



HELPING KIDS COPE

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A tool-kit that will help equip parents with a wide range of activities for children and youth that enhance their skills for coping with the stress and anxiety caused by global events like COVID-19. It is broken down into the following sections that cater both to parent and child:

- [10 Tips for Talking About COVID-19 With Your Kids](#)
- [4 Questions Your Child May Have and How to Answer Them](#)
- [Managing Anxiety and Worry as a Kid](#)
- [Strengthening Kids Coping Skills](#)

WHO IS IT FOR?

1. Any parents who are seeking tools to discuss COVID-19 with their children and reduce the stress and anxiety that it may be causing them.
2. Youth who are looking for tools to reduce the stress and anxiety they may be experiencing in light of COVID-19, current school closures and isolation.

WHY WAS IT CREATED?

At Jays Care we work with unstoppable children and youth everyday and believe it is our duty to help support Canadian families and kids as they adjust to this stressful time with COVID-19.

WHERE DOES THIS INFORMATION COME FROM

Jays Care Foundation would like to acknowledge each of the online mental health and parenting resources for which this information toolkit has been created. It has been our aim to research, collect and make accessible these resources for the benefit and accessibility of the families that we serve.

10 TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT COVID-19 WITH YOUR KIDS:

1. Ensure co-parents are on the same page

It is important, if you are co-parenting, that both parents are on the same page when it comes to what you are doing and saying to your child, as different messages will confuse and possibly make your child more worried.

2. Don't be afraid to discuss it

Start by inviting your child to talk about the issue. Find out how much they already know and follow their lead. Make sure you are in a safe environment and allow your child to talk freely. Most importantly, don't minimize or avoid their concerns. Be sure to acknowledge their feelings and assure them that it's natural to feel scared or concerned about their loved ones.

3. Manage your own anxiety

It will be challenging to address your child's anxiety if your own fears feel out of control. It's easy for kids to forget that you may have fears about your own parents, your finances, your work, or just the stress of parenting 24/7 as kids are asked to stay home. Check in with friends, family, and/or a mental health professional during this time to ensure you're coping well. Your health matters too!

4. Model calmness

Even though you may be concerned yourself, it is important to model calmness, especially when talking about the virus. Children rely on their parents to provide a sense of safety and security and will look to you to see how afraid they should be. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to decompress before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.

5. Be age appropriate

Try to answer their questions and reassure them in a way that will suit their understanding. Use developmentally-appropriate language, watch their reactions, and be sensitive to their level of anxiety. For example, you might tell a young child, "Coronavirus is a new type of cold/flu, and so it is important for us to wash our hands more and sneeze in our elbows to keep healthy." Try to avoid volunteering too much information as this may be overwhelming but instead, try your best to answer your child's questions with honesty. Remember that it is okay if you do not know all of the answers but being available to talk can help them feel calm.

6. Inform them on the virus and what will happen if they do get sick

Reassure your child that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do feel ill you will look after them. Explain the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, fatigue and shortness of breath) and ask them to tell you when they feel any of these symptoms coming on. Your child might be concerned about who will look after you if you catch the virus. Let them know the kind of support you have as an adult so that they don't feel they need to worry about you.

7. Encourage healthy distractions

Finding different ways to stay active and connected can help you and your family find relief from feeling and thinking about stressful situations. When it comes to processing difficult

emotions, it is key to find a balance between talking about feelings and engaging in healthy activities.

8. Reassure and empower

Children tend to feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves and others safe. In the case of COVID-19, it is important to reassure children that there are steps they can take to help protect themselves and their families. These include:

- Appropriate, frequent handwashing (show them how and when);
- Sneezing into their elbow, then washing their hands afterward;
- Social distancing (explain what that is, but assure that it is not the same as “emotional distancing”);
- Helping to wipe down and disinfect surfaces. This reinforces their understanding of how this germ is spread through droplets.

