



# **Mental Wellness During A Health Crisis**

**Helping young people manage COVID-19 Fears**

**COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus) is a worldwide issue that is making people sick and causing widespread stress, anxiety, and panic.**

**Some level of concern is warranted**

**But we must support young people experiencing higher levels of stress, fear, and anxiety.**

## **Signs of stress in children and youth:**

**Excessive crying**

**Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (e.g., toileting accidents or bedwetting)**

**Excessive worry or sadness**

**Changes in eating or sleeping habits**

**Irritability**

**Decline in school performance or avoiding school**

**Difficulty paying attention or concentrating**

**Avoiding typical or enjoyable activities**

**Unexplained headaches or body pain**

**Using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs**

**Some things are out of our control, but not everything. Here are some tips to help young people manage fears and stay mentally well during this crisis.**

**Model calm.** Pay attention to your verbal and nonverbal reactions.

**Be available.** They might need to talk about it. Don't avoid it!

**Use facts.** Stay informed. Discuss updates in a developmentally appropriate way. *(See resources below for support)*

**Know the symptoms.** Fever, cough, shortness of breath. The CDC reports they usually appear a few days after exposure.

**Follow health guidelines.**

Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer.

Clean frequently touched objects.

Cover mouth and nose with a tissue to sneeze or cough. Throw it in the trash.

If you are feeling sick stay home –

**BUT** If you need medical help contact your doctor's office before you go.

Avoid touching your face.

Do not share food and drinks.

**Watch what they watch.** Make sure you know what media they are taking in to dispel rumors and reduce anxiety. Cut them off if needed.

**Do not tolerate discrimination or racism.** People from any race or ethnicity can be affected.

**Schools and parents stay in touch.** Share updates and communicate about illness, fears, or changes in behavior.

**Maintain routine if possible.** Consistency helps ease anxiety and fear.

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### **Additional resources:**

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html>
- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources>