

5 Tips to Support Children's Mental Health

1. **Be intentional when you speak with them.** Limit talking with kids when you are emotionally elevated yourself. This intentionality and mindfulness will allow you to project reassurance and to answer their questions matter-of-factly. No matter how concerned you may be about the big picture, they **need to be reassured that they are safe.**
2. **Focus on what they can control,** like washing their hands, going outside to play in the yard, etc. Tell them about coping skills that help you and help them find age-appropriate ones for themselves that promote emotional regulation: nature, music, journaling, drawing, deep breathing, exercise, etc.
3. **Make it about others as well.** It feels good to kids to be a part of a caring community, something larger than themselves. Talking about how canceled events and social distancing are in place to protect others and help doctors can help them get outside their own heads for a time.
4. **Help your kids stay connected** to close friends and family, especially if you are in a school closure, social distancing, or self-quarantine situation. Social isolation and loss of routine are major triggers for downturns in mental health. Use phone calls, Facetime/Zoom, etc. We recommend seeing/hearing others over text and messenger services for the most benefit.
5. **Acknowledge their emotions** in the moment. It is normal to feel sad or angry if a sport or play is canceled, a birthday is disrupted, etc. Try not to tell them that the situation is much bigger than their concerns, but instead acknowledge the upset they are feeling.

Find more resources, including lists of coping skills and our free app, at shineinitiative.org.



Make time for your mind.