



Wellness Today

For Parents & Families

Keeping Mental Health Intact During a Crisis

During a crisis like the COVID-19 virus, it's important to take steps to stay physically healthy. But maintaining good mental health is also important.

Tips for Maintaining Good Mental Health:

- Limit media. Reading all articles related to the crisis will only cause more stress. Try setting a specific time, such as once every other day, to read updates, and do so with the idea that it will help you know how to prepare, not tell you how much to panic.
- Do some good. As you are able, help those around you.
- As much as you are able, stick to your normal routine. Or, create a new routine and adapt to following it.
- Reduce stress by having a preparedness plan.
- Connect with others through calls, video calls, etc.
- Practice good health habits such as exercising, meditating, sleeping enough, and eating well.
- Do things you enjoy or use this time to explore other interests.

Tips for Helping Your Children During a Crisis

During this time when the world is experiencing a crisis, you can be the source of comfort your children need.

Everyone reacts to crisis and stress differently. Below are some reactions to watch for that may indicate your children need help through a crisis.

Reactions to Watch For:

- Regressing to outgrown behaviors
- Acting out or exhibiting more irritability
- Withdrawing or demanding more attention than usual
- Crying more than usual and at the slightest provocation
- Experiencing unexplainable aches and pains
- Eating unhealthily
- Showing a change in sleep patterns

Whether your children are reacting to the current crisis or to another crisis in their world, the following tips can help you better support your children.

Tips to Help:

- Talk with your children about the crisis. Allow them to ask questions and then answer them simply and in a way they can understand.
- Talk with your children about their feelings. Are they feeling stressed? Worried? Listen to what they say, without judging. If talking doesn't seem to help, encourage them to draw or write about their feelings.
- Tell your children that their safety is important to you. Even though they are safe, let them know it's ok for them to feel scared or worried.
- Take care of yourself. In order to help your children, you need to help yourself. Practice good health habits and exhibit healthy ways to handle stressful situations. Your children can look to you to know how to cope with crises.
- Offer more attention to your children, such as giving back rubs, cooking comfort food or your children's favorite food, and giving more hugs.
- Spend more time together as a family.



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Is Vaping Really a Problem?

Vaping, or using e-cigarettes, has become an increasing problem over the past few years. Although in some ways vaping seems to have fewer health consequences than regular cigarettes, there are still risks and problems caused by vaping. Some problems with vaping include the following:

- Vaping uses nicotine, which is extremely addicting. Since teens' brains are still developing, they are more susceptible to addiction.
- Vaping can impact users' ability to focus.
- Vaping devices are easier to hide from parents and teachers because they don't have a strong odor and can be disguised as an everyday object, such as a flash drive.
- Using vaping devices increases the user's chance of switching to cigarettes.
- Vaping could increase users' risk of addiction to other drugs.
- Vaping exposes users' lungs to a variety of chemicals.

Talk with your children about the dangers of vaping.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Tips

Abusing drugs can cause short-term issues (such as impaired driving) or long-term issues (such as serious health conditions). Parents are in a prime position to do everything they can to prevent their children from abusing drugs.

There are many steps you can take to help your children be drug free. For ideas for your child's specific age, click [here](#). For more prevention information and ideas, read this [parent's guide to drug prevention](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Prevention Tips:

- Be a good example and keep drugs and alcohol away. If you do drugs or regularly drink too much alcohol, there's a good chance your children will too.
- Talk with your children about the dangers of drugs and correct any misleading ideas they have (e.g., "Marijuana won't hurt me").
- Avoid media that sensationalizes drugs and alcohol.

- Practice with your children different ways to say, "No!" to drugs.
- Encourage positive ways to cope when life gets hard.
- Encourage positive friendships and activities.

If you think your children may already be abusing drugs and alcohol, here are some tips on how to help them.

Find Help:

- Calmly confront your children about their drug abuse. Gather physical evidence or note observations of their behavior to back up your concerns.
- Negotiate rules and consequences for drug use and enforce them.
- Enlist the help of a counselor if the conversation gets heated or isn't working.
- Use SAMHSA's National Helpline [1-800-662-HELP (4357)] for treatment referral and information any time or day of the year. Find a treatment option that will work best for your children.