

# Helping your child cope with COVID-19

■ A guide to helping children recognize and organize their thoughts and feelings during COVID-19

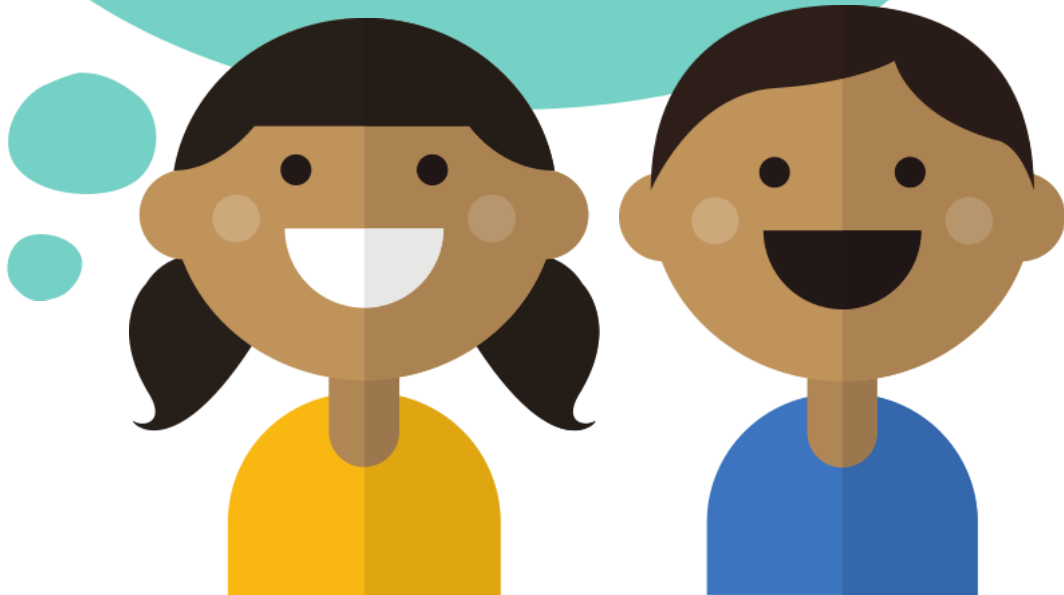
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# How can I talk about COVID-19 with my children?



- Make yourself available to talk
- Reassure your child
- Avoid language that creates blame
- Pay attention to what children hear and see
- The information you provide should be tailored to the individual needs of your child

## For children aged 3-6

“There’s a germ going around, which is making people sick. We know that the best way to keep people safe from the sickness is to wash our hands a lot, and guess what, the doctors say we should sing some songs while we do that!”

# Explaining COVID-19 to children

## For children over 6

You can start off by asking what they already know, and what questions and concerns they have. Encourage them to come to you with any questions. Consider having a more in-depth discussion about why it’s important to wash our hands and to avoid touching our face. You can explain that the virus lives on surfaces that we touch, and if we touch that surface with our hands and then put our hands in our mouth or in our nose, that’s how the virus gets into our body and makes us sick, and potentially makes others around us sick. Consider offering them regular updates as more is learned about COVID-19.

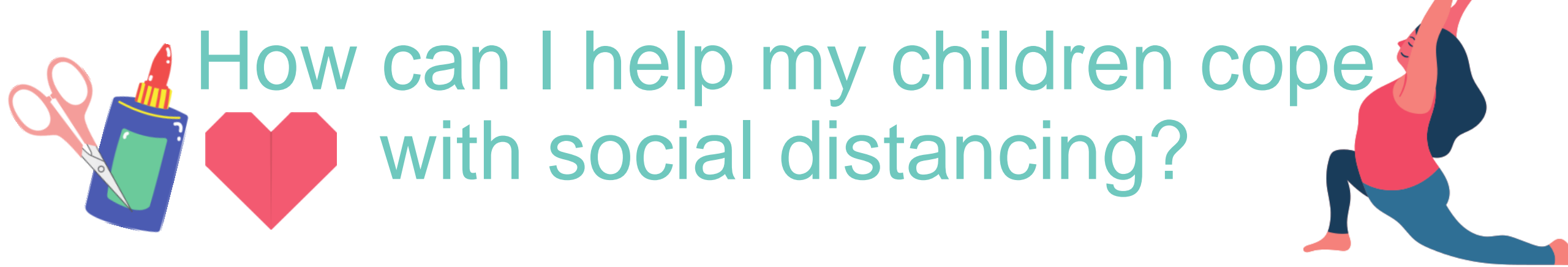
# Stay connected!

Social distancing



Social isolation





# How can I help my children cope with social distancing?

1

Have a discussion with your children about routines and expectations

2

Set aside time for family!

