



Coping with the new norm!

The world has become a very different place in the past few months. We are all adapting to a changed world where new rules, regulations and social contact has turned how we usually live upside down. Everyone everywhere is trying to adapt to a new norm that has no immediate end in sight. A parent's own coping style and mental wellbeing can have a big influence on how well a child adapts to this new environment. As a parent, it is therefore very important to look after yourself first and seek help as early as possible if you are finding it hard to cope. Now more than any other time it is very important to fill up on your own buckets so that you have room to deal with our children's responses to the crisis as well as all the everyday little crises that occur.

Self-care strategies for Parents and Caregivers

- ❖ **Try to get a good night's sleep.** This can be a difficult task for busy parents/carers. There are some good tips below to assist if sleep is a problem for you.
 - <https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/tips-for-a-good-night-sleep.html><https://raisingchildren.net.au/>
- ❖ **Make time for some physical activity.** A walk in the sunshine can lift mood and boost vitamin, breathing exercises, meditation or yoga can help reduce stress. There are some good tips for these calming exercises at the following website. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/looking-after-yourself/anger-anxiety-stress/breathing-exercises>

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- ❖ **Look after your dietary needs.** Research shows that healthy eating can improve moods and wellbeing some great tips can be found on this website.
 - <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/first-1000-days/looking-after-yourself/eating-exercise-for-parents>

- ❖ **Connecting with friends and families others.** Connecting with family and friends can help us cope. We often feel better when we debrief with our loved ones. Often solutions are found when our problems are shared and explored. Due to social restrictions staying in touch may mean using skype, zoom, what's app, messenger or any other media resource to have a virtual coffee time. These may be new technologies for you to explore get some tech help from others if you need it. If you don't have many contacts and would like to discuss ideas with other parent or carers then there are forums on the internet such as the one operated by Reach Out.
 - https://forums.parents.au.reachout.com/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMI26WL-gmg6QIVkw4rCh2uDwc6EAAYAiAAEgLC4fD_BwE

- ❖ **Strengths and Gratefulness.** Research shows that people who express gratitude and focus on the positives have increased wellbeing, lower stress levels and better sleep. The links below are two great sheets from Camp Quality to help with thinking of strengths and gratitude which you can also do with your children.
 - https://fd90f9c3-278b-4d95-b282-4e3ca246e783.filesusr.com/ugd/6b05f3_ac37f2c8c94047b7a7d2bb39311c508f.pdf
 - https://fd90f9c3-278b-4d95-b282-4e3ca246e783.filesusr.com/ugd/6b05f3_bf8d9d1b43c5447a946d910a25eac7b7.pdf

- ❖ **Seek support for your mental health.** These are challenging times so if you feel that you may be experiencing conditions such as anxiety and depression talk to

Central Coast Local Health District
ABN 88 523 389 096

**Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
Getting on Track in Time (Got It!)**

Shop 7, Level 2 Gateway Centre
237 Mann Street Gosford NSW 2250
Tel: 02 4328 7370 Email: CCLHD-gotit@health.nsw.gov.au

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your doctor. Your doctor may link you to a counsellor through Medicare funded Better Outcomes for Mental Health scheme. You can also seek your own counsellor privately or ring a counselling line service such as lifeline on 1311 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. If you are experiencing severe symptoms you can seek assistance through the mental health telephone access line on 1800 011 511 or ring 000 if an immediate crisis.

❖ **Your Children's behaviour.** Children's reactions to these stressful times can often be misunderstood as 'difficult' or 'naughty' behaviour. It's normal to find this frustrating, but expressing anger, or blaming the child for this behaviour might make things worse. Instead, try the following strategies.

- Reassure the child that he or she is safe and cared for
- Listen and talk to the child about the situation. Like adults, children often find what they don't know to be more frightening than the reality.
- Give the child special attention; for younger children, prioritise attention at bedtime.
- Encourage the child to express their emotions – this is part of the healing process, and can happen through a variety of creative ways, like drawing or play.
- Find enjoyable activities to do together as a family.
- Help them understand why they can't do what is usual for them, such as going to school, playing their usual sport and visiting their family and friends. Talk to them about how things are progressing and the aim to get back to as many things as possible when it is safe to do so.

❖ **Contact support for parenting if you need some help.** Parentline is open 9am-9pm weekdays and 9m-4pm on weekends.

Ph: 1300 1300 52

W: <http://www.parentline.org.au/>

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