The 2020 Covid19 Family Guidebook:

Do it at home Coping skills and Activities

Activities to help children, teens, adults, and grandparents deal with feelings and changes during the Coronavirus Pandemic.
Over 200 games and fun ideas for interactive activities while social distancing.
No computer required.

Special sections on support for families of first responders, healthcare workers, and essential workers, Self-care for all ages, coping skills and grounding exercises, mindfulness tips, parenting during this difficult time, games to promote social and emotional health and much more.

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Important and helpful Phone numbers

Emergency Services: 911
Suicide prevention line: 1800-273-8255
Crises Text line: Save this number: 741741. It could save you. Text HOME to 741741 for free crisis support. crisistextline.org.

Use the space below to write down numbers of local supports, friends, and Covid19 resources.

Resources:
NAMI: https://www.nami.org/getattachment/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2020/NAMI-Updates-on-the-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf
MHA: https://mhanational.org/covid19
CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html
First responders: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp
First responders: https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness

Please note: Typically, we would have this document proofread multiple times. During this time, although we tried our best, we want to get resources to families as fast as possible.

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Introduction:

I dedicate this guidebook to the resilient, strong, and creative individuals that I encounter daily. Sending you lots of strength, hope and courage at this time.

Each of the upcoming chapters are filled with activities. Most of the activities/games/suggestions in this guidebook were created during actual sessions! I have tried to include variations to the games, such as when a game can be played on the phone, or with grandparents or friends. You can include your own variations. You may find it helpful to print out this guidebook and read one chapter at a time, or you may want to read through the whole guide and then go back as needed. Activities in this guidebook include aspects of Positive psychology, CBT, DBT, attachment, play therapy, Floortime and more. My hope is that it is beneficial to you in some way.

A note on positivity:

As humans, we have the capacity to hold two thoughts and two feelings at once. A seven-year-old can start to conceptualize disappointment at the same time as feelings of satisfaction. For example, at a party he can have had a great time, yet simultaneously feel disappointed or upset that no one attended. As a child starts to reach their preteen years, they begin to use reflection and have more awareness of the two feelings they are holding.

You can be fearful and grateful all at once. All feelings are valid, true, and accurate. You should be allowed to express and experience all feelings. Encouraging activities that promote positivity are in no way meant to downplay the fear, the anxiety, the uncertainty, the anger, or any feelings you may be experiencing.

This guidebook has many activities aimed to help with coping, having fun, and the releasing of emotions. The benefits of having positive thoughts is well known. This is no contradiction to the above. We may speak positively and engage in positive activities; doing so does not mean we are in denial, or unaware of what is going on around us in the world.

To understand this further, we will explain a bit of basic brain development. From the second a baby is born, everything they see, hear, taste, touch, or smell, when processed correctly, becomes a neural pathway in their brain. These neural pathways are made up of both the sensory input and the emotional connection. I would to go so far as to say that when we think positive, we are engaging the neural pathways in a positive emotion. These neural networks communicate with each other and allow for thought and feelings. There is a lot of research regarding this when it comes to trauma work, attachment and neuroscience, but that is not the focus of this activity guidebook.
In addition to games that foster coping and dealing with feelings, the fun games and activities in this guidebook were selected specifically because of their social and emotional value. From a perspective of fostering healthy relationships, developmental psychology, and neuroscience, we need to engage in specific thinking, feeling, and movement interactions for the appropriate relational and emotional development to occur. Therefore, and in consideration of the current

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Covid19 situation, we provided games to ensure we have the opportunities for these specific types of interactions. Of course, the games and activities are all a lot of fun!
To sum up: Telling yourself positive messages about yourself, being grateful, and engaging in positive activities is one of the healthiest things you can do during this time. Helping foster fun activities that provide opportunities for social and emotional growth is vital. I will repeat that this is in addition to processing difficult emotions and feelings. You may find a friend, mentor, spouse, therapist, or perhaps deep inside yourself a safe space to process and deal with feelings. For now, keep up your awesome work on this unique journey that we are all facing together.

Letter to Parents

Overview on Self-care, Bonding, and Games You Can Do at Home Amid Coronavirus

With the onset of Coronavirus, many parents have been reaching out asking for practical tips on how to help children cope with their fears, as well as how to entertain them during this extended vacation from school. Throughout this guide we will provide tips, games, and activities, both to assist with coping, and dealing with feelings. This letter will give you glimpse into some ideas and activities, and throughout this guidebook you will find many more activities and resources.

The following are a few tips to help you and your child deal with this new reality in a way that is reassuring and grounding. It is important to remember; we are all in this together, we will be strong together, and we will get through this together.

Taking care of yourself:

You may experience fear, worry, anxiety, or uncertainty. All feelings are valid. Children experience the feelings, worries, and fears of those around them. Keeping calm may help your children remain calm, as children learn from their caregiver's reactions. This is no easy feat, and be sure to give yourself credit for trying. We want to navigate the situation in a responsible manner, and at the same time be there for our children, keeping a strong and healthy mindset. Creating a self-care toolbox is a great way to manage and deal with your own anxieties. This is the first step to being more available for your children. As parents, no matter what is going on in the world around us, we need to recharge ourselves emotionally. Since your regular self-care protocol may not be available, try to be creative and come up with new ideas. You may make a mental list, or a list on paper. Some ideas to include in your self-care toolbox are:

a) **Spirituality:** People find it helpful to remind themselves that there is a Higher Power in charge and watching out for our good even when it is hard to understand.
b) **Coping skills:** This category includes ways to cope, such as calling a friend or a grounding exercise. One example of a grounded exercise is the 5-4-3-2-1: Say five things you see in the

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room, say four things you hear in the room, say three things you feel right now, two things you envision tasting or smelling and one good thing about yourself.

c) **Breathing exercises, staying hydrated, sleep, and eating nutritious meals.** Engaging in deep, relaxing breathing can be very helpful to relieve stress and reenergize yourself. Being properly nourished and hydrated is essential to help us manage our emotional health. Sleeping gives us time to reenergize our bodies and minds and is an important part of our self-care plan.
d) **Physical activity and body awareness**. Giving yourself a hug, engaging in dancing, running, or stretches is an important part of a self-care plan.
e) **Distracting activities:** This category includes activities to distract yourself, such as reading a book, watching a comedy, or playing a game.
f) **Comfort activities:** This includes activities that bring you comfort, such as calling someone to discuss the challenge, writing about it, or taking a hot shower.
g) **Release:** This consists of activities that allow you to let out the energy you are feeling, for example, doing 50 jumping jacks to release fear or anger.
h) **Express yourself:** Any activity that gives you an opportunity for self-expression is included in this category. Examples would be singing a song, writing a poem, drawing, or coloring.
i) **Empowerment:** This is an activity that will empower you, for example, writing a list of good things about yourself, sending out ten kind text messages, or writing a list of things to be grateful for.
j) **Enjoyment:** Doing something you enjoy, such as baking, turning up the music, or drawing are some ideas for this category.
k) **Mindfulness:** This includes being present in the moment and bringing awareness to what you see, taste, touch, smell and feel.
l) **Include your own ideas!**

If you are pressed for time, even two to five minutes of self-care can have a positive impact on your day. Having a self-care plan can keep you empowered and recharge your batteries.

Taking care of your children:

When taking care of your children, try to help them deal with their fears, create a healthy routine, empower them with a children's self-care toolbox, and encourage an atmosphere of bonding.

Helping children deal with their fears:

It is important to remember to have open ended conversations with your children, allowing them to express what is on their mind. You can ask them questions about what they heard and how they feel. The more a child feels they can discuss their fears with you, the more reassurance you will be able to provide. Children have a hard time conceptualizing what they hear; having an honest discussion helps them with perspective. It is important to remember your child's developmental age when answering their questions using your discretion when giving information. Being supportive and validating is key, even if you cannot provide all the answers.

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Creating a healthy routine:

It is helpful for all children to have a daily schedule. In addition to the learning program set up by the school, we recommend choosing 3-6 activities as part of each day's schedule.
Ideas of activities include:

1. **Learning activity:** This can be the school's online/phone learning program.
2. **Arts and crafts:** Be creative; paper, markers, scissors, and glue can turn into a fun project such as a present box, an ocean filled with sharks, or a rainbow etc.
3. **Interactive activity with a parent or sibling:** You should have a fun activity that includes some interaction. Interaction does not need to be within a six-foot radius and should only be done with proper precautions in place. Setting up a large obstacle course with household items or playing a game of I Spy are some ideas. As an aside, it is important to remember that interacting with people takes place in all forms; phone calls, video chats, and text messages are also interaction. There are some more ideas for interactive activities in the game section below.
4. **Games or playtime activity:** This includes board games, imaginary play, or thinking games. Ideas for thinking games are included in the game section below.
5. **Movement activity:** Children need to move to help them develop and stay emotionally healthy. Examples of movement games include relay races, obstacle courses, finding something that matches each color of the rainbow in every room of the house, or hide and find games.
6. **Sensory activity for younger kids:** Included in this category is a water activity, playing with toys in a bucket of rice, or jumping on old mattresses that are placed on the floor.
7. **Creative arts activities:** For example, coloring, drawing, and creating story books.
8. **Fun activities:** Some ideas are baking, music, dancing, storytelling and yoga. You can include a fun activity once or twice a week.
9. Although this article is geared for children ages 2-11, it is important to remember your teenagers have unique needs. Helping the teen feel part of something will help them feel grounded. You can try to think about what your teenager's hobbies and interests are and think of ways of how you can support them at home. You can try to have your teenager keep a balance between screen time and non-screen time. You may suggest they actually call a friend to talk in addition to social media conversation. Your teenagers also need physical activities, although their interests will be different from those of the younger children. You can suggest dance parties or fun movement exercise ideas.

Additional points regarding the daily routine:

- For younger children you can have a picture schedule with the four daily activities. For older children you can have a list of six activities, and they can cross off each activity as they go along.
- For children ages 3-11 you can choose a theme such as colors, animals, transportation or numbers. Each week you can have one activity daily that has to do with the theme. For example, if you are doing a color theme and this week is red, you can make a fire truck and then play hide the fire truck. Get creative, your children may be able to help you come up with ideas.
- It is recommended that children (and adults) should keep a morning routine. This includes getting dressed in the morning and having a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

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- You can have a chart where children can put on a star for each morning routine they completed in a timely manner. For example: they get a star if they brushed their teeth, got dressed, and ate breakfast before 9:30 am.

