

# MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

# COVID-19 TALKING WITH CHILDREN



## Stay Calm, Listen & Offer Reassurance.

Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. Acknowledging your concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking the necessary actions that reduce the risk of illness. Here are some helpful tips on ways to teach children positive preventive measures, talk with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection which can help reduce anxiety:

**Be a Role Model** Children will react to and follow your reactions. They learn from your example.

**Talking about COVID-19** Your conversations and discussions about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear. If true, remind your child that your family is healthy, and you are going to do everything within your power to keep loved ones safe and well. Carefully listen. Have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth, reassurance & understanding.

**Explain Social Distancing** **Younger children** may not fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be around others. Tell your child that your family is following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include social distancing. **Older children:** Explain that while we don't know how long it will take to "flatten the curve" to reduce the number of those infected, we do know that this is a critical time—we must follow the guidelines of health experts to do our part.

**Focus on the Positive** Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organize belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.

**Support Others as a Family** This could include: writing letters to grandparents or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers on the front line; sending positive messages/images over social media; contributing to agencies providing aid or assistance to people impacted by COVID-19.

**Seek Help** If you see your child is struggling, **now** may be best time to get professional help. Bowen Center is offering private and confidential phone counseling for your convenience and safety.

Adapted from, Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource, National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Nurses, NASP, 2020

The **Mental Health Moment** is provided by your Employee Assistance Program  
To schedule your private and confidential counseling sessions:

**BOWEN**  
CENTER



**1 800 342 5653**



**www.bowencenter.org**