

Coping with Worry and Stress - Wellness Tips



Welcome to your daily dose of wellness!

Today's Message: **PARENTING** during the Pandemic



Today's Parenting during the Pandemic Insights, Tips and Resources come to you courtesy of Drew A Pate, M.D., and Chief of Psychiatry for LifeBridge Health. The central focus is helping your children deal with stress.

With the unprecedented disruption into our daily lives and the stress that comes from the loss of structure and not knowing when we will return to work and school, here are some thoughts on the best ways to approach your children's concerns and difficult questions, and how to have those tough conversations with your children:

1. Offer the opportunity. Rather than avoiding the conversation, be sure that your kids know that you're happy to answer any questions or discuss any worries they have. If you let them know that you are comfortable with a particular topic or discussion, they will usually feel much better about approaching the topic with you.
2. Let their curiosity guide you. Kids are naturally curious and interested in the world, and will usually ask questions when they are ready for the answers.
3. Seize the opportunity. When kids are ready to talk about the world and ask questions, make sure to take that opportunity to address those questions and concerns. If they become distracted or move on to something else, then you'll have to wait for the next time they show they are ready to talk.



4. Explain the world to them in a way that they can understand. Remember that kids are still developing and think in their own way; they're not just "little adults." Young children and most teens are not able to think about the long-term future, so focus on explaining what's happening now and what it means to your child.



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5. Be sure to emphasize safety! The biggest worry for most kids is, “will I get sick or will the virus harm my family?” While none of us can predict the future, we can make sure that our kids understand that the adults in their lives are making their safety and the safety of their community a priority.
6. Follow your instincts and history. No one knows your kids better than you do, so you probably already know how they're going to respond to bad or scary news. Think about ways you've explained difficult things to them in the past, and if it went well, don't be afraid to use that same approach again.



7. Supervise their exposure. In a world where almost every adult and every kid has some form of unfiltered electronic access, make sure you are thinking about what they might be seeing and hearing when you are not around. It's hard to monitor everything your kids see and hear, so do your best to be mindful about where they're getting their information.
8. Know when to enlist professional help. If your child seems overly troubled or stressed by current events, don't hesitate to seek professional help by asking about mental health resources in your community.

