

# PEARL RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

## School Psychologist Newsletter

A newsletter brought to you by PRSD School Psychologists

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The month of March brings us many positive things to look forward to! Spring, warmer weather, and longer days are just a few. This March is unique in the pandemic we are experiencing. As mental health professionals, we are very much aware of the impact COVID-19 is having on everyone, including parents/caregivers, and our children. We want to provide you and your children with as much support as possible as we navigate these difficult times, and also to remind you not to lose sight of the positives that are still happening around us everyday! 😊



### How can we support our children during COVID-19? Tips for parents/caregivers

Anxiousness is a normal and natural reaction to the global pandemic we are currently experiencing. It is important to acknowledge that the situation is happening and give children an opportunity to process everything they're experiencing. Using Emotion-Management Strategies can help children to feel more calm. In particular, the following emotion-management strategies are very helpful.

**Belly/Slow Breathing** : • Remind children to breathe in slowly through the nose and out through the mouth. A slow exhale stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system. A variation of belly/slow breathing is to breathe in a memory of feeling safe and happy and breathe out the uncomfortable, pandemic-related feelings.

**Slow Counting Positive Self-Talk** • Help children identify negative self-talk related to the pandemic. • Discuss helpful or positive self-talk that they could use instead. • Have them re-appraise or re-frame the situation. Help them understand that they are at home in order to keep themselves and other people safe. In other words, they are doing something very caring and helpful for their family and their community.

**Asking for Help and Getting Support** • It's very important that children know that they do not have to cope on their own. Have your child identify people, in addition to yourself, he/she is comfortable to go to for support.

**Showing Empathy and Kindness** • Speak with your child about what others might be feeling and how they can show their care and concern with acts of kindness. Have your child reflect on how being at home because of COVID-19 is a kind and helpful act. • Remind your child that others can have the same or different feelings about being at home, or about the pandemic (perspective-taking). • Have your child identify acts of kindness or support that would feel helpful to them as individuals during this time. • Have your child identify acts of kindness or support they can offer each other and their families while they are at home.

Here are some resources with additional information and suggestions:

[Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)

[Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)

[Managing Anxiety in an anxiety provoking situation](#)

[Second Step: Ways to Cope in Trying Times-Resources for Students and Families](#)

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## Mindful Gratitude Activities for Children

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1. [Thank you note](#)
2. [Gratitude Flowers](#)
3. [Gratitude Jar](#)
4. [Gratitude Tree](#)
5. [Gratitude Photo Challenge](#)

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## Mindful Activities for Adolescents



1. Adult Coloring Books
2. Take morning walks
3. Yoga
4. Breathing exercises first thing in the morning
5. Listen to music
6. Play board games
7. Spend a day at the park
8. Make a bucket list
9. Read books
10. Try mindfulness apps

# Resources

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The [NAMI Rockland HelpLine](#) is a free service that provides information, referrals and support to people living with a mental health condition, family members and caregivers, mental health providers and the public. Our HelpLine is available Monday - Thursday 10 am - 4pm and Friday 10 am - 1 pm.

A well-trained and knowledgeable volunteer or HelpLine staff will respond to your call or message. Many staff members and volunteers live with a mental health condition or provide care and support to a family member or friend. Contact us at: (845) 359-8787. For more information please visit <http://www.namirockland.org/index.html>



The [Office of Mental Health](#) offers a variety of resources to help people cope with anxiety, fear, helplessness, and hopelessness during a crisis situation. A wealth of information and strategies on maintaining your mental health during a crisis are also provided. For more information please visit [https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster\\_resources/pandemic\\_influenza/](https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pandemic_influenza/)

The Emotional Support Line provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Help Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling- **OMH Emotional Support Line: 1-844-863-9314**