



Supporting Children and Teens who are worried about the COVID-19 virus

Hearing about the COVID-19 virus can make children and teens feel anxious; leaving them with questions and concerns for their own health. It is important for their parents and educators to remain calm, think about the appropriate information to share, and reassure them that health and school officials are working hard to keep them safe.

The following tips may be helpful for educators and parents when they are addressing a young person's concerns:

Provide reassurance:

Remain calm and reassuring. Young people are watching adult actions, comments, and nonverbal cues to gauge their own reactions of how worried they should be.

Children and teens need to hear that parents/guardians are monitoring the situation and taking steps to keep them safe.

Remind students that the adults at school are there to keep them safe and healthy.

Reassure children and teens that most people who get COVID-19 will only have a mild illness and will make a full recovery.

Remind children and teens that if they do get sick that parents and health care providers will take care of them.

Make time to talk and connect.

Provide age appropriate information:

Ask young people what they know about COVID-19 and check the facts to be sure they have the right information.

Provide information that is age appropriate. Young children need brief explanations with reassurance. "The COVID-19 is a virus that makes people sick like the flu. Adults are working hard to keep you safe. We want to wash our hands with soap, keep our hands away from our face, and cough into our elbow because that helps us stay healthy."

Older children may ask more questions and wonder what would happen if the COVID-19 virus comes to their community. Reassure them that the health officials are watching the situation closely, and our public health departments and schools will take precautions to keep people safe if need be.

Teens may be looking for more information about the facts, and how to be better prepared. Provide factual information provided by Health Canada about the status of COVID-19, the symptoms, and hygiene habits to keep them healthy. Fact sheets can be found at www.Canada.ca



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Limit the exposure to media coverage:

Anxiety and worry can be heightened if the focus of the conversations and media exposure throughout the day is focused on the COVID-19 updates.

Limit the amount of television and radio news and social media coverage that your child/teen is exposed to. Provide positive news, uplifting music, and heartwarming shows as an alternative to the worrisome news coverage.

Teach and model preventive measures

All children and teens will benefit from learning habits to keep them healthy such as:

How to properly wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before they prepare food and eat, or after blowing their nose, coughing, or using the washroom.

Coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue.

Avoiding touching their face (eyes, mouth, nose).

Getting lots of sleep and eating healthy food.

Avoiding close contact with those that are sick.

Staying home when they are sick.

Engage in activities that are fun and healthy:

Encourage your child to participate in activities they enjoy. Focus on fun, humor, and self-care to combat the worrisome feelings.

Communicate with the school:

Let the school staff know if your child is home sick.

It is normal for children and teens to be worried when they hear concerning news about COVID-19. If, after reassuring them and talking with them, they continue to be distressed to the point it is interfering with their normal routine, please speak with your child's teacher or principal. A school counsellor may be able to help.

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board COVID-19 updates:

Please see our website for information and updates related to the COVID-19.

<http://www.kprschoools.ca/en/Wuhannovelcoronavirusupdate.html>

