

## MANAGING STRESS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

This information sheet contains resources you may find helpful for taking care of yourself, your children and your family during this particularly difficult time.

It is normal to feel stressed in difficult circumstances. You might feel more irritable, angry, down, on edge than usual or simply not being able to be as present and focused as you normally are. You might also temporarily lose interest in activities you normally enjoy, eat more or less than usual, or feel tired but unable to sleep. These are all normal reactions to extraordinary circumstances.

It is also normal for children and youth to feel worried and anxious, particularly as they may sense how you are feeling. If you are worried and tense, they may also become worried and tense. Taking care of yourself is also taking care of your children. Remember to be gentle with yourself and each other during this difficult time. Tackle one day at a time and remind yourself and your family members that this is a temporary situation.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF & EACH OTHER

It's important to take care of yourself during difficult and stressful times. It isn't always easy and sometimes it might feel like work but it is worth it. Here are some activities that you might want to try:

- Exercising can be tricky right now but you may wish to try walking, running, yoga, stretching or online exercise programs
- Try to remain positive: Engage in positive self-talk and be [compassionate with yourself](#) and your family members.
- If you have trouble sleeping, you might want to read or write out how you are feeling. Avoid screen time before going to bed or when you can't sleep.
- For some easy distraction, watch a funny movie or funny videos online to take your mind off your worries. Maybe try reading or listening to music or audio books.
- Sometimes writing in a journal to express your thoughts and feelings can help reduce stress. Encourage your family members to do the same.
- Put on music and dance to it. You may find your family & your children may love it.
- Do a simple project or craft for you and your family that doesn't require special supplies. Here are [10 Family Learning Activities](#) & more ideas are listed below.
- Connect with family members and loved ones via phone, video chat and text regularly.
- Don't be embarrassed to talk about how you are feeling. You'll usually find that others are feeling stressed too.
- Don't rely on substances. While this might seem to work immediately, the use of substances won't help you get through the next day. You'll likely feel more tired and stressed because of it.

You can find more ideas and links to resources below.

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children do not express their fears and concerns like adults. Younger children may become clingy or fearful, have aches and pains, have nightmares, or revert to thumb-sucking and bed-wetting. They may seem agitated and fight more with their sibling(s) or try to act brave when they really need reassurance. All these responses are normal and expected. Here are some simple ways you can help your children:

- No one knows your child as well as you do. As a first step to helping your children, it is important to reassure them that they are safe and that their lives will return to normal.
- Many fears of children are caused by overhearing other children, adults, TV or social media. Monitor what your children are watching and reassure them that they are safe.
- You can also help your children by providing simple, age-appropriate information about what is happening. Answering their questions can help them understand the situation and feel in more control over their feelings and emotions.
- Both children and youth benefit from routine and structure. Try visual or written schedules and provide choices wherever possible to provide predictability and a sense of control.
- Show them you are there for them and listen to their concerns with empathy and compassion.

## ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

If you're looking for things to do that for yourself or your family, have a look at the activity links below. Many of these are fun and can help pass the time during difficult circumstances.

### **Activities:**

[65 ways to pass the time](#)

[100+ fun things to do during quarantine](#)

[Staying Creative and Having Fun](#)

[101 Ideas to Keep Your Kids Busy](#)

### **Movement & Exercise:**

[Free Home Workouts](#)

[YMCA Free Health & Fitness](#)

[Free YouTube Workouts for Children](#)

[12 Free Online Exercise Resources for Kids](#)

## WELLNESS RESOURCES

Many people find simple self-care activities helpful in getting them through difficult times. Taking time for yourself can give you a break from your worries and help you through the day. Below are some links you might find helpful.

[Free Guided Meditations and Mindfulness Talks](#)

[Calm](#) (App)

[Mindfulness for Teens](#)

[Stress Busters For Kids](#) (PDF)

## A LITTLE EXTRA HELP

Reaching out for extra help doesn't mean that a person is weak or inadequate. Lots of people do it from all walks of life. Below are a number of resources that can be helpful if you or someone you care about is feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope. You can also learn more about resources in British Columbia by contacting 211 or visiting the [BC 211 website](#).

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#) Information, coping strategies and resources for a variety of mental health topics.

[Mind Health BC](#) A variety of mental wellness topics, screening quizzes and links to resources.

[Anxiety Canada](#) Information about dealing with anxiety and links to free online courses & apps.

[Crisis Line and Chat](#) Free 24/7 phone line and chat for adults and youth in distress. 1-800-784-2433 or <https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/>

[YMHC Youth Mental Health Resources](#) Online support, resources & activities

[Foundry BC](#) For youth ages 12-24: information, tools, support services and peer support.

[Kids Help Phone](#) Free 24/7 text and phone support for children and youth (bilingual). [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868) or <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>