

Educational Psychology Coronavirus (COVID-19) resource pack

Dear Parent/Carers

There is a lot of uncertainty around the current COVID-19 outbreak, particularly given that the situation is constantly developing. Understandably, this is causing a lot of worry and anxiety for people. Having children and young people at home, often when people are trying to work themselves, adds another layer of stress. It is therefore important to not only consider our physical health during such challenging times, but also to pay attention to our mental health. It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious when we are faced with uncertain situations, but the sooner we acknowledge and learn to take care of our mental health, the healthier and better equipped we'll be to cope with the situation we're having to face.

We have put together a resource pack which we hope families will find helpful in navigating their way through these next few weeks. The pack will be regularly updated so please do visit this page regularly and share the link with parent/carers.

We are additionally offering consultations to parents of children with additional and/or special educational needs who have particular concerns that they would like to talk through with an educational psychologist. Within this pack you will see details of how to access our telephone hotlines. We have included information which will help you to prepare for these consultations in advance so that we can help you to make the most of the time available.

Please do also remember that your child's school will also be able to support you at his difficult time.

Best wishes

Susan Harris
Principal Educational Psychologist and Autism Strategy Lead

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Telephone Hotline

The Educational Psychology service runs a telephone hotline for school staff every Wednesday afternoon. During the COVID 19 pandemic we have extended our telephone hotline to include parents.

An Educational Psychologist from each area team will be available to consult about children or broader education issues every week on a Wednesday afternoon. EPs will focus on problem solving, providing information and signposting as appropriate. This is not a formal means of referring an individual child to an EP and consultations about children will be anonymous. The following information will be recorded for administrative purposes: school name, contact name, age and gender of the child and a summary of key issues causing concern.

No prior arrangement is necessary – simply call into your area telephone number between **1– 4pm each Wednesday** as follows:

North East:	01372 833588
South East:	01737 737777
North West:	01483 518130
South West:	01483 517179

***Please note that these telephone consultations are open to parents and school staff until further notice.**

If you call and the hotline is busy, business support will take a message for an EP to call you back within 48 hours of your call.

We hope that you find this service useful and look forward to your call.

Managing Home Learning

Tips for Parents of primary school children

This is an unprecedented and extraordinary time, and you need to look after your own wellbeing and mental health too. Make sure you continue doing the things you enjoy and keep in touch with family (remotely) as much as you can. If your child is too young to play independently for a long time, use screens if you need to in order to get housework done or some downtime for you. This doesn't have to be TV or gaming if you don't want it to be, there are lots of live streams and children's activities (yoga, reading, sports, music etc.) on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. You could even consider asking Grandparents to read a book or run a cookery session over a video call.

Young children learn through play so it's important to keep playing! If you find yourself running out of ideas there are lots of groups and accounts on social media with brilliant ideas for all age groups (see below for a few, but there are lots more).



Remember you are not alone. There are thousands of families in the same position. This is new to everyone.
Share the load. If both parents are at home try to share the childcare, or even better spend time together as a family.

Activities:

- For EY and KS1: look at **Play Hooray** (<https://playhooray.co.uk/>) and **Five Minute Mum** (www.fiveminutemum.com/)
- For KS2 look at **BBC bitesize** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) or search **Instagram** accounts of their favourite authors (e.g. David Walliams reads a book each day).
- Join the Facebook group **FAMILY LOCKDOWN TIPS AND IDEAS** or look at **The Green Parent resource bank** (<https://thegreenparent.co.uk/articles/read/lockdown-life-savers>). There are hundreds of ideas for play and activities in this group, most of which use things you'll already have at home. Here are some simple ideas below:
- Make salt dough (you need to mix 250g flour, 125g salt and 125ml water). Once you've made your model, you can bake it in the oven until it's solid, then cool and paint.
- Set up a treasure hunt. Draw pictures for children who can't yet read. This can be as simple as hunting for pegs around the garden, or spoons in the sitting room. Use what you have.
- Take some water and a paintbrush outside and paint with water

- hopscotch outside with chalk.
- Dance! ('This Girl Can' has simple dance routines for children to follow to Disney songs)
- Make a puppet theatre using a large piece of card with a rectangular hole cut in the middle for the stage and some hand-drawn characters on sticks or straws, or even using thin strips of cardboard. You could decorate it, add curtains (if you have leftover scraps of material) and make up your own stories.

Expectations:

Keep activities short and sweet for young children. At age 3 they might manage a learning activity for 5-10 minutes, rising to around 20-30 minutes at 10 or 11. Some children might manage quite well at being set off on a task, others will require more support. Follow your child's lead and don't expect or push too much. Be wary of fatigue (both yours and your child's) and stop if it feels too much. If you're at home with multiple children of different ages, try to stagger the learning so you are able to spend time with each one (e.g. set your 10 year old off first, then spend 10 minutes with your 7 year old on their maths before setting them a short independent task whilst you play pretend shops with your 4 year old). You cannot teach them all at the same time.

Schedule/routines:

Routines are helpful for some people, but not for others. Set one if that is helpful for you. You might like to look across the whole week and set a weekly timetable each weekend. Keep flexible, don't worry if it all goes wrong, just pick up where you left off. An alternative approach might be to set a target or topics each week and structure activities around that (e.g. 'Under the Sea', 'Space'), depending on your child's interests. There are many museums and galleries that you can visit virtually online. Chester Zoo has videos on their Facebook page where you can meet the pandas, elephants, giraffes and more!

You have likely been sent work from school, including worksheets, online learning portals and maybe some project work so you shouldn't be having to make the work up yourself. If you haven't been sent anything, ask your school. You should be able to e-mail your child's teacher, or have a named contact.


The below schedule is an example for a primary aged child. It includes some learning time (reading, writing, maths, topic/creative time) and lots of play time. In school your child will learn in groups of 30 children with 1 or 2 adults. Home learning in a 1:1 setting is much more intense and so sitting down learning time should be scaled down accordingly (consider attention span as above). Remember, **play is learning**, the younger your child(ren) the more of your time should be spent playing.

Example of a primary timetable

Time	Activity
Early morning	Breakfast , morning routine, expectations for the day, share timetable.
9am	Sports activity (e.g. Football in the garden, run or cycle (keeping to appropriate social distancing rules), PE with Joe Wicks (older children) on YouTube or Andy's Wild Workouts (younger children) on BBC.)
9.30am	Reading (being read to, reading to an adult, listening to a storybook – all children's storybooks on Amazon Audible are free to listen to at the moment).
10.00	Snack , outside play
10.30	Maths /number/shape work
11.00	Baking /Gardening/Creative activities
12.00	Lunch , free play
13.00	Literacy /phonics/handwriting/story writing
13.30	Topic /child's choice – learn a new skill?
14.15	Free play inside/outside – set a challenge (e.g. 30 day lego challenge, garden nature hunt)
15.00	Snack , outside play
15.30	Calm activity (e.g. yoga/ballet/singing/storytime –live stream or catch-up)
16.00	TV/screen time/quiet time – mindfulness or wellbeing activity
17.00	Dinner
Evening	Free play and bedtime routine


You can access free visual timetables at TES: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/editable-visual-timetable-with-hyperlinks-6182305>

Morning activities



PE, Reading, Break Time, Mathematics, Handwriting, Cookery, Lunch Time

Afternoon activities



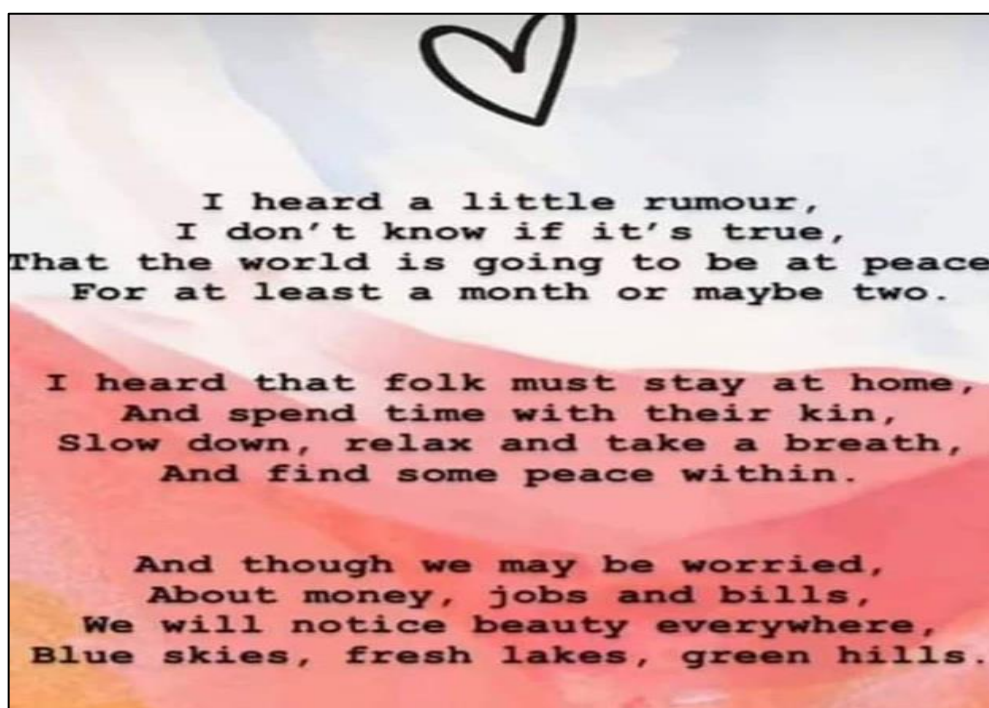
Golden Time, Investigation, I.C.T, Break Time, Design Technology, Art, Golden Time

www.communication4all.co.uk

Well-being:

Above all, protect everyone's well-being. As the poem below says, "Slow down, relax, and take a breath." Children (and adults) cannot learn effectively if they are feeling anxious or worried. Talk to your children, explain (in an age appropriate way) what is going on, answer their questions.

