

## Coping with Stress During This Extraordinary Time

As we work to get through this stressful time together here are some tips on how to help your child and your family get through these unusual times.

1. Don't have a news channel blasting from the television 24/7. A child will get stressed out by hearing nothing but bad news and drama. I heard one news comparing pandemics and they were talking about the black plague. A child can hear just snippets of things and assume that is the situation right now. (However, do stay informed yourself through various resources and fact checking.)
2. Ask your child, "What is your understanding of the Coronavirus and what is going on right now?" This way you get to understand their personal interpretation of what's going on and you get to explain it to them. You are their most trusted authority as to what is going on in the world.
3. Don't let your kids sleep cycle get flipped. This is one of the worst things physically, mentally, or emotionally for any child or adult!
4. Keep enforcing time limits on electronics. Do I need to say it louder for those in the back?
4. Use this time to set up new positive routines and habits. Play Uno, Go Fish, Jenga, Connect Four, exercise, go for walks, bake, make crafts, etc... I am always amazed how much kids love the simple games like Pick Up Sticks and Tic Tac Toe which basically shows they just want some undivided attention.
5. If the anxiety becomes very real practice deep breathing together by using a pattern of breath in for 6, hold for 6, and exhale for 6. There is scientific data that this really does calm the brain. (Doing this for over 5 minutes a couple of times per day is most beneficial.)

Our community partners in providing mental health services have all confirmed that they are set up for the telehealth counseling services through the telephone or computer. Here is their contact information:

A New Dawn A New Beginning 850-329-5776  
Apalachee Mental Health Services 850-584-5613  
Disc Village 850-838-2525  
Community Wellness 850-644-7724

If you or anyone you know is feeling suicidal or in need of immediate help, please text or call:  
The National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255  
Or Text "Help" To The National Crisis Text Line 741741

You can also dial 211 to talk with someone or to find out more about community services that are available.

For more help or information please feel free to contact Paul Peavy, Taylor County Mental Health Coordinator at [paul.peavy@taylor.k12.fl.us](mailto:paul.peavy@taylor.k12.fl.us).