Children's Self-care Relax box:

For children, empowerment comes with feeling like there is something they can do.
You can explain to them the current updates and what the CDC website says about social distancing, washing their hands frequently with soap, avoiding touching their eyes, nose, or mouth and cleaning surfaces regularly.
Children ages four and up can benefit from having their own self-care plan. You can use the ideas above, although you will need to modify the activities for younger children. You may create a box and call it the relax box and put different activities inside the box. For example, a relax box can include crayons, color paper, a water bottle, some paper that can be ripped up and used to release stress, and a picture of a ball to remind the child they can play ball.

Bonding as a family unit:

You can encourage family games that create a feeling of togetherness. Encourage games such as "The Laughing Frisbee" (as the frisbee falls you all laugh) or turning on music and doing silly motions.

Children like to feel empowered and enjoy taking part in activities that engender positive feelings. You can help them "count their blessings" even in such trying circumstances. One example would be to create a book of gratitude. Each day you can add three pages to your book by coloring or making a drawing of something you are grateful for. See how many pages of gratitude you can accumulate over the course of a week!

Ideas for Games:

The laughing game: Throw a Frisbee in the air (you can use a paper plate if you don't have a Frisbee). Every time the Frisbee falls on the floor, start laughing. Each round, laugh and do a different movement while you laugh. For example, laugh while you jump, while you run, while turning around etc.

Jumbo Alphabet Fun: What you need: Construction paper with the letters of the alphabet on them. Each paper should have one letter and each letter should be the size of paper. Create more vowels then consonants as you will need them.
How to play: Choose a theme. The theme can be summer, vacation, pool, or horror stories. Write out your favorite words that have to do with the theme by creating a connected word grid and connecting words like you would in scrabble. Words can be horizontal, vertical, upward, or downwards. This game is a great game that requires thinking and movement.

Double Focus: In this game you can watch a video or look through a book or magazine and connect as many words as you can to a topic that you choose. (Not a topic based on the content of the video/ book). The idea is to be creative. For example, tell your children to look

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through a magazine and connect as many words as they can to your family. The child with the largest word list at the end is the winner.

Yes, No, Maybe not: This fast-paced game is best played while sitting in a circle. Make sure each player is a proper distance from one another. Ask the person to the right of you a yes or no question. The person has five seconds to answer, but they cannot answer "yes" or "no". You also can't repeat an answer that someone already used. Answers do not have to be true, but have to make sense somewhat. You go around the circle asking the questions. For example: Do you know what time it is? Really late. Do you like ice cream? Vanilla is my favorite flavor. Do you like to go on trips? What do you think?

Game of expanding and memory: Choose an everyday activity or occurrence such as bakery, amusement park, or getting stuck on an island as your topic. Each player will add an additional detail to the original topic after listing all the previous details that have been mentioned. For example, you start and say: I went to the food store and I bought an apple. The child continues and says: I went to the food store and I bought an apple and a pear. You continue and say: I went to the food store and I bought an apple and a pear and some corn. See how many items you can remember.

Puppet shows behind the couch: If you are looking for good old fun, this is another idea that can build happy memories for younger children. Gather stuffed animals, dolls, and puppets, from around the house. You can create additional puppets using brown paper bags or by simply drawing a face and attaching it to a popsicle stick. You can start to lead an interactive puppet show and have the children follow and join. Having the puppets express feelings creates an opportunity to build on the relational and developmental process. An example of this would be to incorporate the following into a show: "even though the puppet feels disappointed, he is helping his mother". Acting out a puppet show is a good way to model appropriate social behavior and help children learn about different feelings.

True or False: You say a sentence and the other player has to guess if it's true or false. This game is fun and can be played with children, teens and adults. For example, "I went on a school trip to the Zoo last year"- true or false, or "I love foods that have coconut inside"- true or false.

Answer by Number: Create a set of cards with all different topics. Additionally, create a second set of cards with the numbers one through ten. On each player's turn, they draw a topic card as well as number card. The player then has to mention a few things based on the number drawn regarding the topic that was drawn. For example you chose a three and the topic "school" you say three things about school, you chose a ten and the topic "summer" you will then say ten things about the summer, you chose a five and the topic "embarrassed" you will say five things that have to do with being embarrassed.

Texting game: Option one: See how many kind messages you can send out in five minutes or less. For example, you send grandma a text that says "I love you" and you can send your friend a text that says "thinking of you". You can ask your younger children who to send a message to

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and what the message should say. You can also use this same idea with calling people. See how many people you can call and wish well in the next fifteen minutes. Option two: Two children can get two different cell phones and go to different locations in the house. They text each other either playing the ABC text, the story text, or the random text game outlined below.
ABC text: One child sends a text with a word that starts with an A, the next child texts a word that starts with a B and so on.
The story text: One child starts a sentence of a pretend story such as "I went to the store and bought an apple", the next child has to add to that story and writes "When I came to pay there were no cashiers". The children keep expanding on their imaginary story.
Random text game: Your child or teen texts a random word. The next child texts a random word back that is unrelated to the first word. For example, child one writes "apple". Child two cannot write any food word (since apple is a food) so he writes socks. And so on. This game can be played on the phone with grandparents as well.
If texting is not an option, you can play these games over the phone as well.

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People have been saying that we are all in the same boat; however, many people feel like they are in very different boats. Everyone's situation is different, and the virus has uprooted people's lives and affected people in different ways. For some there are many positive aspects, for others there is the top of a cliff. For some there is sunshine for others dark skies. Each person is facing unique challenges and some enjoy the peace and quiet. We may be in separate boats, but we are all in the same water together. The wind has hit us hard and strong and we all need to sail together, giving each other strength, sharing each other's triumphs, waving to the other boats from six feet away as we try our hardest to sail to dry land. This guidebook provides ideas that you may have to tweak based on your unique circumstance and situation. I recommend venturing out of your comfort zone to try new ideas, but ultimately you know best what may or may not work. Put your creative helmets on and use those thinking caps!
The main thing is to take care of yourself in the best way you know how, to be there for yourself and your children with a listening ear, and to try your best to encourage healthy thoughts and positive activities. Keep being the amazing person you are. Stay well. Stay strong.

Helping children and adults deal with big emotions and feel grounded:

Helping children and adults have a safe place to discuss feelings is a vital part of feeling grounded. Even if we cannot change a situation, it is important to be able to feel, discuss, and conceptualize. Imagine a time when you were upset at your boss (in the olden days!), and you discussed it with a friend or spouse. Even if you both came up with no solutions, you may have felt better, relieved or unburdened after talking about it. People have found that after practicing these exercises, they felt calmer and some of the behaviors coming from the extreme stress have lessened.

Same/different:

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One of the activities I have been doing with children and adults of all ages is the Same/same and different/different activity. We want to talk about what is the same and what is different from before Coronavirus and after. Having this discussion and a safe space to share is in and of itself the goal. Talking about as many things as you can come up with, whether they are the same or different from before, can be really helpful in staying a bit more grounded and a bit more at ease.

Ages 1-8: Sing a song about what is the same and what is different. You can take any nursery rhyme and change the words around to sing about it. For example, "David-David Mommy loves you- Daddy loves you, even when we stay home all day, these things never change. David-David- Grandma loves you, Grandpa loves you even when we don't see them, they love you. David- David-We are here for you and have fun with you even if ------ is different we are here and love you!"

Ages 3-8: Help your child draw two houses. In one house they can color, draw, or write as many pictures or words as they can of items that are the same as before the virus. For example: kitchen chairs, shoes, toys, breakfast, mirror,
In the second house they can color, draw or write things that are different after the virus. For example: we don't go on the bus, we don't go to school, we stay home, their difference in routines.
Then you and your child can draw faces with different feeling expressions, and talk about which feelings they have regarding things that are the same and things that are different. All feelings are welcome and valid.

Ages 6+: Create a deck of cards that say on them either "same" or "different". Each player draws a card. You have five seconds to say something that relates to the card drawn- either same or different. Talk about the feelings related to what was said.

Teens and adults: Players have a paper and pen and in three minutes write everything that is the same in their life as before the Coronavirus. Then on a second paper players have three minutes to write things that are different. Compare notes and see how many similar items you have on each of your lists.
Discuss feelings associated with both lists. There are no right and wrong answers for any of these games. It is all just to help conceptualize what is going on around us.

The gratitude dice:

All ages: Spin a dice. Say things you are grateful for based on the number the dice landed on. For example, if you land on 6 you say 6 things you are grateful for. Added variation. Choose a letter of the alphabet for each round. Answers all have to start with that letter.

The Relax box:

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The relax box is a box or container that you designate as a safe place to place your feelings and store coping tools to help you process your emotions.
You may experience fear, worry, anxiety, or uncertainty. All feelings are valid.
Creating a self-care relax box is a great way to manage and deal with your own anxieties. We all need to recharge ourselves emotionally. Since your regular self-care protocol may not be available, try to be creative and come up with new ideas. You may make a mental list, a list on paper or gather reminders to each self-care tip and place them in an actual relax box. Some ideas to include in your (adult) self-care toolbox are listed above (page 5).

Children ages four and up can benefit from having their own self-care plan. You can use the ideas above (page 5), although you will need to modify the activities for younger children. You may create a box and call it the relax box and put different activities inside the box. For example, a self-care relax box can include crayons, color paper, a water bottle, some paper that can be ripped up and used to release stress, and a picture of a ball to remind the child they can play ball.

