



March 20, 2020

Hello StG Community,

The Counseling and Wellness Department wanted to reach out and share some information and links to continue to support you during this new experience we are all trying to manage. There is not one right way to do this, and every family and situation is different, but some general suggestions may help you and your family find some comfort and control in this confusing and unnerving time.

**Identify and normalize the wide range of feelings everyone in the family may experience.**

- Recognize and acknowledge that ALL feelings are okay to have!
- Name and notice your own feelings and help your children do the same. One moment may be filled with anxious thoughts, and the next may be extreme happiness as you enjoy fun family time.
  - Something we share with students is that our “thinking brain” is a better decision maker than our “feeling brain.” When emotions get high, it’s important to calm your brain and body before you try and make choices. This is just as true for adults as it is for kids, and modeling this for children will help your family handle the many feelings you all may be experiencing.
- Adults need to take care of themselves first to provide effective support for their children.
- Calming your brain and body can be done by simply breathing slow, deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.
  - For additional support you may want to add mindfulness exercises to your daily schedule.

**Model and encourage healthy habits in your family.**

- Set and keep schedules and routines as best as you can; this provides predictability and control, which often help to lessen anxiety.
- Keep bedtimes and bedtime routines predictable and relaxing. Be sure you and your children are getting the recommended hours of sleep each night.
- Take breaks, exercise and play together. Working at home may make you feel like you are now “on-call” every moment, but everyone-- adults and kids alike-- needs breaks. Playing together is a great way to give your brain and body, as well as your healthy family relationship, the boost they need!
- Quiet time alone for reflection, reading, drawing or journaling can be another healthy outlet for every family member.
- Healthy foods, have a variety of foods for your family to make and enjoy. Comfort food in moderation.

## **Stay connected with your family and help build healthy coping skills.**

- Listen without distractions. Share your schedule with your family so they know when you're available to listen.
- Let kids talk about their feelings, ideas and fears. Ask them to share what they know. Help them identify their feelings and help to provide support to address and minimize their anxieties. ("It sounds like you're really worried about that. We all worry about that sometimes, and here's what I do/know to help myself feel less worried..." For younger children, "You're feeling scared/worried. Sometimes people worry. I like to blow bubbles and blow out all my worried thoughts...")
- Make sure children feel connected, cared for and loved! Help them connect with family and friends through phone calls or Facetime. Show affection; children of all ages need this now more than ever.
- Laugh! Find ways to have fun, tell jokes, watch a silly show or movie together. Laughter is terrific for boosting moods! Don't let serious talk take over every minute of your day.

## **COVID-19 Coping Skills Coloring Book from LSU Counseling Clinic!**

[LSU Counseling Clinic Coping Coloring Book](#)

## **Helpful Links and Resources for families.**

[Talking to Children about COVID-19](#)

[Talking With Children During Infectious Disease Outbreaks \(SAMHSA\)](#)

[NOLA Family Magazine](#)

[How to Stay Physically and Mentally Healthy While COVID-19 Has You Stuck at Home](#)

[How To Protect Yourself from COVID-19](#)

[CoronaSchooling? Daily Schedule Advice for ADHD families](#)

[Headspace - Mindfulness for Everyday Life](#)

We are here to support you through this transition and experience of StG Community at Home. You'll also find us on Google Classroom as we post readings of books and other materials we want to share with you and our students. Please feel free to reach out with questions, comments or for further support.

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