If you are trying to juggle a job as well it is crucial that you set realistic expectations. Set aside time for you to work and be honest about what that is going to look like (maybe an hour or two each day, maybe you'll have to work some evenings). If your children watch a film a day so you can find the time work, so be it. This is temporary. See our well-being section for different ways to manage family well-being.



Managing Home Learning

Tips for Parents of Young People in Secondary School

Teenagers are likely to find this period of social distancing and self-isolation very challenging and unsettling. Developmentally, teenagers are forming their own identity and they may have very strong ideas about how to manage their lives; they may also find it challenging following rules for their behaviour that are set by you or the government. Often teenagers seek out social relationships and contact with their peers more than with their families and so being at home for weeks on end may feel very challenging indeed for them.

Teenagers are also often ego-centric, and they may struggle to accept the limitations of this period of self-isolation, feeling that they may need to push the boundaries more than usual. This may lead to greater conflict in the home, and teenagers may also begin to over-rely on technology.

Below are some ideas that may help to keep your teenage children stimulated and to ease the load for teenagers at this time.

Some suggestions

1. Design your home for work and learning. Make a list of wants and needs for each person.
2. Be their parent (don't feel you need to be their teacher).
3. Use social media in a positive way and build in media breaks (see link below on keeping children safe online).
4. It's important for children and young people to **stay in contact with their friends** and peers. Ideas to enable them to do this might include:
 - ☺ Video calling their friends
 - ☺ Arranging a group chat
 - ☺ Connecting with a virtual platform and doing something together like making a cake, making a card and sending it...
 - ☺ Watch a film/episode on Netflix at the same time as a friend so you can chat about it
 - ☺ There are lots of online games that can be played together on various apps
 - ☺ Set an online challenge for your child and their friends to complete
5. Decide how you will help them to track their progress and build in rewards.

6. Growing young people need access to healthy meals, exercise and sleep routines. Some suggestions for activities that promote **self-care** are listed below:

- 👍 Have a bath with bubbles
- 👍 Listen to your favourite song
- 👍 Make your favourite smoothie
- 👍 Have a pamper session
- 👍 Re read a book you have enjoyed
- 👍 Look through some of your favourite photographs
- 👍 Do some baking
- 👍 Go outside and take 3 deep breaths
- 👍 Drink a large glass of water
- 👍 Put music on really loud and dance
- 👍 Lie down and try to concentrate on your breathing
- 👍 Do some colouring in
- 👍 Do some yoga

7. Teenagers need structure to feel productive and to help them feel motivated. Here is an example of a possible timetable for your teenager to follow, although it's a good idea to create one together with your child:

Time	Activity
8am	Breakfast and family check-in/plan for the day
9am	Sports activity (e.g. Football in the garden, run or cycle (keeping to appropriate social distancing rules), PE with Joe Wicks (older children) on YouTube.
9.30am	Lesson Two
10.15	Break
10.30	Lesson Three
11.15	Lesson Four
12.30	Lunch
13.30	Lesson Five
14.15	Lesson Six
15.15	Social networking or online media time
16.15	Personal skills development such as practicing a musical instrument
17.15	TV/screen time/quiet time – mindfulness or wellbeing activity

8. Review how things have worked out as a family and change the plan if you need to.

9. Talk to each other

Teenagers have probably heard a lot about COVID-19 and its potential danger. They are old enough to understand how it spreads, preventative measures, and the risk it poses for our futures.

Have open conversations, beginning with open-ended questions about what they know, what they are worried about, and how they are feeling.

They are also mature enough to watch the news with you or go online and explore trusted sites to learn more about the disease.

Sit with them while viewing and have conversations about what they see and read, and how the illness may impact their lives.

Teens and young adults may be help you shop for supplies, play with younger siblings, prepare meals, and do other tasks to prepare for possible quarantine.

Including them in the effort to protect the family helps them feel valued, and this empowerment lessens anxiety.

It may also help to look at the web links listed below:

Fun Resources for Teenagers:

Live 30 minute daily PE sessions led by Joe Wicks	https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&q=joe+wicks+live+workout&meta=&gws_rd=ssl#spf=1585318050410
Yoga for stress relief	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTANio_2E0Q
Yoga for self regulation	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCZzd6_OHk
Mindfulness meditation for kids	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_qU7l-fcU
Yoga for teens	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kgZnJqzNaU
Ted Talk: Active body/Active mind	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPZ-IQATJ4g

Helpful resources for parents:

Advice for keeping your child safe online:	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
Resources on how to talk to your child about Covid-19	https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2 https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/ https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-highlights-importance-talking-children-about-coronavirus
Media for young people about Covid-19	https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089 https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5-dl74zxPg&t=267s
Advice on mental health and tips for parents:	https://youngminds.org.uk/https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-your-teenager/
Great resources for home educating children:	https://www.educationotherwise.org/
Podcasts to help parents understand child and family mental health difficulties:	https://www.annafreud.org/parents-carers/child-in-mind/
The latest scientific information about the virus, tips on parenting during the crisis:	https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-parenting-tips

WELL-BEING ACTIVITIES

For everyone

1. Wheel of Well-being

Try to complete an activity for each area on the wheel each day or over a week.

<https://www.wheelofwellbeing.org/>



2. Action for happiness coping calendar

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>




ACTIVE COPING CALENDAR: APRIL 2020




SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
"Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances" ~ Viktor Frankl			1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact	2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!	3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why	4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system
5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch	6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them	7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help	8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly	9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them	10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up	11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you
12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast	13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with	14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger	15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you	16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits	17 Learn something new or do something creative	18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity
19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small	20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself	21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with	22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others	23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news	24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths
26 Take a small step towards an important goal	27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year	29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing	30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time	 	







ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

3. What went well today and showing gratitude activities

Think about what you are grateful for today and what went well. This could be something you achieved, something you enjoyed (e.g. the sunshine) or something another person did. It can be nice to look back at these individually or as a group. You can record this in different formats for example:

- Gratitude diary/journal
- Gratitude wall or fridge
- Gratitude jar

Gratitude Prompts

For Kids

Write down a happy memory.

What is one of your favorite gifts that somebody recently gave you?

Tell about a time that someone was nice to you.

What is one of your favorite things that happened this week?

Tell about your favorite stuffed animal or toy.

What is your favorite thing about living in your town, your neighborhood or house?

Write about one of your best friends and why they are special to you.

What is your favorite thing about school?