9. Limit news exposure and correct misinformation

There will likely be an increase in screen time during social distancing. Be mindful of your child’s exposure to the news and model good media habits. Work with your child to clarify any misinformation or misunderstandings they have picked up about the virus through social media, the news or their peers. For example, if they ask you a question, help them to identify credible online sources of information and help them understand the information provided.

10. Focus on what people are doing to keep them safe

It’s important for children to know that people are helping each other with acts of kindness and generosity. Share stories of health workers, scientists and others, who are working to stop the outbreak and keep the community safe. It can be a big comfort to know that compassionate people are taking action.

SOURCES:

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/talking-to-kids-about-covid-19/>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

https://www.bhusd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1689436&type=d&pREC_ID=1846853

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

<https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/the-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://blog.chocchildrens.org/7-ways-to-help-kids-cope-with-coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety/>

https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/camh_covid19_infosheet_talking_to_kids-pdf.pdf

<https://www.cps.ca/en/blog-blogue/how-can-we-talk-to-kids-about-covid-19>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

4 QUESTIONS YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE AND HOW TO ANSWER THEM:

- 1. What is the new corona virus?** The new coronavirus is a kind of germ that can make people feel sick. Remember how the flu made you feel? It can be a lot like getting the flu. Some people feel just a little bit sick and some people feel very sick. Some people get a fever and a cough and sometimes the cough can make it hard to breathe easily.
- 2. How do you catch corona virus?** The virus spreads like the flu, or a cold or cough. If a person who has the coronavirus sneezes or coughs, germs that are inside the body come outside of the body. That's why it's important to stand six feet apart from people other than your family. You don't want to breathe in air with germs. This is also why we wash our hands because you may touch something where the germs have landed because someone who is sick sneezed or coughed or touched those surfaces. We should wash our hands for at least 20 seconds to stop the germs from getting inside our bodies!
- 3. Why can't we leave the house?** Why can't my friends come over to play? Right now, there is a rule that families need to stay home for a little while and be together. That helps us and our friends stay healthy. I know it can be sad when we can't see and play with friends. But there are lots of fun things we can do together at home! Would you like to play a game or do a puzzle?
- 4. Can you die from corona virus?** Most people who have caught the virus have not died, just like with the flu. Doctors are working really hard to keep an eye on anyone who is feeling sick. They want to make sure everyone gets the help they need and to keep the virus from spreading. What is important is that you keep practicing healthy behaviors like sneezing into your elbow and washing your hands before you eat!

SOURCES:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3265-answering-your-young-child-s-questions-about-coronavirus>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

UNICEF:

<https://www.unicef.org/stories/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-what-parents-should-know>

CAMH:

https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/camh_covid19_infosheet-talking_to_kids-pdf.pdf

Child Mind Institute:

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

National Public Radio: Just For Kids:

A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus

Caring for Kids:

<https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/the-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America:

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/how-talk-your-anxious-child-or-teen-about>

Zero to Three:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3265-answering-your-young-child-s-questions-about-coronavirus>

WHO:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print-pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

MANAGING ANXIETY AND WORRY AS A KID:

Anxiety in kids can be especially confusing, not only for the ones feeling anxious, but also for the adults who care about them. Kids and teens often don't recognize their anxiety for what it is and can have trouble articulating it. Children may focus on the physical symptoms of anxiety (e.g. stomach aches), while teens may think they are acting weird, weak, or out of control! Together, these thoughts might make them feel even more anxious and self-conscious creating a spiral effect. Therefore, to reduce any of the confusion or shame that may come with your child's anxiety, the first step as a parent is to provide them with accurate information about anxiety and how to recognize and manage it.

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

Normalise anxiety:

It is important to explain that anxiety is normal, and everyone experiences anxiety at some time in their life – before an exam, when meeting new people, going for an interview or starting at a new school. About 1 in 8 kids have struggled with anxiety – so let them know that in their class, there's a good chance that 3 or 4 other kids would know exactly what they're going through because they've been through it before. Maybe they're going through it right now. You can also talk to your child about how you, yourself, have experienced anxiety and how you manage to reduce it in your daily life.