3

Incorporate physical activity

- Indoor dance party
- Doing stretches/yoga
- Hiking/taking walks
- Nature scavenger hunt
- Picnic

4

Other activities:

- Reading
- Cooking and baking
- Arts and crafts
- Making cards for loved ones
- Board games

5

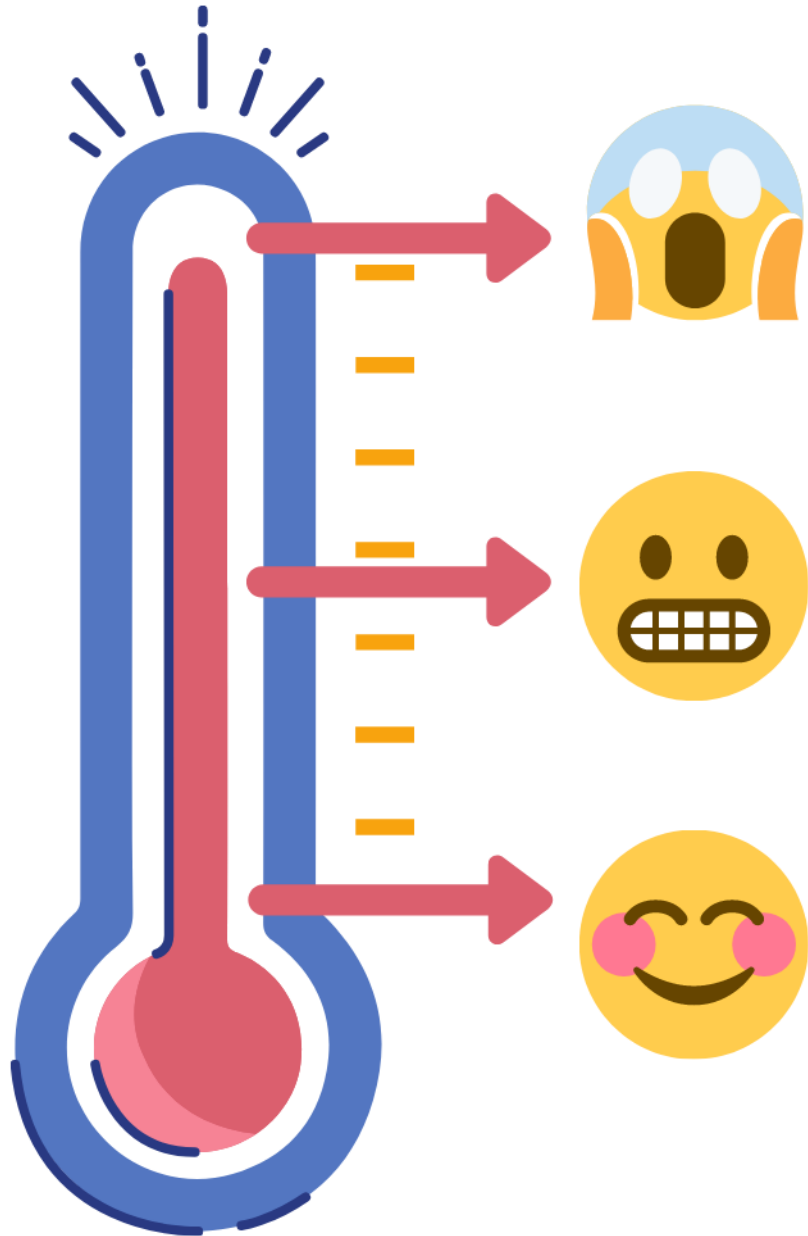
Try to avoid large increases in screen time, as this can interfere with children's well-being and sleep



## How can I help reduce my children's anxiety and worries about COVID-19?

- 1 Use coping-focused language ("we are doing everything we can to keep from getting sick") instead of catastrophic or stress-inducing language
- 2 Be sure to monitor your own stress and anxiety levels in front of your children
- 3 Try to avoid exposing your children to TV and media reports about COVID-19
- 4 Try to establish predictability in their lives by discussing plans to stay safe, and sticking to regular activities and routines (bedtimes, meals)

# Fear Thermometer



- 10 – freaking out
- 9 – super, super scary
- 8 – a big challenge
- 7 – definitely scary
- 6 – really gets my heart rate going
- 5 – not easy and feeling uncomfortable
- 4 – scary but doable
- 3 – starting to get concerned
- 2 – mildly scary
- 1 – barely fazes you
- 0 – piece of cake



Fear, anxiety, depression, boredom, loneliness, anger,  
frustration, or irritability

These are all normal, expected  
responses!



# The 3 C's of Cognitive Therapy



## atch

Identify the thought that came  
before the emotion



## heck

Reflect on how accurate and useful  
the thought is



## hange

Change the thought to a more  
accurate or helpful one as needed

# Mindfulness activity for managing emotions



for you and your children!

1

Take a breath

2

Observe what you are thinking, feeling physically, and doing right now

3

Ask yourself what would be most effective for you to do right now

4

Make a list of steps that will help you do what you need to do

