



Hazelden Betty Ford Children's Program

Continuing Care Activity: Discussing the Coronavirus as a Family

As this unprecedented time in our lives continues to unfold, the Hazelden Betty Ford Children's Program is here for you to provide support to your family to have productive and inclusive conversations about COVID-19. The following are a few outside resources to help have conversations with your children about Coronavirus:

Graphic comic for kids to read: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

Tips for grown-ups in talking to children about the virus: <https://www.fredrogerscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FRC-COVID19-Response.pdf>

Activity: Have a family Conversation

Gather your family together and begin with a brainstorm, allowing everyone in the family to share what they have heard about the virus, and if they can recall, who or what they learned the information from—put this information onto a piece of paper. After brainstorming, help your children, as much as possible, to differentiate truth from fiction. Cross out information on the piece of paper that is fictitious and circle information that is factual.

Once the fact/fiction portion of the discussion is complete, create time for everyone to share their feelings related to the virus. Kids are likely experiencing a range of emotions. They may be scared about their health or a loved one's. They may be happy that they are out of school! They may feel confused by all of the information we are hearing. **All of these feelings are okay.**

Suggested questions for all to answer: What has been the hardest part of the virus for you? Who/what are you most worried about? What feelings do you have about the virus? Do you have any worry about getting the virus? What are some positives that you have seen or experienced?



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Conversation Tips:

You are probably not a medical expert: You do not need to have all of the facts! Become as informed as you can, but do not expect to have all of the answers. If you cannot answer a question, tell your family you do not know but will try your best to find an answer and get back to them.

Find balance: We are still early on in discovering the scale of the impact of this disease, so we want to continue to take precautions seriously while also maintaining hope that we are going to be okay.

Share the space: From the youngest to the oldest, each person in a family has valuable things to contribute to a family conversation. Make sure each person in the family has time to speak—"one person talks at a time" is a great rule to guide you.

Things Kids Need to Hear

- I care about you and there are many other (doctors, nurses, scientists, teachers, etc.) people who are working hard to keep you safe! Your number one job is to be a kid and have fun!
- It is okay to have many different feelings about the virus.
- It is not your job to stop the virus.
- You can help by taking care of yourself, washing your hands, and covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- You can always come to me with questions, and I will do my best to answer you, or I will find an answer for you.

Finally, after a hard conversation like this, make some time for self-care. Play a game together, watch a movie, read a book, go for a walk! Social distancing is a wonderful opportunity to practice your self-care (:

If you have not already, please let us know if you would like to receive these activities every Wednesday. As always, please reach out to us with any additional questions or concerns. We will make ourselves as available as possible!

Be well.

Children's Program Staff

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