**Side note, a child may not see themselves as "anxious". In that case, find out what word is most relatable to him or her. It may be the term fearful, scared, worried, uncomfortable, or nervous. Regardless of the term, normalize this feeling.

Help them recognize anxiety:

Anxiety is very predictable, therefore, regardless of the worry, the mind and body generally respond in the same way. However, how the beginning symptoms manifest will vary for each child. Symptoms can include rapid heart beat, sweaty palms, feeling dizzy, upset stomach, and so on. It can also include thoughts that seem to be swirling quickly in the mind or feeling confusion. It is important that a child learn to recognize the ways in which their body responds to anxiety, so that they can in fact understand what they are feeling and work to manage it. If your child is having a difficult time noticing or identifying symptoms within the body, practice with them. Have them sit quietly and guide them to various parts of the body, encouraging them to describe what they are feeling in that particular spot. You can use examples from your own life to guide them, like telling them that your stomach feels like butterflies are in there when you are talking in front of a group of strangers.

Teach them how to manage anxiety:

Once anxious feelings, thoughts, or sensations begin, and they are recognized as the beginnings of anxiety, it is important that your child has the right tools and skills to be able to manage and control the anxiety they are experiencing. Practice the following anxiety management tools with your child:

- Taking some deep breaths: Deep belly breathing from the diaphragm calms the amygdala, reducing feelings of anxiousness
- Bringing their attention back to the present: Use their senses to bring their attention to the present moment and away from their worries – “Tell me five things you see, four things you hear and something you smell.”
- Getting them moving: Physical exercise is not only a great distraction but it releases feel-good endorphins that help children and young people feel better and more optimistic about the future.
- Defusing their thoughts: Anxious thoughts can get stuck, refusing to budge no matter how unwanted they are. Help your child to distance themselves from their thoughts by placing distancing statements in front of their thoughts. Replace “I’m going to fail the test” with “I had a thought that I’m going to fail the test.” Rather than changing their thinking, assist your child in distancing themselves from unhelpful thoughts.

Work to reduce anxiety:

- Create a calming living space: Take some time to declutter and reorganize the spaces in your home, especially in places where you and your children sleep. A clear and organized environment non-verbally communicates to your children that everything is in order.
- Help recognise anxiety-inducing events: There are many things that can evoke anxiety in your child. Help them to recognise the specific situations and events that make them feel anxious such as meeting new friends, sitting tests and fear of rejection. In this way you can help your child manage and minimise their feelings of anxiety.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle: Sufficient sleep, good nutrition and exercise are essential for anxious kids. Support your child to adhere to their optimal bedtime so they wake naturally each morning, reduce sugar, take care of their gut health through good nutrition and encourage regular exercise for optimal mental health.
- Model positive coping strategies: There are multiple ways you can help kids handle anxiety by letting them see how you cope with anxiety yourself. Kids are perceptive, and they’re going to take in how react to anxiety-invoking situations. If you face your fears, so will your child. If you take care of yourself and schedule time for your own needs, your child will learn that self-care is an important part of life. If you look for the positive in situations, so will your child. Children learn behaviors from watching their parents. The goal is not to pretend you don’t have stress and anxiety, but let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.
- Create a schedule with pictures: Predictability is very important for anxious children’s and one way to soothe kids who don’t read yet is to make a schedule that has images depicting the routine of the day. There is no need to be detailed or elaborate, it can be as simple as, here are four things we do every day: breakfast, lunch, dinner, cuddles. The key is to instill some form of routine or ritual that can reduce any fears of the unknown.

TIPS FOR KIDS:

Below you will find a collection of posters and activity pages that you can use to help your child identify what is happening when they are experiencing anxiety and how to identify anxiety and manage it.

Anxiety presents itself in many different ways...

