

Beyond Blue Information Looking After Yourself and Your Children

Maintaining mental health during this time may be a challenge given precautions against coronavirus are changing so many aspects of our lives. Encourage children and young people to manage their stress levels by using positive self-talk, exercise, healthy eating, connection with their friends, and finding ways to enjoy themselves.

Make time to look after yourself so you're in a better position to support those around you. Children and young people's emotions can be affected by how adults are feeling. Try to maintain your routines, know your limits, debrief with trusted colleagues, family or friends and try to do things you enjoy to manage your stress levels.

Break tasks down into manageable chunks and give children as much notice as possible about transitions and changes to routines and environments. Have realistic expectations of children and young people during this time, especially if they are transitioning in and out of school.

Talk to children about the importance of getting information from trusted sources like government websites.

It's important to listen to any questions children and young people may have, and to let them know that it's normal to feel concerned. If the media or the news is getting too much for them, encourage them to limit their exposure. For more information, watch Beyond Blue's video on [Talking to kids about scary stuff in the news](#).

Focus energy in a positive direction. **Encourage student led discussions and talk about what they can do** to minimise the spread of coronavirus to help them feel more in control, for example practising good hygiene as explained by the World Health Organization.

Support children and young people to express their emotions so they feel listened to and validated. Explain that it's normal to feel a range of emotions during this time.

Children and young people who may be feeling overwhelmed by stress or anxiety could be tired, withdrawn, irritable, fearful, unmotivated, moody, lose their appetite, need more comfort, have trouble concentrating and feel physically unwell. Consult with colleagues, school leaders or families if you're unsure whether you're witnessing a change in behaviour.

If you think a child or young person in your care needs extra support, consult with the relevant leader at your school.

The World Health Organization has developed a flyer on [Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#), and the [Raising Children](#) website also has information that could be helpful.