



# ADVICE FOR PARENTS

DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## HOW THE CORONAVIRUS COULD BE SENDING YOU INTO SURVIVAL MODE

When we are stressed or worried about something like many of us are now, our bodies feel that stress and our brain responds by flicking into protection mode. When this happens, a part of our brain lights up that is designed to protect us - this is called the reptilian brain, or our survival brain. When our survival brain is on, our thinking brain turns off. This can have a negative impact on our well being and mental health if we stay in survival mode too long.

### THE EFFECTS

**MORE EMOTIONAL**

**FORGETFUL**

**DISORGANISED**

**LOW IMMUNE SYSTEM**

**HARD TO CONNECT TO OTHERS**

**SNAPPY/ IRRITABLE**



### WHAT YOU CAN DO



TURN OFF THE NEWS



LESS TIME ON YOUR PHONE



CHILD APPROPRIATE DISCUSSIONS



BE CREATIVE



GET FRESH AIR



LISTEN TO MUSIC

### WHAT HAPPENS?

When we are in survival mode. We go into fight, flight or freeze. This is our way of dealing with the stress and the feeling of being threatened...

#### FIGHT MODE

You want to fight back. You might be getting in to heated discussions about the virus. Arguing with loved ones more. Snappy or frustrated. Wanting to do something pro-active like shopping or finance planning.

#### FLIGHT MODE

It is all overwhelming and you want to get away from it. You walk out of the room when people discuss the virus. You avoid the news. You don't want to hear anymore about it. You want to be alone.

#### FREEZE MODE

You are not sure what to do. You shut down, are indecisive. You are in your head and worry is taking over. You know you should do something but are not sure what.

**WE CAN GO INTO EACH PROTECTION MODE DEPENDING ON THE DAY AND THE SITUATION**



**BE THE ADULT YOU WOULD NEED IF YOU WERE A CHILD**



**PLAY AND HAVE FUN, BE TOGETHER**



# YOUR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

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## YOUR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR MAY BE DIFFICULT

When children are dealing with changes it can be unsettling. You can usually tell a child is struggling with the change by their behaviour. The coronavirus has caused lots of schools to close which means the children will be missing their friends, routine, teachers and social time. So, be ready for some ups and downs with behaviour, especially if they are having to spend extended periods of time in the house. Here are some top tips for supporting them...



### REMEMBER



When children feel overwhelmed their brains go in to shut down ( see advice above) this not only flicks on the survival brain but it also flicks on the emotional brain too. Children will become more teary, fussy and angry as a result. Your job? To calm that survival brain and turn the thinking brain back on! How? By helping them feel calm and safe.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



### FOCUS ON CONNECTION NOT DISCONNECTION

Children respond better when they feel connected to you. Try to put aside at least 30 mins every day where you focus on them. This doesn't have to be all at once. Put away your phone and play with them/ draw with them/ watch their favourite TV program whilst having a cuddle/ read to them.



### GIVE THEM LOTS OF EYE CONTACT

Another way to help your children feel connected to you is to look at them when they talk to you or ask you a question. It is so easy to be distracted with other things but try to make sure you are giving them lots of eye contact and this will help their behaviour more than you think.



### CHANGE YOUR APPROACH WHEN TELLING THEM OFF

If you need to tell them off for their behaviour try to do this in a positive way. Avoid saying no, don't or can't because they will shut down and stop listening. Instead try a sentence that makes them feel loved like "We look after each other in this family, keep your legs to yourself" or "Its my job to keep you safe, so we are stopping this game now" they are more likely to listen to you if you take this approach.



### NOTICE THEIR FEELINGS

Your childrens behaviour will improve if they feel understood and loved (even when they have done something wrong). If you are about to tell them off, start with noticing their feelings first. "You are really angry, that is why you kicked", "You are feeling left out, that's is why you said she couldn't play", " You feel alone, that is why you're grumpy". This will help them feel valued and help improve their behaviour. It will also help them to understand themselves more.



# HAVE A ROUTINE

## DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

### ROUTINE WILL HELP YOU ALL FEEL BETTER

It will be very easy to let all routine go out of the window during this epidemic. Being asked to stay at home for the foreseeable future means you do not have to get up, get dressed and get organised with your day. But if you let your routine slip, it will have a negative impact on your well being. It will also contribute to behavioural difficulties with your children. They need the routine to help them feel safe and secure. Without it they might begin to feel anxious and unsettled. Try to fight the urge to stay in your pjs everyday. You need the burst of energy it takes to help you feel sane!

