

How to Calm Adolescents during Times of Stress



CAN-COPE: Calming, Normalizing, Connect & Hope

Calming

Stress accumulates in the body. In order to calm the body, encourage adolescents to:

Exercise - explain that physical activity helps in releasing hormones which help to regulate stress. When going outside isn't an option, suggest using YouTube videos or staircases.

Dancing to music - suggest they invite friends or join in

Try breathing together slowly.



Regulating our Breathing

Pay attention to how the air makes its way into the lungs and out; Is it warm? Cold?

Imagine the shape, color, and movement of the air.

Introduce change to the rhythm - release the air that comes out with a very slow exhalation through the lips.

Add a **counting to the breathing** - inhale - 1,2,3,4; stop - 1,2; long and slow exhalation - 1,2,3...6.

Did you succeed? Excellent - repeat this exercise several times.

To calm disturbing thoughts during times of stress:

Encourage conversations - mediate events with reliable information. Listen to dilemmas, without panic or judgement, and without rushing to give advice.

Help them pay attention to generalizations & extreme thinking or closed mindedness - help to broaden their perspective and explore other options.

Be aware of information that reaches them - explain and mediate information that comes from groups and social networks. Harsh images can trigger fears and bad feelings, so reduce and even avoid exposure.

Normalizing

Normal responses to an abnormal situation

It is important for adolescents that their feelings and reactions are acceptable to their friends and surroundings. Explain that the current situation can stress anyone out. There is no need to worry about reactions such as fear, trembling, and depression or hide these feelings. We can help ourselves regulate them (see the Calming section).

For explanations about reactions to stress, [CLICK HERE](#)



Connect

Encourage social gatherings on zoom or mutual visits.

Offer to volunteer and help other members of your community or residence, while strictly following Homefront Command guidelines.

Encourage family involvement - help with chores, look after younger siblings.

Hope

Provide a sense of control over the situation - trust them & their abilities, involve them in decision-making, give them significant responsibilities at home.

Remind them that this is a temporary situation - think together about the future and return to routine.

Increase playing, smiling, & using humor at every opportunity - be patient to cynicism and dark humor, as long as it is not offensive.



Implementing CAN-COPE in your Daily Routine

Maintain a daily routine as much as possible or create an emergency routine.

Keep clear boundaries - agree about the appropriate boundaries in the current situation. When restrictions are required, explain the dangers and ensure that they know that these are temporary requests, until the end of the emergency.

Agree on fixed times for sleeping and waking up, taking into consideration the difficult nights.

Set time for sports, games, relaxation, and meals - make sure to have a balanced diet.

Encourage adolescents to take part in family gatherings at least once a day.

Parents

Adolescents challenge us on a daily basis. During an emergency the challenge is even greater and patience and sensitivity are required. Don't forget to take care of yourself - nutrition, sleep, and emotional support.

We recommend consulting with a professional if you have any doubts, concerns, or questions.



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