

Supporting Children through COVID-19



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Topics

Strategies for having conversations about COVID-19 with children including ways of approaching the science of COVID-19 in fun and kid-friendly ways

Common roadblocks to communication to avoid when talking with children and youth about COVID-19

Strategies for supporting kids' worries related to COVID-19

Ways of maintaining connection with others even when practicing physical distancing

NAVIGATING COVID-19 THE CHANGE



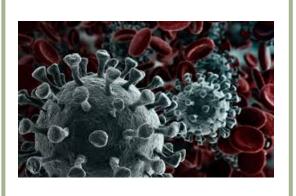


TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

Conversation Starter







"You've probably heard lots of people in your life talking about COVID-19. I'm wondering what you understand about it?"

What is COVID-19?

- Coronavirus is a type of virus. COVID 19 is an illness caused by new type of coronavirus.
 - > A virus is a type of germ that people can catch from one another
- First discovered in humans in Dec 2019.

• COVID19:

CO = corona; VI = virus; D= disease; 19 = 2019



What Is A Pandemic?

"Pandemic" means that the disease has spread to many countries around the world.

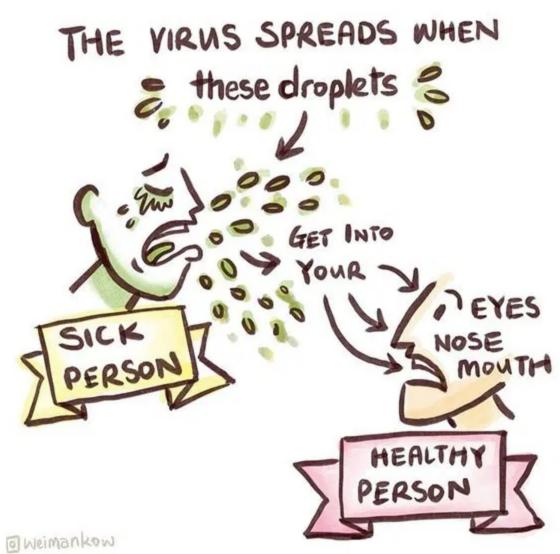
COVID19 is a pandemic.



What's the Big Deal about COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is new so humans have no immunity.
- The human body doesn't have the right tools to fight it off.
- That is why it spread so quickly around the world.
- We don't yet have a cure or vaccine.
- Scientists are working really hard to find a cure and vaccine.

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT HOW A CORONAVIRUS
SPREADS.



What Are The Symptoms Of COVID-19?

- Most people don't get sick or only have mild symptoms.
- Symptoms are fever, cough and troubles breathing.
- Most people don't need to see a doctor.
- Rarely, people need to go to hospital.
- Sadly, some people with COVID19 do get very sick, and some even die.

How Do We Decrease The Spread Of COVID-19







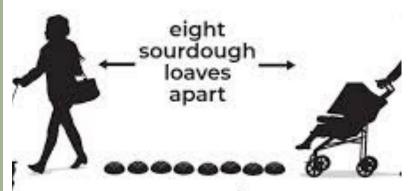


Explaining "Physical Distancing"

Preference for the term "physical distancing" over "social distancing".

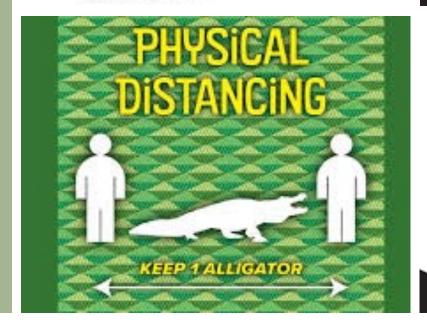
 Physical distancing is something that people are being asked to do around the world to do to help decrease the spread of the virus.

Physical Distancing: How far is 2 meters?



(or 2 metres/6 feet)

Based on an average 24 cm loaf. Actual size may vary, especially if you haven't baked soundough bread before. Add extra loaves if needed.