The desire to control people and events



Difficulty getting to sleep



Feeling agitated or angry



Defiance and other challenging behaviors



Having high expectations for self, including school work & sports



Avoiding activities or events (including school)

Pain like stomachaches and headaches



Struggling to pay attention and focus



Intolerance of uncertainty



Crying and difficulty managing emotions



Over-planning for situations and events



Feeling worried about situations or events

www.thepathway2success.com Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino

ANXIETY FEELS LIKE...

Wearing a corset. Your chest is too tight, it's hard to breathe, and your stomach hurts. You're uncomfortable in your own skin. You seem stiff and awkward to others.



Being inside a kaleidoscope. The world is too bright, and everything keeps changing. As soon as you figure out the pattern, it shifts.



Being on stage ALL the time... and you don't know your lines.



Having a million Post-It notes in your brain of things to do, and not do, and things you wish you hadn't done. Notes are rarely thrown away, but new ones are always being layered on top.

@introvertdoodles

Self-Care & Mental Health for Kids



Share your own feelings to encourage self-awareness.



Set aside time for low-stress or solo activities.



Find social groups that help them feel like they belong.



Focus on articulating feelings.

"I am angry."
"I am sad."

Encourage journaling and diaries.

Encourage your child to focus on the moment.



Practice self-care for yourself to set the standard.

Establish a self-care routine.



Recognize toxic stress events.

Blessing Manifesting

Cultivate interests and hobbies.

Worry Jar

A Worry Jar is a helpful way to decrease your anxious thoughts and worries. Placing your thoughts in the jar will help get them off your mind, at least for a little while. What are some things that you'd like to stop worrying about for now? Write them in the jar below!

**IT CAN BE
HELPFUL TO
PICK A TIME
DURING THE
DAY - AND
ONLY THAT
TIME - WHERE
YOU ARE
ALLOWED TO
GO BACK INTO
THE JAR AND
WORRY ABOUT
THESE
THOUGHTS.**



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Anxiety Breakdown

WHAT IS TRIGGERING MY ANXIETY?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THOUGHTS THAT I AM HAVING?



HOW IS MY BODY RESPONDING?

WHAT IS THE WORST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN?

WHAT DO I HAVE IN MY CONTROL TO KEEP THIS FROM HAPPENING?

WHAT CAN I DO TO CALM MY BODY DOWN?

WHAT ARE POSITIVE THOUGHTS TO HELP CALM MY MIND?





People who help me:

MY COPE-CAKE

Things that help me feel calm:

Places where I feel calm & safe:

I am:

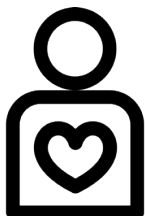
Positive thoughts:



www.facebook.com/OMazingKidsYoga

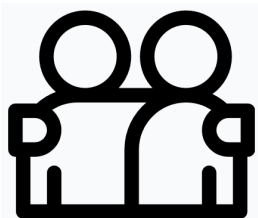
STRENGTHENING KIDS COPING SKILLS

If you or your child is feeling worried, learning how to deal with that anxiety in a healthy way can help the whole family be more resilient, both now and when the pandemic is finally over. These are trying times, but incorporating the following wellness practices into your child's daily routine can help to calm anxiety and build healthy coping skills. Below you will find a list of activities that are designed to help youth manage and reduce some of the anxieties and stresses they may currently be experiencing. Each activity falls under one of the following four categories:



HEALTHY BODY AND MIND

Keeping both our bodies and brains active during this period of isolation is essential to promoting our overall wellness! Physical activity, brain exercises, and healthy eating are all valuable tools that can promote physical and mental health during this time. Try out some of the activities below with your child to help keep their bodies and brains healthy and active!



MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

In today's age of technology, there are more ways than ever to stay connected. While we maintain social distancing measures in our homes and communities for the next little while, we are also finding new ways to unite! Now more than ever is the time to reach out to our friends and family and find new ways to stay close. To get you started, we have compiled ten tips and activities for fostering positive and meaningful connections with your community and loved ones.