More ideas of what can go into a teen or adult relax box:

Exercise/ hot shower/massage yourself/scribble /doodle /create word search and crosswords puzzles/ complete word search or crossword puzzles/ play a game/ imitate a celebrity/ sing/ study the tress, grass or sky/ punch a punching bag /drum on a pot/ look at photographs/ take a nap/knit or sew/read a book/ listen to music/ meditate/ bake cookies and make them in funny shapes/ alphabetize your CDs or books/. Write yourself a letter about all the good things you love about yourself/ create a chart with a list of emotions/ rip up paper into small pieces making snow/ write a letter and send it to someone you think can use it/ avoid saying the word "the" in the next conversation you have/ hug yourself/ dance/ dance while doing new moves/ hyper focus on details of your hand or a rock/ color coordinate your books, CDs, or wardrobe/ text 10 friends or random people,/ look up five new words in the dictionary and share them with someone /build a fort out of boxes, pillows, cubes, anything./Memorize the words of a poem or song or a random page of text/ color/ make hot chocolate or a smoothie/ see how many words you can make out of your full name/organize your photographs/ Take photographs of twenty items around the house that you have not noticed in a while/ find an item matching each color of the rainbow in photographs/ perform a random act of kindness/ learn how to do a new dance/ engage in yoga exercises- if you do not know yoga moves pretend you do and create some./ Change the location of furniture to arrange the room for a new look -this helps many people when being home for extended periods of time/ write out every emotion you had this past week- draw circles and color in the circle corresponding to how much you felt that emotion- a full circle symbolizes very much-/watch something funny/ Look at family videos/ look at positive affirmation (nice inspiring sayings to lift you up)/create your own positive affirmations notebook or loose-leaf.

More ideas of what can go into children's relax box:

Butterfly breathing: Breathe while placing your hands on your chin with your elbows out. Move your hands while on your chin up and down to look like a butterfly. Breathe deeply in and out. You can change speeds going fast, slow, or medium/ Emotion popsicle stick people -create

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emotion faces and glue them on popsicle sticks for your child to be able to express what emotion they are feeling. /Emotion pictures. /Color paper and crayons for child to play "Coloring about feelings" (Page 15)/ Paper to rip up/ Squish ball/ Magic bottle-create a water bottle and stick inside all kinds of things such as buttons, sequins, paper clips- watch what falls and sinks or play I spy with the items in the bottle. Make sure the bottle is sealed with tape and only do this when there is no safety hazard for other children. / Items that remind him/her of calm place. For example, a child who likes the beach can have a seashell or picture of the beach/ Music/ Calm books to read/ Coloring sheets/ Water bottle/ Sticky notes- Put the sticky note where you feel the emotion.

Grounding through expression of self and emotion:

Fifty hearts:

Draw 50 small hearts. Fill the hearts with love for yourself. Write nice things in each heart. For example: Write things you are good at, things you are grateful for, nice things people would say about you, and affirmations. Draw smiley faces on the remaining hearts. If you have difficulty filling in the hearts, try to imagine what another person would write if they are filling in the hearts about you. If you still have difficulty, you can draw faces on all of the hearts. Now imagine all the hearts are hugging you and showering you with love, courage, support, and strength. Save the hearts in a special place.

Social story book:

We want to create a story book to help children process the changes, the emotions and the coping skills. I have done books like this for many years. The book is based on and follows the ideas used in the relax box above; the same/same different/different and the Children's DBT/Floortime book that we do to help children deal with big emotions, feelings, and behaviors. (The book below is similar to the one we create when a child goes through a change in living arrangements due to separation or divorce.) I use the invisible string comparison from Patrice Karst book called "The Invisible String". Children enjoy creating and coloring their own book.
One actual format of the book I was doing via telehealth over the past few weeks: On each page, I had the parents or child, depending on age, write out the words (you can print them as well). Then have them color or draw pictures representing the questions or discussion on each page.

Cover page: Being strong while you are home
Page 1: People all over the world have to deal with the Coronavirus at this time. We are doing everything that is recommended to stay safe. What are you doing to stay safe? (social distancing, washing hands, staying inside, etc.)
Page 2: Let us see what we can do to make us feel strong in this situation
Page 3: A lot of things in our lives are very different now. Draw or list things that are different.
Page 4: There are some things that are the same as before. If we look closely, there are actually

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a lot of things that are the same. Draw or list the things that are the same (table, bed, shoes, parents love me, food)

Page 5: Some times our life has big changes and things are very hard. We can have all different feelings. All feelings are ok. Many people feel those feelings. We want to have a space for our feelings. Draw and write about your feelings.

Page 6: We can have all different thoughts. Thoughts are in our mind. Draw and write about your thoughts.

Page 7: Where in your body are you having feelings and where do you have thoughts?

Page 8: We were given the strength inside to help deal with our feelings and situation. Draw what it looks like to feel strong inside.

Page 9: Our strength includes coping skills: (If you want to discuss a higher power, we do it on this page).

Page 10: We can tell someone such as a parent or friend how we feel. Who do you have around you that you can talk to when you need to share your emotions or thoughts with someone safe?

Page 11: We can do breathing exercises, drink the right amount of water, sleep well, and eat nutritious meals. Engaging in deep relaxing breathing can be very helpful. Deep breathing calms our mind and relaxes us. Let us try butterfly breathing now. (see page 12 on butterfly breathing)

Page 12: Physical activity such as exercise and giving yourself a hug help us deal with big emotions. What exercise activities do you like? Draw or list them here. (dancing, running, or stretches).

Can you give yourself a nice big hug?

Page 13: We want to have time where you get to do things that you enjoy, such as reading a book, playing a game, baking, listening to music, or drawing. What are some things that you enjoy doing? List or draw them here.

Page 14: Some activities bring us comfort: This may be calling a friend on the phone, writing your thoughts down, or taking a hot shower. What activities can bring you comfort? List or draw them here.

Page 15: Some activities help us release our emotions. This can be doing jumping jacks, jogging in place, or ripping up paper. Draw or list the activities you can do to help yourself feel release.

Page 16: We can also do activities to help us express ourselves: This may be through singing, dancing, drawing or coloring. Let's try to dance to the beat, and sing a song. Draw a picture here.

Page 17: We can empower ourselves to be strong. We can write or draw a list of five good things about ourselves.

Page 18: We can empower ourselves by doing good things for others. Draw or list five things you can do for others. (share your toy with a sibling, call grandma, clean up your supper plate, leave a shout out for the mail personal)

Page 19: We can also empower ourselves by finding things to be grateful for. Draw or list five things you are grateful for.

Page 20: We can use our coping skills. One coping skill is called 5-4-3-2-1. We use our five senses and we say five things you see in the room, four things you hear in the room, three

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things you feel right now, two things you envision tasting or smelling and one good thing about yourself. Let's try it now.

Page 21: We can use Mindfulness to focus our attention on something that will calm our mind. We can think of a pleasant place. Imagine that place now. Take a few deep breaths. What do you see at that place? What do you feel at that place? What do you hear at that place? What do you taste at that place? What do you smell at that place? What does that place make you feel like inside? Now store that feeling in your mind and you can try to remember it when you feel stressed**.**

Page 22: We can use invisible hearts like an invisible string to connect to all the people we love even if they are not with us now. Draw hearts that can connect you to the people you love. (invisible string adapted from Patrice Karst's book called The Invisible String). Who are you connecting to?

Page 23: (Depending on the child we add in whatever else would benefit them)

Page 24: You are doing a great job. Keep being the strong person you are.

The end.

I used this book for children ages 4-11. For younger children I modified it to a more basic book. For preteens and teens, we draw cartoons.

Rip up paper:

Children can rip up papers to put in a pile. The size of the pile corresponds to how upset/frustrated/angry they feel. The pile is biggest when they are upset the most. You can make paper into snow and then stand on a chair and watch it fall. You can color the paper to see colorful snow. Caution to do this in a way that the snow can easily be swept up.

The post it notes:

For children ages three and up, you can have them stick post it notes on the body part that they feel the upset or anger in. The angrier they feel, the more post it notes they can use.

Exercise and dancing:

Turn on the music and start dancing. Different people in the family take turns being the leader and showing what steps to do. This is a great release of stress and emotion.

Color your emotion:

Children can draw or color about their emotions. You can say, "color all about what you're angry/happy/frustrated/annoyed with, in whatever colors you want." After coloring a picture, you may say, "Hmmm… I wonder what is happening on this page." Even if the child cannot express a story, the act of coloring the emotion can be helpful. We want to give them a variety of feelings that they can express. We want to allow them to express their feelings on what we call a degree of difference (The learning Tree, 2010 Greenspan and Greenspan), meaning it is not all or nothing. A child may be a tiny happy and very frustrated or really upset but a tiny bit ok.

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Showing with your hands:

Children may like to show with their hands how upset they are. It is similar to asking an older child to rate how upset they feel on a scale from one to ten. Children can show a small amount of emotion by cupping their hands a little or stretching them wide apart to indicate a greater amount of emotion.

For older children, engage in conversation around emotions. For example, asking "On a scale from 1-100 is this the worst thing that happened? What else is really frustrating and what number is that?" Encourage open ended discussions rating the feeling compared to other feelings, and then validate their emotions. It is important that validation is genuine and doesn't sound rote.

It is important to create safe and heathy ways for children to express both positive and negative emotions. An example would be, at night, asking your children what their favorite part of the day was and what their least favorite part was. Parents ask me if this discussion will make the child delve on the negative. In my experience, it has been quite the contrary. If the child is experiencing distress, it's on the child's mind. If it sits on the child's mind it grows; after having a discussion, many times it shrinks as the child feels understood.

(see also "Bonding as a Family Unit – page 8)

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Bonding with our Children

When we talk about parenting with love, we talk about what I call the "notebook". Let's say love is quantified in balls, and children need 50 balls of love a day. You give your child 100 balls of love of day. What happens if the child has a block, or blockage that makes them not experience that love? When I did in person sessions, I would show parents: if there is a "notebook" in front of them, and you're throwing them balls of love, the balls just hit the notebook and then fall off. A parent may be trying to give their child affection, yet they feel their child doesn't experience it. Many times, the child has a "notebook" in front of them that is not allowing the love to penetrate. I discuss with parents how we need to find a way to open up a little hole in the notebook so we can get our ball of love in, and the child can actually feel the love that we want them to feel. We think about "What will help that child actually experience that affection?"
At this time, many children have a "notebook" in front of them, because there is so much going on. We may be providing that same love we always do, but we might have to stick in extra ways to reach them, making a hole in the "notebook".

Some of the idea's parents have found helpful to assist with bonding are as follows.