What does physical distancing look like?



What does physical distancing look like?

(also known as "social distancing")



Responding to Questions

Make sure you understand the questions being asked

"Can you help me understand your question better?"

"I think you're asking ... is that correct?"

Validate the question

- "That's a really good question."
- o "I wonder that sometimes, too."

Wonder with them

- "I wish I could answer that, but I don't know either."
- "I don't know the answer, but I will look into it for you."



Key Principles for Communicating with Children

- 1. Open the conversation.
- 2. Use simple but correct language. Honesty is key.
- 3. Do not provide more information than the child is looking for.
- 4. Foster a compassionate environment where they feel safe to ask questions. Invite the sharing of questions and concerns.
- 5. Know it's okay not have the answer (wonder about life's mysteries with them).





COMMON ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

Roadblocks to Communication

- 1.The Fix it Trap
- 2. Advising, Giving Solutions
- 3. Reassuring
- 4. Praising

I wanted to cry, but I didn't.

I was brave instead. and sad





STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING KIDS' WORRIES

Supporting Well-being

- Limit media exposure
- Discuss, encourage and model expression of ALL emotions, in a range of healthy ways
- Distinguish between feelings and behaviors
- Offer kids the chance to talk, but don't force it
- Consistency = Predictability = Control



Prepare for Pandemic Pivots





- Acknowledge the potential of returning to on-line learning
- Acknowledge that uncertainty can be uncomfortable – help child get "comfortable with their discomfort"
- Possible changes to hospital policies, in-person options as numbers change

Foster Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to understand one's emotional state, name feelings, and express one's feelings in healthy ways.





Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario

What does collective loss look like in students. You might see and hear reactions such as:

| Younger Students | Additional Reactions in Older Students |
|--|---|
| Frequently changing mood or emotions | Withdrawal from family activities |
| • Little motivation or interest in schoolwork, activities | Intense wish to be with peers |
| Energy, sleep or appetite changesDifficulty concentrating | Increased need to assert independence (which may look like defiance) |
| Low frustration tolerance, irritability | Interest in activities from younger years Questioning fairness, trying to make sense |
| Increased need for contact and reassurance | Worries and fears about the safety of family, friends, self |

Explaining "Grief" To Kids

MEANINGLESS

RELIEF

SAD

ANGER

NOT FAIR

"GRIEF" is all the different thoughts and feelings that occur when experiencing a significant loss in life. RESENTMENT

CONFUSED

WORRIED

FEAR

HAPPY

SHAME

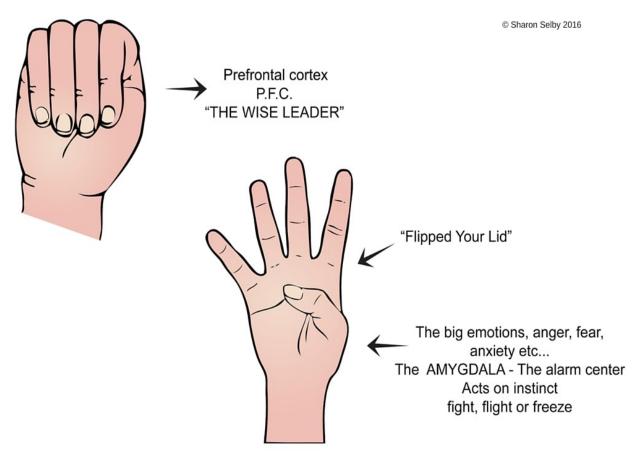
HELPLESSNESS

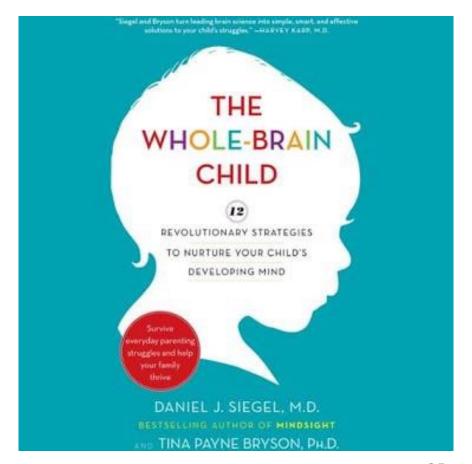
ALONE

REGRET

GUILT

Dr. Daniel Seigel ("Name it to Tame it")





