



April 22nd, 2020 | Week 3

Welcome to the Weekly Well-Being Connection! Each week we will share advice from our clinical experts on ways to care for your mental health and well-being throughout COVID-19.

Supporting Children

Families with children face unique challenges right now. On top of schedule changes, business and school closures, physical distancing, and financial strain, parents are trying to keep their children engaged in learning. **We have a few tips** to help families cope with changes to daily life.

Remember to be kind to yourself and each other. We are all learning to navigate a new normal. **Give yourself some grace.** Every day does not have to be filled with balanced and enriched activities.

Take care of yourself. **Any parent who has flown with kids has heard from flight attendants that we need to put on our oxygen masks before we help our children.** This sentiment is INCREDIBLY true now! Kids use the adults around them to regulate their emotional states. **When we model calm, kids feel this** and while it might not settle the situation, it will have an impact.

- Among the typical self-care suggestions (eat healthy, exercise, practice good sleep hygiene, humor), **we like the acronym: WIN - What's Important Now?** It's human nature to worry about the future, but **try to focus on today.** That doesn't mean don't plan at all, but once you've done the necessary tasks, look for ways to calm your body.

Talk to kids in age appropriate ways about Coronavirus. Kids likely know more than we think they do, but not all of it may be true and accurate. Groups like the CDC, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network have helpful resources with tips for talking with kids of all ages. There are even stories and comics geared towards kids to help them understand what is happening right now, such as [this social story from Conscious Discipline](#) or [this comic from NPR](#).

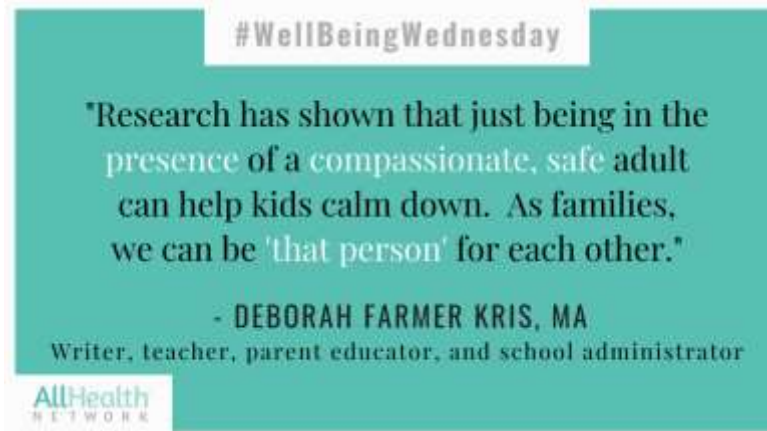
Create a predictable structure to the day. This can promote learning and help reduce stress and anxiety. How can you create structure without being rigid? **Try some of these small steps:**

- Do things at a similar time each day. Waking up, eating meals, play time, and educational activities around the same time every day are some places to start.
- If children are old enough, include them in the process of creating a schedule.
- For younger children, provide choices to them for blocks of the schedule. Only provide choices you are willing to accept though. For example, carrots or peas with lunch? Coloring or painting during art time? Don't offer something that will take a lot of clean up and monitoring on your busiest work day.
- Find a way to display the schedule so kids know what to expect and what was agreed on. This helps the adults orient too.

Encourage kids to move their bodies. Do your younger kids need ideas for this? Check out resources like Cosmic Kids Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga> or GoNoodle <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

As weather and physical distancing allows, play outside and get fresh air. If you have the chance, **get outside with kids**. The fresh air will help you reset too!

As you can, find space to **have some fun together as a family**. This could be an indoor scavenger hunt, a board game, movie night, or extra story time. Do what your family likes to do together!



If speaking to someone about ways to cope with all these life changes would help, please reach out. AllHealth Network, along with other community mental health centers, is continuing to provide services via telehealth and by phone. Our Crisis Walk-in Center remains open 24/7 and offers in-person care to those experiencing a mental health crisis. For more information and to get connected with our services, please call 303-730-8858. To learn more about what other community mental health centers are doing, please visit the [Colorado Behavioral Health Council COVID-19 website](#).

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and are in need of immediate assistance, please call the **Colorado Crisis Hotline at 1-844-493-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255**.

How do you know if you're experiencing a mental health crisis? Here are some warning signs to look out for from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): <http://bit.ly/2K1Z3Vm>

Resource links

- [PBS - How You and Your Kid Can De-Stress During Coronavirus](#)
- [WFPL - Structure, Self-Care Important for Kids and Parents During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [Conscious Discipline - COVID-19: Five Helpful Responses for Families](#)
- [Conscious Discipline - Resources About COVID-19](#)
- [CDC - Talking With Children About Coronavirus](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists - Talking to Children About COVID-19: A Parent Resource](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network - Parent and Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus](#)