

# Helping the Children and Youth in Our Lives Cope



## Take Care of Yourself

We know that even in times of biggest crisis, if adults are coping well, children will cope well. Role model good self-care and emphasize healthy habits— “good sleep, nutrition, exercise and hand washing help us stay healthy.” Or “Our best way to help is to do what we know to do to stay healthy: get good sleep, wash hands, sneeze/cough into our elbows and drink lots of water.”

Contribution is an important part of building resilience. It also supports another aspect, control. Helping children and teens learn how they are contributing to positive coping can be a great way to help grow their own resilience. Link their use of healthy habits as an important contribution to their community’s health and safety. Another way might be checking in and making sure that more vulnerable loved ones have what they need.

## Find Ways to Contribute



## Limit/Guide Media Intake

Good for us all, and helpful for children. Be thoughtful about children and adolescents’ independent access to news or what peers are saying online. Talk things through and clarify any misconceptions or untruths. Take the opportunity to talk about credible sources and offer suggestions that may be the most helpful. Beyond online sources, breaks are also needed from traditional media coverage -like television and radio.

Children deserve truthful answers that match their developmental stage. If a child/teen has a direct question that you don’t know the answer to, it is ok to say, “that’s a good question” and share that you don’t know the answer. In some cases, you may be able to obtain the information. In others, you may share that this is unknown for now, but more will be learned in the coming days or weeks. Offer that once you learn the information; you will share it.

## It's OK... Not to Know



## Normalize their fears and reactions, offer HOPE

Like all of us, children and teens may notice they are reacting in different ways. They may worry that their reactions aren’t “normal” or that they are “crazy”. Let them know that stress can show up in thoughts, feelings, bodies and behavior. One example may be experiencing headaches, stomachaches, or lack of sleep. Feeling restless, sad or worried are also common, as is irritability. Being disappointed about how activities may be cancelled or delayed is understandable and fair. We may notice that our children and even our teens may be sticking closer to parents/caregivers or needing more assistance to fall asleep or stay asleep independently. Offer hope that by sticking together, talking to each other, giving and receiving comfort and practicing healthy habits we can and will feel better over time – even when things are uncertain.

### Here are some recommendations to follow:

- ✓ Allow room for questions over time
- ✓ Stick to facts
- ✓ Continue to follow normal routines like dinner and bedtime. Maintain limits on behavior and expectations.
- ✓ Focus on what can be controlled (i.e. social distancing, hand washing)
- ✓ Promote positive habits
- ✓ Encourage stress-management activities and find ways for new fun
- ✓ Let them know you and others are here if they need to talk or need a break
- ✓ Listen and validate feelings

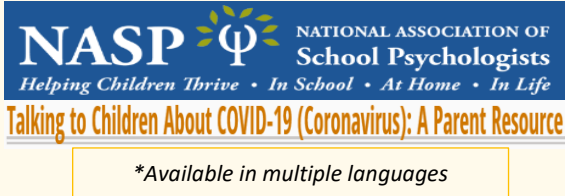
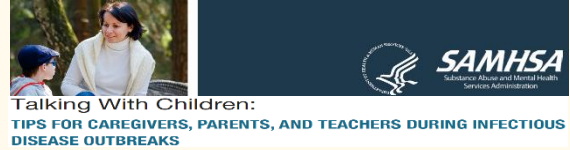


## Check in regularly and provide room to talk

### BRIGHTEN SOMEONE'S DAY!

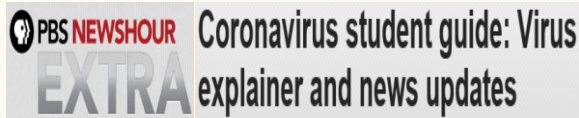
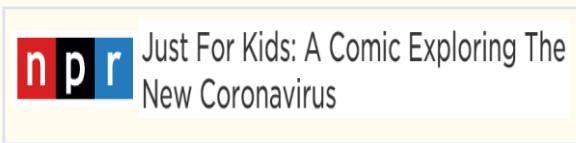
*Children and youth have a unique talent at bringing hope and fun to others. Asking them to make a daily phone call or video chat to loved ones, create a funny Tik Tok to share or send a meme can be great ways to stay connected through social distance*

Here are some additional resources (click on the images below) for you and the children/youth in your lives:



**PODCAST** with Dr. Ken Ginsburg on Talking with Kids and Teens about COVID-19

### For Children and Youth...



### Managing Time at Home...



Sign up for daily activities to learn and play at home

### Resources from the Child Mind Institute | Harvard University (available in Spanish)

