

News Release
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Just Breathe

To say that we are all stressed right now would be putting it mildly! A mother of two children shared with me that she is being inundated with emails and texts about the very best things to do with her children. In the Extension office we are receiving email after email listing resources that might be of some help to people.

Where do we start to reorganize our lives in the midst of chaos? My first response would be to find a quiet space and learn to breathe. That sounds so simple but we seriously do need to allow our body and our minds to rest before we jump in with solutions. Do you have a quiet space or a reading corner set up in your home where children (and parents) can go to relax and maybe read a book? If the sun is shining find a place outside where you can spend some quiet time and just appreciate nature.

When I was researching my presentation for the Health and Wellness Expo I most appreciated the “Take 5” process. Some teachers are using it to help students calm down. First, you stretch your hand out like a star and then use the pointer finger of one hand to trace your fingers slowly up each finger and down the other side. As you slide your finger, Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in as you slide up the finger and breathe out as you slide down the other side. It may take more than five breaths, so just try it again. Just the movement of the breath in the body can be very calming.

The information being shared on the news can be very scary for our children. Some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute was shared with us about how to speak with

our children about the coronavirus. We should not be afraid to talk to children about the epidemic but carefully choose what you will share with the younger children. Invite your children to tell you what they have heard about the virus. This will give you a chance to correct any misinformation they have heard. It also gives them a chance to share their feelings.

It is important to reassure your children that there are ways we can stay safe. We can stay at home and not be in crowds. We can wash our hands. We can eat healthy food and get plenty of rest. And we as parents need to follow those rules too!

All parenting research reminds us that routine and predictability is very important for children. Since our schools are closed try to create a schedule for learning activities and also fun activities. Try to keep a regular bed time schedule. Find time in the day for your children to do something for someone else whether it is making a card for someone in the nursing home or making a phone call to the grandparents.

Thank you to Jaime Menon with K-State Research and Extension PRIDE for sharing the following: "Please know that we are all in this "adventure" together. Yes, things feel bleak and overwhelming, but don't forget, through the clouds, even if you don't see it, there is the blue sky, and the sun waiting to reemerge".

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