Support Strategies for Worry



- Normalize the worry
- Externalize the worry (creating a worry character)
- Grounding Exercise
 - 5 Senses countdown
 - Square breathing
 - Body scan
 - Nature Detective
 - Feet on the ground
 - What's missing?
- Name it to Tame it (Dr. Dan Siegel)
- Talk back to the worry (What would you tell your best friend who felt this way?)
- Worry Eater Creature



WAYS OF MAINTAINING CONNECTION THROUGH COVID-19

The 5 C's of What Children Want to Know

- Did I CAUSE it?
- 2. Can I CATCH it?
- 3. Can I CURE it?
- 4. Who is going to take CARE of me?



The 5th C – How do I Stay Connected?









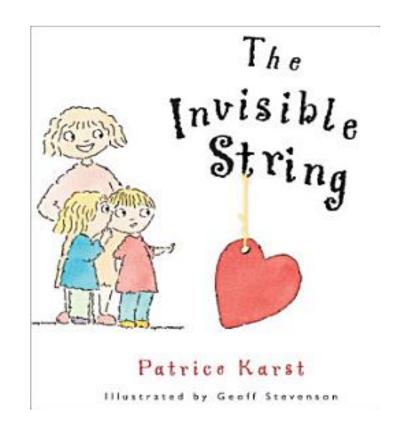


RESOURCES

Staying Connected Resources

Good Grief Tip Sheet: "Funerals in Times of a Pandemic: A Toolkit for Children and Families": https://good-grief.org/wordpress/wp-content/themes/x-child/pdf/Children-Funerals-

and-a-Pandemic.pdf



Resources For Supporting Kids

A Kids Book about COVID-19: https://akidsbookabout.com/

Brainpop's video explaining Covid-19 to children:

https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/

Connect and Redirect refrigerator sheet - Dr.Dan Siegel & Tina Payne Bryson https://www.drdansiegel.com/pdf/Refrigerator%20Sheet--NDD.pdf

CNN article by Kate Bolduan, 'What I'm telling my kids about Covid-19': https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/opinions/telling-my-kids-about-coronavirus-bolduan/index.html

PBS's '10 tips for talking with your kids about Covid-19': https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids

The Daily (Podcast): A Kids' Guide to the Coronavirus: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/podcasts/the-daily/kids-coronavirus.html

Free Resources For Caregivers

Headspace for meditation (Temporarily Free Option)

https://www.headspace.com/covid-19

Website for managing anxiety during COVID-19

https://www.virusanxiety.com/

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's suggestions on managing stress during this time (for self and children):

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html







A Mental Health Literacy Resource for Educators

Loss, Grief, and Bereavement during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented time for all of us. With it has come some amazing stories of kindness, hope and positivity. Unfortunately, it has left many with a sense of collective loss. In schools, students have experienced a variety of losses, such as disruptions to their academic learning, lack of access to recreational activities, inability to be with friends and extended family, and missed celebrations of major milestones. Educators have experienced losses too; like interrupted schedules and plans, and separation from students, collegial relationships, and usual classroom life. All of us have experienced a loss of freedom and connection during this pandemic time. Collectively, and cumulatively, this sense of loss can challenge our well-being.

Next Q&A: Tuesday Oct 6, 1pm



Sign Up Here: https://bit.ly/38EFtZe



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Q & A



Andrea



Lisa

"The greatest gift you can give your children is not protection from change, loss, pain or stress, but the confidence and tools to cope and grow with all that life has to offer them."

Dr. Wendy Harpham