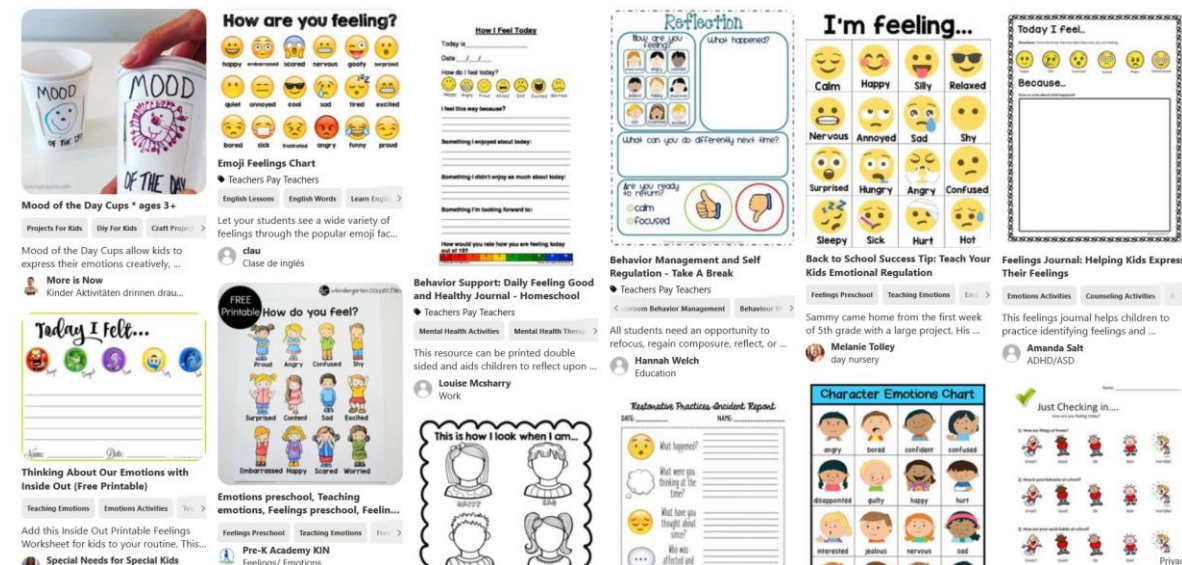
What is an event or occasion you are looking forward to?

Name one thing you do really well.

<https://coffeepancakesanddreams.com/2019/04/29/how-to-start-a-gratitude-journal-for-kids-families/>

4. Daily emotion check-in

Draw how you are feeling or choose from a picture/photo and share together.



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/145522631685211731/>

For adults and young people

- **Headspace:** <https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>
Headspace is an app offering meditation, sleep and movement exercises
- **Create a happy/calm box:** create a box with special little memories or items such as photos, notes that family or friends have given you, items that make you happy or calm you down
- **Watch theatre online:** www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre for full length plays online.
- **Participate in a virtual pub quiz**
- **Learn a new skill**
 - A new language with Duolingo: <https://www.duolingo.com/>
Duolingo is a website and app where you can learn up to 30+ languages
 - Use YouTube for free fitness classes, dance, yoga, Thai chi, Pilates, meditation and more...
 - Learn to draw: <https://www.free-online-art-classes.com/>
 - Learn to cook: <https://www.deliaonline.com/learn-to-cook>

Resilience framework Colour code the resilience framework. Green: 'I already do this.', Orange: 'I do this sometimes', Red: 'I never do this'. Choose some orange ones to work on each week. <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/resilience/resilient->

Resilience Framework (Adults) – Copyright Hart, Blincow & Cameron (adapted from original) www.boingboing.org.uk					
	BASICS	BELONGING	LEARNING	COPING	CORE SELF
SPECIFIC APPROACHES	Good enough housing	Find somewhere to belong	Make work & learning as successful as possible	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	Instil a sense of hope
		Help understand place in the world, & that others may face similar situations			
	Enough money to live	Tap into good influences (eg peer support)	Engage mentors	Being brave	Promote understanding of others
	Being safe	Keep relationships going (eg educator /support partners/carers/family)		Identifying & solving problems (reduce self blame and guilt)	
	Access & transport	The more healthy relationships the better	Map out career or life plan	Putting on rose-tinted glasses (reframing/reappraising)	Help the person to know her/himself
		Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope		Fostering their interests	
	Healthy diet	Get together people the person can count on	Help self-organisation	Calming down & self-soothing (support reflection, not feeling overwhelmed by illness)	Help the person take responsibility for her/himself (self-advocacy)
		Responsibilities & obligations			
	Exercise and fresh air	Focus on good times and places	Highlight achievements	Remember tomorrow is another day	Foster talents
	Enough sleep	Make sense of where the person has come from		Lean on others when necessary	
Leisure & work occupations	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Develop life skills	Have a laugh	There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them	
	Make friends and mix				
NOBLE TRUTHS					
ACCEPTING		CONSERVING		ENLISTING	
Interpersonal skills, empathy		Interpersonal skills, trust		Self (eg not passive), family, friends, mental health professionals, GP	
COMMITMENT					
Ongoing support issues					

[therapy-resilience-framework](#)

For children

All ages

- **Smiling Mind:** <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/covid19-support-page>
Smiling Minds app provides free mindfulness and meditation guides for children and adults
- **Daily online P.E. lesson with “P.E. with Joe”:**
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>
Joe Wicks hosts live P.E. lessons from Monday to Friday at 9am (or available to watch any time on the YouTube channel)
- **Mindfulness colouring sheets:** <https://diaryofajournalplanner.com/free-mindfulness-colouring-sheets/>
- **Paper and pencil games:** noughts and crosses, hangman, battleships, Pictionary...
(<https://www.playworks.org/resource/fun-paper-and-pencil-games-to-play/>)
- **Easy and cheap crafts:**
https://wvla.org/downloads/Annual_Conference_2013/craftbookletforwvla.pdf
- **Free Art lessons:** <http://www.robbiddulph.com/draw-with-rob> and www.carlasonheim.com/product-category/free-classes/

Early years

- **Activity guide for children aged 0 to 3 years old:**
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3264-at-home-activity-guide>
- **Simple and fun activities and resources from newborn to five:**
<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>
- **Arts and crafts for younger children:** <https://www.redtedart.com/>

Primary school

- **Printouts for different key stages (1 month free):**
<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/how-to-utilise-twinkl-during-the-coronavirus-shutdown-a-guide-for-schools>
- **Picture books:**
 - Storyline Online: lots of fantastic free on-line stories read by actors and with animations - <https://www.storylineonline.net/>
 - “The Smartest Giant in Town” by Julia Donaldson
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfiPrA8E3qE>
 - “How to Catch a Star” by Oliver Jeffers
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3oQcKxE-ck
 - “I’ll Wait Mr Panda” by Steve Anthony

- **Audiobooks:** David Walliams is releasing a free audiobook every day at 11am <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>
- **30 day Lego challenge:** <https://www.freehomeschooldeals.com/free-printable-30-day-lego-challenge-instant-download/>



- **Regulating Obstacle Course Video from Beacon House:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vLvoEXLApA&feature=youtu.be>
- **Yoga with cosmic kids** <https://www.cosmickids.com/>

Secondary school

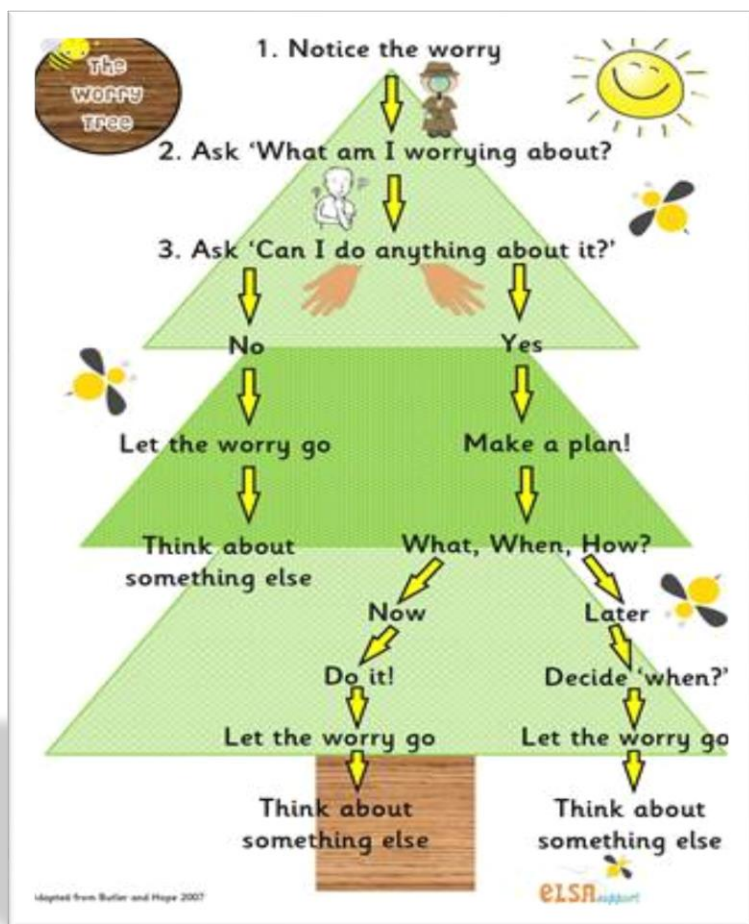
- **Free resources/activities around film, such as quizzes, writing frames, costume design etc.** <https://www.intofilm.org/news-and-views/articles/activities-for-young-people-to-do-at-home>
- **Learn origami:** <https://origami.me/#>
- **Virtual tours of some of the world's best museums:** <https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>
- **Do some DIY:** <https://diyprojectsforteens.com/>
- **Relax with Yoga:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view_as=subscriber

