



## Wellbeing Activities and Information to Support Our Families

Hi Everyone,

It is difficult not to have some degree of anxiety in the current climate. As an adult, I feel a level of anxiety when I go to the supermarket and some of the shelves are bare, people are walking around the streets with masks on, along with the forever-changing guidelines that we are being directed to follow. If adults are anxious, imagine how our children might be feeling.

Here is a list of various strategies that may be helpful. Not every child will respond to every strategy, but hopefully you will find something that is helpful for your child and your own wellbeing.

### **Provide information, not excessive reassurance**

Establish an understanding of what your child already knows: you want to provide information and correct misinformation. This should be done in a developmentally appropriate, honest and clear way. When you don't know something, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know," and let them know you will try to find out the answer.

Be prepared for this conversation and make sure you are up on the facts. The World Health Organization website is a good place to look. Some facts you may want to consider sharing include that the majority of the people who are sick live in other countries, there are a lot less cases in Australia, we can keep ourselves safe by using good hygiene habits like washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Very few kids have become sick with the coronavirus. Finally, adults such as government officials, doctors, and scientists are working hard to learn more and to keep us safe.

Information-providing is not reassurance-giving. The world is uncertain and as parents, we can't guarantee that bad things won't happen, including getting sick, but we can remind them of the best possible ways to take care of ourselves and each other.

## Label your Feelings

Encourage your child to recognise what they are feeling; some may need a little prompting and perhaps you may need to name two or three feelings for them to choose from. It is also a good idea to do this when they are feeling 'happy' or 'excited', so they learn to recognise they are having good times too. Every day may be different and some days will be better than others. It may change throughout the day. That's completely understandable.

Different people will have different feelings and reactions to the same information. Why do we label our feelings? Clinical research has demonstrated that one way to help regulate your emotions is to identify them. Once you can identify your feelings, it becomes easier to manage them. As Dr. Dan Siegel says, "When you name it, you can tame it."

## Behaviour

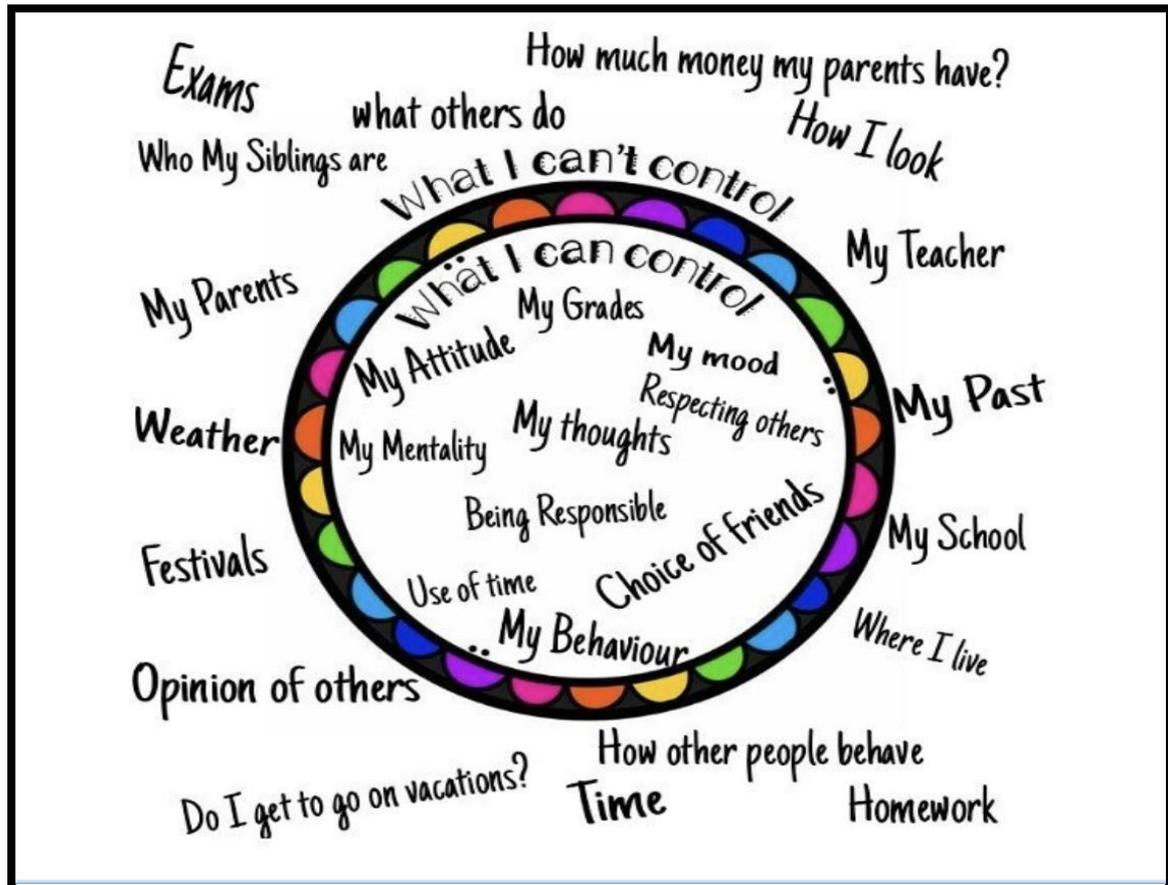
Expect some behavioural changes in your children, and respond gently. On some level, we are all struggling with the current disruption in routine; this can really impact children who rely on routines organised by others to make them feel safe and in control. Expect possible increased anxiety, worries and fears, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, testing limits and meltdowns. Do not introduce major behavioural consequences at this time, but rather, try to remain stable and focus on emotional connection.



