



# Connections

*for mental wellness*

## **A parent's guide to supporting your child's mental wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic**

As a parent attempting to assist your child in adapting to the struggles and effects of a pandemic, you may be left feeling at a loss or unable to provide what your child may need at this time. However, parents often underestimate how impactful their role can be in helping their children to cope, by maintaining environments that promote safety, calmness, connectedness to others, self-efficacy (empowerment), and hopefulness.

We have compiled some of these helpful guides to help assist parents in identifying and supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing during the COVID pandemic. Below you will find a listing of articles and guides from trusted sources and leaders in youth mental health such as Child Mind Institute, Center of Disease Control (CDC), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), Mental Health America (MHA). We hope they are useful as a guide and support their youth during this time.

### **I. Conversation Starters**

Discussion questions and other topics that may be beneficial as we continue this school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [Talking to kids about COVID](#) (Child Mind Institute)

- En Espanol <https://childmind.org/article/como-hablar-con-los-ninos-sobre-el-coronavirus/>
- [Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19](#) (National Association of School Psychologists)
- [CDC Parent Guide: Youth Mental Wellbeing By Age Group](#) (CDC) Full toolkit

## II. How can parents help:

Parents should never underestimate the supportive role they play in their child's life. Parents help to lay the foundational support needed especially during a time where constant change is inevitable. Kids who feel safe, supported, accepted, and understood are better positioned to weather difficult times.

- [6 Ways to Support Kids Mental Health Right Now in an Online World](#)
- [How to Help Kids Who are Too Hard on Themselves](#) (Child Mind Institute, Childmind.org)
- [How to Support Children's Emotional, Educational Needs while Remote Learning](#) (UofMichigan.org)
- [Passing Anxiety onto our children](#), (Child Mind Institute)
- [How to Help kids Handle Holiday Disappointment During COVID-19](#) (Connecticut Childrens, ConnecticutChildrens.org)
- [Helping Homebound Children During COVID19 Outbreak](#) (CSTSONline.org, Center of the Study of Traumatic Stress)
- [Managing Anxiety During Reopening](#) (Childmind.org)
- [How to Help Kids and Teens Deal With Grief |](#) (Strong4Life.com)

## III. Building Youth Coping Skills:

- [Keys to Emotional Well-Being](#)

- [Building Resilience](#)
- [5 Ways Parents Can Help Children Improve Social Skills](#) (Centervention.com)
- [Tips for Supporting Student Wellness at Home During COVID-19](#)
- [Happy Successful Teens. Life Skills that help your teen Succeed](#) [Life Skills that help your teen succeed](#) (Allstatefoundation.org, CASEL.org)

#### **IV. Understanding the difference: appropriate behaviors based on the situation or is it something more:**

During this time, youth may feel a wide array of different emotions. What is difficult for a parent to decipher is whether the behaviors are situational and/or appropriate for what we are going through at this time or is what they are experiencing something more? The articles below outline symptoms to watch for. It is important to consider how often these symptoms are felt and the severity of the symptoms.

- [Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in Children During COVID-19](#) (Focus: all ages) (Child Mind Institute)
- [Signs of Depression During Coronavirus Crisis](#) (Child Mind Institute)
- [KNOW THE SIGNS: Recognizing Mental Health Concerns in Kids and Teens](#) (Mental Health America)

#### **V. Helpful questions to ask your child:**

- Take a private moment to express your concern gently and without judgement. For example: “I’ve noticed that you’re spending more time in your room” or “I’ve noticed that you just don’t seem as happy. Can we talk about that?”
- If your child has a hard time opening up, try offering up some personal examples to start the conversation. For instance: “This is what I’ve been experiencing in this stressful situation. I’ve been more anxious, and had a harder time thinking about the positives. Is that something you’re

feeling too?”

- If they don't want to talk at length about their feelings, that's okay. Get in the habit of doing a quick mood “weather check,” to report when they're feeling low without the pressure to go into all the details. For example, “I just want to check in on how you're feeling today, and if you're worrying about anything in particular” or “Scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling today?”

#### **VI. When to seek outside help from a mental health professional:**

If you feel that there may be more that your child is struggling with, please do not hesitate to reach out to trusted advocates in order to find options for mental health care. Discuss your child's symptoms and experiences and possible next steps. They can assist with additional resources and help get your child connected to appropriate assistance they may need.

Potential advocates include:

- Child's school social worker/counselor/psychologist
- Child's primary care physician (PCP) or pediatrician
- Licensed Clinical therapists available in our area.

#### **VII. For a web-accessible resource for mental health and substance abuse information, resources and services within Brown, Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties, please visit: [Brown County & Fox Valley Network of Care](#)**

#### **VIII. Other available resources:**

- [Free Social Emotional Learning Activities](#)
- [Calming Spaces at Home](#)
- [Discovering Student Strengths](#)
- [Parent's Guide to a Growth Mindset](#)

- [Social Thinking: Problem Size at Home and Other Resources](#)
- [Discussion: Things I can control](#)
- [Conversations with Families](#)
- [Students-Care-for-Yourself.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#)