



# COPING WITH STRESS



Some guidelines and tips for you to keep calm and manage stress. Remember, you are a role model to your children, and how you handle this stressful situation can affect how your children manage their worries. This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so that you can support your children.

- **Stay connected.** Make sure you're communicating with people in your social circle, especially others who are in similar situations, such as other parents. Decide how you'll keep in touch with friends and family members – texting, phone calls, video chats, social media, etc.



- **Set boundaries.** Limit exposure to news coverage, including social media. Know sources where you can find reliable information. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

- **Eat well, and stay hydrated.** Your physical health is an importance part of your mental health. You and your family's appetites may change if your routine has changed, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating, and drinking water regularly helps with mood and energy levels.



- **Take care of your immediate environment.** As you are spending a lot of time at home, you may find it helpful to keep it clean and tidy, although this is different for different people. You and your family members may have different ideas about what counts as 'tidy' or how much it matters. It could help to decide together how you'll use different spaces. And you could discuss what each person needs to feel comfortable.

- **Create a new routine.** It may help to write this down with your children, and use a visual schedule, such as the one provided on the St. Joseph's Foundation website, to display at home. Try to follow the ordinary routine as much as possible. Get up at the same time as normal, follow

the usual morning routines, and go to bed at the usual time. Set alarms to remind you of the new schedule if that helps.

- Modify your daily activities to meet the current reality of the situation – focus on what you and your children can **realistically accomplish**. Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day, like making a school timetable. Children will follow a routine better if they help make it.



- **Create rotas.** If you are in a situation where family members are arguing over the use of a tablet / TV, who cooks or cleans, etc. It may be useful to create a rota together as a family. This can help you and your family agree to a fair system to help avoid arguments.

- **Try to keep active, and get as much fresh air as you can.** If you have a garden, or a park within 2km of your home, try to spend time in these spaces while respecting social distancing guidelines. Bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger and make you feel more relaxed. Even opening the windows in your house to let in fresh air can be beneficial for your mood.



- **Give yourself small breaks.** Try a one-minute meditation (linked below) when you are feeling stressed or worried. Attempt to control any self-defeating statements and replace them with more helpful thoughts. When your children are asleep, ensure to do something fun or relaxing for yourself.
- **At the end of every day, take a minute to think about the day.** Tell your child about one positive or fun thing that they did. Praise YOURSELF for what you did well today.



# Working from home?



Remote working, or working from home may have been suggested by your employers due to guidelines to help contain COVID-19. For many people, this is their first experience working from home, and you may have trouble remaining focused, you may feel isolated, or you may find it difficult to deal with your children who are at home from school while you are trying to manage your workload. Here are some suggested ways to manage stress working from home:

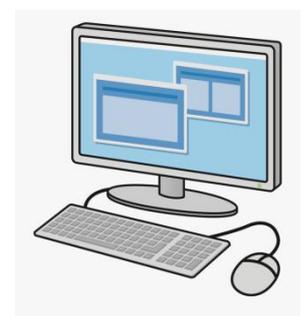
- **Be aware of your own stress.** Look for ways to relax and manage your stress, and schedule the time within your day to take time to yourself.

Try a breathing exercise, take a walk, practise a guided online meditation, watch TV or any other activity that brings you calmness.



- **Create a regular routine for yourself.** Make time for what you need, including time to shower, get ready, work, eat lunch, go for a walk, and so forth. It may be tempting to skip some of your usual steps because you're working from home. But don't let work take your entire day just because you're working from home!

- **Get set up for success.** Find a practical spot in your home for your workspace, somewhere that is comfortable and organized. If you organize your workspace, you can feel more in control of stressful situations when they come up.
- **Create a game plan with your children.** As your children are at home with you, it is best to create a regular schedule to help minimize distractions during your workday. You can use a visual schedule, or keep them busy with activities. It is also important to **be realistic** with your children - they will not be able to stay quiet and calm all day, but perhaps they can for 15 minutes while you take a call.



# Online Resources

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Headspace: One minute guided meditation -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1Ndym-lsQg&t=1s>

Unicef: COVID-19 Parenting tips: <https://www.covid19parenting.com/>

A wealth of resources, including information on how to explain to children and young people what the coronavirus is and resources to use at home with your children - <http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/educationalpsychology>