WORRY AND ANXIETY

Dealing with anxious feelings during the Covid-19 pandemic

Advice for children and young people

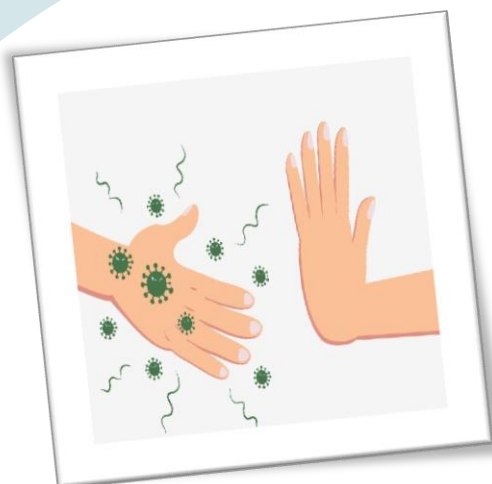
You must have heard many times about the *Coronavirus*, or Covid-19, and you have probably noticed many changes around you. You might be feeling well, or you might be finding it hard to get used to all the changes taking place. Many children and young people have many questions about what is happening, and you may have questions too. Remember, it is fine to ask someone close to you about Covid-19, such as a teacher or parent. You may also get more information about Covid-19 in the resources section at the bottom of this page. It may be helpful to remind yourself that Covid-19 is rarely giving children and young people any serious problems.



All the talk about Covid-19 can make some children feel nervous, worried or anxious. Feeling this way is normal, and it does not mean there is anything wrong with you. It may be helpful to do some things to feel better and less anxious. If you think you may be too worried and are having a hard time doing the things you usually enjoy doing and if you are having trouble sleeping, then read on below for some ideas.

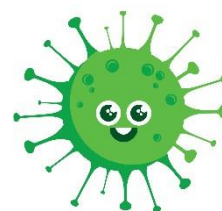
1. Talk about your feelings:
 It's OK to feel worried. Do talk about how you feel with your family or someone else you can trust, such as a teacher. If you try to ignore feelings of stress, this can make it harder. At the same time, it may be helpful to remind yourself that there is no need for you to

worry very often, because adults are working very hard to keep children, young people and adults safe. Even if you do get this virus, children usually don't get very sick from it. It's more like a mild cold. But you still have a unique role to play in protecting others! Older people, like



grandparents, need your help to stay healthy. That means **washing your hands very much and staying home if you're sick**. It may also mean skipping your usual routine and not going out like you usually do.

There you are; now you know what you can do!



2. When at home for a long time, keep yourself busy: do things by yourself or with someone else, things which are healthy for you and which you enjoy. Try not to do one thing only for very long times, such as playing video games. You could try reading more or watching movies, doing some exercise or trying new relaxation techniques. Eat as healthy as you can and try and eat many fruit and vegetables unless your doctor said not to.

3. The internet and connecting with others online can be beneficial: do connect with your friends online when you can but remember – try and keep positive and don't forget that some information shared on the internet can be wrong! It's best to get information from your parents or teachers. With friends, also try to take the time to talk about the things you like or play games together. Do not read too many news stories as these tend to focus on bad things. Always stay safe and do not trust people you do not know online no matter how friendly they are.

Useful Resources

- **Online Free Counselling:** <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- Support Telephone Number - Childline – **0800 1111**
- **Social Stories** for children with communication difficulties: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/covid-social-story-school-closing-and-virus-12270054>
- **Young Minds Coping Resources:** <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>
- **Various resources** for children and young people including mindfulness and relaxation techniques: <https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/anxiety/>

Information for Professionals



Yes, these are unusual times indeed: and as a professional you are likely to be facing pressures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Employers and employees need to respond to unprecedented changes and those who are working in front-line health, care and education positions may experience increased anxiety while having to coordinate front-lines duties, look after yourself and those close to you. You may also experience disturbance of sleep at this time, while your mind tries to process the complexity of the current situation.

Surveys issued by *People Management* and polled over 390 employers to establish what the presently perceived main organisational challenge is, found that nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of respondents cited general anxiety as their organisation's main challenge. Professionals need to recognise that stress and anxiety can be an appropriate and proportionate response to the situation. "These are anxious, difficult, unprecedented times and we don't have any similar experiences to go on so perhaps one of the things to do is acknowledge that people feel anxious and they're not making a fuss" (*People Management*, 2020).

1. Check-in regularly with your colleagues and managers-

The human connection is essential when working, now more than ever. It will also help to keep up to date on the changes taking place, including any requested consideration made for facilitating remote working.

In considering all the information that is being made available, it is understandable that you have missed a piece, an email or a message – so don't hesitate to ask for clarification or reminders if needed.



2. Take the opportunity to be creative and think of ways you can contribute to maintaining your service while working safely at a distance if these haven't yet been suggested. Most managers are striving to figure out how to make most of the unprecedented change in the work environment. Share any ideas you may have which you feel have been missed.

3. Organise a functional Remote Working Routine: This needs to be flexible enough to include time for breaks and any ongoing communication and commitments you will need to maintain with other people you share your living space with.

4. Try and keep your work channels clear for work topics - but create social channels too on your intranet or messaging tools. Keep a space where you and your colleagues can both share work-related information and other recreational pieces such as videos and photos.



5. Presently, Employers and employees may experience a higher level of stress and anxiety– this is to be expected. There are various resources in the final section, including recommendations on how to cope with excessive anxiety if you or your staff are experiencing it. Communicating the need for help with your colleagues and management, however, especially if you feel overwhelmed remains essential.

6. Remember to stay mentally and physically active outside of working hours, possibly even taking these unusual times as an opportunity to rediscover lost interests and passions or explore new ones.

Resources and further reading:

- **People Management Reference and link:** <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/experts/advice/coronavirus-support-employers-hub>
- **Anxiety in the Workplace:** <https://www.acas.org.uk/supporting-mental-health-workplace>
- **Looking after your mental health:** <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/while-working#>

Information for Parents/Carers and Schools

It is to no surprise that many Children and Young People may experience anxiety concerning Covid-19. The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) has recently published advice on how to talk to children about Covid-19. The following recommendations are based on the guidance provided:



1. It is good to talk: Children will have heard about Coronavirus or Covid-19 and likely noticed changes around them (such as people wearing face masks). It is important they feel comfortable talking to you about this as you will be the best source of information and reassurance for them. It's also likely they will speak to their friends or other children, which can involve imagination and misinformation. So having the chance to check-in with you is even more helpful.



2. Be truthful but remember your child's age: Children should take an honest and accurate approach – give them information but adjust the amount and detail to suit

their age. For example, you might say 'we don't yet have a vaccination for Covid-19, but doctors are working very hard on it' or 'a lot of people might get sick, but normally it is like a cold or flu and they get better'. Younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better. We also recommend that adults watch news programmes and then filter this information to their child in a developmentally appropriate way.

3. Allow children to ask questions: Naturally, children will have questions, and likely worries, about Covid-19. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is OK to say you don't know. Now, there are questions we don't have answers to about Covid-19 – you can explain this to your child and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions. Maybe your child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them.

4. Try to manage your own worries: Uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious or worried. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home; music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny), and time with family members can all help. Talk to your children when you feel calm – it will reassure them.

5. Give practical guidance: Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands, and following

1. Recognise the child's emotions and empathise with child.
2. Validate and label the child's feelings
3. Set limits on behaviour (if needed)
4. Problem-solve with the child

the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes. Help your child practise

these routines and increase their motivation to keep going (forego they may wish to sing a song while washing their hands).

6. If you encounter non-cooperative behaviours, practice *Emotion Coaching* with Children and young people

by 1. *recognising their emotions*, 2. *validating their feelings*, 3. *setting limits on behaviours* and 4. *facilitating joint problem solving*. This is a different and more effective approach compared to imposing solutions or 'orders' authoritatively. It can be quite likely that many of us tend to automatically head straight for setting limits on behaviour and demanding adherence to rules. This can often not work when children are feeling emotionally overwhelmed and lead to the escalation of challenging behaviour. The steps outlined in emotions coaching not only makes it easier to manage any behaviours that can be experienced as challenging but will also help develop a connection with your child/ young person and reduce the chances for 'difficult' behaviours get out of hand. Emotions coaching is also known to improve the development of self-regulation. Self-Regulation involves the capacity for children and young people to independently take control of their behaviours and manage difficult emotions and thoughts. It also allows them the capacity to think more helpful thoughts. In addition, self-regulation involves one's ability to at set priorities and resist impulsive actions or responses.



