

Coping with Covid

Tips for Families, Adults and Children

The impact of COVID-19 on our daily lives and those of our families has been significant. The crisis came suddenly, feels out of our control and affects our health, our ability to earn a living and the ability of our children to attend school or see their friends.

Trauma and adversity is balanced by resilience and the ability of us all to access the resources and supports to be resilient. Think of resilience as a seesaw where the negative aspects of COVID are on one side and the personal and family resilience, supports and resources are on the other to help balance out the negative aspects.

Self-Care Tips for Parents

Put your own oxygen mask on first!

As parents, we support and guide our children while also carrying the weight and stress of earning an income, caring for the household and managing our own stress and physical and mental health. This can be especially true for single heads of household with children during this time of loss of work, working from home and balancing child-care and schooling in the absence of daycare. Taking time for self-care is putting the oxygen mask on so you have the resilience to be present for, and supportive of, your children.

Take a Break

Give yourself a few minutes off; take a few deep breaths while letting your mind settle on a beautiful image, a peaceful memory or while listening to relaxing music. Take a virtual break.

Reach out to someone for support

We all have moments when connecting with someone else can provide needed information, resources and support, or just a different point of view. Whether to a trusted friend, a caring family member or a needed professional, reach out.

- **Identify your Circle.** Make a list of family and friends that you can access for support, put the list somewhere you will be reminded to use them in times of stress.
- **Maine Crisis Hotline.** Call, chat or Text **1-888-568-1112** 24/7 Phone support or crisis assessment.
- **NAMI Maine Helpline.** For help navigating the mental health system: **1-800-464-5767**.
- Contact your primary care provider or your child's pediatrician.
- **NAMI Maine's Teen Support Text Line.** Text to **1-207-515-TEXT (8398)** Noon-10pm daily for youth under age 21. Connect with someone who cares.



Wear a Mask, Show You Care.
For more information, visit chlb.me

Practice active self-care to manage stress and anxiety so you can be present for your kids:

- Set and manage a routine for you and for your kids
- Actively manage your news and browsing activity to lower stress
- Listen to music, watch humorous videos, read a book
- **Less Stress in Under a Minute: An online resource for ideas**
nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/coping-wellness-tips/less-stress-in-under-a-minute
- Look for ways to help your community and give back. Make it a family affair.

Supporting your children through the pandemic isolation

Help your children understand the current crisis

Explain the pandemic in simple terms they can understand so they can make sense. Be prepared to answer their questions. For older children, help them do their own research.

- **Resources for Helping Kids and Parents Cope Amidst COVID-19**
www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Libraries/covid-19/resources_helping_kids_parents_cope.aspx
- **Supporting Families During COVID-19**
www.childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents

Model emotional health

Your children will take cues from your emotional state. If you are feeling stressed, say so, and then talk about what you are going to do to reduce your stress. When you notice they may feel stressed, anxious, or sad, give them space to talk about it and let them know it's normal to feel these feelings and they can come to you.

Model reasoned thinking

Try to give them clear options and make decisions based on information you trust. Walk them through that process in a way that feels appropriate for their age.

Practice the “Three Goods”

- Good-for-you foods
- A Good night's sleep
- A Good amount of exercise

Practice mindful moments or meditation

- **Headspace meditation App**
www.headspace.com/covid-19
- **CALM Meditation App**
www.calm.com

Explain and model how they can stay safe

Give them information and guidance supporting social-distancing and the importance of hand-washing and the use of masks. Let them know that part of staying safe is talking about their feelings, asking questions, and asking for help.

Model self-care

If you are sitting on the computer for hours on end without breaks, so will your kids. You have to walk the talk. Talk about your self-care plan and help your kids come up with theirs.

Encourage them to reach out

Get them to write letters, talk on the phone, have face time chats, with their friends, grandparents, aunts, uncles. If play dates feel safe, have some, keeping it to one or two friends at a time keeping the guidelines in mind, washing hands, etc.

Being resilient means being able to adapt to situations as they arise without pretending that nothing is wrong. It is easy to feel uncertain, agitated, lost, and insecure during this time. It is an unprecedented time we are in. There is no one magical thing to do to get through this, and if you do as much of what is laid out here as often as you can, you will notice you and your children feeling like you are standing on firmer ground and trusting that you will come out on the other side.