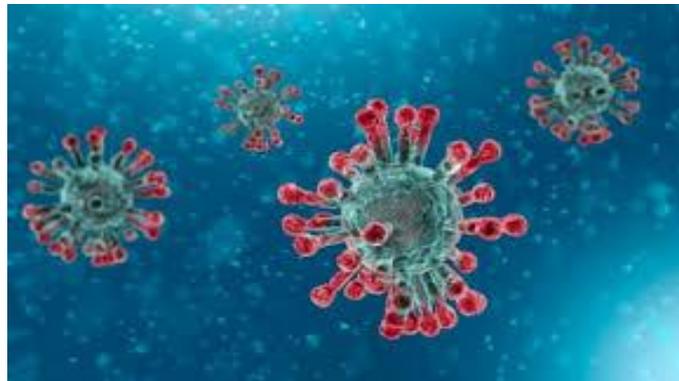




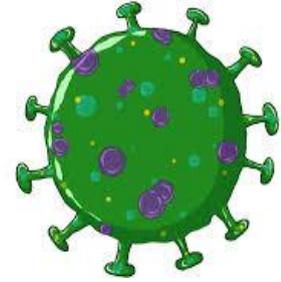
COPING WITH ANXIETY DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/can-face-mask-protect-me-from-coronavirus-covid-19-myths-busted>

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What a Time to be Alive!



In a matter of a few weeks we have found ourselves confined to our homes anxiously anticipating what will happen next. The novel coronavirus has brought the world to a standstill. There is not one person on the planet who is not or will not be affected by this. We have never faced a challenge such as this one before and EVERYONE is having to adapt and find ways of coping with the anxiety and uncertainty.

Our children are also going through this with us and watching our every move and listening to everything we say. This has been extremely difficult for adults to comprehend; I can only imagine how our children must be feeling. They are looking at us, as their role models, to help them cope and teach them how to deal with the sudden changes and continuous uncertainty.

It has been suggested all over social media that we should take this time to reflect, bond with our children and families, and allow the earth to heal. This is easier said than done. As individuals, couples, and families we are struggling to come to terms with how the world is changing and where we are headed. Therefore, the purpose of this resource pack is to highlight some strategies that can be employed during this difficult time to help ourselves and our children navigate these uncharted waters. Some of these may work for you, others may not. This is ok! We are all learning and will get through this together.

“

It's Okay

- * To not know how to homeschool your own child
 - * To not know how to work from home
 - * To give kids more screen time than usual
- * To make a colorful daily schedule or just wing it
- * To not magically feel motivated to work out at home or take on a new hobby
 - * To not feel okay

This is not normal for any of us.
Please be kind to yourself.



Educate your Children About COVID-19

When children know more about something that worries them, they can understand it better and explore possible methods to alleviate their worries.

COVID-19 will be around for the foreseeable future, so let's equip our children with the knowledge and skills they need. Explain to them the importance of handwashing, not touching one's face, and social distancing etc. This should obviously be done age appropriately. There are some wonderful resources available to assist you in doing this with the aid of pictures and appropriate language. These are links to some of the resources available:

COVID-19 'Coronavirus': An Illustrated Guide for Kids with Questions:

<https://archive.org/details/covid19kidscolorpdf/mode/2up>

Coronavirus (Covid-19): How to Talk to Your Child

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html>

Coronavirus: What Kids Can do

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/coronavirus-kids.html>

Hello! My Name is Coronavirus

<https://www.thedadsnet.com/this-free-book-is-great-for-explaining-covid-19-coronavirus-to-your-children/>

Keep them, and yourself, informed and updated as things develop but there is no need to watch the news obsessively. **SHOW THEM THE SILVER LINING TO EVERY DARK CLOUD AND THAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE THIS EXTRA TIME WITH THEM.**