## Some strategies you can use with your children

### Acknowledge what you can and can't control

There are some things you can control and some things you can't. Situations like the one we find ourselves in at the moment, one can highlight for us how many things we can't control. Here's a visual image to help you and your child understand the things you do have control over and the things you don't have control over in your life.



Instead of focusing on those things you have no control over, you can focus on what you can control, and that is you. You can control how you act, what you say, what you do, how you behave and how you respond to others.

### Make a plan

Now that you are focused on what you can control, make a plan. You can use the problem-solving steps to make a plan to solve problems.

#### Identify the problem

For example, I miss my friends.

#### Generate ideas to solve the problem

The next step is to generate several ideas for solving an issue. Not all of them will work, but you're not trying to pick out ones that will and won't work during this step. Right now, it's just about generating ideas:

- Send friends a card
- FaceTime my friends
- Email them
- Give them a call
- Play a game online together
- Watch the same TV show and call each other to talk about it

Pick out a few ideas to help solve the problem and use them.



### Peaceful Kids Meditations

Meditation gives young children the feeling of being quiet and still. It gives them time to breathe and imagine and lets them know that it is okay to have feelings. In fact, through meditation children learn that it is okay to be whoever they are and feel whatever they feel.

In addition, meditation helps children:

- Fall asleep, especially when practiced before bedtime
- Deal with grief and other difficult emotions
- Release negative thoughts and behaviours
- Get along better with others

You can access the Peaceful kids meditations on the link below.

<https://www.peacefulkids.com.au/meditations1.html>

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## Pillow Spray

Lavender oil can calm anxiety and improve sleep.  
Chamomile oil has a calming effect and can induce sleep.

What you'll need:

- Distilled Water
- 95ml Spray Bottle
- 10 drops Lavender essential oil
- 10 drops Chamomile essential oil

Instructions:

1. Add the Lavender and Chamomile essential oils to the spray bottle
2. Fill with distilled water
3. Replace the lid and shake thoroughly

To use: Spray onto your pillows and sheets before sleep. Suitable for children.

## Mindfulness

This exercise helps children to focus on the positives throughout the day and not the negatives.

Three Good Things exercise:

1. Every night, just before you go to bed, sit down for a while and look back at your day.
2. Think of 3 things that went well for you during the day.
3. Write them down.

The Three Good Things don't have to be really big, such as winning a sports event, having a birthday or another big event, though those things count. Just 3 simple good things.

To start with it might be hard to think up three good things; however, you will start to see the small good things in your life.

What to do:

1. Write them down
2. Think about what happened and how you felt
3. Try to do it before bed every night-It is OK if you miss a night!

## Using Belly Breathing to Relieve Anxiety

Belly breathing is a useful tool to support your child to cope with anxiety and other emotions.

By consciously increasing our awareness about breathing and by practising breathing exercises it is possible to:

- improve our sense of well-being
- decrease our level of stress
- regulate our emotions
- help to bring about interconnectedness between our minds and bodies.

### **Breathing Exercises**

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

### **Elmo showing the benefits of belly breathing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZbzDOpylA>

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## Journaling/Worry Box

Writing down worries helps us to feel better and to 'get rid' of the worry because we don't need to keep thinking about it. It helps to place the worries outside your mind and clear your mind each day.

Children can use an envelope or box; it can be decorated and they can write on it 'My Worries'. Children can write their worry down on a small piece of paper and place it in the envelope or box. Whenever the child has a worry they can write it down and put it in their box.

Journaling of feelings, including worries, actually helps to reduce worries. Children can use a notebook to write or draw about their day and any emotions or feelings they are experiencing.

It is important to make sure children are aware that if they have a problem or a worry they can also talk to an adult for support.



## Further Support

Kids Helpline phone Counselling

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Raising Children Network

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/services-support/local-services/vic-services>

## Fun Activities

To distract and keep our minds busy, there are many resources and lists of activities online that you can access. Here are a few to get you started:

Melbourne Zoo Live Streaming

[https://www.zoo.org.au/animal-house?utm\\_campaign=march-eneews\\_multiple\\_march-2020&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=marketingcloud](https://www.zoo.org.au/animal-house?utm_campaign=march-eneews_multiple_march-2020&utm_source=email&utm_medium=marketingcloud)

Virtual Museum Tours

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>

Kids Art Spot

<https://www.kidsartspot.com/>

Mindful colouring

<https://www.twinkl.com.au/search>

Science activities for kids

<https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3>

Exercise/movement breaks

<https://www.gonoodle.com/good-energy-at-home-kids-games-and-videos/>

Online Library resources

<https://library.portphillip.vic.gov.au/eLibrary>

[Read Aloud Storybooks](#)

<https://www.vooks.com/parent-resources>

<https://secretldn.com/david-walliams-audio-stories/>

