

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

### **Information for Parents/Carers which may support families at this time**

Provided by the World Health Organisation and Unicef @ 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020

#### **Messages for carers of children from the World Health Organization**

##### **Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness:**

- Every child has his or her own way of expressing emotions.
- Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing or drawing can facilitate this process.
- Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

##### **Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible, or create new routines, especially if children must stay at home:**

- Provide engaging age-appropriate activities for children, including activities for their learning.
- Where possible, encourage children to continue to play and socialize with others, even if only within the family when advised to restrict social contact.

##### **During times of stress and crisis, it is common for children to seek more attachment and be more demanding on parents:**

- Discuss COVID-19 with your children in an honest and age-appropriate way.
- If your children have concerns, addressing them together may ease their anxiety.
- Children will observe adults' behaviours and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times.

##### **Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe, and avoid separating children and their carers as much as possible:**

- Ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and carers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled telephone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g. social media).

#### **Messages for people in isolation:**

- Stay connected and maintain your social networks. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via telephone, e-mail, social media or video conference.
- Try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines or create new routines if circumstances change.
- During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings.
- Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.

- Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food.
- Keep things in perspective. Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working on the outbreak to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected.
- A near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Seek information updates and practical guidance at specific times during the day from health professionals and WHO website and avoid listening to or following rumours that make you feel uncomfortable.

## Website links which parents/carers may find useful:

- **Parenting tips:**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-parenting-tips>

- **Ways parents can support their children:**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/6-ways-parents-can-support-their-kids-through-coronavirus-covid-19>

- **Protecting mental health of teenagers:**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

- **Washing your hands:**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/everything-you-need-know-about-washing-your-hands-protect-against-coronavirus-covid-19>

- **What parents should know about coronavirus:**

<https://www.unicef.org/stories/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-what-parents-should-know>

- **Information videos from the World Health Organization:**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/videos>