7. Promoting the development of self-regulation is essential part of parenting, along with teaching children to respect social boundaries and rules. *The Harvard Centre for the Developing child* (2020) explains how self-regulation promoting environments provide children with "scaffolding" that helps them practice necessary skills before they must perform them alone. Adults can facilitate the development of a child's self-regulation skills by establishing routines, modelling social behaviour, and creating and maintaining supportive, reliable relationships.

It is also important for children to exercise their developing skills through activities that: foster creative play and social connection, teach them how to cope with stress involve vigorous exercise, and over time, provide opportunities for directing their own actions with decreasing adult supervision.



8. The EP service runs a telephone hotline for school staff every Wednesday afternoon. During the Covid-19 pandemic we **have extended our telephone hotline to include parents.** An Educational Psychologist from each area team will be available to consult about children or broader education issues every week on a Wednesday afternoon. EPs will focus on problem solving,

providing information and signposting as appropriate.

No prior arrangement is necessary – simply call into your area telephone number between **1– 4pm each Wednesday as follows:**

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No prior arrangement is necessary – simply call into your area telephone number between **1– 4pm each Wednesday as follows:**

North East:	01372 833588
South East:	01737 737777
North West:	01483 518130
South West:	01483 517179

Resources and further reading

- **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** www.nasponline.org
- **Talking to Children** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhVad8ToCiU&feature=youtu.be>
- **Social stories for children with communication difficulties:**
<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/covid-social-story-school-closing-and-virus-12270054>
- **British Psychological Society:**
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Coronavirus%20and%20UK%20schools%20closures%20-%20support%20and%20advice.pdf>
- **Emotion Coaching UK:** <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>
- **Centre of the Developing Child - Harvard University:**
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/>

Advice for foster carers, kinship carers and adopters: Supporting children during the COVID-19 outbreak

Guidance written by Surrey Educational Psychology Service, March 2020

Attending school

Children in care are classed as vulnerable children and are able to access schools during this time. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Leaders of educational settings and designated safeguarding leads know who their most vulnerable children are and will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support. Some families need more support than others and that attending education settings is an important protective factor for children receiving support from a social worker. These children are therefore prioritized provision in schools at this difficult time.

This information was taken from the following website. For more details, see:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Contact with, and concern about, birth families

Foster and kinships carers may be worrying about how to reconcile government calls for social distancing with court-ordered contact with birth families. This family time is often crucial to maintaining children's relationships with parents and siblings and may need to be monitored by "contact supervisors" in council offices. If contact centres shut then consideration will need to arrangements that can be put into place to ensure that contact doesn't stop altogether for a long time. With the support of the social worker, you could explore options such as telephone contact, online video calls such as Facetime or Skype calls and email/letter writing. Careful consideration of what is most appropriate for each individual child will be important to ensure that individual circumstances are explored to ensure that safeguarding is maintained. It will be important to find age-appropriate ways to explain to younger children the reasons for this change so that children do not imagine other reasons, for example worrying that they have been forgotten about or that they have done something wrong. The following website provides some guidance as to how to talk to children about coronavirus:
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Children may be worried about the wellbeing of family members and may feel disempowered if they are unable to help them. You may notice changes in their behaviour as they attempt to communicate these feelings. Support them to understand the emotions driving their actions through sensitive conversations which acknowledge, validate and empathise with their feelings.

Grandparents Plus have produced some helpful information for kinship carers about maintaining contact with birth parents at this time: www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/for-kinship-carers/advice-and-support/covid-19-information-for-kinship-families/coronavirus-contact-with-birth-parents/

Adopted children may also worry about the health and safety of their birth families at this time. If your child has little or no contact with their birth family, it will be difficult to reassure them that members of their birth family are safe and well. It is important to acknowledge and listen to your child's concerns. It can be tempting to dismiss their worries by using statements like, "Most people recover from the virus so I'm sure they're fine". Instead, be curious about how your child is feeling, empathise with those feelings (put yourself in their shoes) and communicate acceptance of their emotional experience (i.e. reassuring them that all feelings are OK). For example, if your child raises concerns, "Thank you for telling me how you've been feeling. I can understand that you feel worried, I would be worried too if I didn't know how my family were".

Helping children and young people to cope with stress following experiences of trauma

Dr. Bruce Perry of the Child Trauma Academy, Texas has described the COVID19 outbreak as an opportunity to teach children about stress and trauma as, to a greater or lesser extent, all of us will be experiencing an increase in our own stress levels during the current time.

"This global experience is ultimately going to be one of the most useful, teachable moments about stress, distress, trauma that we will ever find".

(see www.thetraumatheproject.com/podcast/bruce-perry-md-phd-staying-emotionally-close-in-the-time-of-covid-19)

Dr. Perry explains, in the podcast above, that when we are experiencing stress, our thinking brain can shut down or 'go offline' and, under duress, we may act out of our emotional brain with more reactive and emotional responses. This known as 'state-dependent functioning' - our responses are dependent on the physiological state of our brain and which parts of the brain are most active at the time, guiding us to respond in certain ways. There are countless examples currently of how people are acting in an irrational manner in a state of dysregulation (panic buying is just one example); we can use these examples to teach children and young people the importance of more thoughtful, regulated behaviours. Setting an appropriate, cautious but non-alarmist tone and talking rationally and calmly through any changes that are being made, will be particularly important for children will be watching how you are role modelling responses to the stressors and uncertainty of the current situation. Perry continues:

"There are ways to turn unpredictability and uncontrollability into something which is a little bit more digestible".

Children need sensitive and responsive caregivers who can create a safe physical, relational and emotional environment during this uncertain time. It is helpful to hold the following 4 Rs in mind:

- Regulation
- Relationships
- Reassurance
- Routine

Some strategies to achieve the 4 Rs are outlined below:

1) Stay within your own 'window of tolerance'

As adults it is vital that we maintain our own regulation in order to effectively support children and young people. Children who have heightened stress responses tend to be very observant and often hypervigilant; they will be noticing the changes in your voice tone, body language even before anything is said, so it is key to be mindful of the messages that you are giving to others without perhaps intending to. If we are not regulated ourselves then it is much harder to have a positive impact on a child or young person's ability to regulate themselves. We need to be within our window of tolerance to support others; this means that we are able to remain calm so that we can respond rationally and thoughtfully to challenge. Our window of tolerance is likely to be narrower during times of stress. Consider what you need for your own self-care routine and seek support from others to enable you to access this time, so that you can stay within your window of tolerance.

Self-care strategies for parents/carers be found Louise Bomber's website:
www.touchbase.org.uk/support-through-this-season

*For more information on the window of tolerance see Beacon House 'Window of Tolerance' document and animation (available from www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources)

2) This will pass

Remind children that this crisis will pass; it is not going to last forever. Help them to visualise the future, for example saying, "in X number of months' time it will be autumn, the leaves will be falling from the trees and hopefully this will be over. We will be looking back and be amazed at how we ever got through something so difficult".

3) Modelling how to regulate

Children's emotional reactions and responses to the pandemic will vary greatly. For some, living through COVID19 may trigger memories of living through previous periods of uncertainty and distress. For children whose baseline for anxiety may already be very high and for whom their stress responses can be highly reactive, modelling

regulating approaches is key. It is therefore important to provide regular opportunities for physical and sensory activities together (Dr. Bruce Perry refers to this as the 'bottom-up' approach). Examples might be talking a walk together for exercise, doing some painting together, listening to music or playing with a pet. Repetitive rhythmic activity can be enormously regulating for children with heightened stress responses. Spacing out physical activity is key; taking a 45-minute walk once a day is a good start, but these activities have a greater impact on regulation if they are interspersed throughout the day. Small but frequent 'doses' of regulatory activity lowers the baseline of arousal more effectively than one 45 minute session. So during the day find multiple times to model and engage children in 5 minutes of regulation (for example, deep breathing exercises, yoga stretching, or mindfulness) instead of one session per day. Whilst we are emphasising the importance of connection, we also need to remember that for some children regulation may involve withdrawing to a safe space on their own. It may be helpful to identify a safe space within the house that the child can **choose** to go to when dysregulated (this is not to be used as a time out but as a self-chosen safe space).

Bruce Perry reminds us to 'regulate, relate and then reason' and this is particularly important in the current times. It is important that children feel calm (regulate) and connected (relate) before they are able to engage in learning (reason), so concentrate on regulating and relating before introducing more formal elements of teaching/learning.

