

10 Tips for Kids' Mental Health during COVID-19

1

It's normal to feel anxious. Do not ignore anxious thoughts. Instead, be aware of your anxiety and accept the feeling. Keep things in perspective; challenge your extreme or unhelpful thoughts. If you are experiencing worsening symptoms, do not be afraid to reach out to formal mental health supports from a recognized agency.

2

Talk it out. Make mental health part of the regular vernacular in your home by encouraging your kids to talk about their feelings, validating their thoughts, and discussing what mental health means and how to keep a positive outlook.

3

Make it a family affair. Reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness by creating as many social experiences as you can. Sit down for meals together, cook and bake as a family, and make family entertainment (games, funny movies) or comic relief a part of your routine

4

Find an outlet. Artistic expression is an excellent outlet (for all ages!) – from arts and crafts, to journaling and computer design. There are also online social networks, such as Roblox that can effectively help kids socially connect with others, if done in moderation and balanced with in-person interactions.

5

Shift focus to others. Research shows that giving to others helps the giver feel happier. Consider asking your kids to help buy groceries for a neighbour in need. Even a small gesture like making a phone or video call to cheer up an older relative or a friend can result in kids feeling uplifted.

6

Exercise in fresh air. Get your kids moving outside. There are plenty of winter activities to consider, from sledding, skating and ice hockey, to simply taking a daily walk around the block. It's especially important to get out when the sun is shining to help boost spirits

7

Plan. Put activities, calls, meal ideas – anything you can on the calendar to have a schedule and events (even phone calls to a friend) to look forward to. By planning, it doesn't look like you have an empty social calendar.

8

Positive Habits. Make a list of as many positive habits as you can think of! Refer to the list when you are feeling down – or better yet, put them in a jar and pull one out when you need a boost.

9

Switch it up! Create new traditions. Try new recipes or cuisines that you've never cooked. Wear a new hairstyle. Paint your nails a colour that you've never tried. Or allow a child to paint your nails!

10

Do what you can. Take the recommended precautions as outlined by Health Canada and other credible health agencies. Remain focused on the factors within your control, such as washing hands, covering your mouth during coughs and sneezes, avoiding non-essential travel, etc.