Boxing in

Boxing in is the idea that you want to "box in" time for your child. You are anyway about to spend time with your child- how can you box in that time and make it more valuable and of greater quality?
The first way is leading up to the event with anticipation. If in two hours you will be spending time together you can verbalize: "Hey in two hours we will be playing that game and I can't wait." Right before the time that you spend with the child, you want to box in that time to show them that it is just for them. You may say to your child, "Cubby, can you please put my phone in the kitchen drawer. Right now, we will be playing together and we don't want anything to disturb us. I need it completely out of sight as I want to spend a few minutes talking/playing with you, and I don't want to take any calls." During the time we spend together, we want to solidify that time with them and say "hey, it's just us now playing this game and I am having a great time with you." After the game is done, regardless if it was for two minutes, five minutes, or a half hour, we want to remember that time. Later in the evening or the next day you want to remind your child what a nice time you had with them. You may say "Cubby, that time we spent before, that was really fun. I had a nice time with you. I can't wait to do it again soon."

Hang-Up Versus Hold-On Relationships

We then talk about the difference between a hang up relationship verses a hold on relationship with people. If you're on the phone with someone and you have to go, you hang up the phone, and you are no longer on the phone with them. But what about if you're on the phone and you just want to do something in your house; you keep them on and say "hold on". The connection

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is still live. They can continue listening to you and they can continue hearing what you are doing. As soon as you finish your activity you talk to them.

As parents, many times we end up using what we call a hang up relationship.
The child asks “can I tell you a story?” The mom responds “Not now.” Or “Can I show you this picture?” The parent responds, “Not now, go to bed...” How many times a day do we say to a child, “Not now”, or “I’m busy?” Are we “hanging up on them” when they are about to tell us something…?
What about if we keep our children on a hold on relationship. We start to say yes. We may say hold on but we don’t hang up. The child asks “Can I play a game with you?” and you answer “Sure, but first we will eat supper.” Or the child asks “Can I tell you the end of that story?” and you answer “of course, after I do this work meeting.” Or the child asks “Can I play on the dance machine again?”, and you respond “Certainly, but first we will go to sleep and in the morning you can play again.”
It is just changing the way you answer; your answer is basically the same. Think on terms of yes and no, so instead of saying “no, but” you want to say “yes, tomorrow.” Instead of “no, not now” you say “yes, after supper.” Even when we are busy with other tasks, we are verbalizing that we are still emotionally connected… This maximizes your relationship with your child, because even when you are not talking to your child, you did not shut them out of the relationship. It is on hold and continuous.

Thinking of you:

We usually give this idea for when children are out of the house, but now we are going to give the idea for children in the house. When children are out of the house, and we want to build the relationship on a continuum we use this tip. An example would be if each day when your child arrives home from school you say, “Mariella, when I was eating lunch, I wondered what you were having for lunch today.” And then the following day you express “While I was eating my lunch, I was thinking about what you may have been having for lunch.” After doing this for about five days, when it is lunch time in school, your daughter may be thinking, “Hey, Mommy is thinking of me now.” You just build a relationship on a continuum. Now she knows you are thinking of her. You may always have been thinking of her, but now you made a little hole in the notebook, and your child knows and experiences it.
You can do this now, even though your children are under the same roof all day. You still can use this little tip. “Yoyo, when I was upstairs doing my work, I was thinking I wonder what my Yoyo is doing downstairs”. “Yoyo, when I was making breakfast and you were playing in the basement, I was thinking ‘I wonder how much fun my Yoyo is having, I wonder if he is getting bored or having fun’.”
Then he is going to start to think “Even if my mom or dad is another room, they are actually thinking about me. In this busy, chaotic, uncertain world right now, mom and dad are thinking about me. This is very powerful to a child.

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Remember when:

We want to constantly remind children of fun times we had with them; of little affection games we have played with them. For example, "Remember that time when it was late at night, we were out in the country, and we played that game? It was so much fun!" Reminding a child of fun times is especially important during the current challenging time.

Internal and external compliments:

We are going to talk about the difference between internal and external compliments. Children need both. Examples of external compliments are "I love that picture that you drew" or "you have such a pretty bow." Anything we are complimenting that the child did or is external classifies as external. An internal compliment is a complement when we are not evaluating the child. If you look deeply at the example of "I love that picture you drew"-it is essentially an evaluation; what would you happen if you did not like it? Children need both internal and external compliments.

Internal compliments are targeting their internal-self, such as their perseverance, dedication, kindness, compassion, or effort. Examples would be: "Wow, that picture looks like it took you a lot of effort", "Wow, looks like you worked really hard on that room to clean it up", "You are persevering till the end", or "You are showing so much kindness to your siblings- look how compassionate you are." Children need both types of compliments.

By the way, these tips work for spouses and other relationships. Spouses also need internal and external compliments. It's amazing for relationship building to remember events in which you had fun together. Telling a spouse something positive that you think of them, putting the relationship on a hold-on verses hang-up relationship, and "boxing in time" are great ideas to help you build a deeper relationship with your spouse.

Building Self-Esteem

I have been getting many calls about how to build up a child's self-esteem while they are at home all day. While these ideas are not specific to Coronavirus, they can be used now as well as any other time. While you are at home with your child, one of the greatest gifts you can give them is helping them develop a positive self-image. Self-worth can be divided into a few categories based on a person's developmental age and stage.

Stages of Self-Esteem

Stage one: Attachment

This stage begins when a child is born. Positive attachment styles with a caregiver can increase a child's self-esteem. You can play mirror games with your child, such as looking in the mirror

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with your child and saying “I love you because you are mine…” Thinking positive thoughts about your child is an important part of this stage.

Stage two: Testing out the world

In this stage, very young children will test out the world. They see what works and what doesn’t work based on your reactions to their experiences. They feel empowered through their accomplishments when you show them you are proud of them.

To encourage self-esteem while your child is testing out the world, try to **give them opportunities for choices and allow them to explore.**

Choices can empower a child with the ability that they can decide. Think of a time you had a choice, acted upon it, and succeeded in your goal. It brings responsibility and a sense of self-satisfaction. You can give choices around items that you are comfortable with your child being able to choose. For example, you can ask, “Do you want to play with trains today or color with crayons?”

The second idea is allowing children to explore. Many of us do things for children to help speed up the process. Even if it is easier for us to do the work, allowing the child to explore will build their confidence. When a child figures out how to set the table or create an arts and crafts, it creates a confidence that will allow them to explore other challenges.

Stage three: Success builds on success

In this stage, a child starts to build on what he has explored in the previous stage. If Mommy is proud when he listens, he may want to listen again. Although this stage starts off when children are young, it continues throughout life. It is very important for parents to set a child up for success. You can do this by dividing every task in half to ensure success. If you were going to ask your child to pick up the blocks from the floor and you know they may or may not listen, try asking the child to pick up five blocks. This chore will more probably be fulfilled. This leads to the child feeling good about himself and gives him the knowledge that he/she can succeed in following your direction, which will enable them to pursue the larger task.

Stage Four: Mirroring your own impression

The next stage that we will look at is a child mirroring your image of them and holding that image as their own. A child’s image very often is a reflection of the caregiver/ parents/teacher’s image. If your child feels you are disappointed in her, she may feel devalued and consider herself a disappointment. This may lead him/her to feel dejected and feel like giving up. Of course, if you are constantly giving your child positive feedback, occasionally allowing them to know you are disappointed in their actions is part of healthy parenting. But if that is the only message a child receives; it can influence their self-worth.

How can parents build up the child and be a positive reflection?

One way is by showing the child that we believe in his/her inner strengths. This will allow them to develop an inner strength on their own to be used throughout the rest of their journey.

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Helping a child develop their inner strength can be done by verbalizing to your child the details and inner strengths it took for him/her to accomplish what he/she did (internal compliments). For example: If your child draws a picture, instead of telling them what a beautiful picture they drew (which is an evaluation of the picture), try saying, "You worked so hard to complete that picture. You put all the colors that needed to go in that picture in it." The message you are giving the child is that they possess inner strength, such as hard work, and that he/she has the ability to ascertain what is needed.

Another example: Instead of saying, "Thank you for cleaning the playroom," how about, "I appreciate your perseverance in getting to every last toy even when you were so exhausted." In this example, the message outlining their inner strength is the perseverance, making positive choices, and going beyond their limits.

You can use words that reflect your child's determination, perseverance, courage, responsibility, kindness, and thoughtfulness. When you give these words to children, they are stored as strengths that they can pull out later in life time and again.

Stage Five: Realizing one's own strengths

The next stage is Realizing one's own strengths: As children begin to reach the preteen and teenage years, they begin to develop a sense of awareness around what they are good at. Older children begin to realize their own strengths. You will hear them say, "I am good at this." We want to encourage a child to reach for the stars, yet we are there to show them things that they may end up having a harder struggle with. The key to this stage is showing them a balance between believing in them and their ability to accept that there are things that may not be their strengths.

Overcomplimenting on false pretense doesn't help your child. If you say to a child, "You are the strongest," and then they experience someone to be stronger than them, you may be shattering much of their hope or self-esteem. Instead, if you say, "You look like you can put in effort and bake a cake that gets eaten to the last drop," your child has an honest assessment of their strengths and can add that to their inner self esteem. Build them up by noticing their inner strengths such as perseverance, determination, and sensitivity.

Make your child aware that you love him/her unconditionally, regardless of performance, and acknowledge their inner strengths. Discover what your child is good at, and then frame it.

At this stage, your teen or preteen may want to take risks or try something new to reexplore and discover what they are good at. It is healthy to allow them to take reasonable risks. Allow them to help you even if it doesn't come out perfectly. To help build your child's confidence, you can request that you need their help with something they are good at.

Stage Six: Inner Strength

And finally, the stage of Inner strength: This stage is the culmination of a person's healthy development. They have the inner strength and resistance to know that they are stronger at some things and weaker at others. They will have the confidence to say no, and not be swallowed up by someone's negative outlook on them. Negative experiences take longer to

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impact their overall sense of self, and they have a positive outlook. They know what they have, whether it is determination, kindness, courage, perseverance, patience, honesty, or sensitivity. To help foster the final stages of self-esteem, it is important for a parent to model for their preteen/teen self-love and positive talk. This may be expressing out loud, “I like myself because I am going to get through today. I like myself because I was just sensitive to another person.” “I like myself because I am getting through hour by hour on this very difficult day”. It’s your inner voice that creates a healthy self-esteem.
Additionally, you can model not accepting other people’s put downs as reflections of yourself or self-worth. For example, you may say, “Although --- comment was hurtful, I know what I am worth, so her judgment is not an honest appraisal of my complete abilities.”