Further ideas for regulation activities can be found at:
Beacon House 'Brain Stem Calmers': available from
www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources

Dr. Karen Treisman's relaxation and regulation videos:

www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/covid-anxiety-stress-resources-links/

If your child exhibits unusually high levels of dysregulation that do not resolve quickly, seek professional help. Young Minds have a dedicated parent/carer helpline: 0808 802 5544. Please also see links at the end of this section

4) Predictable routine

Even though they may not be going to school, getting up at the same time each day and bringing in some kind of schedule routine to the day can make a huge difference as it helps to give some sense of predictability and control over the current circumstances. Dr. Perry suggests that stress in itself is not always a bad thing; it is the unpredictable, prolonged and uncontrollable nature of stress which is most disruptive to us physiologically, so we need to find ways to make our experiences more predictable and controlled. You may find it helpful to consider with the family what activities can you do together at certain times to bring structure and predictability into their days; eating at a certain time, scheduling activities at particular times etc. Wherever possible, maintain family traditions/rituals that would usually happen within the home to maintain consistency.

Dr. Perry reminds us that, “*The unknown is more anxiety-provoking than the known situation, even when the known situation is a bad one*”. This may be particularly true for children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences in the broadest sense. Hence increasing structure in the day is especially important for these children as they need their current experience to be familiar structured and ‘known’ to reduce any sensation of panic or chaos where the global situation is changing so fast. Watching the news is one example of being out of control; we have no control over when we will be shown distressing footage of number of deaths worldwide or photograph of people in the intensive care unit.

5) Media control

Limit the amount of time that the news is on in your house and ensure that it is not on during the evening within 2 hours of the children going to bed as images and stories can increase anxiety and affect our ability to sleep. The same applies to social media; monitor the amount of time that young people are plugging into their phones where they do not have control over the images that they will be seeing; try to instead engage them in predictable shared regulatory activity. Reducing media exposure can be described as ‘turning the heat down’ on arousal levels and when arousal levels are reduced children may then be more ready to listen and engage in ‘top-down’ approaches and conversation. Ensure empathic responses in your use of language; model emotional vocabulary and wonder out loud how the child or young person might be feeling, and empathise with them.

6) Provide cognitive scripts of reassurance and model acts of kindness/social responsibility.

Once children’s arousal levels have reduced and they are able to talk things through, provide scripts that they can try, which emphasise strengths, hopes and positivity such as ‘This will pass’, ‘I’m going to stay healthy’, ‘I can cope with this’ etc. Remind children of the facts; for example, the vast majority of people are going to be fine; some may get ill, some may get very ill but the vast majority of people are going to be fine. Obviously, the current crisis may increase levels of anxiety about other factors that are being affected such as finances and employment. Be mindful of when and where you are having these discussions in the family; try to shield children from these discussions as much as possible and if questioned reassure children about the government measures that are being implemented at the current time to avoid adding to an escalation of anxiety. Enhance children’s sense of control by reminding them of the things that they do have control over (for example, washing their hands regularly, following government guidance and helping others). Let children know that we all take care of each other in society; share with them examples where you have seen this happening and model this yourself, for example taking food to the doorstep on an elderly neighbour. Model kindness and social responsibility so children can see this in action.

Always remember that when explaining or giving advice, you may need to say these things again and again as the degree to which children will hear them will depend on their levels of regulation and listening ability. You may find that the most connected conversations you have with children at the current time are whilst you are going for a walk, or painting together for example. Some children may struggle to explain how they are feeling and may benefit from alternative means of communication (e.g. drawing, making models, keeping a diary).

7) Meaningful moments and holding children in mind

Many children who are classed as vulnerable may be used to a high level of support from professionals including teachers, social workers, therapists etc. It is likely in current COVID19 crisis that these contacts will have been reduced or stopped altogether. It is hugely impactful for children and young people to receive small 'doses' of contact to know that they are being 'held in mind' by these professionals so encourage this wherever possible. To receive a text/email from a professional/teacher just checking in that they were thinking of you and wondering how they are getting on only takes a minute or two but can be enormously beneficial. For teenagers, make sure you ask their permission before sharing their contact details with key professionals to enable this contact to happen. Model this by ensuring that when you are reaching out to check with in your own family and friends the children can see what you are doing or if it is after bed-time tell them about it the next day so they can appreciate the importance of staying connected.

8) Staying connected

One of the greatest challenges about the current Coronavirus crisis is that our main method of regulating is through our social connections with our peers and it is this socialising which has been restricted through social distancing. The term 'social distancing' is an unhelpful one and might be better termed as 'physical distancing', as we need to stay away physically from others but remain emotionally close to one another. Model for the children the importance of staying connected with others through phone calls texts, video calling and find times to support the children with how they can stay connected to their peers as well.

9) Have fun!

Dan Hughes' PLACE model emphasises the importance of playfulness, love, acceptance, curiosity and empathy within our interactions with children who have experienced trauma. Where possible, introduce playfulness and good humour throughout the day. Build in opportunities for having fun together for example, playing games, telling jokes, making things together. Fun is calming (for you and them!) and so will support with emotional regulation. Keeping busy with fun activities will also provide children with time and space away from worrying/talking about the pandemic. It is important to permit children to have fun during times of difficulty, so that they do not become overwhelmed.

Helpful links:

- Bruce Perry: Staying emotionally close in the time of COVID19 (podcast) www.thetraumatheapistproject.com/podcast/bruce-perry-md-phd-staying-emotionally-close-in-the-time-of-covid-19/
- Dan Hughes: Parenting a traumatised child while living through COVID19 (video) www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nLF0wdoSJ0
- Touch Base (Louise Bomber): Support through this season (interactive resource) www.touchbase.org.uk/support-through-this-season
- Dr. Karen Treisman Covid, Anxiety, Stress – Resources and Links : www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/covid-anxiety-stress-resources-links
- Dr. Russ Harris. FACE COVID: How to respond effectively to the corona crisis: available from www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources
- Beacon House Resources: www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources
- Young Minds. Children and young people's mental health charity: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Surrey Virtual School www.surreyvirtualschool.org.uk

For foster parents:

- The Fostering Network: COVID19 Support for Foster Carers www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/covid-19-support-foster-carers
- Fostertalk: Coronavirus Support: www.fostertalk.org/coronavirus-support
- Fosterline helpline. Telephone: 0800 040 7675, Email: enquiries@fosterline.info

For kinship carers:

- Grandparents Plus: COVID19 Information for kinship families www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/for-kinship-carers/advice-and-support/covid-19-information-for-kinship-families/
- Grandparents Plus: Information for kinship carers about maintaining contact with birth parents www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/for-kinship-carers/advice-and-support/covid-19-information-for-kinship-families/coronavirus-contact-with-birth-parents/
- Family Rights Group: Advice for family and friends carers (known as kinship carers) during the Coronavirus Crisis www.frg.org.uk/need-help-or-advice/family-and-friends-carers/information-for-family-and-friends-carers
- Grandparents Plus helpline. Telephone: 0300 123 7015, email: advice@grandparentsplus.co.uk

For adoptive parents:

- Surrey Adoption Support Service. Telephone: 01932 794340
- AdoptionUK support for adoptive families through Covid19 www.adoptionuk.org/pages/category/covid-19
- AdoptionUK helpline. Telephone: 0300 666 0006, Email: helpline@adoptionuk.org.uk
- AdoptionUK are also offering parent Webinars for members.
- PAC-UK advice line (London). Telephone: 020 7284 5879


Internet safety

During this time, we will all be using the internet as a helpful resource and a way to stay connected to our family and friends. It is important that we are mindful of the potential dangers and risks the internet poses to children and young people. The following websites provide useful guidance about internet safety.

Checklist

- ☒ **Put yourself in control**
 Make use of the parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. You can find out how at your broadband provider's website or by visiting internetmatters.org.
- ☒ **Search safely**
 Use safe search engines such as swiggle.org.uk or kids-search.com. Safe search settings can also be activated on Google and other search engines as well as YouTube. You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetycentre.
- ☒ **Agree boundaries**
 Be clear what your child can and can't do online – where they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. Agree with your child when they can have a mobile phone or tablet.

Over 65 % of parents are most concerned about their 6-10 viewing inappropriate content online*



- ☒ **Explore together**
 The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to ask them to tell you about it. Encourage them to use devices in communal areas so you can see what sites they're visiting and share with them.
- ☒ **Check if it's suitable**
 The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook and Instagram.

Know this stuff matters, but don't know where to turn?

Internet Matters is a free online resource for every parent in the UK. We'll show you the best ways to protect your children online – with information, advice and support on all the big e-safety issues.

internetmatters.org

*Source: Children's online safety in 2016 report, Commissioned by Internet Matters by Opinion Leader

Useful resources:

- www.internetmatters.org
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Support and resources in the event of a bereavement

A bereavement is a difficult time for adults and children. We would like to share some resources which can offer advice and support in the event of a bereavement - there is a focus on supporting children and young people to understand and manage during this sad time.