Focus on What you Can Control

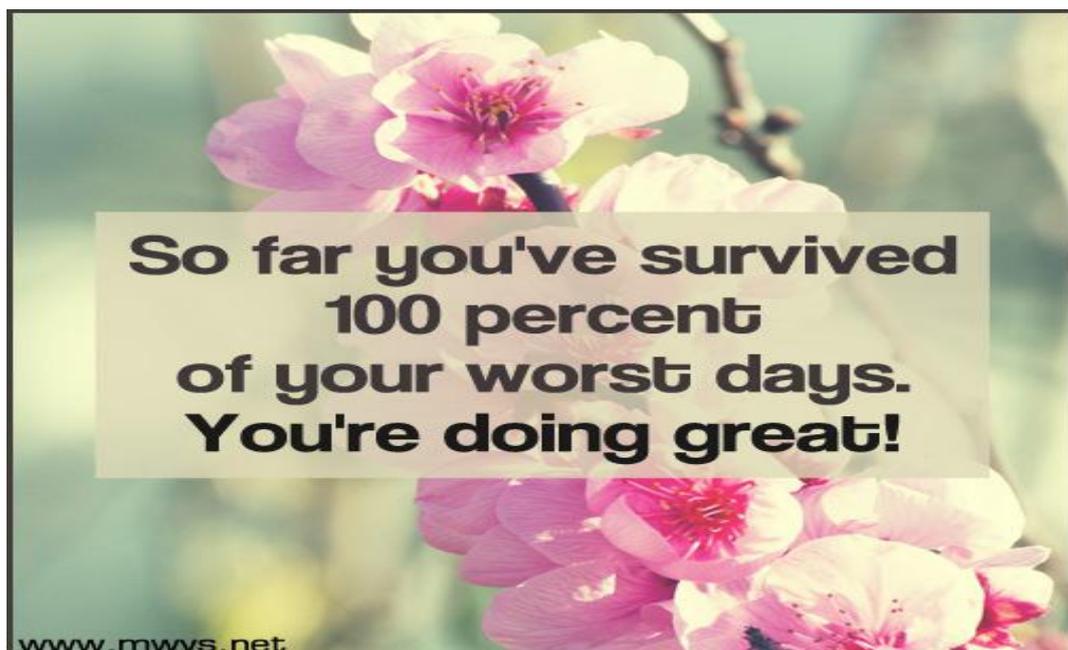
While a lot of what is happening is outside of our control, we can redirect our focus on things that are within our control – like our responses to stressful situations. We can also help our children do this.

- Always look after yourself and teach your children to do the same. This includes physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, and intellectually. You might just have to be more creative when doing this now.



Source: <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/397653842071015941/>

- While it may be normal to be worried about what the next few months may bring (especially in terms of our family's health and finances), these feelings of anxiety do not make anything better nor do they change the outcome. Let's take it one day at a time and refocus that energy into something more productive!
- When things become overwhelming, remember that:



Source: <http://www.eminentquotable.com/so-far-youve-survived-100-percent-of-your-worst-days/>

- Focus on the activities that usually make you feel better, e.g. music, playing with pets, and other coping strategies that you already possess.
- While we cannot control the spread of the virus, we can do our bit to help flatten the curve and keep ourselves and others safe, e.g. frequent handwashing.
- Plan for what you can.

Strategies to try:

- Write down your worries.
- Make a list of all possible solutions (they don't need to be perfect options).
- Focus on things that you can change or solve.
- Draw up a plan of action.



Source: <https://graphicmama.com/design-bundle/business-outline-illustrations-mega-bundle/fragment/motivated-businessman-drawing-idea-plan-action>



Source: <https://femmevolution.wordpress.com/2014/04/29/8-healthy-coping-skills-for-strong-emotions/>

Try to Establish a Routine that Works for Everyone

Everyone's routines have been disrupted significantly, not to mention the considerable restrictions that we all need to adhere to. Changes in routine can be especially difficult for children, particularly those with learning difficulties. Therefore, it is recommended that some type of schedule or routine be created. This is not a normal situation that we are in so let's try to create some sense of normality in our homes.

Involve the whole family when planning this and get input from your children. Remember to make time for things that their normal routines would include, as far as possible. Again, there are many great resources online, but each household will find something different that works for them. This is one example:

Daily Schedule

Before 9:00 AM	Wake up!	Make your bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed
9:00-10:00	Outdoor Time	Family walk or outdoor play
10:00-11:00	Academic Time	No Electronics! Reading, homework, study, puzzles, journal
11:00-12:00	Creative Time	Creative play, drawing, Legos, crafts, music, cooking, baking
12:00-12:30	LUNCH	
12:30-1:00	Home Chores	Clean rooms, put away toys, take out garbage, pet care
1:00-2:30	Quiet Time	Reading, nap, puzzles, yoga
2:30-4:00	Academic Time	Electronics OK! Educational games, online activities, virtual museum tours
4:00-5:00	Outdoor time	Family walk or outdoor play
5:00-6:00	Dinner time	Family dinner, help with clean-up and dishes
6:00-9:00	Free Time	Relaxing before bedtime
9:00 PM	Bedtime	Put on PJs, brush teeth, clothes in laundry

If you are including chores in your schedule (which is advisable), here is a guide as to what you may expect your child to do:

Age-Appropriate Chores for Children



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Ages 2-3

- Put toys in toy box
- Stack books on shelf
- Place dirty clothes in laundry hamper
- Throw trash away
- Carry firewood
- Fold washcloths
- Set the table
- Fetch diapers & wipes
- Dust baseboards