Another tip that parents find helpful is having your child experience the good feeling of doing for others. As your child grows older, she will begin to realize that doing for others makes her feel good and builds confidence. You can support this by setting him/her up to help someone in need.

So, to sum up, self-image and how one perceives themselves can be greatly molded by the parents. Your words and actions do make a difference. As an exercise, try listing things you feel helped build your self-image and a list of things you feel hindered your ability to develop inner strength. Take that awareness, and continue building your child, starting today! You already mastered the first step of becoming more aware by reading this page.

Showing Affection to our Children

When a child is born, they are basked in their parent’s love. They see it through their mother’s and father’s smile, feel it as they are being held, sense it in the unspoken words, taste it as they nurse, smell it in their parents’ scent, and can hear it in the spoken words.

Physical affection provides a child with security and the ability to foster healthy relationships later on in life. Physical affection, such as cuddling, releases oxytocin, a feel-good hormone. It also can help children manage stress throughout the day. There are many studies that determine how children who were shown physical affection had a better relationship capacity and reduced anxiety level. If we cannot provide physical affection, we want to use ways that are very similar to provide affection. Below are a list of touch affection games and non-touch affection games. At this time, it is important to check in with your doctor about what is recommended for physical affection with children.

Getting into the Experience
Parents find it helpful taking 5-10 seconds “getting into the experience". This would include being aware of what you have on your mind before you engage in affection with your child. There is no right and wrong way to give affection, and as long as it is appropriate touch (or non-

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touch) activities, you can use your imagination to discover what works for you. Even if you are short on time, five seconds of bonding with your child is effective.

Touch affection ideas:

Afternoon snuggle bubble

While both you and your child's feet are touching one another under a blanket, you can see how many words you can say that relate to a specific category. Categories can include funny sounding words, affectionate words, fruits ….

Guess how many fingers are on you

To play, gently glide one, two, or three fingers on your child's hand while your child is not looking. Have your child guess how many fingers are on him/her.

The insey wincey spider

You can play this by climbing your little finger up your child's hand.

Airplane ride

Hold your child pretending you are an airplane and walk to different pretend destinations.

The Car Wash Game

Scrub the car (child) on their hands for cleaning the front window. Get creative. You can playfully get silly saying, "Beep, beep," on their cheek or being the windshield wipers on the back.

Non touch affection ideas:

Blanket game

You and your child go under the same blanket. You can use your imagination, and pretend you're in a cave, or you can spend quality time together without the imaginary game.

Saying I love you

Saying I love you and end with a big imaginary hug (showing a hug is also important).

Animal Hugs Game

This would be using pretend play to foster the hugs such as, "I'm giving you a bear hug," or "I'm holding you in my pocket like a kangaroo." You can draw the hugs on paper and give it to your child.

Numbers

For children who like to be in control, you can ask questions so that the child can choose between two options. Some examples would be: "How many hugs, one or two?" Draw out the amount of hugs and give it to your child.

Create a Hug Drawer

You can create hearts by drawing a few hearts and cutting them out. Your child can decorate the hearts. You can place the decorated hearts in a hug drawer and randomly give out the paper hugs as symbols of hugs and affection.

Play the Imaginary Handshake

While pretending to shake your child's hand, make up funny words that make each other to laugh.

Napkins of love

When you set the table place a little note under each person's napkin that says 'I love You' or 'You mean so much to me.'

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Helping Children with Limit Setting

Limit Setting During Coronavirus:
Many parents have been calling me about trying to set limits with their children during this time. It is really difficult to set limits during the current situation, so I give you credit for any limits that you are able to set. I will share with you the two techniques that I typically give parents to try to help with limit setting. Please modify them based on age and situation.
It is important to understand that limit setting without providing love is like driving a car without wheels. The first step to limit setting is actually proving extra, additional love in a language your child can understand. It may be putting a little note under their pillow, it may mean taking a picture of something that you know your child will enjoy seeing, or it may mean recording yourself and letting your child listen to it. We want to encourage those little shows of affection throughout the day, before we try and set a new limit protocol.
Who is In Charge?
Before we set a limit, we want to try to help children understand and conceptualize what they are in charge of and what you are in charge of. Children can be told they are in charge of their toys and space. This is especially true during the Coronavirus when there is so much uncertainty. Before setting limits, try to give your child many opportunities to make his/her own choices throughout the day. This can include choices such as, "Rachel, do you want to sit on this side of Mommy or the other side of Mommy while I read you this story? You decide." Or, "Nathen, do you want to sleep with your teddy bear on your bed or next to your bed? It is your choice."
Notice, the choices above include the words "you decide," or "it's your choice." By included these words, you are teaching a child what types of things are in their domain to decide. If you look at the type of choices we gave in the example, you will notice that these choices are not related to routines. Although giving choices around routines, such as, "Do you want to go to bed now or in five minutes?" has a great purpose, the focus here is on steps to teach your child what is part of their domain of choices versus the parent's domain. For this matter, we want to give choices that are in the child's domain and not around the routines we are essentially asking them to do.
After encouraging your child's choices for a bit, you can start the second step, which is showing a child there are times when you, the parent, decide, and they are not given a choice. This may be saying something such as, "Daddy and Mommy decided you need to come to the table now. You can decide if we should sing now or after we serve the food." We want to do this constantly until your child starts to feel that there are things they are in charge of and have their control over. They will therefore be able to be more available to listen to the rules of their parents.
Process level conversation:
Sometimes children need to have a discussion around the limit setting. This is very different then giving the child a direction. What I want to empower parents with is something that we call a **process level conversation**. A process level conversation is a discussion with your child about their feelings and their choice of rewards and consequences.

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The first step of a process level conversation is stating the direction. An example of this would be “In five minutes it will be time to go to bed.” Next, have the child process the direction by asking the child a question. In this example it would be “what will it be time for in five minutes?”

Step two is having your child choose the reward and consequence. Be cautious that child chooses an age appropriate response. Ask your child “What will happen when I say to go up for bed and you follow the rule? Maybe you get to ask mommy or daddy any questions you want for five minutes, or maybe you get 25 cents, or what will happen?” After the child picks the reward, we ask the child how they will feel if they listen. They may say happy or they may say upset. Any feeling they say is fine. I may also ask, “how do you think mommy or daddy will feel if you follow the rule.”

Next, you want to ask what is going to happen if the child does not listen. Once again, the child should choose the consequence. The consequence should be really small. When a child loses their entire bag of chips, they may be so upset to the degree that they are not even engaged anymore in why they had a consequence. But when a child loses one chip out of a bag or loses one minute from an activity, the child feels responsible for what they did wrong. You want to then ask about their feelings. How are you going to feel if you lose a chip? And how is mommy going to feel?

When concluding, we want to end with positivity and ask “ok, so what are we going to do? - Yay, we are going to listen and you will get your reward.”

It may take 3-5 minutes to have this conversation, but that may be much shorter than a child not going to bed for an hour.

Remember: Love and limit setting go together, so we need to shower our children with love and build in proper limits.

Mindfulness Ideas

Mindfulness is the act of being mindful or aware of what is happening around you. This includes experiencing the sensation of all the five senses and being in the moment with the feeling. There are three common ideas of mindfulness

1. Being mindful throughout the day.
2. Being mindful in the present moment.
3. Being mindful of a past pleasant experience.

Being mindful throughout the day

This type of mindfulness can include being mindful of simple acts throughout the day. If you and your child are playing with blocks, feel the texture of the blocks and be engaged in what you are feeling. When you open a door, feel your fingers on the doorknob. Try to notice the feeling every time you open or close a door knob. When you are sitting on a comfortable chair, concentrate on what you are sitting on and how it feels. If it is raining, listen to the sound of the rain falling, smell the rain, and watch the drops fall onto the ground. In all the above cases, as

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you are being mindful, try taking slow breaths in and out. This activity helps engage the mind to process the present in a calmer way.

Being mindful in the present moment
The second part of being mindful is taking a few moments to engage in a mindfulness activity. You may want to engage in this activity for three to five minutes. During this time, sit quietly in a room. Try to calm your senses by taking in the present moment and your surroundings. As you are taking in your surroundings, breathe slowly, and take deep breathes in and out. Try to relax your body by letting go of any tensions and sitting loosely (not stiff). Concentrate on what you are seeing around the room. Take it all in. Next, close your eyes and listen quietly to what you hear; it can be background noise, noise in the room, and your own breathing. Then, focus on the platform you are sitting on and what you are touching. You can draw attention to what you are smelling and tasting if applicable. Last, try to connect with the calm feeling inside of you, and experience what that feels like.

Being mindful of a past pleasant experience
The third way to be mindful is to recall another pleasant experience and engage completely in the memory. The way we would engage in this activity is to choose a place that you once felt very calm, very relaxed, or very good about yourself. Sit in a quiet room. Imagine yourself in that calm place. Breathe slowly, taking deep breathes in and out. Close your eyes. Imagine being at the calm place; what do you see, hear, taste, touch, smell, and feel? For example, if you felt calm by the beach, imagine seeing the ocean, the sand, the crashing waves, and the seashells. Imagine hearing the waves and the wind, imagine tasting the salty water, imagine touching the sand and seashells, imagine how you feel inside; Perhaps calm, perhaps peaceful, perhaps relaxed. This activity can be used when in a very stressful situation.
Children as young as four and five can engage in these activities. Children may say a nice place for them is the pizza shop. We then talk about what are the experiences and what information in the pizza shop was like for you. Close your eyes: what do you see, hear, taste, touch or smell. What feeling do you experience inside?

Engaging in mindfulness is like building a muscle. Throughout the day, continuously engaging in different mindfulness activities can help the mind relax more and deal with stressful situations better. Just like when you go to the gym one time, and you may not see the change you want, engaging in mindfulness activities is an exercise. With mindfulness, it's the more the better.

Self-care for First Responders, Healthcare workers Essential workers, and their families

This section was written based on the ideas that first responders/healthcare workers/essential workers and their spouses and families have found helpful. This section is written out of heart. Most of the ideas take a few seconds to a minute to implement and people have reported them

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having a real impact. For more extensive ideas that are applicable to first responders, healthcare workers, and essential workers read the sections on: How to help children and adults deal with big emotions (page 10) and Mindfulness (page 25). The families of first responders, healthcare workers, and essential workers may benefit from all the sections of this guidebook. As in the rest of this guidebook, please contact a mental health or medical professional for any and all questions.

