



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

HEARTWISE WEBINAR SERIES

PARENTING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

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OBJECTIVES



Understand **general issues** regarding “normal” parenting during pandemic



Understand signals/signs of **parenting disruptions**



Understand signals/signs of **stresses in children and youth**



Review some **general strategies** to use during this timeframe

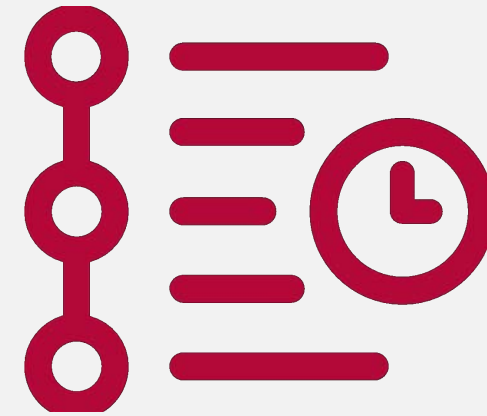
January 25: first presumptive case in Ontario (Canada) and is put in isolation at Sunnybrook Hospital.

March 12: Ontario schools ordered to shut down two weeks following March Break.

March 17: Premier of Ontario declares state of Emergency.

March 18: Non-essential travel between US and Canada shut down.

June 12: Phase 2 open in Ontario



TIMELINE OF CHANGE



PHASE 1:

- Everyone came home at the same time
- Organization, planning and monitoring had to occur at the same time
- Self care had to be in the mix as well.



ONTARIO COVID-19

Child, Youth and Adult Mental Health and Addiction Survey

BEHAVIOURS

- 64% → watching more TV
- 56% → more time online
- 46% → “changes in eating habits”
- 44% → less exercise
- 40% → more video games
- 28% → more tension in household
- 42% → increased substance use/ gambling / alcohol use
- 9% → are not coping with any of the above

April 28-30, 2020!!!!



STRUCTURED PARENTING

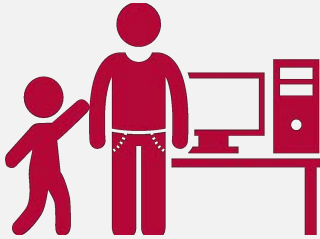
- Social media/internet
- Structured play
- School
- Travel/Location



“FREE RANGE” PARENTING

- All together
- More TV time
- Less structure
- Increase creativity

PARENTING NOW: HAVE WE STOPPED BAKING YET?

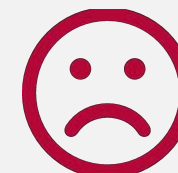


PARENTING DISRUPTIONS - SELF

- Working and Parenting at same time
- Stresses
- Self Care losses
- Role Strain

PARENTING DISRUPTIONS - OTHER

- Loss of Supports
- Loss of Structure
- Emotional/Behavioral Changes in Children
- Dual Roles



**WHEN DEMANDS
> COPING**

COPING
ABILITY

DEMANDS /
EXPECTATIONS
/ STRESSES





DEMANDS / EXPECTATIONS / STRESSES

- Reduce the demands, expectations and stressors on you
 - Reduce self-imposed expectations, e.g. practice self-compassion
 - Reduce external expectations that are unrealistic
 - Don't focus on what you cannot control



