Helping Your Children During COVID-19

If you have kids, one of the most important things you can do for your children is to keep your own anxiety in check. When adults are anxious, children pick up on this very quickly, which stirs their own feelings of distress.

The key message to your children should be about simple measures to encourage them to stay healthy. Wash their hands, eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, and wear a face mask. If your kids are anxious, make sure you help normalize their fears, then talk about the skills they need to handle the current pandemic:

1. **Help your children control what they can control.** Help them understand the illness is caused by germs, and there are ways to protect themselves from germs. Talk with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak. Also, limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the pandemic through social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

2. **Keep them healthy**. Remind them to wash their hands frequently. Be a good role model for your children by taking breaks, getting plenty of sleep, exercising and eating healthy foods.

3. **Keep them safe.** Remind them to not put things in their mouth or share drinks and eating utensils with other people. Also, discuss the importance of wearing a face mask in public.

4. **Let them know they aren't alone.** Reassure children that everyone is doing their best to stay healthy. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child can understand.

5. **Talk to your teens.** Teens are well-informed. Invite deeper discussions about how the virus has influenced society.

6. **Protect yourself and your children.** Most of us are familiar with the reminder from flight attendants to put on our own oxygen mask before we help those around us. This is true in managing our anxiety by staying calm and modeling prevention behaviors for our children.