

8 Ways to Promote Self Care for You and Your Kids

from your (social distancing) Hanalei School Counselor



1. Be Available to Talk

Kids have big questions, and it's okay to answer them. Take cues from your kids and offer clear but concise answers in developmentally appropriate language. Keep the focus on what you are doing to prepare and prevention strategies that are within your control like proper handwashing and avoiding large crowds.

Videos: How to Talk to Kids About COVID-19

How to Talk to Your Kids About Covid-19

- News of COVID-19 is everywhere. Many parents are wondering how to talk about the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from Jamie Howard, PhD, Clinical Psychologist at the Child Mind Institute.

Corona Virus Explained

- This is a good video for **younger children** that explains what the virus actually is and how to prevent it.

2. Limit News Exposure

Even when it seems like they're not listening, kids pick up on what they hear on TV and radio. Newscasters' tone of voice can be enough to set off alarm bells for kids, and unfamiliar words like pandemic and outbreak can be fear-inducing. Opt for watching or listening to news reports when kids are in bed or choose to read news articles if possible.

3. Stick to Routines and Boundaries

Kids thrive with routines and boundaries, and predictability can be very comforting in anxious times. When some things feel out of control, routines can give kids a sense of security. School-aged kids might be used to seeing a visual schedule in their classrooms, so try using one at all. Write your daily routine on a whiteboard or make a paper schedule together. And make sure you include fun activities in your daily routine! Play board games, play outside, or have silly dance parties.

4. Set and Track Daily Goals

Set small daily goals and track progress so kids can work toward something important to them! Make sure the goals are within their control. Set goals around how much they'll read each day, how many free throws they'll practice each day, or how many kind gestures they'll show toward family members. Track progress on a goal chart so they can have a visual reminder of the progress they're making!

5. Start or Continue Mindful Practices



Mindfulness is an amazing practice for people of all ages. If you don't have a regular mindful practice already built in to your family time, try adding it to your routine. This can look like 5 minute morning or bedtime guided meditation (look for apps like Calm or Headspace) or simple mindful mandala coloring. Find a mindful practice that you all enjoy doing together!

Mindfulness Video Links:

[From Mindless to Mindful](#)

[Weather the Storm](#)

[Rainbow Breath](#)

[Cosmic Kids Yoga Adventure](#)

6. Try Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Help your child release tension from their body with a progressive muscle relaxation. In this exercise, children gradually tense up their muscles and then release them. Find scripts for this on your favorite mindfulness app or on Youtube:

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Video Links:

[Melting](#)

[Chin Up](#)

[Progresive Muscle Relaxation for Kids](#)

7. Use a Journal or Feeling Tracker

Give your kids a journal to write about feelings or use a feelings tracker daily. Sometimes worries are so big it feels like they define our whole day, but when we keep track of our feelings throughout the day with a visual tool, it's easier to see that worries are a smaller part of a healthy balance of emotions.

8. Be Mindful of Your Own Worries

It's completely reasonable for everyone to have some level of worry. But kids do pick up on our feelings and notice our anxieties, and they will take cues from us. If you're feeling anxious, practice your own mindful or calming activities, call a friend or loved one, practice self care, or reach out for help. Even if you're stuck at home, your therapist may offer phone services or you can try an app like [Better Help](#) or [Talkspace](#).