

THE MAMA PARSI GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

COVID-19 and its Mental, Emotional & Physical Impacts on children

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused various psychological problems like depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and severe threats to the lives and physical health of people around the globe. As a result children might develop higher levels of stress, feeling restless or grumpy. Some might develop anxiety and become irritable, aggressive or scared. Social withdrawal, boredom or crying all these feelings can also display in physical reactions including stomachaches, headaches, or loss of appetite.

1-Anxiety: Tips

- Planning the daily routines helps in adapting quickly and managing anxiety.
- Divide your time clearly as work and non-work times. Make the same division in your headspace too.
- Identify an activity/hobby that brings you joy and perform it e.g. gardening, cooking, embroidery, learning a new skill like craft work, colouring and drawing.

2-Loneliness: Tips

- Several community teams have developed interactive platforms. Be active in groups you like.
- Be in touch with friends, family, and colleagues over social media or the phone.
- Pick a new hobby. Learn something new every day. Keep your mind engaged.
- Pen down your thoughts and emotions regularly.

3- Difficulty in concentrating, low motivation and a state of distraction

- Pick a physical activity of your choice like Yoga or even simple stretches. Spend at least one hour per day on your physical health.
- It is important to be rational regarding the expectations we set for ourselves as well as for those in care of us. Do not have high expectations of others because they are sailing in the same boat.

4- Negative emotional spirals

- Do not Google symptoms of any disease, trust doctors.
- Avoid frequently checking the latest COVID statistics.
- Do not be hesitant to seek help.
- Keep time aside every day for breathing exercises and meditation.

5- Apprehension about Future

- It is common to have apprehensions and panic regarding the future. However, worrying does not help.
- Avoid speculation and focus on facts. Do not believe everything you read. Confirm your suspicions.
- Remember, humanity has seen worse, and every time we have bounced back. We will, again. Being hopeful is the key.

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Advice to parents on how to deal with their children during COVID 19 lockdown situation

1. One of the most important things is talk to them! Talk about what is going on, ask them about their thoughts and feelings. Be a compassionate and safe adult for them. Research shows that this has a very calming effect on kids.
2. Let your children play. Free and undirected playing is essential for their emotional well-being, especially in these times. It also has a tremendous impact on their cognitive and social development. Through playing, children express and conquer their feelings which help them develop emotional strength.
3. Let your children be physically active. Exercise increases the psychological and physical wellbeing and also reduces stress hormones. If it is possible, just go for a drive without getting out of the car and get some fresh air with your children.
4. A technique that reduces mental and emotional stress – from preschoolers to adults – is mindful breathing. Teach your children to observe their breath and take deep breaths together. One way to do this: lay down, place a cuddly toy on your belly and watch the stuffed animal slowly move up and down as you inhale and exhale.
5. Help your children, especially the younger ones, sustain their social life and stay in contact with their friends and grandparents. Let them write letters or draw pictures to send to family, and make phone calls or video calls. They will be happy to see that everything is okay.
6. Practice self-reflection as a parent and caretaker. How do you feel? Are you anxious? Stressed? Overstrained? If these feelings are too strong to handle, please seek professional help for yourself. This will also help your children.