

Tip Sheet for Parents and Caregivers: Coping Through Unsettling Times

Spend family time

- Read a book or cook together
- Play board games
- Watch a show and talk about it

Take care of your own needs as adult caring for children

- Maintain bedtimes so you have time to rest after children have gone to sleep

Be optimistic

- This will end
- We are privileged to have a home to stay in

Emphasize people's resiliency

- Look up recovery numbers

Stick to the facts

- Think about where you get your news. Is this a reliable source?

Highlights from the Child Mind Institute

Make your child feel safe

- A warm hug
- Comforting words

Act calm

- Think about the tone you are using
- Avoid speaking to children about your stress

Maintain routines

- Proper meal times
- Bedtime/bedtime routine

Help children enjoy themselves

- Use technology to connect children and youth to family and friends
- Encourage them to be creative

Discuss events in age appropriate terms:

- Share information, limiting as appropriate
- Answer children's questions and do not overload

Pick good times to talk

- Look for natural openings

Prevent or limit exposure to news coverage

- Children who believe events are temporary can recover from them more quickly

Understand that children cope in different ways

- Let your child know it's normal to express emotions
- Support their coping strategies

Listen well

- Hear what they have to say about how they feel and think during this time

Help children relax with breathing exercises

- Find techniques online

Acknowledge what your child is feeling

- Again, let them feel heard and that their feelings are normal

Know that it's okay to answer, "I don't know."

- Children will appreciate the honesty and feel safer to trust what you have to say moving forward



References

Child Mind Institute. "Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event." *Child Mind Institute*, childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/.