

The Counseling Chronicle

Finding Peace (Reducing Anxiety)

OUR TEAM

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Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is a natural human response that serves a very important purpose. It is our body's way of protecting us and keeping us from harm. It's important to not dismiss one's stress entirely, rather work to make it a healthy and manageable part of life. The key is learning how to cope with it and keep it from becoming unhealthy. Stress is caused by external influences (i.e. COVID-19) and anxiety is our internal response to it. In this newsletter, we hope you will find some best practices for managing your stress during these uncertain times. Remember, this will not last forever and we are here for you. Please reach out to us.

Feeling worried, stressed or anxious about the COVID-19 is normal and okay. If you feel that your anxiety or your child's anxiety is more serious, please contact us or another mental health professional.

Mental Health Wellness Tips for Quarantine

- Stick to a routine.
- Get out at least once a day for 30 minutes.
- Find some time to move each day for at least 30 minutes.
- Reach out to others for at least 30 minutes a day.
- Stay hydrated and eat well. Stress and eating don't often mix well (not eating enough, eating too much).
- Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. We are all feeling a lot of things right now, and being in close quarters with others makes us feel like we don't have space for ourselves. It also makes it easier to get frustrated with those around us and take that frustration out in not-so-healthy ways. Try not to engage in every argument that you are presented with.
- Find your own space. This can be very difficult when we are limited to few walls. But if we can create a space to retreat, we can feel a little more relaxed. Identify a place to go when you are feeling stressed. Make it cozy and safe. Think blankets, pillows, tents, "forts".
- "Radical Self-Acceptance". Accept everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without blame or pushback. You cannot fail right now - after all there is no roadmap to follow. Just do the best that you can and let that be enough.
- Notice the good in the world. If you need help to see this, check out Ellen. She recognizes the good in others and is not afraid to celebrate them. I am not sure where I read this... in all bad situations there is good, look for the people doing the good (healthcare providers, first responders, etc.)
- Control. Find something you can control and control it to no end. A lot of times stress and anxiety stems from a feeling of not being in control. What can you control? Organize your closet or toys.
- Find something to engage in that allows you to take breaks from what is going on in the outside world.
- Humor! Find something that makes you laugh. Funny cat videos, America's Funniest Home Videos.

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- This is temporary. Remind yourself of this. This will pass. We don't know when, but we know it will.
 - Find the lesson. What can we learn from this? What are the potential positive outcomes?

*Reference: Eileen Feliciano | NYS Psychologist

Develop a Self-Care Toolkit

Find a bag or shoe box and create a "comfort box." Make it sensory. Include the seven senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, movement, proprioceptive (comforting pressure).

Touch: a soft blanket, stuffed animal, ice packs, cold washcloth

Taste: hot chocolate, mints, hard candies

Sight: photos from a favorite place, time, activity

Sound: comforting music, a sound machine, waves on the ocean

Smell: essential oils, grass, citrus fruit

Movement: swing, rocking chair, bouncy seat (or workout ball)

Comforting pressure: heavy blankets or a weighted blanket

Other things to add: coloring books, inspirational quotes, breathing ball

Note to Parents:

Spend some extra time playing with children. Often children do not come to us and tell us that they need to talk but they may request to play with us more frequently. Play is therapeutic for children - it is how they process the world (and there is a lot they are processing right now).

Expect behavioral issues from children. Do your best to respond gently. Children like routine, and right now it can be hard to create. Do not implement new behavioral plans or consequences. Rather, reassure your children that you are there for them right now.

Second Step Lessons on Anxiety

This is the curriculum that Mrs. Madson and the counselors use during group Social/Emotional Learning at Eagle Ridge Academy. The curriculum has released lessons, videos, and guides to help families talk about different topics they may be experiencing during distance learning. Listed below are videos and guides specifically geared toward dealing with anxious feelings. Take a look and have a discussion with your family!



Video Link for Second Grade <https://bit.ly/SSGrade2Lesson14>

- Grade 2: [Lesson Guides for Families](#)

Video Link for Fourth Grade <https://bit.ly/SSGrade4Lesson13>

- Grade 4: [Lesson Guides for Families](#)

Video Link for Fifth Grade <https://bit.ly/SSGrade5Lesson11>

- Grade 5: [Lesson Guides for Families](#)