To our dear first responders, healthcare workers, essential workers, and their families:

There is something vital you need to be told:
You are the Heros deserving a metal of gold,
Protecting so many, putting your lives on the line,
We want to express our thanks to you at this time.
Sending you love, warmth, and a piece of our heart
Sending you a basket of sunshine- we are together while apart.
We are indebted to you- we are so grateful,
Try to take care of yourselves as best as you are able.
As you continue your vital work day after day,
For you and your family we will continue to pray.

Self-care for the first responders, healthcare workers, and essential workers:

You are a hero. You are amazing. Thank you for your work. Self-care includes taking care of yourself. It is important to nurture yourself both physically and emotionally in the best way you know how.

Take a one-minute break: Never underestimate the power of a **one-minute break**. The one-minute break may take place in your mind. During the break we want to engage in deep breathing, be compassionate to ourselves, and think positively about the past, present, and future. We also want to find a safe space for our feelings. Our mind is a very powerful tool and has an effect on our emotional state. Engaging in positive thoughts can have a positive overall effect.

- **Breathe:** Take a moment as many times a day as you can to breathe deeply. Even twenty seconds is powerful. For all these exercises 20 seconds to a minute is great. During that time, think of a loved one, pleasant place, or pleasant memory. Try to engage in this activity at least five times a day.
- **Love yourself:** Take a moment as many times a day as possible to love yourself. Send yourself a hug in your mind, think of something you like about yourself or something people like about you.
- **Past:** Take a moment to take a few deep breaths. Try to remember a fun or pleasant time you had with a loved one or on your own.

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- **Present:** Take a moment to take a few deep breaths. Find three things you see at the moment and three sounds you hear at the moment. Think of one positive think about yourself.
- **Future:** Take a moment to take a few deep breaths. Try to imagine a future positive thought. For example, hugging a loved one or being at a waterfall. Try to imagine engaging in that act.
- **Compassion to yourself:** Try to take a moment and be compassionate to yourself. You are going through a tremendous amount, putting your life on the line. Allowing yourself the space to process what is going on is important.
- **Deal with feelings:** See if there is someone you can verbalize your feelings and fears to. It may be another worker, friend, or spouse. If that is not possible try to journal about it. You can journal on a notepad, on your phone, or whatever works for you. All feelings are valid.
- **Set alarm affirmations:** Set affirmations as an alarm on your phone. For example, at 2:00 pm have an alarm that reads "I am a hero" at 7:00 pm have an alarm that reads "I deserve compassion."
- **You can distract:** It is ok- in fact it is healthy to engage in distracting activities. This can be watching a comedy, music, or talking to a loved one. This guide has multiple game sections, some with humor components. Many of the games can be adjusted to be played solo. If you have a spouse or friend to play with over the phone/computer that is great too.
- **There is love:** People from all over the world talk about the HERO that you are. We are all sending you love, strength, and support.
- **Reach out to friends and family and ask them for support:** Ask friends and loved ones to send you messages of support throughout the day.
- **Support:** It is brave to reach out for support. If you feel you need support look for resources in your area or find a mental health counselor who can assist you.

Self-care for the first responder, healthcare worker, and essential workers families:

When a loved one is on the front line, it takes a toll on the whole family. It is important to take care of yourself and your loved ones in the best way you know how.

- **Validate your feelings:** It is important to validate all and any feelings. It makes sense to feel scared, numb, anxious, or alone.
- **Relax box:** You can create a self-care relax box as outlined on page 5.
- **Children's relax box:** If you have children at home you can help them create a self-care relax box as well.
- **Reach out to supports:** Reach out to local resources that are offering support to families of first responders, healthcare workers, and essential workers.

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- **Have compassion:** Try to be easier on yourself and have compassion. This is a very difficult time for many families.
- **Bonding and games:** Try to encourage both bonding and games with the members that are at home. You will find examples of games throughout this guidebook.
- **Mindfulness:** Take some time each day to be mindful- see the mindfulness section for more ideas on how to practice mindfulness.
- **Treat yourself:** It is helpful to try to find something you enjoy and have some times throughout the day to engage in it. Hopefully some of the ideas written under the discussion of the relax box will get you started.

Find meaningful ways to connect to your loved one on the front lines:

You may find meaning in trying to be there for your loved one. You may not be able to engage in your typical show of affection and friendship. It is important to try to be creative in coming up with alternative ways to connect, bond and love. Some ideas to get you started are included below.

- You can send a text message of hope throughout the day.
  Some ideas include "just know I'm thinking of you" or "sending you an abundance of support."
- You can send a picture of something you know they especially enjoy.
- You can send a picture or reminder of a previous fun time you had.
- You and your children can draw hearts or a project and you can send them a picture of the project.
- You can send them resources such as the ones above.
- If they have a break even if it is a short one and would like to engage in a game, you can use the game sections below. Having five minutes to laugh with a loved one can provide much needed connection.

Fun and Interactive Activities and Games for Children

Playing fun games with children is an important part of helping your children cope and deal with the new reality. These games were chosen because of their value in helping children develop social, emotional, and thinking capacities. All children need to continuously develop these capacities and specifically in a challenging time it is important to encourage games that have the necessary elements (such as the ones that follow). Here are some of our favorites fun games that can be played with children. Note: Many games can be played solo, or with adults as well.

The Four-Letter word Say a four-letter word. The next player has to then say a four-letter word that starts with the letter that the word you said ended with. For example, Kite- Eggs-Sand-Done-Exit-talk… This can be played with one player as well.

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The Backward Game Think of a number between 1-1000. Each player has to say the number that is 3 numbers below that number. This is harder than it sounds.

Good Deeds Envelope Every time your child does a good deed, put the paper in the envelope. The child gets a reward every ten notes that are placed in the envelope.

Three Songs Three or more players each sing a completely different song in a loud voice. See how long you can keep this up without covering your ears.

Room BC Pick a room in the house such as your kitchen. Find something in that room that starts with each letter of the alphabet. For example: Apples, basket, chair, door, eggs, fridge, highchair…

Rhyming Words Game Choose a rhyming word. Each player needs to think of another word that rhymes with the original rhyming word. When no one can think of any more words, then start a new rhyme. This game can be played on the phone with others.

Flip the Coin When you land on a head say something positive. When you land on tails say something challenging.

Hey the Letter is A Choose any letter of the alphabet. Start to say words with that letter. See if you can reach 100 words. Then choose a new letter. For younger children you can try reaching 20 words.

Silly Words Say a made-up word and start laughing. That's right- you read right. Then the next person says a silly word and starts laughing. Caution: this game may end up in hysterical laughter. This game can be played on the phone with friends or grandparents.

The Grateful ABC See if you can come up with something you are grateful for that starts with each of the letters of the ABC in three minutes or less. The next person also has three minutes, but can't repeat any of the ideas previously said.

Hamburgers and Laffy Taffies Think of a number between 1-1000. When a player guesses the wrong number instead of saying higher- if the number you are thinking of is higher-you say "Hamburger". And instead of saying lower- if the number you are thinking of is lower- you say Laffy Taffy. When the player guesses your number, then it is the next players turn. For younger children, I first play with the words "higher" and "lower" until they get the hang of it. As a variation, you can show higher with an upward motion and show lower with a downward motion. For younger children, choose a number between 1-20. For added fun choose a number between one and a million. For more added fun, each time instead of saying higher choose a new word with an H. And each time instead of saying lower choose a word that starts with an L.

Picture Tic Toc Toe Games Draw a tic toc toe board with an extra 10 lines in each direction. As you play a tic toc toe game, every time the player who is 0 draws a 0, they draw a picture or design out of the 0. Every time the player who is X draws an X, they draw a picture or design out of the X. The more creative the better.

Three Random words Say three random words that all start with the same letter and say them as one word. For example, Catcokecoat or sunsmilesand.

Around the Globe Pretend each room around the house is a different country. Find things that can be placed in that room as symbols of that country. Pretend to be a tour guide, you can even pretend to talk different languages.

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Rainbow Window Game Find something that is each color of the rainbow outside your window.

Music without Talking Turn on a lively music CD, and dance. Each child gets a turn to be the leader and show the dance moves while you all follow along. See how long you can dance and remain quiet without talking. If you want to say something to each other just motion to them what you are trying to say.

Ten Second Piles Give a random direction to a child. They have ten seconds to comply. For example, put three yellow things in a pile, three blue things, three things you can use at the beach etc.

Peek-A-Boo for really young children Start playing peek-a-boo and instead of saying boo, change the word to something else (Child's name, yummy boy…)

Yoga Play Take deep breathes and engage in relaxing movements while you pretend you are a butterfly, tree, flower, bunny etc.,

The Game of Opposites Give a direction to a child and have them do the opposite of what you say. This game is great for kids who don't want to listen, or have a hard time following direction. For example, dance really fast- the child dances slow. Talk soft, so the child talks loudly, clap very fast, the child claps slow. Then the child gets a turn to say what you do the opposite of.

Record and repeat Adult records into a video or recorder for 10 to 120 seconds. The recording can include saying funny things or things that happened to you that day. The child then watches/listens to the recording. Then, either the child tries to repeat the story the adult said into the recorder, or the child says their own story. Try to use funny accents, sing songs, or add motions to a video or recording.

Hang on tight What you need: A jump rope or any rope. Choose a theme. Each player pulls at one end of the rope, similar to the way you would play tug of war. For 60 seconds try to say as many fun or funny words that you can blurt out that have to do with the theme that you chose.

Paper Plate Matching What you need: 20 paper plates, 10 sets of two pictures each. Pictures can be of items, people, or anything fun. Draw or paste 20 pictures on paper plates to create a fun matching game. Set up the 20 plates in rows like you would a matching game. Play matching for a great joint activity.

Laughing Limbo This is similar to regular limbo, except you want to laugh all while you are under the rope!

The Thank You Plate For this game, you need one paper plate and a crayon or marker for each player. Players can sit in a circle or around the table. Be cognizant of staying the proper distance from one another. When the music (or song) starts you pass the plate around. When the music stops, the player either writes or draws a picture of something they are thankful for on the plate.

