

SUPPORTING PARENTS
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

27TH MARCH 2020

CARING FOR YOUR CHILDREN WITHOUT A BREAK

- Feeling worried or intimidated by this doesn't make you a bad parent!
- You know your children best. There is lots of advice online, but follow what works for your family.
- Set up a routine/timetable which breaks the day into chunks, so that you and your children know what to expect.
- Dive deep into play. Set up objects and toys in a way that invites children to develop their independent play skills. Step back and watch what they do.
- Encourage your children to join you in your day-to-day activities such as hanging up the washing and sweeping the floor. Everything will take longer, and may not be done to your usual standard, but it will fill some time and connect you with your child.
- Do your best with any learning from school, but remember that playing, reading together, trying out activities and talking together are all important forms of learning too.
- Don't feel guilty about using screen time when you need to.
- Try to make sure everyone gets enough sleep (this might include putting all devices in a basket in the kitchen, or switching off the wifi at a set time).

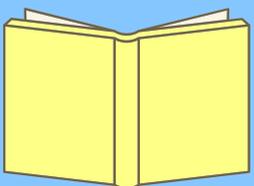
Resources

1. [Tips from a parenting coach](#)
2. [Guide with lots of different advice for managing at home as a family](#)



CARING FOR YOUR TEENAGERS WITHOUT A BREAK

- Being in the house around the clock with teenagers with big feelings can be daunting; lots of parents are feeling the same way.
- Wherever you can, be collaborative instead of directive. Ask “What can we do about this problem?” Invite everyone’s ideas, and agree a plan.
- Make sure everyone has space, even if this means getting creative e.g. pulling out pop-up tents, or using earbuds to show family members when you’re happy to chat and when you want peace and quiet.
- Many teenagers place higher priority on their social contact than on family time. Think about how you will support your teen to stay in touch with their real-life and online friends, their romantic partners, and adults who are important to them. Will you need to relax your rules about phone and technology use? Or will you need to put some rules in, so that your teen also has time to eat, relax and sleep!
- Give your teenagers more grace than usual: they are facing huge disappointment, loss and uncertainty. It’s understandable if they are irritable, distressed or angry. Let them know what is and isn’t acceptable: “It’s ok to be angry. It’s not ok to slam doors.”
- Be kind to yourself and each other. This is a very stressful time and situations can escalate quickly when we are contained in a tight space and can’t get out. Wherever you can, walk away rather than joining the conflict. Try to start afresh each day, however stressful yesterday was.
- As a family, agree some expectations about daily routines. Do you expect everyone to be up and about by a certain time, or can everyone follow their own schedule? Which meals are everyone eating together, and which are people fending for themselves? Agree a time by which everyone has to quietly in their own rooms/beds, even if they’re not going to sleep.



Resources

[Article about how families can cope with self-isolating together](#)

[Teenagers' experiences in their own words](#)

[Relate's advice about parenting teenagers](#)



For advice about how to talk to your children and young people about what is happening, and supporting them with their feelings, please see the booklets 'Supporting primary-aged children' and 'Supporting secondary-aged young people.'



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELVES

- Remind yourself that it's ok to feel stressed, worried, anxious, frightened, or low. This is a perfectly usual reaction to a really unusual situation.
- Take a break from watching, listening to, and reading news stories. Make a plan to check it once a day at a set time.
- Review your social media use. Are some platforms or groups more anxiety-provoking than distracting or comforting? Stick to the ones that lift you up, and pause the ones that make you feel worse.
- Use mindfulness and grounding techniques to come back to your body and the present moment, when your mind is running away with you. Focus your attention on what you can hear, see, smell and touch, and taste.
- Focus on what is within your control.
- Create a routine for yourself and your family, even if this is different from your usual routine.
- Give more to yourself: make sure you're getting enough rest, eating and hydrating, moving your body enough. If you feel unwell, look after yourself. Meeting our physical needs reduces our emotional vulnerability.
- Find ways to connect with others e.g. via messaging, emails, or video calling.
- Find ways to contribute to others' wellbeing and happiness e.g. by texting others to check on them; picking up something from the shops for them if you're doing your shopping.
- Every day, try to do something you enjoy, even if it's for a few minutes.
- Think about what you want to stand for in the face adversity, and what you want your children to learn from how you and other adults respond.
- If your anxiety is stopping you from functioning in your day to day life, ask for help.

Resources

[Mind - coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)

[Response Coronavirus](#)

[Psychology Today](#)

[Health Harvard](#)

[Mind Kit](#)



IF YOU ARE FEELING ISOLATED

- Stay connected: think about the people who fill you up (rather than deplete you), and make plans to stay in touch with them. Use messages and videocalls, send emails, and write cards.
- Make plans for the future: research groups, hobbies, breaks and holidays you would like to take part in once social distancing ends.
- Spend time each day doing something you enjoy. If it's hard to think of something enjoyable, find inspiration in what you enjoyed as a child.
- Tackle a nagging task: what have you been meaning to get around to, if only you had more time at home? Decluttering your belongings; make meal plans; try out a new craft or hobby; find online exercise classes; catch up on your life admin; reorganise your furniture; potty train your toddler; start playing card games as a family...

Resources

1. [Video from the Anna Freud Centre](#)
2. [Every mind matters- self care tool kit](#)



IF YOU ARE WORKING FROM HOME

- If possible, zone your home or room so that you are not trying to work, relax and sleep in the same space. This will also help to keep a routine going.
- Staying active is important, be sure to take regular breaks from the screen. A few short exercises can also help. If appropriate, getting outside or opening the windows to get fresh air can also make a big difference.
- Depending on your commitments, try time blocking, so that you can dive into work tasks which are important but not necessarily urgent.
- If appropriate to your role, consider checking your emails at set times of the day (e.g. when you start your day; after lunch; and before you finish for the day) so you have control over your work rather than reacting to whatever pops up. Taking a break from repetitive news cycles may also be a good idea.
- Consider switching off the Wi-Fi when you need to deeply focus on a piece of work.
- If you have children at home with you, be kind to yourself (and them!) and lower your expectations. Identify opportunities when they are absorbed in something or resting, and do your more focused work then. If you're on phone or video calls, let others know that you might need to attend to your children- people will be understanding.

Resources

Tips for working from home:

[Gretchen Rubin](#)

[Mind tools - Working from home tools](#)

[Tips for working from home with young children](#)

