

Keep calm when managing stress from COVID-19

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so you can support your children.

You are not alone, millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.

Listen to them, avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

Take a break, we all need a break sometimes. When your children are asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself. Make a list of healthy activities that you like to do. You deserve it!

Be open and listen to your children. Your children will look to you for support and reassurance. Listen to your children when they share how they are feeling. Accept how they feel and give them comfort, you will understand them because at times you feel the same way.

Taking a pause can also be helpful when you find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong. It gives you a chance to be calmer. Even a few deep breaths or connecting with the feeling of the floor beneath can make a difference. You can also take a pause with your children!

Emergency Stress-Stoppers:

Emergency stress stoppers are actions to help you defuse stress in the moment. You may need different stress stoppers for different situations, and sometimes it helps to combine them. Here are some ideas:

1. Count to ten before you speak or react.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths until you feel your body un-clench a bit.
3. Go for a walk, even if it's just to the restroom and back. It can help break the tension and give you a chance to think things through.
4. Try a quick meditation or prayer to get some perspective. If it is not urgent, sleep on it and respond in the morning.
5. Walk away from the situation for a while, and handle it later once things have calmed down.
6. Turn on some chill music or an inspirational podcast to help you deal with the situation at hand.
7. Take a break to play with the pet and the children outside, hug a loved one or do something to help someone else.
8. Work out or do something active. Exercise is a great antidote for stress.

Stress-Busting Activities:

Doing things you enjoy is a natural way to relieve stress and find your happy place. Even when you are down, you may find pleasure in simple things like going for a walk, catching up with a friend, or reading a good book. When stress makes you feel bad, do something that makes you feel good, even if only for ten or fifteen minutes. Some of these activities may work for you:

- Make art -- draw, color, paint, or play a musical instrument.
- Work on a scrapbook or photo album to focus on good memories.
- Read a book, short story or magazine.
- Call a friend, do a Zoom meeting with friends.
- Do a hobby like sewing, knitting, or making jewelry.
- Meditate or practice yoga, take a walk in nature, work in the garden
- Take a relaxing bath and feel the stress wash away.

The key is to find your groove and make it a practice. You will be amazed at how quickly you may start to feel better once you disrupt the cycle of stress.