from National Association of School Psychologists ([NASP's guidelines](#) on **talking to your children** about COVID-19:

### Remain calm and reassuring

- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19 and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

### Make yourself available

- Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.

### Monitor television viewing and social media

- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children

### Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible

- Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.

### Be honest and accurate

- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself.