



Resources for Students and Families

Easing Anxiety

Shikha Verma, MD, child and adolescent psychiatrist at Rogers' West Allis hospital and Kenosha clinic, says that an increase in anxiety is understandable given the circumstances.

"Mass measures like schools closing, cancelled trips or activities, and reduced social contact create heightened anxiety and panic-like situations in the general public," she explains. "Along with fear and increased anxiety, overwhelming news around natural disasters can also lead to depressive symptoms, sleep and appetite changes, increased irritability, inability to focus, increased risk of substance use, and other medical ailments like headaches."

To combat any anxiety or depression you may be experiencing, Dr. Verma recommends trying the following:

1. **Stay in touch with family and friends.** For COVID-19, experts recommend "social distancing" to avoid spreading the virus, which requires keeping physical distance between yourself and others. When recommendations like this are made, people might withdraw or avoid social contact disproportionately, fearing for their safety. However, it is necessary to have some form of social contact, even if it means getting in touch over social media or through video calls.
2. **Stay active.** Take walks outside, if possible, or find ways to exercise at home. Exercise is not only beneficial for your physical health, but also benefits your mental health.
3. **Prioritize a good night's sleep.** When so much around you is changing quickly, it's important to maintain structure in your daily routine and have time to recharge after a long day. Engage in healthy sleep behaviors and try to be consistent with when you go to sleep and wake up each morning.



4. **Maintain adequate nutrition and hydration.** Another important way you can keep structure in your days is to keep a regular meal schedule and be sure you are drinking plenty of water.
5. **Use mindfulness activities.** Meditation, deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation techniques can be very helpful in decreasing anxiety. It's also important to foster your interests or activities that keep you productive, like music or art. Other mindfulness activities may include journaling, drawing, or spending time in nature.
6. **Focus on reliable news sources.** With an endless amount of news available at our fingertips, it doesn't take long to veer away from trustworthy sources. Identify reliable news outlets for information, keep in mind that information on social media may not be factual, and avoid spending too much time consuming news.

Free Virtual Meet-up for Teens

This online support group is for high school students who are isolated, out-of-routine and feeling the consequences of the current COVID-19 statewide school shutdown.

Teens can join us for a conversation, to do art or schoolwork while connected to others, or simply just to share the space while sitting in silence. Whatever you need, we are here and there's no expectation that you be or act a certain way to belong.

It's a support group and not therapy, so we basically have been doing a check in on how they are, what they want to share and generate coping and self-care strategies together. We focus on music, art, behavioral activation, organizing routines, sleep schedules, ect. It's been a positive experience so far.

Learn more here: <http://creativehealingphilly.com/meetup>



Parent Resources:

[Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)

[How to Talk to Your Anxious Child or Teen About Coronavirus](#)

[Parents - Being "Good Enough" Right Now is OK](#)

[COVID-19: Managing Stress in this Anxious Time](#)

[That Discomfort You're Feeling Is Grief](#)

[Coronavirus picture book/ social story](#) (for children 8 and under)

[Just for Kids - A comic exploring the Coronavirus](#)

[Talking to Teens and Tweens About Coronavirus](#)

[Brené on Comparative Suffering, the 50/50 Myth, and Settling the Ball](#) (Podcast)