Surrey Educational psychology service can offer support for schools in the time of a bereavement offering both practical and emotional support. Please contact your Area Senior Educational psychologist for support:

North East:	01372 833588
South East:	01737 737777
North West:	01483 518130
South West:	01483 517179

References/Resources

- National Association of School Psychologists
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/addressing-grief/when-grief/loss-hits-close-to-home-tips-for-caregivers> - PDF documents of helpful tips and facts for dealing with grief as a parent, caregiver, teacher, and/or administrator.
- The Dougy Center
<https://www.dougy.org> - The Dougy Center provides support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families grieving a death can share their experiences.
- Sesame Street Grief Resources
<https://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc/griefresources> - Provides helpful activities and materials for grieving families.
- Winston's Wish
www.winstonswish.org.uk – Provides good publications and excellent school and parent resources on line.
- How to say good bye when funeral isn't possible
<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-funerals-alternative-goodbyes/> - The restrictions and safety measures introduced in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will affect practices around funerals and funeral homes in the coming months. This website has put together some guidance for talking to children about funerals in this period.

- Cruse
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk - 1:1 counselling for adults and teenagers
- Jigsaw4u
www.jigsaw4u.org.uk - Offer support groups for bereaved children and adults, offer support to schools, home visits, and on-going support over time.
- Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org.uk - Support for families after a child has passed away.
- Simon Says
www.simonsays.org.uk – Child bereavement support services and helpline.
- Helping children Cope with Grief:
<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-grief/> - Tips for coping with grief broken down into a range of ages and experiences, and information about what to say, who should say it, what to look out for and how to help.
- What is Grief – a worksheet from ELSA Network:
<https://www.elsanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/what-is-grief.pdf> - Child friendly explanation of what grief is and how it can affect you.
- Child Bereavement UK:
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-bereaved-children-and-young-people> - A charity that helps support families living with loss

COVID-19: Dealing with bereavement and loss

COVID-19 has significantly changed everyone's lives and children and young people are having to accept missing out on important life events and get used to a new way of being.

Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions, from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness. The pain of grief can also disrupt your physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. These are normal reactions to loss and the more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be.

At the moment children and young people might grieve after missing out on; doing their exams, attending school and seeing their friends, being able to attend their prom and being able to go outside freely. Whatever the loss, it's personal to the individual, and it is important that they don't feel ashamed about how they feel or believe that it's somehow only appropriate to grieve for certain things. Whatever the cause of the grief, though, there are healthy ways to cope with the pain that, in time, can ease your sadness and help you come to terms with your loss, find new meaning, and eventually move on with your life.

We have put together these resources to share how bereavement and loss may be affected by this pandemic. It covers some of the different situations and emotions people may have to deal with. We will be adding to and updating this information as the situation develops.

Talking to your children about Coronavirus

You may have already been faced with the challenge of talking with children and young people about Coronavirus and the evolving situation. Know that there are no right or wrong ways to talk to children and young people about such situations but the following may be helpful to know:

- **Talk about it:** Know that children and young people pick up on more than we may realise or, indeed, want to realise. Children and young people will usually know or find out if you are 'making things up'.
- **Make it understandable:** Use words and concepts that children and young people can understand. Think about how old the child and be developmentally pitched.
- **Acknowledge their worries and reassure them:** Let children and young people know that they can ask questions and it is important to you that they do. Remember that children and young people can personalise things – so they may worry about their own safety and that of others they know. This is quite normal. As you reassure them, be mindful too about not making promises but let them know that there are always people helping and doing a lot to help people who may feel poorly.

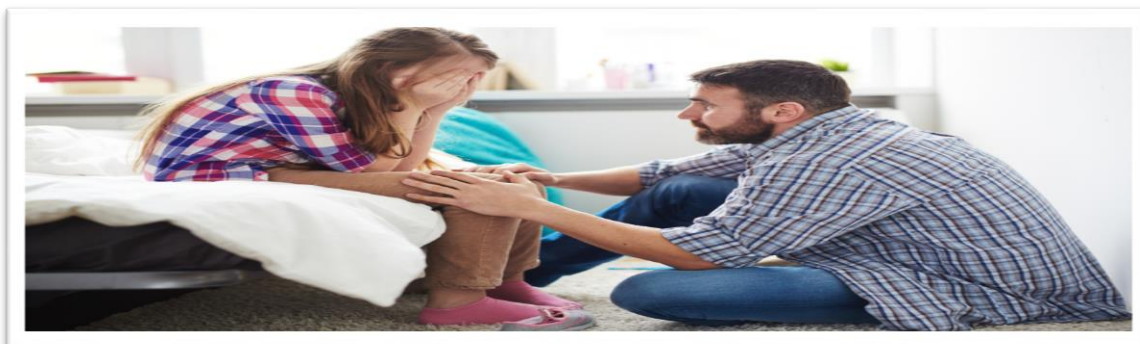
- **Managing your reactions:** Children and young people learn from their parents, carers and teachers. They will learn from how you react to news and also from what they hear and see when you are having conversations with others. Try to be calm and factual.

For more information:

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/how-you-can-help/emergencies/coronavirus-uk-outbreak-facts>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/talking-to-children-about-feelings/>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children>

Coping with Loss of Normalcy and Cancellation of Events

1. Children and young people are having to adapt to coping with the loss of their daily routine and cancellation of much anticipated events. Year 6 children will not have their last day at primary school and year 11 children will miss out on taking their GCSE's and celebrating with prom. College students will not have the opportunity to take their A levels and may feel their whole future is uncertain. This can all bring about extreme emotions and the feelings of grief.
2. It is important that children and young people are allowed the freedom to express their disappointments or anger. Deliver the news in a factual way but acknowledge their emotions, help them explore their feelings and validate them so they know it is 'OK' to feel this way (e.g., *"I know how sad you are about this. You miss being with your friends, it's a big loss not to have that"*). Comments such as *"But honey, we're so lucky that we're not sick and you'll get to see your friends soon!"* are less helpful. Do not make false promises or reschedule with uncertainty but find a way to modify the missed event so it can be done creatively at home. Let them know you can't solve the problem for them. Be a listening ear so your child can freely vent their frustration. Don't try to wipe out the disappointment but if they are really catastrophising, for example, worrying that they won't go to university and won't get a job, this should be corrected.



3. It is helpful to understand the 5 stages of grief. The 5 stages do not always happen in a linear order:
 1. **Denial:** This virus won't affect me
 2. **Anger:** You're making me stay home and taking away my activities.
 3. **Bargaining:** Okay, if I social distance for two weeks things will be better
 4. **Sadness:** I don't know when this will end
 5. **Acceptance:** This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed. I can wash my hands, I can keep a safe distance from others, I can learn how to work virtually. Acceptance is where the power lies as one can feel more in control. It is important to focus on what can be controlled. Help channel their anxiety to productivity (e.g., hand washing, social distancing, altruistic behaviours, staying home and making new hobbies) rather than unproductive (e.g spending all day clicking on the latest coronavirus headlines).

References

- That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief – Scott Berinato (Harvard Business Review)
<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief> - This article discusses the implications of collective grief, how it is taking a toll on all of us and what we can do to help manage our grief as a community.
- Handling Your Kid's Disappointment When Everything Is Cancelled – Erinne Magee (The New York Times)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/parenting/coronavirus-kids-events-cancelled.html> - This article discusses how parents can help their children stay positive during this difficult time.
- Grieving the Losses of Coronavirus - Lori Gottlieb
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/well/family/coronavirus-grief-loss.html> - Mental health professionals discuss the implications of experiencing great losses (i.e. losing a loved one) and smaller losses (i.e. postponed weddings/vacations) and outline three steps in helping people cope with all types of loss.
- The Five Stages of Grief & Loss – Julie Axelrod
<https://psychcentral.com/lib/the-5-stages-of-loss-and-grief/> - This article discusses 5 stages of grief and loss and explains how and why people do not experience them in the same way or in the same order.

Coping with school changes related to Covid-19

Getting your head around the changes...

The past couple of weeks have brought many changes to everyone's daily lives. You have also found out that school will be closed for some time and you'll not be sitting your exams this year.

You might be going through a range of emotions feeling:

- **Sad** that you might not see your friends or teachers again
- **Worried** what this might mean for your qualifications or your final grades
- **Frustrated and disappointed** because you've been working very hard on it
- **Confused** as to what this all means and how it will affect your plans for the future or even feel
- **Angry** that things are out of your control and there are many answers that grown-ups cannot clearly answer for you.

Be assured that you're not alone in these feelings and making sense of situations like this is difficult for everyone. It is absolutely **OK** to feel this way.

You're experiencing the loss of what is a 'normal' life for you, important and much anticipated events on your personal, social and academic calendars. When humans experience loss, we process our emotions in a particular way – **grief**. This is a personal experience and people experience it differently. There are 5 stages of grief and this does not happen in any one order.

Source: Adapted from a resource from Darlington Educational Psychology Service

What may this look like?