### DURING THE WEEK

#### MORNING

- Get up and put some lighthearted music on
- Get dressed, brush teeth and go downstairs
- Have breakfast sat together with no TV or distractions
- Start your day

#### LUNCH TIME + DINNER TIME

- Eat at the same time every day for lunch and dinner time
- Ask the children to help you set the table/ take the food in
- Sit together to eat with no TV or distractions (play some games - see activity sheet)
- Ask the children to help you clear up and take plates back in to the kitchen

#### BED TIME

- Turn off the TV and devices and put relaxing music on you tube 30 mins before they are about to go to bed
- Read books together (it calms the brain)
- Do a calm visualisation before bed (you too!) - See free resources

### IN THE MIDDLE



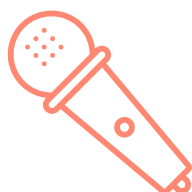
DO SOME  
LEARNING



DO SOME  
PLAYING



HAVE MOVIE  
TIME



SING AND  
DANCE



FACETIME  
FRIENDS



# FILLING YOUR TIME

DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## TIME TO LEARN, TIME TO PLAY AND TIME TO REST

No one knows how long schools will be closed for and how long we will have to stay inside for. That can feel overwhelming, especially if you have children at home and are trying to work from home. You need to find time to teach them, let them play and to rest too! Here are some ideas to get you started. We hope you find something that suits your family.

### MAKE LEARNING FUN 4-10 YEAR OLDS



#### WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTER

**Activity:**

- Ask the children to choose one of their favourite TV programs and watch an episode together
- Ask them to think about what happened in the program and then to write a letter to one of the characters.
- They need to ask the character 3 questions and give 3 opinions about what happened in the program.



**Learning objectives:**

Writing  
Spelling  
Comprehension  
Imagination



#### WRITE A SONG

**Activity:**

- Ask the children to choose one of their favourite songs and listen to it together
- Get the lyrics up on your phone or computer and read them together
- Ask the children to write their own song (they can use the same tune if they want)
- When they have finished practice singing it all together as a family



**Learning objectives:**

Writing  
Spelling  
Comprehension  
Imagination  
Listening skills  
Developing rhythm  
Movement and exercise



#### FIND THE TOY/ OBJECT

**Activity:**

- Pick any medium sized object in the house, a toy, teddy, car etc and hide it around the house for the children to find
- If you find it, then it is your turn to hide it



**Learning objectives:**

Patience  
Team work  
Listening skills  
Movement and exercise



## MIXTURES

### Activity:

- Find an old bottle - a juice bottle/ old water bottle/ old washing up liquid bottle
- find some random tubs and boxes of different sizes and some spoons - wooden or metal
- Put the kids in the bath with shallow water or send them outside with some buckets/ pans
- Give them some washing up liquid (small amount) and let them make mixtures. If they are outside they can add leaves too!



### Learning objectives:

Imagination  
Creativity  
Calming the brain  
Problem solving



## HIDE AND SENTENCE

### Activity:

- Write down different sentences on bits of paper and cut/ rip apart each word then hide them/ stick them around the house
- Set a timer on your phone and ask the children to find them all before the timer goes off
- Once they are found ask the children to make up sentences with the words (they do not have to be the same ones as you did at the start)



### Learning objectives:

Comprehension  
Reading  
Problem solving  
Exercise



## FIND THE WORD

### Activity:

- Get some paper and a pen/felt tip and write loads of random words on it - make sure its words your child can read or nearly read
- Give your child a pen and say a word for them to find. You say each word (as fast as they can handle) and they have to scribble out each one as they spot it/ read it.



### Learning objectives:

Reading  
Phonics  
Confidence

## LETS DANCE

### Activity:

- Organise a video WhatsApp call/ Facetime call with a friend who also has children.
- Tell the children they have got 15 mins to come up with a dance routine together virtually.
- Give them some time to practice and go and get on with some jobs (with them in ear shot)
- After 10 mins both parents come back into their rooms and watch the childrens dance!



### Learning objectives:

Social skills  
Problem solving  
Listening skills  
Working together  
Well being and happiness!

## LUNCH TIME AND DINNER TIME GAMES

Play these together while you are eating to keep your kids occupied and engaged!