COPING ABILITY

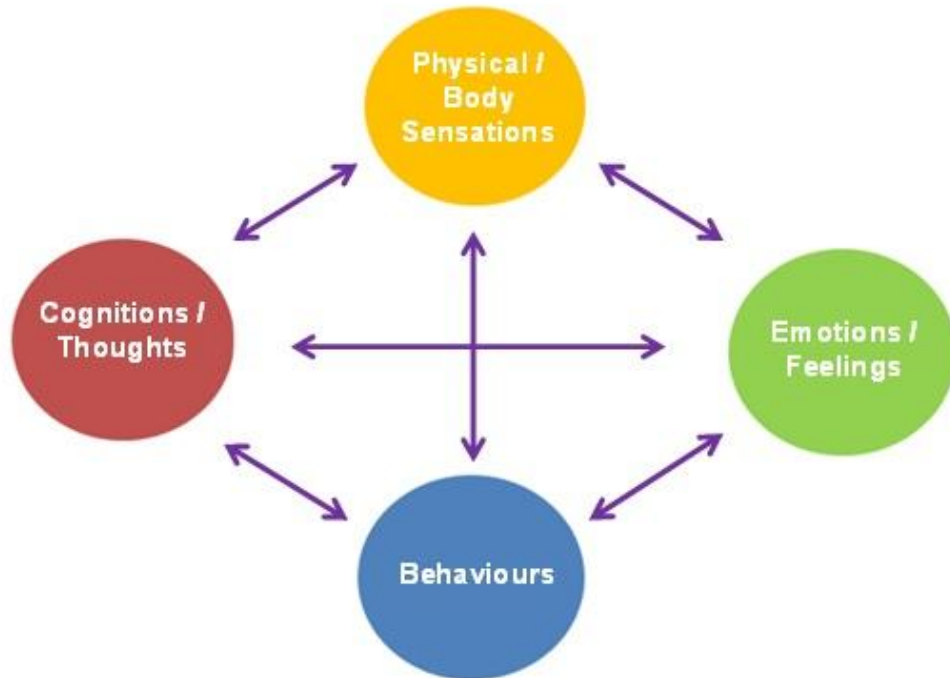
- Improving your coping ability
 - Do focus on what you can control:
 - Looking after yourself.
 - “Putting on your own oxygen mask.”
 - Self-compassion: Be kind to yourself like you would to a good friend.
 - When your own needs are met, it is easier to stay calm (and not yell at the kids), model empathy, kindness for the kids.
 - Ask yourself, “What do you need for your mental health?” and ensure those things are in your daily schedule
 - Build your support network and team.
 - Make sure you create your bubbles with self and child-care in mind first.



MAKE (OR THINK ABOUT) YOUR COVID SCHEDULE

- Predictability and routines help children and adults feel safe.
- Include key routines for kids and adult mental health
- Remember:
 - Schedules are a tool to help you out, not to stress you out.
 - If the schedule is stressful, change it...
 - More structured
 - More flexible

DON'T NEGLECT SLEEP



Signs and Signals:

- For all emotions (anxiety, sadness, anger etc) and behavioral issues like inattention/impulsivity
 - Thoughts,
 - Feelings,
 - Behaviours.
 - Body Complaints/Sleep Etc.
- How to Help
 - **Validate of feelings, empathize, acceptance**
 - “This is a stressful time. Its okay to feel upset / mad / sad / scared...”
 - **Comfort, co-regulate, Avoid avoidance**
 - “Let me give you a hug. Its good to cry and let out your feelings.”
 - **Is your child calmer? Consider rational thought:**
 - Find the “silver lining”, or a way to see “meaning and hope” from the situation.
 - “I like the way we get to go for a lot of walks these days.
 - **Emphasize positives that are the same as before:**



Coping, Crisis and Safety Planning

What is Coping, Crisis and Safety Planning?

Life isn't always easy -- in fact, it can get pretty stressful sometimes. During times of stress, it becomes hard to think and deal with things.

The solution? A Coping Plan is a helpful tool where you have written down ahead of time, possible stresses that might happen, and what you and your support network can do to support you.



The plan is created ahead of time, when people are calm. It is not done during a crisis, when people are upset and unable to think clearly.

A Coping Plan can also help during a crisis (which is why it might be called a Crisis Plan); and can also help keep people safe (which is why it can be called a Safety Plan).


Feel free to download this Google doc as a Microsoft Word document that you can modify to make your own custom coping, crisis or safety plan.


