

CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19

Emotional Health Resources

Undoubtedly, recent events related to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in fear and for many, a tendency to pull inward and isolate. While this is a natural emotional response to a viral outbreak; it is imperative now, more than ever, that we are treating ourselves and others with compassion and maintaining our emotional health in addition to our physical health. It is also a time to lean into one another to offer strength, support and encouragement.

MANAGING YOUR OWN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH, AND SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS:

- ▶ [Know the Facts.](#) Accurate information is helpful while keeping fear and anxiety in check.
- ▶ [Say 'No' to Panic and Proactively Manage Anxiety.](#)
- ▶ [Adopt Healthy Best Practices.](#)
- ▶ Accept Vulnerability.
- ▶ [Show Compassion and Wish Others Well.](#)
- ▶ Be Aware of Yourself and Your Own Reactions.

Additionally, many adults are now struggling with how to best discuss the subject with children in a way that does not elicit further worry. It is important to acknowledge that children of all ages are perceptive and may be frightened by the news headlines reporting the spread of the virus and its impacts. Over the next several weeks, we should expect the psychological impacts of this pandemic to affect classroom learning. We may also expect an increase in emotional and behavioral needs. As such, the following suggestions, talking points and linked resources may prove useful:

TIPS FOR DISCUSSING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) WITH CHILDREN:

1. **Be Calm and Reassuring:** Scholars will react to you, what you say and how you say it. Reassure them that you and the other adults in the school are focused on keeping them safe and healthy. Also share with them that this virus is not thought to pose any significant risk to children.
2. **Be Developmentally Appropriate:** What you say can either increase or decrease scholars' anxiety. Try to answer questions honestly and clearly, without making assumptions about those who might have COVID-19. Stick to the facts.
3. **Maintain Normal Routine:** Keeping a normal routine can be reassuring to scholars and help keep them safe and happy. Introduce changes, such as increased handwashing in a positive way.
4. **Focus on the Steps Taken to Keep Scholars Safe and Healthy:** Review procedures that the school has for keeping them safe and healthy. Remind scholars of good hygiene habits that promote a healthy lifestyle such as washing hands. If scholars ask about face masks, you can share that the CDC say they aren't necessary, and that anyone wearing them is being extra cautious.

5. Don't be Afraid to Discuss the Coronavirus: Most scholars will have already heard about it and not discussing it could create more anxiety or worry. Your goal is to provide fact-based information that is more reassuring than what they may be hearing from peers, the news, or social media. It is also okay to incorporate the topic into current lessons.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON DISCUSSING WITH CHILDREN:

- ▶ [The CDC](#)
- ▶ [Child Mind Institute](#)
- ▶ [The National Association of School Nurses and the National Association of School Psychologists](#)