MINDFULNESS AND GRATITUDE

Practicing mindfulness and gratitude can help to keep us in the present – this is a key factor in helping to alleviate our anxieties. Rather than trying to control the situation, tapping into what we are grateful for in that moment can help us remain grounded and calm. Below you will find a list of various activities that are designed to keep you and your child present, which can guide you to reflect on the positives in life and help you make peace with the current uncertainties.



COPING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

During incidents such as disasters or infectious outbreaks we can experience a buildup of stress and worry that can often overwhelm us. As a result, it is important to come up with healthy coping strategies to combat these feelings and help us mitigate their occurrences. Below we have outlined some of our favourite coping skills and strategies for dealing with any stress caused by the current COVID-19 crisis.

ACTIVITIES FOR A HEALTHY BODY & MIND:

1. Jays Care Be Unstoppable Challenges

Have you ever wondered if you got what it takes to be a Toronto Blue Jays Player? Well now is your chance to find out! Jays Care have designed a set of weekly challenges to help kids and families continue to nurture each child's unstoppable nature while staying fit and having fun at home! Find a new set of Challenges every Monday at: www.jayscare.com/Challenge

2. Home Yoga Studio

Children and teens derive enormous benefits from yoga. Physically, it enhances their flexibility, strength, coordination, and body awareness. In addition, their concentration and sense of calmness and relaxation improves. There are plenty videos you can find online but here are some of our favourites:

- Comic Kids Yoga: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obzFP6eEGAg>
- 20 Min Kids Yoga Class: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM5MGLMNN_E
- Yoga for Teens with Adrienne: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kgZnJqzNaU>

3. Free Fitness Videos

Is your child missing their school P.E. class? The fitness world has got you covered! Online there are numerous videos that are fun and suitable for all ages and will get everyone sweating! What are you waiting for? Here are some of our favourites:

- YMCA: <https://ymca360.org/>
- P.E. with Joe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wzoy_J3I_c
- 10 Min Workout for Teens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj4TVbnIEgk>
- Go Noodle Zumba: <https://family.gonoodle.com/channels/zumba-kids>

4. Brainteasers and Puzzles

It is important to add daily brain teasers to your fitness regiment, so your mind can stay as sharp as your body! Research has shown that a dexterous brain makes for happier, healthier people and that problem solving can help with lowering anxious feelings. Try out some of the following brainteasers with your child and get that brain moving:

- Brainteasers for kids: <https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/brainteasers/index.htm>
- Printable Crosswords: <https://www.puzzles-to-print.com/word-scrambles/index.shtml>
- Printable Sudoku: <http://www.mathsphere.co.uk/downloads/sudoku/10201-easy.pdf>

5. Virtual Field Trips

Who said field trips had to be cancelled? Whether you need a trip to the aquarium or want to check out some mummies, learning does not have to end because schools are closed! Keep your child or teen's imagination flowing as they explore a variety of virtual worlds. We've compiled some of our favourite virtual tours together for you here:

- Learn some baseball history: <https://baseballhall.org/discover/online-exhibits>
- Spend a day at the Zoo: <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/cams/koala-cam>

- Take a trip under the sea: <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
- Become a time traveller: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/>
- Roam the National Museum of Natural History: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour>
- Explore Rapa Nui (Easter Island) up close: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/4wXhfs-OooroMQ?hl=en>
- Learn about extraordinary women throughout history: <https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits>

6. Storytime with Celebrities

Reading aloud to children has been shown to improve reading, writing and communication skills, logical thinking and concentration, as well as inspiring a lifelong love of reading. Storyline Online, a FREE literary resource where actors read to children! Each video comes complete with an activity guide featuring lessons for K – 5 students. Check it out here: <https://www.storylineonline.net/library/>

7. Kids Cooking Activities

Spending time in the kitchen and cooking new recipes can help children develop a positive connection to all different types of foods including fruits and vegetables. Forming a positive experience with fresh food is so important for youth because eating nutritiously is foundational for overall wellness! So hop into the kitchen and try some of the family-friendly recipes below with your kids:

