

# Parent Support

## SUPPORTING YOU & YOUR FAMILY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

One day at a time



*Alone we are  
strong...  
together we are  
stronger*

As we all try to deal with these unusual circumstances, it is important for you and/or your child to know that you may feel overwhelmed, frustrated, confused, upset etc...and this is normal.

### REMEMBER...

1. **Model CALM for your child and help them to feel SAFE.** Children and young people mirror their parents emotionally—feelings are contagious.

2. **Reassure your child** that you are there for them and they can ask questions anytime. Don't minimise or deny their feelings or your own. Let them know that it's ok to feel upset and that things will get better.



3. **Let them talk it out.** Make time and start the conversation with them. Listen to their fears and concerns. Label and validate their feelings. Problem solve together. Be available physically and emotionally.

4. **Maintain a routine.** This is vital for everyone's mental health. Try something like this: Brekky, study, break, study, lunch, check in with friends, walk, study, fun break, music, friends, supper, telly, wind down and relax together, bedtime routines.

5. **Have daily family meetings** where you agree who does what and how you are going to support each other and get through this together. Agree on how you will deal with arguments.



6. **Be honest about the facts and help them to understand what is happening.** This will be different depending on the age of your child.

Check out [www.mindheart.co/descargables](http://www.mindheart.co/descargables)

7. **Enjoy extra time together** - eating, playing, being together in small special ways. Use this as an opportunity to have fun together.

8. **Keep an eye on their social media activity.** Ask where they are getting their information. Don't allow them to feed their fears and upsets. Try to get a balance between talking about what is happening and not overdoing it.

9. **Do something special together.** Write a letter/ email to people who you won't see for a while; thank those who are helping you and your community. Video call friends and family. Keep a family log of your daily lives at this time—it will be something to look back on in the years to come. Mark your achievements in it.

10. **Tackle stress by doing calming things together.** Try singing, dancing, board-games, or read a book together.

11. **Monitor your own stress levels and mind yourself.** Debrief with someone you trust.

12. **Name the positives out loud and list the things that you are grateful for.** Ask your children to name the people and things that they are grateful for.

13. **Exercise is great for beating stress.** Shake off stress by moving. Try walking and talking with your family and at other times with someone you trust so that you can talk through your concerns.

14. **Do something in your neighbourhood.** Take the time to do something kind for a neighbour. Together everyone becomes stronger,

## YOU MIGHT NOTICE SOME OF THESE SENSATIONS, IT IS A NORMAL REACTION

- Anxiety and hypervigilance (for example looking for symptoms which may be a sign of the virus)
- Feeling overwhelmed, angry and snapping.
- Signs of stress like palpitations—heart racing or fluttering, difficulty breathing, headaches, feeling sick.

These are all normal reactions to a strange situation.

### EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS. DON'T BOTTLE UP.

Get a few minutes to yourself every day. Write down how you feel somewhere private. This really helps in stressful times.

Fearing the worst is normal. Counter these thoughts and feelings with positive self-talk and gratitude,

It is normal to be worried so set up a worry window for yourself where you write down all your worries of the day and give yourself permission to think about them during this specific time instead of worries consuming the whole day

Stay positive. You have survived lots of challenge and you will get through this too.

Self-compassion– treat yourself as you would a best friend.



## CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF REGULARLY...

- \* Recognise that this is a challenging time for you and your children.
- \* Stay healthy – eat well, get 8 hours sleep, and get some exercise
- \* Stay in touch with family and friends using phone calls and social media.
- \* Relax – plan time and activities for yourself.
- \* Support your children by making time to listen to them and being honest,
- \* Ask for help. See the contacts overleaf which provide accurate information about Covid-19 and phonedlines for you to contact someone if you are worried.
- \* Take slow deep breaths when you feel overwhelmed – in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4.
- \* Maintain rules and routines. It is important that everyone knows what is expected of them.

Who can you contact to support you during this time?



Give practical guidance: Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes.

## Important Contacts

ParentLine 1890 927 277  
*Mon-Thurs 10am-8pm and Fri 10-am-4pm*

St. Pat's Information Line (01) 249 3333  
*Mon-Fri 9am-5pm*

Samaritans 116 123

Samaritans SMS 087-260 9090

Pieta House Helpline 1800 247 247  
[www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)

Barnardos Parent Support 1800 910 123  
10am-2pm [parentsupport@barnardos.ie](mailto:parentsupport@barnardos.ie)

Crisis Text Line Ireland 086 1800 280

[yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie) 1800 111 888

Aware Support line 1800 804848  
10am-10pm [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)

## Get the Facts about Covid-19



[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) - 1850  
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World Health  
Organization

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)



[www.rte.ie/news](http://www.rte.ie/news)