Denial: Can't believe this is happening. I'm sure this will end soon and the decisions might be overturned.



Anger: This has never happened before. Why is this happening to me and our year? NOT FAIR



Bargaining: There must be some things I can do to change this. I'll find a way. There must be an appeal process. I'll still be able to keep in



Low Mood: What was the point of working so hard? I miss my friends. My life will be different to what I had in mind.

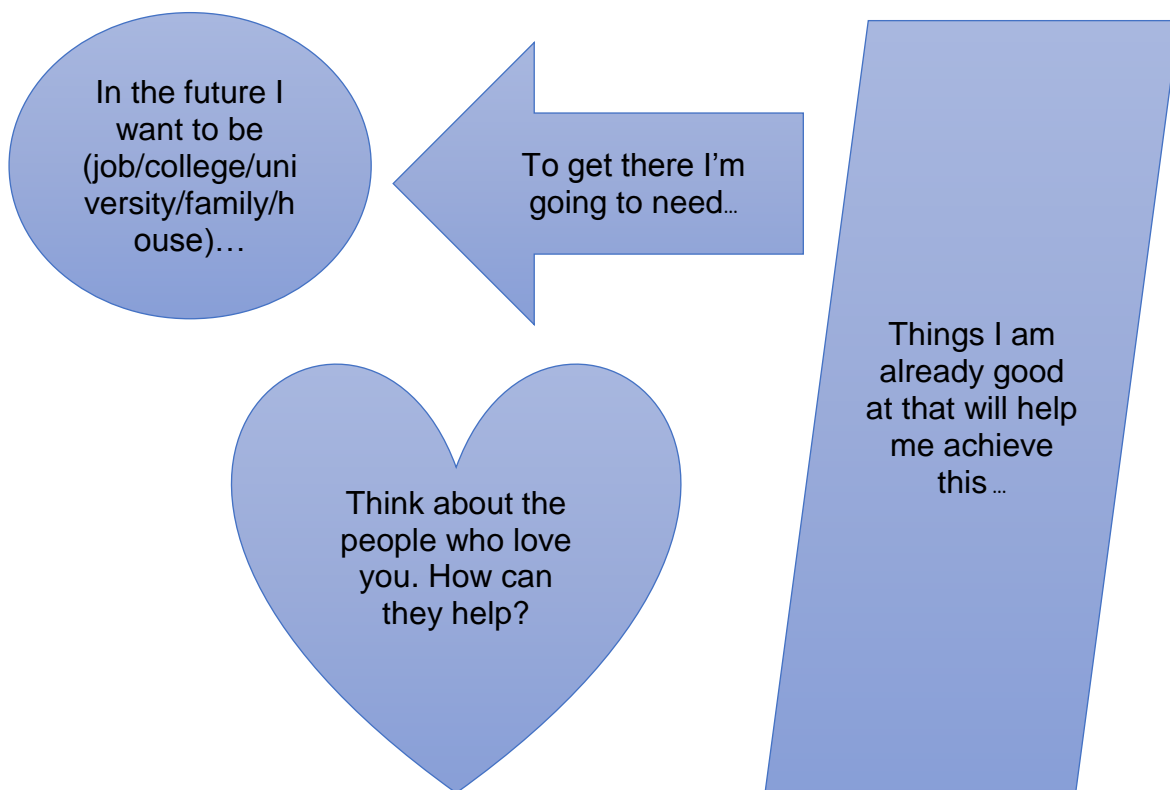


Acceptance: Ok, things might not be as bad and it should work out. I'm not alone in this.

What can you do next?

1. Talk to an adult that you trust about how you are feeling. You could use the diagram on this page to help you do this.
2. Keep in touch with your friends! Share telephone numbers and social media contact information. Keep talking!
3. Look after your mental wellbeing: Exercise regularly e.g. walk/jog; practice mindfulness; listen to music; do some arty activities!
4. Try to keep a routine for your day

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Some helpful apps/websites for finding out information and seeking support:

- Headspace (App for mindfulness)
- www.kooth.com
- www.nopanic.org
- www.themix.org/get-support/speak-to-our-team
- www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines

Signposting to Further Support

For Children and Young People

- **Young Minds**
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>
The Young Minds Crisis Messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text YM to 85258. Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm).
- **The Mix**
<https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team>
08088 084994
Essential mental health support for Under 25's, 1:1 online chat, crisis messenger service and helpline.
- **Kooth**
<https://www.kooth.com/>
Kooth is the UK's leading mental health and wellbeing platform. It is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free at the point of use.
- **Papyrus**
<https://papyrus-uk.org/>
Papyrus provide confidential support and advice to anyone under the age of 35 struggling with thoughts of suicide and anyone worried about a young person through their helpline, HOPELINEUK – Call 0800 068 4141, Text 07860039967, Email pat@papyrus-uk.org (9am – 10pm, Mon – Fri, 2pm – 10pm Sat and Sun).
- **ChildLine**
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>
ChildLine is a service to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Call ChildLine free on 0800 1111 or speak to a counsellor online.

For parents and school staff

- **Qwell**
<https://www.qwell.io/index.html>
Qwell offers adults flexible therapeutic support free at the point of access. It is an online counselling and emotional wellbeing service providing adults with early intervention support.

- **Samaritans**

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, often through their telephone helpline. Call 116 123.

- **Mind**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/support-community-elefriends/>

Mind is a UK Mental Health charity providing information and advice on a range of mental health topics and an online mutual support community (elefriends). They also provide an information and signposting service, open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, 0300 123 3393.

- **Education Support**

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Education Support provide mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations via online resources and a free 24/7 confidential helpline, call: 08000 562 561, text: 07909 341 229 providing support through counselling, coaching, information and signposting.

- **MindEd**

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

MindEd is a free educational resource, providing advice and information from trusted experts on children's and young people mental health. MindEd is suitable for all adults working with, or caring for, infants, children or teenagers; all the information provided is quality assured by experts, useful, and easy to understand. We aim to give adults who care for, or work with, young people the knowledge to support their wellbeing, the understanding to identify a child at risk of a mental health condition and the confidence to act on their concern and, if needed, signpost to services that can help.

- **NSPCC**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

The NSPCC run dedicated helplines for those who want to reporting child abuse and neglect, or are worried about a child and not sure what to, call NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.

Family Pressures

- **Family Lives**

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

Family Lives is a national family support charity providing help and support to families who are struggling. They offer emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life via email (askus@familylives.org.uk), phone (call 0808 800 2222, open 9am – 9pm, Monday to Friday and 10am – 3pm Saturday and Sunday) and online forums.

- **Family Action**

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>

Family Action works to tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today – including financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems. Family members aged 18+ can contact the service for free via telephone text message, web chat or email, open 9am to 3pm and 6pm and 9pm. Telephone: 0808 802 6666, Text Message: 07537 404 282, Email: familyline@family-action.org.uk. If out of operation hours, they also offer a crisis messenger service by texting FAMILYACTION to 85258.

- **Gingerbread**

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/what-we-do/contact-us/helpline/>

Gingerbread are the leading charity providing advice and practical support for single parent families. They have an online forum and a free and confidential helpline, call 0808 802 0925 (check website for opening times).

Anxiety

- **Anxiety UK**

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/>

03444 775774, Text service: 07537 416905

Helpline, blogs and webinars to support adults with anxiety around COVID-19.

- **No Panic**

<https://nopanic.org.uk/>

No Panic provide support for individuals who suffer from Panic Attacks, Phobias, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders and other related anxiety disorders and their families with online resources and additional support available over email (sarah@nopanic.org.uk) and their helplines:

Helpline – 0844 967 4848 – 10am – 10pm everyday (please note this is not a free phone number).

Youth Helpline – 0330 606 1174 – for 13 to 20 year olds
(see website for opening times)

Special Educational Needs

- **WellChild**
<https://www.wellchild.org.uk/2020/03/11/covid-19-information-for-parents-and-carers/>
Helpful information specifically for parents and carers of children with complex medical needs.
- **MENCAP**
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/onlinecommunity>
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/our-services/learning-disability-helpline>
MENCAP offer advice and support for people with a learning disability, and their families and carers, through its online community forum and free phone helpline, 0800 808 111, Mon to Fri, 9am to 3pm

Bereavement Support

- **Child Bereavement UK**
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>
08000 288840
Information and helpline providing confidential support, information and guidance to families and professionals affected by bereavement.
- **Winston's Wish**
<https://www.winstonswish.org/>
08088 020021
Information, advice and guidance on supporting bereaved children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19). Winston's Wish can provide advice and support to parents, teachers and anyone who is supporting a grieving child.
- **Cruse**
<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>
08088 081677
Resources and helpline to support individuals dealing with bereavements related to the coronavirus.