



Northumberland County Council

Psychological Services

A) Psychological tips for teachers and parents supporting children and young people in their thinking about Coronavirus.

Coronavirus and public health emergency: words that can scare everybody, including younger people.

Below are some ways to help children and young people to understand the current situation and cope with emotions it may trigger.

What Is Coronavirus?

It is a new type of virus that is spreading around the world. The scientists called it covid-19.

What Is A Public Health Emergency?

It is an extraordinary event which threatens the health of people that live in different parts of the world through the spread of disease that requires the coordination of different states and countries. The spread of the covid-19 led the world health organization to declare a state of public health emergency of international concern in 2020.

Which emotions might we feel?

We can feel emotions such as.....
fear, sadness, or anger.

However, it is really important to continue to feel emotions such as...
relaxation and enjoyment

1. How Can We Cope With Fear, Sadness, And Anger?

Don't:

- Give up.
- Stop looking for solutions.
- Think that you can't do anything.
- Ignore reality.



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- Pretend that there is no emergency.
- Listen to rumours.

Do:

- Take steps to help solve the problem - follow advice.
- Do the right things (for example washing your hands frequently).
- Talk about facts.
- Follow advice from experts.
- Look for information from reliable sources.
- Give correct, clear, and comprehensible information.

2. Seek And Give Support.

Don't:

- Put all the responsibility onto others.
- Complain too much.
- Panic.
- Isolate yourself from others.
- Withdraw into yourself.
- Be selfish.
- Interrupt contacts with others.

Do:

- Understand and express your emotions.
- Talk about how you feel.
- Be calm.
- Receive and give help.
- Help and reassure those around you.
- Collaborate with others.
- Communicate with friends and family face-to-face (if possible) or by phone and internet.

3. Understand What Is Important.

Don't:



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- Continue to think negatively (we can't control the thoughts that pop into our head but we can use techniques such as mindfulness or answering unhelpful thoughts to help us manage them).
- Overthink about the emergency.
- Think that the safety measures (for example the quarantine) are not useful.
- Ignore the recommended safety plans
- Ignore the regulations from the ministry of health.
- Blame others.

Do:

- Take some time to focus on other things.
- Keep yourself busy (for example playing or studying).
- Spend some time thinking about positive things.
- Adapt by changing the ways you do things if necessary.
- Remember that following the rules protects everybody's health.

There are many ways to cope with fear, sadness, and anger: we can choose case by case the ways that function better and also invent new ones!

B) Psychological tips for parents and carers supporting children and young people in their thinking about coronavirus.

Parents can help provide opportunities where feelings can be discussed within a safe context, as well as maintaining a sense of normality, routine and calm. Supporting children will enable them to process and manage their feelings and build resilience.

The following suggestions may be helpful:

- **Reassure children that they are safe:** children will need to be reassured regularly they are safe, and that adults will faithfully try to keep them safe.
- **Let children know that it is alright to be upset:** tell children all feelings are ok, but it is important to still behave in a polite and respectful way to others.
- **Maintain a normal routine:** set up a work/leisure/exercise routine for students at home. Make extra time to listen to what your children need to tell you. Avoid children being exposed to the background noise of '24 hour news channels' such as sky news.



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- **Place an emphasis on resilience and strengths:** focus on the child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.
- **Look for opportunities to help others:** acts of benevolence, charity and humanity help to restore positivity about the world.
- **Provide opportunities for children to be honest about their feelings:** sharing worries or feelings of upset with other family members reduces a sense of vulnerability and isolation, raises optimism and self esteem. Checking in with your children to see if they have any worries can help them start these conversations.
- **Manage disappointment:** It is likely events will be cancelled that your child was looking forward to. Explain that events will be rescheduled or new events planned when the situation changes. Try to plan fun things that you can do within the current situation that you might not otherwise be able to do - for example you are likely to be spending more time together at home as a family.
- **Provide opportunities for physical exercise:** exercise is valuable in developing natural chemicals in the brain to help us cope with feelings such as shock or worry.
- **Look after yourself:** a time of stress can mean less energy and more potential for illness for you, as well as others. So please take care of yourself.

C) Psychological tips for the wellbeing of everyone.

- **Show compassion for self and others-** take time to look after yourself. Remember the guidance for oxygen masks on planes, self first then others.
- **Model gratitude to others-** make a special show of being thankful to others, for opportunities, for safety, for the people who care for us.
- **Comment on strengths used-** this is definitely the time to notice and comment on the strengths used by others, and to notice our own.
- **Highlight resilience in others-** comment when someone has shown perseverance in the face of difficulty.
- **Look out for others.** Four simple letters are really important at the moment. If you notice someone is struggling, adult or child. Just ask r u o k? They may be fine, they may not, but asking makes sure we don't miss a chance to help.



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If you have any concerns about your child's well being please do get in touch with the school who will be able to talk to you and advise you further. If a school feels they require additional support they can contact our team or other agencies for further advice and support.

D) Additional resources

For children and young people

- [Anna Freud Centre: Self care and coping strategies](#)
- [Anna Freud Centre: Supporting young people through disruption](#)
- [A comic exploring the new Coronavirus](#)
- [CBBC: Your questions answered](#)
- [Coronavirus](#) - video for children explaining the virus and how to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease
- [Coronavirus social story](#)
- [Easy read information sheet about coronavirus](#)
- [ELSA: Coronavirus story for children](#)
- [Five minute mindfulness meditation](#)
- [Social story about pandemics and the Coronavirus - Carol Gray](#)
- [Smelly Velcro Cat - Resource for dealing with difficult thoughts and feelings](#)
- [Young Minds Blog: What to do if you're anxious about Coronavirus](#)

For teachers, parents and carers

- [Anna Freud: Supporting parents and carers through disruption](#)
- [BBC: How to protect your mental health](#)
- [BPS Advice: Talking to children about coronavirus](#)
- [ChildMind: Talking to kids about the Coronavirus](#)
- [Coronavirus: Keep it simple, stick to facts - how parents should tell kids](#) - it includes a video of kids asking questions about the coronavirus
- [Coronavirus: Myth busters](#)
- [Talking to children about coronavirus](#)
- [Talking to children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A parent resource](#)



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