Reasons for Living: Purpose, Hope, Meaning and Belonging


Who do I live for? E.g. mom, dad, siblings, friends, relatives, pets, etc. What do I live for? E.g. future dreams, goals, etc.	
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CREATE A COPING / SELF-REGULATION PLAN

- A Coping / Self-Regulation Plan has all the key essentials written down.
- Read more here, along with link to a downloadable template.

FEELING	WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE IN THIS FEELING?	WHAT TRIGGERS OR MAKES ME FEEL THIS WAY?	WHAT HELPS WHEN I'M THIS WAY?	WHAT CAN OTHERS DO TO HELP WHEN I'M THIS WAY?
 BORED	<p>"I'm bored, there's nothing to do!" Healthy coping,</p> <p>e.g. helping out family</p> <p>Unhealthy coping, e.g. fighting with siblings, video game addiction</p>	<p>Lack of routines, lack of activities with purpose, meaning</p>	<p>Have healthy daily routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow boredom to encourage creativity AND • Daily routines, activities to give sufficient: • Sensory input (e.g. sound, visual, touch, movement) • Emotional stimulation. • Social stimulation. • Intellectual stimulation.

FEELING	WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE IN THIS FEELING?	WHAT TRIGGERS OR MAKES ME FEEL THIS WAY?	WHAT HELPS WHEN I'M THIS WAY?	WHAT CAN OTHERS DO TO HELP WHEN I'M THIS WAY?
 STRESSED	Annoyed, irritable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much noise • Difficult schoolwork 	Talking to family or friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just listen, and don't give advice unless I ask for it

FEELING	WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE IN THIS FEELING?	WHAT TRIGGERS OR MAKES ME FEEL THIS WAY?	WHAT HELPS WHEN I'M THIS WAY?	WHAT CAN OTHERS DO TO HELP WHEN I'M THIS WAY?
 OVERWHELMED	<p>When my face gets red, swearing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much noise • Being tired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not talking about things. • Going to my room and having things quiet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do accept I'm accept. • Don't try giving advice. • Don't add to my stress by shouting or raising your voice. • Do give space • Is it a crisis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call a crisis line

FEELING	WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE IN THIS FEELING?	WHAT TRIGGERS OR MAKES ME FEEL THIS WAY?	WHAT HELPS WHEN I'M THIS WAY?	WHAT CAN OTHERS DO TO HELP WHEN I'M THIS WAY?
 CALM	Engage, content, happy	Spending time outside, with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting enough sleep, nature time • No screens past 8 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask how my day was and how things are going • Ensure healthy routines.



RESOURCES: EMOTIONAL COPING

- eMentalHealth.ca:
 - Upsetting News Events: Helping Your Children and Youth Cope
- eMentalHealth.ca:
 - Nightmares: Helping Children & Youth with Problem Nightmares
- Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street
- GoNoodle.com
- Stop, Breathe & Think Mindfulness App for Kids
- Spaghetti Toes relaxation exercise
- Kids Help Phone Breathing Balloon
- Mighty Moe free anxiety workbook for kids



RESOURCES: EMOTIONAL COPING

- https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/covid19?gclid=Cj0KCQjwgJv4BRCrARIsAB17JI6bLKXSO0FaW7sF0Mzf6dNha_hoFqJbbilgzZPYqy2dlmVZYakSRxoaAv-kEALw_wcB covid copig
- Emental Health Guides
 - Sensory Strategies for Self-Regulation, Stress and Calming
 - Safety Plan
 - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
 - eMental Health - Depression in Children and Youth: Information for Parents and Caregivers
- Sesame Street: Kermit And Elmo Discuss Happy And Sad
- Emotionary by Funny Feelings®



RESOURCES: EMOTIONAL COPING

- [eMentalHealth.ca: Helping Your Children and Youth Be More Active!](#)
- [eMentalHealth.ca:](#)
- [Nature and Why It's Essential For Kids' Brains: Information for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Child Mind Institute: Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature](#)
- [CHEO Covid Resources quick sheets](#)



