

Supporting Your Child During The Coronavirus Pandemic

Tips, advice and where to get support for your child's mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Supporting your child if they're feeling worried

It's normal for children and young people to feel worried or anxious at the moment. We've all experienced sudden changes in our lives and routines – and we're living with lots of uncertainty about the coming weeks. For some young people, the coronavirus pandemic may also worsen or trigger anxieties they were already struggling with.

Here are five things you can do to support your child:

1. Talk to them about what's going on. Find out how they're feeling and what they're thinking about, let them know it's okay to feel scared or unsure, and try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but talking things through can help them feel calmer.
2. Help them to reflect on how they're feeling and encourage them to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
3. Reassure them that this will pass, you're there for them, and you will get through this together.
4. Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (such as reading, playing, painting or cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a 'big chat'.
5. Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable.

Supporting your family's wellbeing during isolation

This is a really challenging time for families. Parents are experiencing a sudden change in their lives and routines – and are having to balance children being home full time alongside jobs, employment and health worries, financial concerns and care for vulnerable family members. This is inevitably going to feel stressful at times – and remember, it's okay if things don't always feel okay at the moment.

As parents, there are things you can do to help daily life feel as manageable as possible for you and your family. Have a look at our top tips and activity ideas to help you set up a routine that works for you.

How can I access mental health support and treatment for my child during the coronavirus pandemic?

- If your child is already being treated by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or another mental health service, get in touch by phone with the service and/or their key workers to discuss how their support will continue during the pandemic. Many services will be offering online or telephone support in place of meeting face-to-face, so this is something you can ask about.
- If your child is already seeing a therapist or counsellor, or needs emotional support and would benefit from starting therapy or counselling while the pandemic is happening, it may be possible to arrange online or phone sessions in place of face-to-face. Ask the professional supporting your child about this, as well as any other ideas they have for how they can make sure some contact continues, rather than cutting off support abruptly.
- Your child can still access emotional support from helplines, textlines and online chat services anytime they need to – and Childline, Samaritans and the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger all provide 24/7 support. The Mix is also providing online and phone support as normal. You can find organisations offering support for young people around specific mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and self-harm on our [Parents Guide to Support](#).
- If you are worried about your child's mental health and need professional support, contact your GP. In line with NHS advice, avoid going to the GP surgery in person if you can. To speak to a doctor or book an appointment, you can phone the surgery, use their online contact service if they have one, or visit the surgery's website to find out the best way to get in touch.

If your child experiences a mental health crisis and they need urgent care, you can seek professional support in the following ways:

- If a health professional has already given you a crisis number to call in this situation, call this number.
- If your child is already under the care of CAMHS or another mental health team and they have a crisis plan that states who to contact when they need urgent care, follow this plan.
- If your child needs urgent care but it is not life threatening, you can call 111 for advice.
- If there is a medical emergency, for example if your child is injured or you are worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.

If you're unsure about anything and need some advice, you can call our Parents Helpline for free. We're open Monday-Friday from 9.30am-4pm and you can reach us on 0808 802 5544. If you need further help after speaking to one of our Helpline advisors, we can refer you to one of our specialists – whether it's a psychotherapist, psychiatrist, psychologist or mental health nurse. They will arrange a phone consultation within 7 days of your call.

Helplines and services available

Anxiety UK

- Practical advice and information for anybody affected by anxiety, stress and/or anxiety based depression – as well as for their parents, family and friends.
- In response to Coronavirus, they are extending their Infoline hours to support as many people as possible.
- Now open Monday-Friday 9.30am-5pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-8pm.
- Phone: 0344 477 5774
- Email: support@anxietyuk.org.uk
- Text: 07537 416 905
- Live Chat available during office hours via the website
- You can join #Coronanxiety webinars and support groups, including around topics such as OCD, uncertainty and claustrophobia, at www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources.

The Mix

- You can find information for young people about coronavirus and ideas for things to do while staying home on their website.
- The Mix's emotional support services are open as normal – and if you're under 25 you can talk to them about anything that's troubling you over the phone, email or webchat. You can also use their phone or online counselling service.
- Helpline open daily 4-11pm: 0808 808 4994
- [Email service](#)
- [Webchat open daily 4-11pm](#)
- [Counselling service](#)

National Autistic Society

- You can find information about coronavirus on the website – and look out for more ideas and suggestions for supporting someone with autism around routine change, anxiety and sensory issues such as hand washing over the coming weeks.
- You can also contact their Helpline for information and advice. Open Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm and Fridays 9am-3pm.
- Phone: 0808 800 4104

Contact

- Information on benefits and tax credits that parents and carers could be entitled to if caring for children during the Coronavirus pandemic
- Advice on what the Emergency Coronavirus Bill means for disabled children and their families: You can also call their helpline for information and advice.
- Open Monday-Friday 9.30am-5pm.
- Phone: 0808 808 3555

Cruse

- Resources to support people around bereavement as a result of Coronavirus, grieving and isolation, talking about death and dying and other issues

Beat Eating Disorders

- Information on Coronavirus, your child's treatment and changes to food routines at www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/coronavirus.
- Their Helplines are open 365 days a year from 12-8pm on weekdays, and from 4-8pm on weekends and bank holidays.
- Adultline (for over 18s, including carers and professionals): 0808 801 0677
- Youthline (for under 18s): 0808 801 0711
- Studentline (for all students): 0808 801 0811
- 1:1 online chat open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12-8pm, and on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 4-8pm
- Email for adults: help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk
- Email for young people: fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk
- Email for students: studentline@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Rethink

- Coronavirus information page including temporary changes to the Mental Health Act, advice for carers looking after those with severe mental health problems and information on self-care

CarersUK

- Guidance on what support is available to carers during the coronavirus pandemic, with lots of relevant links

Shelter

- Advice on coronavirus and housing, including information on evictions, mortgages, rent, benefits and landlords