- Under the Sea Graham Crackers: <https://www.copymethat.com/r/mEnQfSJ/under-the-sea-graham-crackers/>
- Painted Toast: <https://www.food.com/recipe/painted-toast-217200>
- Backyard Bug Snacks: <https://thecraftingchicks.com/back-yard-bug-snacks/>
- 15 Fun Cooking Activities For Kids: <https://www.sitters.co.uk/blog/15-fun-cooking-activities-for-kids.aspx>

ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS:

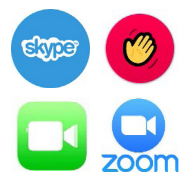
1. Letters of Encouragement

Write positive messages of hope and gratitude to front-line workers in your community who are committed to helping those in need. This is also a great way to let loved ones know that you are thinking about them from a distance.



2. Reach and Teach

Sending a text message or even tagging someone in a meme can let them know that you are thinking about them, but hearing one another's voice and speaking face-to-face can go a long way in maintaining strong connections. If you have access to programs such as Facetime, Skype, Houseparty, and Zoom, take some time to build your network by reaching out to friends and family who are unfamiliar with these options. Create your own how-to guide for others to use and before you know it, you'll be receiving video calls from grandma!



3. Snail Mail Mosaic

No matter your age, it is safe to say that everyone enjoys opening mail from loved ones. Begin your own chain mail to send along to your friends or family. Once they receive your mail, it is their turn to contribute a positive message, memory or image and mail it along to the next person on the list. The final product is sure to put a smile on everyone's face!



4. Community Mural

If you can, take some time to be outdoors in your community. Find an open sidewalk or volunteer your driveway to begin a community chalk mural where others can take part and contribute their art work!



5. Meal Share

Nothing brings people together better than meal time! Video call your loved ones to create a virtual dinner party. Use this time to share recipes, ideas and cooking tips that will not only bring your next meal to the next level, but you will enjoy great company too!



6. Share & Lend Library

Create your own miniature community library! Here you can share books and magazines with others in your community. Place a book for someone else to borrow and wait to see which book others might share with you!



7. Meaningful Media

While it is important to stay informed, excessive new coverage has the potential to make you and your family feel overwhelmed. Model positive media habits by avoiding media multitasking, and instead being present and engaged when using your phone or T.V. If possible, try to watch together for the chance to be a part of your child's media exposure and make it meaningful by discussing content and addressing any of their questions or concerns.

8. Relate and Relay

Take some time to have honest conversations with other parents and friends. Discuss your worries, ask questions and make sure to share with one another any helpful advice, activities and words of encouragement. Remember, we're all in this together!

9. Storytelling

Story telling is a meaningful way to connect and learn about one another. Find or think about one thing that is meaningful to you. It could be in the form of a song, a photo, an activity or object. Take turns reflecting on your memories and share with others about what your artefact means to you.

10. Family down time

Take some time to unplug and wind down with your loved ones before bed time. Pick one activity such as a board game, puzzle or guided meditation (see mindfulness activities) that can help foster a relaxed environment and a better rest for everyone involved.

ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE MINDFULNESS & GRATITUDE:

1. Mindful Breathing:

Star Breathing:

Start at any "Breathe in" side, hold your breath at the point, then breathe out. Keep going until you've gone around the whole star.



www.copingskillsforkids.com

2. Mindfulness Activity Cards



3. Gratitude Prompts

I am grateful for:

Positive Things About My Life:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

3 Strengths/Qualities

3 Things I'm Good At Doing

Positive Things About My Health & Body

Relations I Am Grateful For:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Activities I Enjoy

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Grateful For A Dream I'm Moving To-