Spin the Thanks Spin a dice. Whatever number the dice rolls on, that's how many things you have to say you are thankful for. You can add variation by saying all items need to be in the same category. For example, if you land a 6 you can say 6 people you are thankful for, 6 fruits you are thankful for…

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Thank You by Color Choose a color. Set a timer. See who can think of more things to be grateful for that are that color. Each round you can switch colors.

Rhyming Thanks In this game, the first player says something they are thankful for and the second player has to say something they are thankful for that rhymes with the first word.

Obstacle Course Create an obstacle course using blankets, baskets and different surfaces. Then decide what you will do on each surface. For example, run through the blanket, jump in the basket, pretend to sleep on the mat, dance around the colored mats, jump on the ball. Children love to run through the obstacle course with adults. You can also ask your child before each round if they want to go fast, slow, or medium.

The Compound Word Game Think of a compound word such as peanut-butter or ice cream. The first player says the first half of the word in a funny voice. The second player says the second half of the word in the same voice. If you whisper, they whisper. You say it loud; they say it loud.

Music while cleaning Turn up the music while cleaning. Set a timer for a random time, for example 7 minutes or 4 minutes. When the timer rings, everyone joins in a predetermined room to do a fun dance.

Indoor Attractions Activity list

Similar to all the games and ideas in this book, your attitude will transmit to others attitudes. We call this emotional transmission of feelings. People can pick up the way we feel by the energy that the feelings sends off to others around us. Think about it in this way; you may enter a room and even if everyone is smiling, if the people are tense then you may sense it. Therefore, if you engage in these games with an excitement it is much more likely to be enjoyable for others.

The mock wedding

On day one plan and prepare for a mock wedding hosted on day two. Be creative.

Carnival

Set up a Carnival for your own family. Examples of booths: Roll the ball to knock down the water bottles, see who can set the supper table first, race like frogs, or animals across the room or color the picture first.

Amusement park

Set up a pretend amusement park. Place old mattresses on the floor for a makeshift trampoline. Boxes from orders can be used as part of a train, just add wheels and color using your imagination. Create large figure eights on the floor out of tape where children can run around the eights with music on.

Zoo

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You can print or draw pictures of as many exotic and common animals as you can. One Child can pretend to be the zookeeper while another can be a tour guide.

Word wiggles

Everyone writes down five verbs on a paper. Player one chooses a paper and acts out the verb under a sheet. The other players have to guess what the person under the sheet is doing. While each player is acting it out, other players have to do a predetermined motion, such as dance, jump, or wiggle. If you stop doing the motion you are out. Then player two chooses a paper to act out…

Concert

Turn on the music and bring out any musical instruments that you have, or create musical instruments by using pots and other household items. Different people get to the singer by the makeshift mike.

Magic show

See how many "Magic" tricks you can come up with, and perform them in front of everyone.

Fun and Interactive Activities and Games for Teens and Adults

Adults and teens also need to have fun! Playing thinking-based, fun games encourages the appropriate reflection, thinking, and interaction for teens, and fosters closeness and relational bonding for all ages. These are some of our favorite ideas to get you started. At the end of this section you will find a list of questions for games that require questions.

Best and worse Decide on a category, and say something that is your best and worst from that category. The other person has to try to figure out which is your best and which is your worst. Try not to make it obvious. For example: Roller-coaster or Arcades guess what is my best and what is my worst.

Letter games For this game, you need letters of the ABC. You can use Banana Gram letters, or you can prepare your own letters. After choosing a letter, say eight things that start with that letter that you are grateful for. You only have fifteen seconds to answer.

Another way to play the letter game is to create a list of random questions, or use questions from at the end of this section. Choose a question and answer in five seconds or less. The answer to the question has to start with the letter that was chosen. Answers do not have to be true but have to make sense.

Guess the host Everyone in the audience decides who you are, but you do not know who you are. You are being a host to some event, dinner, or speech. The audience asks you questions

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based on who you are and you have to guess who you are. If you are a principal, they will ask you questions as if you are a principal. If you are the president, they will ask you questions based on if you are the president. Other ideas include owner of a chocolate factory, a hair dresser, or a specific person that your family knows. Get creative!

Imitate and Guess Imitate a famous person, a favorite singer, or your child's principal, and everyone has to guess who you are imitating.

Color the Plates on your head Take paper plates and everyone has to draw a picture of themselves while the plate is on their head. Put all the plates in the middle and the youngest player has to guess who was supposed to be who. The next round, everyone can draw two household items. Again, this is done while the plates are on their head. Then everyone guesses what items they were trying to draw. For the third round, you can give all the players a copy of a random picture and try to draw it while it's on your head.

LOL Poem Two people write an eight-line poem. Do not show your poems to each other. Then give the last word of every line of your poem to the other player and they have to plug it in to their poem in the order that you wrote it. You take the last word of each line of their poem and plug it into your poem. Read the poems out loud-this turns out to be really funny.

Alphabet Fun Cut out huge ABC letters. Each letter should be about the size of a paper. Place the cut-out letters all over the floor. Every player stands on one letter. Ask an open-ended question, such as "if you had $100, what would you buy? (You can use questions from below). Everyone has to blurt out an answer that starts with the letter they are standing on. The answers do not need to be true, but they do need to make sense. Everyone switches to a different letter before choosing the next question. This is a great adolescent game that ends in laughter.

Shouts Outs Send shout outs to ten different people. You can text your local pharmacy a shout out. You can attach a note to the mail box for the mailman. Get creative.

Hearts Together Cut out ten hearts. On each of the hearts, write kind messages to members of your own family and give them out.

Stress and Release Breathing Tighten your hands, pretending to put all stress inside your hands. Tighten them as hard as you can. Breathe in. Then when you breathe out, loosen your hands, and let all the stress go away with it.

Muscle Relaxation Tip Lay flat. Tense and release one muscle at a time. Tense the muscles while breathing in and release the muscles while breathing out. You can do feet, legs, hips, shoulders, arms, hands, and face.

Who's Who! Give out small pieces of paper such as sticky notes. Everyone should write down one thing they did this past year that is something no one would guess they did. Collect everyone's papers. Pick out one at a time and have fun guessing who did what.

Ideas of questions for Teen and adult games

What is your favorite supper?
What is the best part of staying home?
What is your biggest fear?

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If you can add anything into your room now, what would it be?
If you can add one book to a bookcase, what book would it be?
What is a strength that you have?
What is something fun you like to do?
When is a time you felt really happy?
What is something you are looking forward to?
What is your favorite sport?
When is a time you felt disappointed?
What was the best/worst thing that has happened to you in camp?
What was the best job you've ever had? And the worst?
What's the best vacation you've had?
How do you like to spend a rainy day?
If you were president/principal/father for the day, what three things would you change about America/School/your house?
What is your favorite food?
What is your favorite pastime?
What would you buy if you can order one thing to your house?
If one store was to move to your basement what store would you want it to be?
What's the best present you've ever received?
What's one favorite thing you do by yourself?
If you had a million dollars what would you buy?
If you can add one thing to your kitchen/room/house /town, what would it be?
What is your best /worst: book/car/place/food/person/game/outdoor activity?
What was your most embarrassing/frustrating/scared/happy/excited/calm moment?
If you can be granted one wish, what would you ask for?
If you had to eat one food all day, what food would you eat?
Who is someone you admire?
What do you miss most during this time?
What is the most challenging thing for you during this time?

Fun and Interactive Activities and Games: The Gold Standard

To my very special role models across the globe, younger generation grandparents and older generation grandparents, Grandma's and Grandpa's:

Spring is here it is in full bloom,
The flowers blossoming outside,
Although we are all stuck in our room,
You are the ones that give us pride!

We are taking all you taught us,

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We are giving you a piece of our hearts
We are thanking you for all you do for us
We are together while apart.

Your children- we are proud to be,
We are proud to call ourselves neighbors,
We are proud to live in the same community,
We are proud to be your grandsons and granddaughters.

We will send you all our gratitude and love,
Priority mail- across town or across the ocean
We will take all that you taught us,
Your love, your care, your warmth and your devotion.

And in this way even if we are far-
We treasure you in our hearts like gold-
Wishing you a most wonderful day-
And just know- our hearts are connected as one whole.

Here are a few fun games that we thought you would enjoy:

Letter Games Choose a letter of the ABC. Think of one thing that you own that starts with that letter. Added challenge: You only have ten seconds or less.

Around the World Choose a place around the world. Use your creativity to see how many items you can creatively connect to that place. Variation: the items have to be present in the place you are.

Hearts together Ask each of your grandchildren to color or draw a heart and write one thought on it and mail it to you.

The Rainbow Game In the room you are in, see if you can find something that is each color of the rainbow in one minute or less.

The Laughing Word Game This is one of my favorites. Choose a word such as “random”. Then take any other letter of the alphabet and put in at the start of the word so fandom, landom, wandom, handom. You have five seconds or less to say another word.

Remember When The first player has to remember an event that they did that starts with an A. for example apple picking, or flying over the Atlantic Ocean. The more years back the better and the more creative the better. The next player has to remember an event they were part of that starts with a B.

The Name game Who do you know whose name starts with an A? Who do you know whose name starts with a B.? Continue with as many letters of the alphabet as you can.

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The heart collection Draw a heart. Write one good thing about yourself on the heart. You can also write something you are grateful for. Post the heart somewhere where you can see it. Each day challenge yourself to add a heart to the love wall.

Color by Number Choose a color. Spin a dice. Can you list items that are the chosen color in ten seconds? You need to name the amount of items corresponding to the number the dice landed on.

Rhyming Words Start with any word such as hugs. Round one you say a real rhyming word such as bugs round two say a word that rhymes that makes no sense such as gugs. Then think of a new word and start again.

Weddings or What? In five minutes or less, how many weddings can you name that you attended or happened in the past ten years. You can also try times you flew, went to the country etc. Add in your own memories.

Poems

The box of strength. Delivered.

My order arrived, the box was empty, hollow, and bare-
No toilet paper, or tissues, or water was in there-
But as I looked closer-deep inside, I could find-
A box full of strength, hope, and determination, of an unprecedented time.

I went to the shop to stock up and buy a few goods-
The shelves were empty and drained, there in shock I stood-
The empty shelves filled my heart with affection for my friends and family-
With a whisper and Prayer that we all remain together, strong, and healthy.

