

# CHILD, CAREGIVER AND FAMILY WELLNESS



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# *Agenda*

- Acknowledging stress and its impact on ourselves and our children
- Stress versus anxiety – when to seek help
- How to support optimal wellness – the importance of self care
- Coping Strategies for ourselves and our children

# Stress

- Stress is a normal part of everyday life
- A low or moderate amount of stress can be good for us - keeps us alert, motivated and engaged
- Too much stress can:
  - Interfere with our ability to function, pay attention, remember things or stay organized
  - Make it more difficult for us to learn and get along with others
  - Have an impact on emotional and physical health
- Research indicates that up to 90% of illnesses are related to stress



# Stress vs Anxiety

- Stress is usually a response to one or more external events which are typical for all people to experience.
- Anxiety is when a person becomes unreasonably fearful and experiences excessive worry to the point that it impacts everyday functioning.
- Anxiety really becomes a problem when it starts to interfere in one's life (and the lives of those around them), which can then cause them to experience more stress.

# Strategies for Managing Stress

- Understanding the function of stress and facing difficult/stressful situations
- Physical activity, sleep and nutrition
- Spend time in the natural environment
- Socializing with friends/family
- Seek out messages of hope and gratitude, consider limits to media exposure
- Box breathing – [Link](#)
- Challenging negative thoughts
- Set small goals
- Name what you are feeling (“Name it, don’t numb it”)
- Muscle relaxation
- Journaling
- Get creative! Examples include, but aren’t limited to, music, drawing, writing

# Self Talk and Challenging our Negative Voices

- Self talk is very powerful. It sends the same chemical messages to our brain as the actual experiences do.
- Your body believes your self talk.
- Negative self talk creates the feeling of stress in your body and your mind.
- We all have negative thoughts! It is a normal part of life. Sometimes these thoughts are about ourselves, about other people, or even a situation we are in.
- These can be confusing and can make our problems and stress seem much bigger.
- Knowing what kind of negative thoughts you are having can make it easier to tackle them with more positive and healthy thoughts.

# Negative Voices

**Absolute thinking:** Do you use words like “always” and “never” to describe problem situations?

**Exaggerated thinking:** Do you sometimes blow things out of proportion? Are you making things seem worse than they really are?

**Mind reading:** Do you sometimes think you know what others are thinking? You may think that they are having critical thoughts about you when you don't really know that is true?

**Fortune telling:** Do you sometimes predict the very worst outcome without any evidence that bad things will happen?

**Negative labelling:** Do you sometimes put others or yourself down in the way you think about a situation?



# Shift Your Thinking

- **Catch your critic:** learn to notice when you're being self-critical so you can begin to stop. For example, notice when you say things to yourself that you wouldn't say to a good friend or a child.
- **Accept setbacks and mistakes as normal.** Tell yourself that you can learn from them and do better next time- this does not make you a failure.
- **Say it aloud:** sometimes when you catch yourself thinking negative thoughts in your mind, simply saying them aloud can help remind us how unreasonable or unrealistic they sound.
- **Think like a friend:** when our inner critic is at its worst, it can sound like our worst enemy. Often we'll say things to ourselves in our heads that we'd never say to a friend. Why not reverse this and make it a point to imagine yourself saying this to a friend.
- **Watch out for words like "always" and "never."** Very often we make things sound worse than they are and can leave us feeling stuck with that negative feeling.
- **Remember that thoughts and feelings aren't always reality.** Try to figure out if this is a realistic or unrealistic thought you are having.
- **Practice activities and techniques that take your mind off stressors that you have no control over and cannot change.**
- **Learn to be your number one fan!**



# Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering. Kristin Neff has defined self-compassion as being composed of three main elements – self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness.
- Self-kindness: Self-compassion entails being warm towards oneself when encountering pain and personal shortcomings, rather than ignoring them or hurting oneself with self-criticism.
- Common humanity: Self-compassion also involves recognizing that suffering and personal failure is part of the shared human experience rather than isolating.
- Mindfulness: Self-compassion requires taking a balanced approach to one's negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. Negative thoughts and emotions are observed with openness, so that they are held in mindful awareness. Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which individuals observe their thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them.

# Resilience

- A combination of skills and positive qualities that people gain from their life experiences and relationships. These skills help them solve problems, cope with challenges and bounce back from disappointments.
- Ability to become personally and professionally successful despite severe troubles/difficulties in their life.
- Strategies to help build resilience include fostering wellness, finding purpose, embracing healthy thoughts and seeking help when needed.



Canadian  
Red Cross

# COPING WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



**It is normal** to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.



**Be aware that not everything you hear about the virus may be true.**

Stay updated and use information from trusted sources, like your health authority, World Health Organization (WHO) or your local Red Cross or Red Crescent.



**Limit worry and agitation** by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.



**Draw on skills you have used in the past** that have helped you to manage previous adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during this outbreak.



**If you must stay at home**, maintain a healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contact with family and friends at home and remotely.



**Deal with any emotions you may have in a healthy manner.**

If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

# MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



## For You

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

BlessingManifesting

## For Kids

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure




## For Quarantine/Isolation


- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

# Self-Care for Adults



**10**  
COVID-19  
+ Self Care Tips +

- 1** Creating a daily routine will help you move through your day. Keep things realistic and flexible! 
- 2** Try to be in bed at the same time each night, and up at the same time each morning. 
- 3** Try not to bottle things up, reach out to a friend or help line if you need to talk. 
- 4** Include small tasks on your daily to-do list to help you feel accomplished. 
- 5** Write down 5 things that you're grateful for. 