People Who Have Taught & Supported Me

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

GratitudeHabitat.com

Day 1

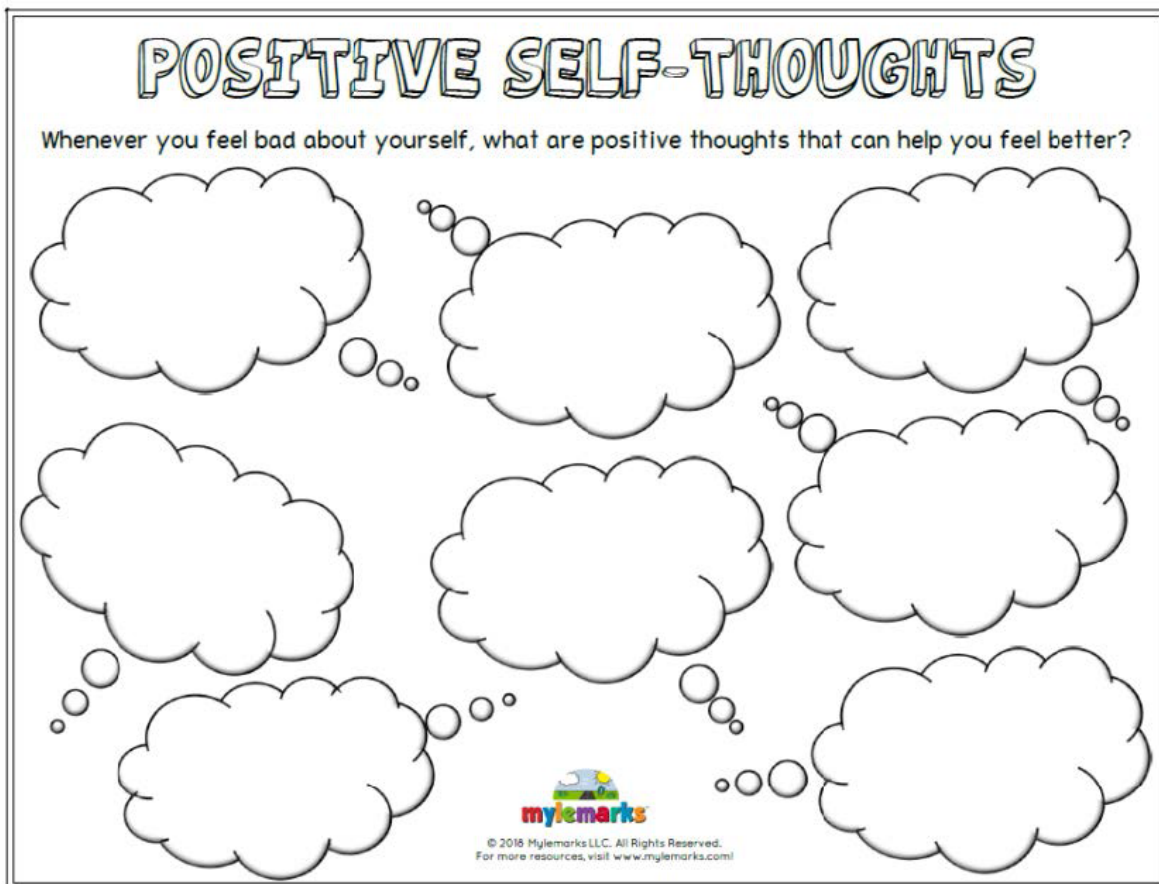
My Gratitude Jar

Think about different people, things, and events you are grateful for.
Write what and who you are grateful for inside your "Gratitude Jar" below.



