

**Episcopal Counseling Department:
Easing Coronavirus/COVID-19 Distress**

With the uncertainty surrounding us in recent weeks related to the coronavirus and an increasing number of events being cancelled, families may be feeling stressed and anxious. Changes to our daily routines can lead to anxiety. Taking care of yourself and your children's mental health during these times can be difficult but is important. Here are some ideas for managing your family's well-being during stressful and uncertain times:

- **Talk to your child.** Provide developmentally appropriate and factual information and answers to your child's questions about the coronavirus. While it's important to be honest with your child, be careful not to volunteer too much information that may increase their worries.
- **Be reassuring.** Reminders that doctors and health professionals are working together to keep everyone safe is helpful. Explain that events are cancelled as a precaution to keep people safe. It can be helpful for children to know most often symptoms of the virus in young people are mild, and do not necessitate a medical emergency.
- **Monitor news exposure on TV and social media.** While facts can be helpful, too much visual imagery can be scary for adults and children. Stay informed, but consider if it's creating stress symptoms in your child.
- **Manage family stress.** If you sense yourself feeling overwhelmed, manage your anxiety so that you can be helpful to those around you.
 - Exercise - Go for a walk, jog, or play basketball with your child.
 - Get outside - Enjoy the spring weather in the comfort of your backyard.
 - Meditate - There are a lot of great apps available for free, such as Headspace; Calm; Stop, Breathe, Think; and Insight Timer.
- **Plan family social time.** Build in some social time at home, as children will miss the socialization that school provides.
 - Play a family game.
 - Have family movie night.
 - Allow your teen to pick a series for the family to watch together.
 - Make family dinner together.
- **Focus on what you are doing to stay safe.** Remind your child that your family is taking safety precautions to prevent spread of germs, and these are healthy habits for all to have.
 - Wash hands for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if you don't have access to hand-washing.
 - Don't drink after others.

- Consider family guidelines for social activity- each family must make decisions about what they are comfortable with.

If you or your child are having anxiety symptoms or academic challenges, please reach out to your division or learning support services counselor by email for support. While students are working from home, we will be connected digitally.

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Resources/references:

“How to Talk to Kids about the Novel Coronavirus.” *The Seattle Times*.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-the-novel-coronavirus/>

“Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus.” *Child Mind Institute*.

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

“Talking to Children about COVID-19: A Parent Resource.” National Association of School Psychologists.

[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?fbclid=IwAR1TLUKbJso8POLUATIHjXI92tx9035xvmJr_3NyCZIoQI_f3aRG1jXdQz4](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?fbclid=IwAR1TLUKbJso8POLUATIHjXI92tx9035xvmJr_3NyCZIoQI_f3aRG1jXdQz4)

“Help Your Family De-Stress During Coronavirus Uncertainty.” Common Sense Media.

<https://www.common Sense Media.org/blog/help-your-family-de-stress-during-coronavirus-uncertainty>