### 1. Guess the animal in my head

One person thinks of an animal in their head and gives everyone else 4 clues. Everyone else has to guess what it is. The one who guesses right gets a go!

- Adapt this to become guess the colour/ person/ place/ object in my head

### 2. 12'S

The idea is to take it in turns to count up to 12 but the person who gets to 12 is out! You can say up to three numbers each, like this.. person one: 1 2 3, person two: 3 4, person three: 5 6 7, person four: 8 9 10, Person five: 11 person six: 12 (OUT!)



# LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

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## YOU ARE SO IMPORTANT IN ALL OF THIS

This is such an unusual situation to be in and how you deal with this will decide what your experience will be. It is important you take care of your wellbeing. That means, you take care of your happiness and sense of feeling good. You have to look after you in order to be able to do a good job of looking after your children, relationships, do homework and deal with behaviour. Oh and your own work too (if you have to work from home as-well!) Here are some important things to remember and our top tips.

**YOU CAN'T CONTROL  
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN  
THE WORLD.  
BUT YOU CAN CONTROL  
HOW YOU RESPOND TO IT**



**WHAT YOU FOCUS ON GETS  
BIGGER..SO FOCUS ON THE  
GOOD STUFF. BE IN  
CONTROL OF YOUR  
THOUGHTS AND MINDSET  
- FOCUS ON THE LIGHT NOT  
THE DARK**



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR THOUGHTS

You are not your thoughts. You probably have loads of worries running through your head right now. You might be thinking negatively and allowing yourself to believe some of that stuff. "I can't manage this", "We can't survive", "We are unsafe".

Remember: You get to choose the thoughts you accept and those you reject. Be in control and focus on good thoughts instead...



### HOW?

- Write down all the things you are thankful for in your life (even the smallest things)
- Write down something that made you smile at the end of each day
- Replace negative thoughts with positive ones. "We are unsafe" becomes - "We are healthy and together" or "We can't survive" becomes "We can get through this"
- Have time for yourself - a bath, a early night, a 20 min cup of tea alone. Do not feel guilty for making this time for yourself
- Meditate each night before bed (see our free resources)



# MEDITATION

## THE TREE

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### INSTRUCTIONS

- Do this with your children before bed or if they have just had a big argument/ melt down
- Make sure you are calm and happy when you do this so it feels safe for the children
- Do this once a day or once a week - either way it will make a difference to their overall mood and they will feel happier during the day too!
- Do this with yourself too, read it first and then imagine it in your head when you go to bed. Play relaxing music if that helps too!

### HELP CALM THEM WITH SOME BREATHING FIRST...

Close your eyes. Listen to your body and take a calm breath in and out...in and out...each time you breathe in, imagine you're breathing in goodness. When you breath out...imagine your blowing out any worries and anything that's upset you today...breathe in the goodness...and blow out the sillies or worries...( x3) Okay now focus on your body... you are relaxed and ready to imagine a very special place. Keep your eyes closed and imagine the story in your head..."

### READ THIS OUT TO THE CHILDREN/ PRE-READ IT FOR YOURSELF

Imagine your stood in a field full of flowers...you've got bare feet and you're stood on the cool green grass, there is a light breeze. You can feel it on your face. Raise your head to the sky. The sun is shining down on you're face and it feels warm. You're whole body is relaxed. You look around the field at the flowers, what colour are they? You just stand there for a moment feeling content and happy. This is your safe place. You look ahead and you see a tree in the distance. The sunlight is shining down above the tree and it glows. You begin to walk toward it. You can feel the ground beneath your feet. You feel safe and secure. You get to the tree and you realise, now you're close that little stars are hanging on it. Each one has a special message of hope on it. you reach up and pick one off the tree, you look down at it in your hand, What does your message say? You hold the star in your hand and you smile. It makes you feel happy. You sit down under the tree and relax. Your body feels quiet and calm. The tree is your special place, you can come back here any time. Soon it's time to go. You stand up and say good bye to the tree. You put a star in your pocket to remember your time here. You begin to walk back to the flowers in the field. Slowly you walk through the cool grass and feel happy. You finally get to the field and you take a deep breath. Smile and wave goodbye to the tree. When you're ready open your eyes.



CALMS YOUR HEART RATE



REDUCES STRESS



CLEARs YOUR MIND



HELPS YOU SLEEP