



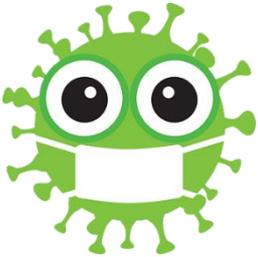
Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

113-117 Dunmaglass Road, Glenfemess
PO Box 812, Witkoppen, 2068
Telephone: (011) 465 9830, (011) 467 4889, (011) 467 4657 / 072 617 5291
Fax: 086 654 9727
E-mail: admin@cedarwoodschool.co.za
www.cedarwoodschool.co.za



DEALING WITH PANIC AND ANXIETY



Children, regardless of age, experience powerful emotions. These emotions are amplified in the presence of uncertainty and panic. The world of a child can be very frightening and overwhelming as they try to navigate their way around it. By now your children have heard their fair share about the Corona Virus, children are registering that the adults around them seem worried. This worry is confusing and unsettling, as a few weeks ago these adults could confidently multi-task making dinner while helping them with their homework as well as predicting that it would rain on the day they forgot their raincoats at home. And now, it seems that these adults don't know what to expect and

are scared. It is important to note that everyone deals with panic and uncertainty differently. How you deal with these feelings will be influenced by your background and the community in which you live. You may have noticed that in response to the panic and uncertainty surrounding them, children have become clingier, withdrawn, display anger, have temper tantrums and demonstrate physical ailments such as headaches and sore tummies. This is normal and to be expected as they are still learning how to filter information as well as their emotional responses to the information.

Amidst the uncertainty and panic that you may be experiencing as parents, your children are watching and mimicking your responses to these uncertain times. Without question, this virus and the ongoing stream of information is challenging the parenting landscape. It has put pressure on parents to manage and police their children's exposure to information and monitor their reactions to the information they are exposed to. What this pandemic is reminding us of, is that although children need to learn the skills to deal with uncertainty, they need adults to teach them how to do it. This may be complicated, as our brains are hardwired to dislike the unknown and are often motivated to constantly create and update sets of rules that can predict how the world works.



As a family, these feelings of panic and anxiety need to be acknowledged to ensure effective coping during this stressful time. There has been an influx of information on how to cope during periods of lockdown. As such we have compiled some of our favorite tips, taken from a variety of sources listed below, that will assist you in managing feelings of uncertainty and panic in your children and your family.



CEDARWOODSCHOOL
(Association incorporated under Section 21 - not for gain)
Fundraising Number: 01 101753000 2
Co registration number 1997/018168/08
Umalusi Accreditation No. 17 SCH01 00304





Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

113-117 Dunmaglass Road, Glenfemess
PO Box 812, Witkoppen, 2068
Telephone: (011) 465 9830, (011) 467 4889, (011) 467 4657 / 072 617 5291
Fax: 086 654 9727
E-mail: admin@cedarwoodschool.co.za
www.cedarwoodschool.co.za

Dealing with uncertainty and panic

1. Be an example for your child:

Irrespective of the real concern that you're experiencing, it is important to model calmness when talking about the virus. Your children will look to you, to see how afraid they should be. Model behavior that motivates your child to understand that although the risks associated with the virus are not going to disappear, this uncertainty is not crippling and that it can be overcome.

2. Establish a clear routine for being at home:

This might include dividing household chores between each family member and indicating work and relaxation time. Children, and adults, function optimally with routine and boundaries.

3. Speak to your children about how they are feeling:

Try to normalize their feelings and let them know that they are not alone. Let children know that worrying about finances etc. is the adult's responsibility and they do not have to take on this worry as well. In speaking to your children about how they are feeling, acknowledge their feelings while also correcting some misunderstanding that they may have which could be fueling their feelings of panic and uncertainty.



4. Keep vigilant for reassurance-seeking behavior:



Although all children feel strong emotions, how emotions are expressed is unique to your child. As previously mentioned, some children will express their discomfort with the uncertainty by asking questions, others may become clingier and make it considerably difficult to conduct your Zoom meetings without interruptions. Keep an eye out for what will seem to be 'odd behavior' and respond to this behavior by being reassuring and emotionally available for your child.

5. Limit media exposure:

Given that you are on lockdown, trying to multitask meal preparations and simultaneously meeting remote working expectations, the news channels might be blaring in the background. Although the news can be helpful, by keeping everyone informed, the constant flood of information can be scary for children. Limit the news-viewing to the hours when the children go to sleep or read the news independently. While your children need to know what is happening in the world, try and filter the information that they are exposed to. You can do this by removing strong emotive words when speaking about COVID-19. Be mindful of your child's overactive imagination and the unnecessary catastrophic stories this imagination can create. Ensure that the information you are providing them with is what they need to know to understand the virus, what their responsibilities are, and what can be done to help.





Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

113-117 Dunmaglass Road, Glenfemess
PO Box 812, Witkoppen, 2068
Telephone: (011) 465 9830, (011) 467 4889, (011) 467 4657 / 072 617 5291
Fax: 086 654 9727
E-mail: admin@cedarwoodschool.co.za
www.cedarwoodschool.co.za

6. Stay connected with friends and family:

Arranging virtual meetups will be beneficial to mental health for both children and parents.

7. Practice diaphragmatic breathing to instill a sense of inner calm:

You want to try and get your stomach to move in when you breathe in and expand outward when you exhale. Also, the following steps can be followed to promote mindful breathing and reduce feelings of panic and anxiety:



- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
- Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths

8. Concentrate on relaxing your muscles:

You can do this by lying on the floor and tensing each body part for the count of 5 and then releasing this tension. After doing this, your body and mind will feel relaxed and calm leaving little room for panic.

9. Try and keep physically active:



This might include running around your garden, or on the spot, for at least 20 minutes per day. Encourage children to engage in physical activities such as playing outside and playing with the dogs. If access to the outdoors is not an option, then getting children to do some skipping/star jumps is a great way to release some of their energy.

We hope the tips listed above will instill a sense of calm during this period of panic and uncertainty. If you or your children are struggling with these emotions, we would encourage you to reach out either to someone in the school community or a health professional for additional support. It is during times like these that we need to support and encourage each other, demonstrate empathy and compassion and know that we are not alone. For further reading and insight, the articles from which our tips were compiled are listed below.



Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

113-117 Dunmaglass Road, Glenfemess
PO Box 812, Witkoppen, 2068
Telephone: (011) 465 9830, (011) 467 4889, (011) 467 4657 / 072 617 5291
Fax: 086 654 9727
E-mail: admin@cedarwoodschool.co.za
www.cedarwoodschool.co.za

Resources for dealing with panic

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/your-emotional-meter/201706/10-simple-tactics-manage-anxiety-and-panic-attacks>

<https://www.psycom.net/help-kids-with-anxiety>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html> →

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/home-management-strategies-for-panic-disorder/>

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/March-2020/How-to-Ease-Children-s-Anxiety-About-COVID-19>

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

<https://childmind.org/article/anxiety-and-coping-with-coronavirus/>

Resources for dealing with uncertainty

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-uncertainty>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/travisbradberry/2015/12/21/11-ways-successful-people-overcome-uncertainty/#4de944df2475>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.adsrm.org/news-detail?pk=910843#>

<https://www.fractuslearning.com/teaching-children-to-cope-with-uncertainty/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/parenting/coronavirus-kids-talk.html>



CEDARWOODSCHOOL
(Association incorporated under Section 21 - not for gain)
Fundraising Number: 01 101753000 2
Co registration number 1997/018168/08
Umalusi Accreditation No. 17 SCH01 00304