Ages 4-5

- Feed pets
- Wipe up spills
- Put away toys
- Make the bed
- Straighten bedroom
- Water houseplants
- Sort clean silverware
- Prepare simple snacks
- Use hand-held vacuum
- Clear kitchen table
- Dry and put away dishes
- Disinfect doorknobs

Ages 6-7

- Gather trash
- Fold towels
- Dust mop floors
- Empty dishwasher
- Match clean socks
- Weed garden
- Rake leaves
- Peel potatoes or carrots
- Make salad
- Replace toilet paper roll

Ages 8-9

- Load dishwasher
- Change light bulbs
- Wash laundry
- Hang/fold clean clothes
- Dust furniture
- Spray off patio
- Put groceries away
- Scramble eggs
- Bake cookies
- Walk dogs
- Sweep porches
- Wipe off table

Ages 10-11

- Clean bathrooms
- Vacuum rugs
- Clean countertops
- Deep clean kitchen
- Prepare simple meal
- Mow lawn
- Bring in mail
- Do simple mending (hems, buttons, etc.)
- Sweep out garage

Ages 12 and up

- Mop floors
- Change overhead lights
- Wash/ vacuum car
- Trim hedges
- Paint walls
- Shop for groceries w/list
- Cook complete dinner
- Bake bread or cake
- Do simple home repairs
- Wash windows
- Iron clothes
- Watch younger siblings

source: <https://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/27/age-appropriate-chores-for-children-and-why-theyre-not-doing-them/>

So sometimes the above just is not enough to prevent anxiety or meltdowns. The following are further strategies that you could use to help your children cope with anxiety and maintain positive emotional well-being (these can even be used by adults):

Mindfulness and Breathing Techniques

Mindfulness refers to focusing on the present moment, including the thoughts and feelings being experienced in the current moment, and accepting these. There are countless ways to teach children mindfulness, many suggestions are available online.

Some mindfulness exercises to try:

1. Simple Breathing Exercise

- Find a safe place to be in and sit comfortably. Set a timer for one minute.
- Breathe deeply in and out while focusing on any sensations you may experience or sounds that you can hear.
- Still while breathing deeply, imagine the air coming into your lungs and back up again.
- Take one more deep breath and hold for a moment, then release it.

2. Glitter Jar

- Allow your child to decorate a jar or plastic bottle.
- Fill 3/4 jar/bottle with water.
- Add clear glue, food colouring, and glitter and shake.
- Seal the lid and let your child shake away.

3. Safari

- If you are fortunate enough to have a garden, go outside and try to pick up a small rock or touching a plant or flower.
- Notice the birds, the small bugs.
- Touch the earth.
- While walking through your garden, pay attention to everything – the sounds, the smells, the sensations, the colours, the movements.



Source: <http://www.carena.org.uk/grounding-technique-for-anxiety/>

Art

Many children enjoying some form of art and this can be therapeutic. Each child has different preferences. Some like to sketch or draw, others prefer to colour or paint, while others enjoy crafts. In fact, people of all ages could benefit from art or creative activities.



Source: <https://specialresource.com/resource-center/art-therapy-children-special-needs>



Source: <http://4mamaearth.org/2016/03/11/art-therapy-for-kids/>

Mandala's can also be relaxing to colour – even for adults. There are thousands of templates online.

Music and Movement

Music and movement can be soothing and invigorating. For our more 'active' children, this is also a great way to release some energy while at the same time allowing self-expression. This is a great way to just 'let loose' and the whole family can take part in a good dancing session – and maybe even singing. Instruments can also be added.



Source: <https://www.nsp4kids.com/parenting/therapy-moves-dancemovement-therapy-children/>

Books

Books are a great way to tell stories and explore various topics and coping strategies. There are a wide range of therapeutic stories available for almost any issue you can think of. There are even free downloadable books on worry and the novel Coronavirus:

Dave the Dog is worried about Coronavirus:

<https://nursedottybooks.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/dave-the-dog-coronavirus-1-1.pdf>

Caroline Conquers her Corona Fears:

<https://alliedhealth.lsuhs.edu/clinics/docs/CarolineConquersherCoronoaFears31820.pdf>

REMEMBER TO REACH OUT AND ASK FOR HELP IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE NOT
COPING OR JUST NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO.



Source: <https://www.picuki.com/media/2254831799636581077>

Please contact me via email (lindah@orioncollege.co.za) should you require any further support, information or tips. If you have found this resource pack helpful and have suggestions for others, let me know your thoughts.