

How to Handle Anxiety Related to the Virus (talking to your kids about COVID-19)

1. Validate- Children pick up on how things are said, even if they don't understand what is being said. They can feel fear and sense worry around them. They can hear our tones of voices. If your child expresses confusion, anxiety, concern, etc., acknowledge and validate those feelings. Try phrases like, "I know this day has been crazy and that makes us feel out of sorts/frustrated/confused. I feel out of sorts when my day is different too. I hear you're feeling worried. Let's talk about ways we can help you feel safer."
2. Communicate clearly and honestly- Allow your kids to ask questions, and answer them honestly. A good rule of thumb is to keep information to single sentences, that are easily digestible (5-10 words). The best way to fight worry or fear is with reassurance and factual information. Try phrases like:
 - "A virus is like a cold."
 - "If the virus happens here, I will keep you safe."
 - "If we get sick we have doctors and medicine to help us."
 - "We are doing lots of things to stay safe/healthy."
 - "People are working together to keep us healthy."
3. Control the environment- Turn off the news when children are around. Step outside or in a different room to take a virus-related phone call. Maintain a routine. Manage your own feelings so not to heighten stress or anxiety in your children. Create an environment of comfort and communication so that your children know they are safe and that life is not out of control. You set the temperature of your home... our goal as parents is to be a thermostat (control the temperature of your home) and not a thermometer (reacting to the temperature).

Please reach out with any questions you have, or if you feel that your little one is struggling. Sending love!

-Mrs. Bayard, LPC
School Counselor