Sending your order, delivered to your door with a box filled to the brim-
Of love, hope, courage, and strength from within-
As news spreads like wildfire, and changes every minute-
You can fill your own box, putting all the strength you need to survive in it.

In the walls of your home try to find the key and open the lock-
To the music, laughter, gratitude and kindness box-
Sending virtual hugs to you and your family where ever you are-
Keep strong and keep safe and stay close while apart.

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One heart

He feels fear, he feels alone-
She feels anxious, angry, and like stone-
You feel courage for just a bit-
She feels sunshine for one minute.

He feels grateful, he found a way-
She feels fearful - more today-
You feel sadness tears are at bay-
They feel strength somehow, they say.

Can you share your joy with him somehow? -
Send him an invisible piece of your heart now? -
Can you take a piece of his fear? -
Off his shoulders so he can persevere?

Can you unburden some of your fear to them? -
Can she receive some love from him? -
So that she can feel a bit more space-
Can you put a smile on their face?

Can she share that smile with them? -
And take some strength from the next one? -
And in this way can we make a chain that's long-
Of all of us carrying each other's feelings on and on?

Joy and courage fear and fright, can we share them all-
With all our Friends all over the world-
Receiving and giving holding each other from apart-
All of us sharing one heart!

Sending you some well wishes this morning:

A paper airplane flying near the trees-
Holding love, hope, and a warm breeze-
Carrying aboard strength and strong will-
I sent it to you from my window sill.

A piece of my heart is all I've got-
So, I mailed it today in the mail slot-
Sunshine, care, compassion, sent with my heart right away-
You should receive it sometime today.

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A long string on an invisible balloon-
Filled to the max with love from my room-
I sent it with tenderness high in the sky-
Sealed with a top priority stamp as to you it flies.

A little bird with passion and a song for you-
And a strong note of friendship in her beak too-
The note sends hugs and well wishes with a sweet tune-
It's arriving to you early this afternoon.

An umbrella as wide as the whole world that reaches the sky-
An umbrella that keeps us close while apart and keeps us dry-
An umbrella of hope, courage, strength, and love-
As we shelter together and -for an end to Covid19 -we pray to the One Above.

Thank you to all:

Shout out to all the hospitals, doctors, nurses and medical staff,
Working round the clock with care and compassion,
Shout out to all the city workers and garbage collectors,
Working day and night to keep us safe and take our trash in.

Shout out to the mail men and women from door to door you go,
Shout out to the tech guys and internet and phone companies connecting us from afar,
Shout out to the news outlets who inform us of important info,
Shout out to the gas attendants who help us with our cars.

Shout out to all the truckers who are driving,
Working round the clock to get us our groceries,
Shout out to all the grocers and baggers,
Who are making sure we have food to eat.

Shout out to all the police and all the politicians,
Who are keeping us safe and making laws to assist,
Shout out to all the doctor's, therapists, and counselors,
Who are helping us deal with this new reality that exists.

Shout out to professors who teach online for the university,
Shout out to writers who keep us inspired,
Shout out to psychiatrists, shout out to LPC's,
Shout out to all those working even those that are retired.

Shout out to psychologists, and social workers who are working from home,
Shout out to mentors and big sisters and big brothers,

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Shout out to the grandmas and grandpas who are there for us by phone,
Shout out to all those giving financially to others.

Shout out to all the pharmacy staff -Who are working overtime when staff is cut in half,
Shout out to attorneys and accountants who are helping many navigate,
Shout out to all the singers for free concerts and the comedians who make us laugh,
Shout out to each charity organization who are helping those in need every day.

Shout out to the preschool teachers and babysitters and housekeepers,
Shout out to each lawmaker creating beneficial rules,
Shout out to those working by day and when we go to sleep,
Shout out to the teachers who are there for their students and school.

Shout out to all clothing stores and accessory stores online or not,
Shout out to all essential businesses that stayed open with little to no staff,
For giving with heart and all that you've got,
You're amazingly providing for us all while wearing gloves and a mask,

Shout out to all the stores and businesses that closed-
You are one of the many unsung heroes-
Helping slow the spread your care truly shows-
We support you and send you love we want you to know.

Shout out to all the local doctors and ambulances PA's, NPs MAs-
Who are constantly there by day and night-
Each of you in your own way-
There for their patients from sickness to fright.

Shout out to all researchers working on Vaccines and a cure-
Shout out to the gym instructors, Zumba teachers who are there online -
Shout out to the delivery drivers who are doing more-
Shout out to nutritionist- to assist people creative ways you find.

Shout out to amazon workers who ensure each box has what we need in it,
Shout out to the grassroots and big organizations,
Shout out to the all those who are working every minute,
Should out to each person who is part of this nation.

Shout out to all moms-Shout out to all dads,
Shout out to the love and care in the whole world around,
For finding energy you never knew you had,
Should out to each person in every country, city, state, and town.

Shout out to every woman, shout out to every man,

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Should out to all children for trying your best,
For waking up each day and persevering again,
Should out to all mankind who is being put to the test.

Shout out to my friends-shout out to my family,
Shout out to everyone I know and everyone I do not,
For being there in the best way for me,
Shout out to everyone who is carrying a lot.

Shout out to you, shout out to the universe
Shout out to everyone young and old,
Everyone deserves a great big round of applause,
Here's a great big clap and a tight hug to hold.

Dear parents:

I don't expect you to wake up in the morning-
Doing anything more than closing your eyes and yawning-
I don't except you to scramble eggs-
Or shine anyone's shoes or make all the beds-
I don't expect you to teach science or math-
Or give child number three a one-hour bath-
I don't expect you to have patience all day-
I actually don't expect anything today (or any day).
I don't except you to cook a 5-course meal-
I don't expect you to be able to deal-
I don't expect you to set any limits-
I don't expect you to start something and finish-
I don't expect you to have supper by six-
I don't expect you to only serve a healthy mix-
I don't expect you to have the kids in bed before eight-
I don't expect you to feel you have the tools to navigate-
I don't except you to serve meals on time-
I don't expect you not to hear your children whine-
I don't expect you to get any work done-
Not housework or job work or either one-
I don't expect you to feel extra love and affection-
Even when you're trying so hard to make the connection-
There's nothing we expect in this trying time-
So just do your best and take one minute at a time-
If you woke up this morning tried to make it a day-
If you served your kids any food today-
If you said I love you one time this week-
If you had a chance to get some sleep-
If you taught anything to your little ones -

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Maybe “to lower expectations and take minutes as they come”-
If you tried to do laundry or just tried your best-
If you got angry for one minute less-
If you had patience for one minute longer-
If you gave yourself courage to try to be stronger-
If you attempted to give yourself love and affection-
If with others you attempted a connection-
If you tied someone’s shoe or poured someone’s cereal-
If you laughed out loud or shed tears that are real-
If you smiled at a soul or smiled in your heart-
If you sat down to do something albeit only start-
If you gave something up or you tried your best-
If you put your negative thoughts to a one-minute rest-
If you cuddled or didn’t or smiled or not-
If you did what you could and gave it all you’ve got-
Then you are a hero- a super dad- a super mom-
Sending you strength, wisdom, and courage, to continue on.

What I am doing now:

If I can’t take a swim at the Gym,
I will try to keep others afloat so they don’t fall in.

If I can’t hug you the way I used to from six feet away,
I will send double love virtually with the words I write and say.

If I can’t go out and party the night on the town,
I will connect to my family and friends in the best way I know how.

If I can’t work or go to events and meetings,
I’ll work on myself and what’s important eternally.

If I can’t visit my neighbors and friends,
I will be sure to call and send messages again and again.

If I can’t dance together and hold hands,
I will dance in my heart in a way you understand.

If I can’t go to stores to shop and to pay,
I will pay attention to what my loved ones say.

If I can’t go to work nor keep my routine,
I will work to find goodness as hard as it may seem.

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If I cannot do all the things I used to do,
I will always find a way to connect to you,

If things have changed as they have a lot,
I will engage double in what I still have got.

Helpful Apps

My colleagues and I put together a list of helpful Apps. The author takes no responsibility to the helpfulness of any of these Apps.			
Name of APP	Cost	Category	Comments
This is Sand	Partially free - to upgrade cost	Relaxing activity	Fun for kids, teens and adults
Calm Harm	Free	Self-harm but good for any stress	Activities for Comfort**,** Distract**,** Express Yourself**,** Release**,** Random **and** Breathe**.**
Calm	$59.00 per year	Reduce stress	
Recovery Record	Free	Eating disorder but has awesome other resources	Amazing coping skills amazing meditations People who use this app both eating disorder and self-harm or stress report they love it
Headspace	Partially free- to upgrade it cost	Meditation, sleep, empowerment	
Virtual hope box	Free	Coping skills	Amazing distraction, inspire, coping skills, relaxation
DBT Coach	$5	DBT	It offers a customizable diary card
Rain Rain sleep sounds		Meditation	
Nature sounds		Meditation	
Breathe2Relax-		Meditation	guided deep breathing
CBT thought diary-		CBT	challenge and change thoughts
CBT tools for kids-			CBT skills
Nature sounds sound sleep		Sleep	Relaxing sounds and white noise lifestyle. Sounds of nature to help sleep
DBT daily		DBT	
Stop Breath and think		Meditation and mindfulness	
Relax forest Nature sounds	Free	Sleep	
Simply being-	$2	Meditation	Guided mindfulness

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PTSD Coach-		PTSD	skills to manage symptoms
Mindfulness Coach (VA)-		Mindfulness	guided mindfulness meditations
TF-CBT		TF-CBT	Triangle of Life- TFCBT skills for kids
Wysa		CBT mindfulness	Similar apps both provide CBT, mindfulness, and validation through a Robo-therapist.
Youper		CBT mindfulness	
This is a CDN			CBT app that is free and excellent.
Anxiety Canada		https://www.anxietycanada.com/	Coping cards, relaxation etc.
Sorry	Free		meditation

We hope you enjoyed this guidebook. The main thing is to be there for yourself, your children, and others with a listening ear, and to try your best to encourage healthy thoughts and positive activities. Stay well. Stay strong.

Please ask all questions including medical and mental health questions to a qualified professional. This guidebook is for awareness purposes only. As things change every hour, any ideas that are no longer based on the CDC recommendation, local officials, Doctors, or advisors should be discarded.

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March 15th 2020 last updated April 11th 2020.
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