

Talking to Children About the Next Phase



What to Expect

- Being a role model – it starts with you
- Creating a safe and comforting environment
- The "Talk" about COVID-19
- The "New Normal"
- What will change?
- Altered Reality
- Your parenting style during crisis
- Helping children deal with COVID-19 deaths



Learning Points

- Help you realize the critical role you play in helping your child cope with COVID-19
- Assist you in creating a safe and reassuring home environment
- Prepare you for the conversations about the many changes we need to prepare our children to move forward
- Recognize your parenting style will influence your success in navigating COVID-19



It Starts with You

- Be a positive role model
- You set the tone for your children and household
- Check in with your emotions regularly
- Stay Calm
- Practice self-care
- Model healthy habits to avoid virus



Create a Safe and Comforting Environment

- Reassure child that they are safe
- Let child know whatever they may be feeling is ok
- Be available and encourage conversation when your child wants to talk
- Encourage conversation but allow your child to take the lead
- Don't force conversations if child isn't ready
- Listen for what is said and what is not said
- Show empathy
- Create and maintain daily routines
- Limit access to news/social media

The "Talk" About COVID-19

- Prepare yourself
- Choose a good time to talk
- Ask them what they already know
- Ask them what questions they have
- Use clear and concise language
- Give them age appropriate facts and information
- Honesty is the best policy
- If you don't know something, say so and offer to research together
- Give them time and space to feel in control

Will We "Go Back To Normal"?

- There will be a "New Normal"
- Many changes on the horizon!
- What will stay the same?
- The importance of the "known"



Changes in Boundaries and Socializing

- Physical boundaries
- Wearing masks
- Physical distancing
- Socializing in smaller groups of friends
- Limitations
- Need for consistent reminders



Back to an Altered Reality

- Resuming daily activities – what will look the same/different
- Continue to celebrate life's events in new and creative ways
- Returning to school – worries/concerns
- Parents returning to work
- Health Safety discussion for children



Parenting Styles During a Crisis

- Authoritative style (Firm, consistent, structure offered, adaptability is high)
- Authoritarian style (Very rigid, too much structure, concrete thinking)
- Permissive style (lack of rule enforcement, the "friend" v. "parent" role)



Parenting Style and Reintegration

Your Parenting style may influence reintegration.

- Authoritative – cautiously optimistic
- Authoritarian – lack of choices
- Permissive – too many choices



Harsh Reality - Death and COVID-19

- Prepare yourself and your child for the sad possibility of losing a loved one
- Lay out the facts based on child's age
- Avoid euphemisms that might confuse the child
- Allow for space and emotions
- Finds ways a child can honor the loved one



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Death Through the Ages

Children process death very differently at various developmental stages

- Ages: 2 to 6: Temporary/reversible
- Ages 6 to 9: Clearer understanding
- Ages 9 to 12: Fully developed
- Age 12 through adolescence: There is a sense of egocentrism and a tendency to believe that they are immortal and indestructible.



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In Summary ...

- The "New Normal" will require adaptation
- Be present and available to your child
- Use clear and simple language in describing changes
- Talking to kids about the virus and death are complicated, be prepared
- Validate your child's emotions
- Authoritative parenting yields best results!



Resources

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- Returning to 'normal' after COVID-19. (2020, June 16). Retrieved June 28, 2020, from <https://thehelpful.com.au/podcast-the-voice-of-mental-health-after-covid-19/>
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- Whyte, A. (2020, May 10). COVID-19 Parent Questions: How Do I Set Boundaries for My Teen? Retrieved June 28, 2020, from <https://www.treatment.com/blog/covid-19-boundaries-for-teens/>
- www.aacp.org (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
- www.cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control)
- www.mayoclinic.org
- <https://www.unicoforge.org/coronavirus-how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>



Thank You for Attending Today's
Session!
Talking to Children about COVID-19