 [mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca) 



**6** Dance or sing it out – put on a fun playlist! 

**7** Create a morning routine that helps you start the day on a positive note. 

**8** Yoga or relaxing with a tea /coffee can be a nice way to start your day. 

**9** Plan a video chat with a friend or family member when you're missing them. 

**10** Take a news break or find a positive news source for a change. 

With lots of changes happening around us, it's important to keep in mind the ways that we can take care of ourselves. These times may be tough, but so are we! We can get through this together.

 [mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca) 

# Self-Care Ideas for Families

- Taking time for self-care is critical for maintaining positive mental health at this time. Consider framing self-care as care for emotional, physical, spiritual, mental, practical and social needs and find ways to engage in each as a family.
- Some ideas for engaging in family self-care:

<p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•name and talk about your feelings</li><li>•write each other gratitude notes</li><li>•say “I love you”</li></ul>	<p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•hike, bike or walk together</li><li>•family yoga</li><li>•create a family fitness challenge</li></ul>	<p><b>Spiritual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•spend time outdoors in nature</li><li>•practice mindful meditation</li><li>•volunteer together</li></ul>
<p><b>Mental</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•read or write together</li><li>•make vision boards</li><li>•learn a new skill</li></ul>	<p><b>Practical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•declutter and clean together</li><li>•establish a morning and evening routine</li></ul>	<p><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•call a loved one</li><li>•host a video chat night with friends</li><li>•write a letter to a loved one</li></ul>



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# Self-Care Ideas For Kids

- Throw a Football
- Spend Time With a Pet
- Blow Bubbles
- Chew Gum
- Knit or Weave
- Hang upside down
- Balance on One Leg
- Name the Feeling
- Do a Puzzle
- Run
- Shoot Baskets
- Have a Dance Party
- Finger Paint
- Do Cartwheels
- Hike
- Smell and Taste a Lemon
- Color a Picture
- Climb a Tree
- Count to Ten
- Pray
- Do Pushups
- Cry it Out
- Breathe Deeply
- Phone a Friend
- Give Thanks
- Garden
- Send a Thank You Card
- Do a Downward Dog Pose
- Stretch
- Scooter
- Bounce a Balloon 100 Times
- Smile Gently
- Journal
- Listen to Music
- Wrap Yourself in a Blanket
- Read a Book
- Jump Rope
- Toss Pebbles in a Pond
- Eat a Healthy Snack
- Play with Putty or Clay
- Blow a Feather
- Count Backward from 100
- Put on Fuzzy Socks
- Paint
- Do Situps
- Go on a Bike Ride
- Ask for a Hug
- Squeeze an ice-cube
- Skip
- Blow a Pinwheel
- Pop Bubblewrap
- Have a Cosy Drink

# Community Resources

## For Caregivers:

- DSBN PIC Series Speakers - Family health and student well-being webinars:
  - Parenting in a Pandemic (Ann Douglas)
  - **May 26th:** How to Make Our Kids More Resilient (Dr. Unger)
  - [Click here for the link](#) (DSBN Website)
- Pathstone TV - Short videos on topics ranging from childhood resilience to coping through the third wave of the pandemic: [Click here](#)
- CTRI - Webinar with an in-depth focus on caring for self and children during Covid-19: [Click here](#)
- Contact Niagara is hosting regular webinars where caregivers can connect with a resource coordinator to discuss access to child/youth developmental and mental health services in Niagara Region: [Click here](#)

Call to speak directly with a coordinator 905-684-3407

## For Students:

- Kids Help Phone:
  - <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
  - Call 1-800-668-6868
- Pathstone Crisis Line - Immediate telephone counselling for children and youth 24/7
  - 1-800-263-4944
- Pathstone Walk In Clinic:
  - No cost single session counselling for children and youth - call 1-800-263-4944 to book at a site/virtual site near you.
- Jack.org - mental health resources by youth for youth:
  - <https://jack.org/Resources>

## **Remember:**

Be compassionate with yourself and your family. There is no shame in facing difficulties, feeling big emotions, or needing help at this time. Reach out for support when you need it.

- DSBN Mental Health and Well-Being (Parent Resources): [Click here](#)



# Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom

## KIDS HAVE STRESS TOO!

This program introduces children to the topic of stress and how to manage it in fun, engaging, and developmentally appropriate ways. This program promotes resiliency by buffering the impact of stress on children and youth, and by teaching positive coping strategies.

## MERRELL'S STRONG START/KID/ TEENS

The Merrell's curriculum is carefully designed to prevent the development of mental health difficulties and promote social and emotional wellness among children and adolescents. It specifically targets internalizing behaviour and emotional problems (e.g., Low mood, anxiety, social withdrawal), using a cognitive behavioral (CBT) orientation, to promote social and emotional resilience.

## MINDUP

This curriculum uses the latest neuroscience research to improve student behaviour and learning. Each lesson offers easy strategies for helping students focus their attention, improve their self-regulation skills, build resilience to stress, and develop a positive mindset in both school and life.



# Wellness Wednesday

"We rise by lifting others"

Virtual Meeting Times:

**Grades 1 – 5**

12:00pm-12:20pm

**Grades 6 – 8**

3:00pm-3:20pm



Thank you!

Visit us at the Lockview  
Website:

[www.lockview.dsbn.org](http://www.lockview.dsbn.org)