



Mental Wellness During A Health Crisis

Helping young people manage COVID-19 Fears

COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus) is a worldwide issue that is making people sick and causing widespread stress, anxiety, and panic.

Some level of concern is warranted

But we must support young people experiencing higher levels of stress, fear, and anxiety.

Signs of stress in children and youth:

Excessive crying

Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (e.g., toileting accidents or bedwetting)

Excessive worry or sadness

Changes in eating or sleeping habits

Irritability

Decline in school performance or avoiding school

Difficulty paying attention or concentrating

Avoiding typical or enjoyable activities

Unexplained headaches or body pain

Using of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Some things are out of our control, but not everything. Here are some tips to help young people manage fears and stay mentally well during this crisis.

Model calm. Pay attention to your verbal and nonverbal reactions.

Be available. They might need to talk about it. Don't avoid it!

Use facts. Stay informed. Discuss updates in a developmentally appropriate way. *(See resources below for support)*

Know the symptoms. Fever, cough, shortness of breath. The CDC reports they usually appear a few days after exposure.

Follow health guidelines.

Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer.

Clean frequently touched objects.

Cover mouth and nose with a tissue to sneeze or cough. Throw it in the trash.

If you need medical help contact your doctor's office before you go.

If you are feeling sick stay home.

Avoid touching your face.

Do not share food and drinks.

Watch what they watch. Make sure you know what media they are taking in to dispel rumors and reduce anxiety. Cut them off if needed.

Do not tolerate discrimination or racism. People from any race or ethnicity can be affected.

Schools and parents stay in touch. Share updates and communicate about illness, fears, or changes in behavior.

Maintain routine if possible. Consistency helps ease anxiety and fear.

Additional resources:

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html>
- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources>