

## **This is a Mental Health Awareness.**

Many of us, including children and young people are worried about coronavirus and how it will affect us and those we love. Below are a few tips to help support young people's mental health and some links to additional support.

### **1. Listen to what your child says and how they are feeling**

Children and young people may respond to stress in different ways. Children and young people can feel less anxious if they are able to express themselves in a safe and supportive environment. Stay calm – kids often take their emotional cues from the adults in their lives, so how you respond is important.

Listen to and acknowledge their concerns, speak kindly to them, and answer any questions they have honestly. Give them extra love and attention if they need it.

### **3. Limit news and conversation about coronavirus**

Children and young people, like adults, can become more worried by too much news on the coronavirus outbreak in the media and online. But blocking all news rarely helps, as children are likely to find things out from their friends or online. Turning off the TV or closing websites when children come into the room may increase their interest, and their imagination, too much. Cut down on the amount of coronavirus news and talk you and your family have. Try to stick to getting an update twice a day – it is enough to keep you informed but not overwhelmed.

### **5. Eat healthily and avoid too many treats**

We know it can be tempting to give sweets or chocolate to cheer your children up. But too many treats are not good for their health, especially if they are not as active as they normally are. Change4Life has loads of healthier snack ideas – and making them together is also a great way to keep the kids busy.

### **2. Be clear about what is happening**

Children and young people want to feel that those who care for them can keep them safe. Explain what will help to keep them and those they love safe, such as washing their hands regularly. Do this by talking openly and giving honest answers to questions they have.

Use reliable sources of information, like the <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> – and explain things in words they understand. If you cannot answer all their questions or stop them from worrying, focus on listening to their feelings. This will help them feel supported.

### **4. Create new routines**

Life has changed for all of us for a while. For most children and young people, certain routines like going to school have stopped. Routines make children and young people feel safer, so think about how to develop new routines that are interesting and fun.

Plan for the day or week that includes time for learning, playing and relaxing.

### **6. Children and young people need good sleep**

Children and young people need good-quality sleep, so it's important to keep to existing bedtime routines.

**Remember to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing! You will give the best support to those you love if you can deal with things calmly and confidently.**

In addition to the support offered by school If you are worried about how your child is coping, there is plenty of advice, help and support out there.

**Young Minds** Parents Helpline Enquiries - <https://youngminds.org.uk/contact-us/parents-helpline-enquiries/>

offers advice about mental health in children and young people.

- You can call the helpline on 0808 802 5544.

**Childline** offers a confidential telephone counselling service, so your child can speak to someone anonymously.

They can:

- call 0800 1111 any time, free of charge
- have an online chat with a counsellor - <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>
- check out the Childline message boards - <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/message-boards/>

**Shout** provides free, confidential support with trained crisis volunteers via text for anyone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK,
- or visit Crisis Text Line - <https://www.crisistextline.uk/> for more information.

**The Mix** offers a free, confidential telephone helpline and online service for young people.

They can:

- call 0808 808 4994 free of charge, from 11am to 11pm every day
- access the The Mix online community - <https://community.themix.org.uk/>
- or email The Mix - <https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/email-us>