

## Child Health Psychology 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### Anxiety and COVID-19- Advice for families

We understand that the recent outbreak of COVID-19 can lead to an increase in anxiety for lots of young people and their families. While it is normal to worry, it can be useful to reflect on different supports and strategies that might help to make things more manageable.

- Don't forget the basics, keeping to a routine as much as possible, eating regular healthy meals, drinking enough water and getting some exercise.



- Take some time away from the internet and news. Frequent checking can increase anxiety and make sure you only look at information from reputable sources.



- Stay focused on what you can control (things like washing your hands and keeping away from crowds). Also try to recognise when your worries are becoming overwhelming, step back from the thoughts and don't forget to breathe (Imagine you are blowing a bubble or blowing out an imaginary candle). Although it can be difficult to accept uncertainty, try to let go of things that are outside your control. A useful youtube clip for young people to look at is 'Struggling with Internal Hijackers?'



- Stay connected to friends and family through whatsapp, facebook etc.



- Practice mindfulness or relaxation. For example, pay attention to your breath, awareness and body sensations when out for a walk.



- Plan in activities that you enjoy like reading, playing in the garden etc.



Try to make handwashing fun. Make up a silly song to sing for 20 seconds.



- If you are starting to feel overwhelmed it is important to speak to someone you trust, like a family member or friend. Children are likely to pick up on their parent's anxiety levels and may need more reassurance, support and cuddles than they normally would.



***For helpful tips on talking to your child about the coronavirus, please see the link below***

<http://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

***For helpful tips for young people, please follow the link below***

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/#stick-to-your-normal-routine>

***News articles for adults*** Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health March 2020

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

***Video Links for young people***

BBC videos on how to wash your hands, questions and answers and tips about what to do if you are upset by the news.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51791626>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51896156>