WORKING AT HOME WITH CHILDREN AROUND

- We are trying to parent, teach, and work at the same time.
 - Or we have to go in
 - No “off” time
- **Acceptance tip**
 - Have your kids wandered into the room?
 - Pre warn colleagues
 - Use resources available
 - Don't be a hero
- **ROUTINE AND SCHEDULING**

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

© Jessica McHale Photography

Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A- wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight

WORKING AT HOME Scheduling

- **OVERCOMMUNICATE.** Absolute off limit times, other needs.
- **Don't think in typical work hours.**
 - Take breaks together, re-organize and keep going
- **Use Electronics well**
 - Educational games, tv/TVO shows, Brain Games.
- **Discuss at the end of the day-worked didn't work.**



WORKING AT HOME

Hybrid Schooling

- We are trying to parent, teach, and work at the same time.
 - Discuss with older children schedules ahead of time
 - Communication back to school, particularly if LDs or BXs are issues
- Shared bubbling with other families/friends the same age.
- <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Tips-to-Juggle-Parenting-and-Working-at-Home-COVID-19.aspx>

Q1

4 and 7 year old fighting more becoming aggressive recommendations?

- Siblings have fights and disagreements when sibling A wants (or expects) one thing, and sibling B wants (or expects) another thing. When triggered, siblings go into the yellow zone, or red zone. Boundary violations.
- Are they in the red / yellow zone (e.g. actively verbally or physically aggressive)? If so, then separate each child.
 - Parent: “Okay, I see both of you are very upset. You are each going to take a time out in your bedrooms, and when you are both calmer, we’ll work through this.”
- Are both parties calmed down enough to talk? If so, then talk separately if its very sensitive. Otherwise, talk with both together.
 - Ask each of them “What was that fight about?”; “What got you so upset?”
 - Validate any emotions they are having, e.g. anger, frustration, sad, rejected, etc.
 - Try to problem-solve (only when people are calm): “Any ideas how we can resolve this?”
 - Ask “What do you think we might do next time to avoid getting into a fight?”
 - Ask “And if we do get into a fight, any ideas what we should do to help everyone calm down?”
 - Try to then resolve the conflict
 - Try to then plan ahead so that future conflicts are avoided
 - Provide some individual time with each child daily
- For more information
 - How to stop siblings fighting
<https://www.ahaparenting.com/ask-the-doctor-1/how-to-stop-siblings-fighting>

Q2

What to do if a child is shutting down/withdrawing and does not want to talk?

- Children typically withdraw when they are feeling sad or anxious, or due to opposition.
- The role of *effective coping skills* is important in promoting resiliency, self-efficacy and a sense of mastery.
- Help the child identify their zone if they are not overwhelmed with emotion. (red or blue)
- If they do not want to talk see if you can identify other ways to support them (behaviors, comfort, activity) to promote a sense of mastery within the situation.
- Model naming emotions and problem solving as best as you can.

- Children tend to shut down for emotional non oppositional reasons because they cannot name what they are feeling or because they feel embarrassed. Validate feelings of anxiety or sadness are valid.
- Recall past experiences when your child successfully managed a challenging moment and encourage them that they will be able to work through whatever they are feeling.
- Remind them that you are there when the child is ready.
- **For Further support contact**



<http://www.connexontario.ca/>

Q3

What supports are available to a single parent?

- We require supports. As a working single parent, making sure you expand your bubble is important.
- Finding other parents willing to share some days activities are important to include in your bubble.
- See what access you have to daycare/summer programming.
- Talk to teachers and other supports that you had pre-covid.

- Talk to children about what teamwork is required when they are with you.
- **For Peer Support**
 - https://www.facebook.com/groups/singlemomsbuddyottawa/?ref=pages_profile_groups_tab&source_id=114495086574780