Printables by Big Life Journal - biglifejournal.com

5. Mindful Self-Talk



6. Gratitude Apps

If you or your child is tech-savvy try checking out one of the mindfulness or gratitude apps listed below:

- Grateful: Gratitude Journal App
- Gratitude Garden App
- Smiling Mind App
- Stop, Breathe & Think App

7. Meditation Videos

If you aren't sure where to start with meditation or breathing exercises here are some great videos to get you started:

- 3 Minute Body Scan Meditation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcw_ofuME
- Guided Meditation for Kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64QzBuhsyuk>

ACTIVITIES THAT DEVELOP COPING SKILLS & STRATEGIES:

1. Create a Calm Down Toolbox

A calm down toolbox is a resource you and your child can create at home! Fill a box, bag, or container with a collection of items that engage your child's senses or help them ground when they feel upset. Not only is the box great for calming their anxiety but it also gives them control over the process of calming their own body and brain. Some of our favourite items to include are:

- **Stress/Sensory Balls** - These are great because it can help children calm down. By simply manipulating a stress ball and applying pressure on it with one or two hands while paying attention to their breathing can calm their minds and bodies. Learn how to make one here: <https://www.thechaosandthelutter.com/archives/how-to-make-sensory-balls>
- **Calming Scented Playdough** - It only takes a few minutes to make and all you'll need is a few ingredients and a couple of drops your favorite calming oil! As you play with it, the scents of essential oils are released helping you to feel calmer and more relaxed. Learn how to make it here: <https://www.thechaosandthelutter.com/archives/calming-lavender-scented-playdough>
- **Breathing Techniques** - Calming breathing techniques for kids are great strategies for supporting self-regulation and calm behavior. Write some of your child's favourites down on a cue card and reference them whenever they are feeling overwhelmed. You can find some techniques here: <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/calming-breathing-techniques-kids/>
- **Fidget Toys** - These little toys often have big benefits. They have been proven to serve as a distraction from certain anxiety symptoms and can provide a soothing satisfaction for those with sensory complications. Find out how to craft your own DIY fidget toys with some easy to follow tutorials found here: <https://www.weareteachers.com/diy-fidgets/>

2. Art Therapy

Drawing, painting and colouring are all simple strategies that can help calm an anxious mind. When we are focused on creating, our attention often shifts away from whatever worries or stresses that are bothering us, helping to calm down the nervous system. Below find some of our favourite colouring pages and art-based activities:

- Kid Colouring pages: <https://www.crayola.com/featured/free-coloring-pages/>
- Kid's Art Tutorials: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ArtforKidsHub>
- Art Therapy: <https://intuitivecreativity.typepad.com/expressiveartinspirations/100-art-therapy-exercises.html>

3. Climb The Ladder

Instead of skirting around discussing fears surrounding something like COVID-19, you and your child could try a technique called 'laddering' - breaking down worries into manageable chunks and gradually working towards a goal. For example, say your child is struggling with missing their friends during isolation. Work with them to generate manageable steps they could take to reconnect with them. For example, some of these steps could look like:

- Sending them a card
- Setting Facetime 'playdates'
- Playing a game online together

4. Use Calming & Mindfulness Scripts

If your child is feeling overwhelmed or anxious, try reading them a calming or mindfulness script. Slowly and carefully read the words as your child listens and follows the instructions. Keep in mind that much like adults, kids will have days when they feel inspired to participate, and days they'd rather not. Don't push them; make the experience warm and inviting, something to circle back to. Below are a couple great resources. Below are resources you can read aloud to your child, as well as, pre-recorded scripts you can play:

- <https://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxation-scripts-for-children.html>
- <https://annakaharris.com/mindfulness-for-children/>

5. Help Your Child Take Charge

The uncertainty around COVID-19 may be overwhelming for your child; however, there are ways you can help them feel like they have some control over the situation. For example, go over the steps they can take to prevent the spread of the virus (handwashing, elbow cough, social distancing, etc.) and create a reward system for every time they 'help prevent the spread'.

6. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This practice is a helpful strategy for kids as it helps to build awareness about anxiety triggers through physical sensations and teaches an association between relaxed muscles and a relaxed mental state. To practice, get your child to start with a few deep breaths. Then, tell them to practice tightening and relaxing each muscle group, starting with their forehead and moving down to their toes. With practice, they'll be able to 'cue' this relax state at the first sign of the muscle tension that accompanies anxiety. Here is a video to get you started:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc>