



COVID-19 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

PO Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239
P: 360.678.6028

During this emotional time, it helps to know how our children might respond to this extra stress and what you should expect. **Please see examples below for each age group with some advice on how to support them.** Links and phone numbers are provided at the bottom of this email for additional family support during this stressful time. You are not alone- it is okay to seek help and important to support one another. Know that help may not look the same as it has in the past and we may have to work harder to get it. Please keep trying and reach out to others!

Children may respond differently to stress, depending upon their age. Below are some common reactions according to age group and ways you can respond:

<p><u>Preschool age</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of being alone, bad dreams • Speech difficulties • Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting • Change in appetite • Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors 	<p><u>How you can help</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience and tolerance • Provide reassurance (verbal and physical) • Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling • Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements • Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime • Maintain regular family routines • Avoid media exposure
<p><u>School Age (ages 6-12)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior • Clinging, nightmares • Sleep/appetite disturbance • Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches) • Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest • Competition for parents' attention • Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school 	<p><u>How you can help</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience, tolerance, and reassurance • Regular exercise and stretching • Play sessions and staying in touch with friends through telephone and internet • Engage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games) • Participate in structured household chores • Set gentle but firm limits • Discuss the current situation and encourage questions. Include what is being done in the family and community • Encourage expression through play and conversation • Help the family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines

<u>Adolescent (ages 13-18)</u>	<u>How you can help</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.) • Sleep/appetite disturbance • Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy • Ignoring health promoting behaviors • Isolating from peers and loved ones • Concerns about stigma and injustices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience, tolerance, and reassurance • Encourage continuation of routines • Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers and family (but do not force) • Stay in touch with friends through telephone, internet, video games • Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promoting behaviors • Limit media exposure and talk about what they have seen/heard, including at school • Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during the outbreak

Seeking Additional Help

This information is from the Washington State Department of Health, *Helping Children Cope*. The full document is available through the following link:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020COVID19/ParentsCaregivers>

If you or a loved one is having a difficult time coping with the outbreak and want to seek outside help, you have options for support. For example: Contact your primary care physician or insurance company (if they have a consultation line) to ask health-related questions or to seek mental health support. **Get support for anxiety or stress by speaking to a trained counselor at SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: 1.800.985.5990 or text TalkWithUS 66746.**

Other Helpful Resources:

- **Island County Behavioral Health:** <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/humanservices/behavioral-health/Pages/Home.aspx>
- <https://medium.com/waospi/talking-to-your-children-about-school-closures-aeb3e6be6456>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/ways-to-promote-childrens-resilience-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>
- <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/March-2020/How-to-Ease-Children-s-Anxiety-About-COVID-19>
- <https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/helping-kids-and-parents-cope-coronavirus>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>
- *Military Families*: Non-medical, solution-focused, short-term video counseling. Qualifiers are Active duty, recent retired, and reservist military youth dependents between 6 and 17 years old. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-onesource/non-medical-counseling-for-youth-now-available-by-video>
- VOA 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.584.3578, 360.969.2067 *Hurting-Crisis Chat: <http://imhurting.org/>
- Trevor Project: text/call 1.866.488.7386 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/>
- Crisis Text Line: Text Start to 741-741 or visit <https://www.crisistextline.org/>
- CADA - Citizens Against Domestic & Sexual Abuse (Oak Harbor): 1.800.215.5669 or visit <http://www.cadacanhelpp.org>