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OCTOBER 2020

One of the best ways to combat anxiety and depression is to continue to explain this extraordinary pandemic to our kids:

Read this [article](#) to learn more.

One of the most important steps is to manage your own anxiety FIRST. If you are afraid, worried, stressed, your children will be too.

Remember to validate how Covid is affecting your kids and your whole family. It's easy to get used to this "new normal" and to stop talking about all the changes, unknowns, and uncertainties.

The best way to support your adopted child as they navigate an unknown future, is to establish routines, structure, and expected activities. No matter how old your child is, do not underestimate the power of a written schedule.

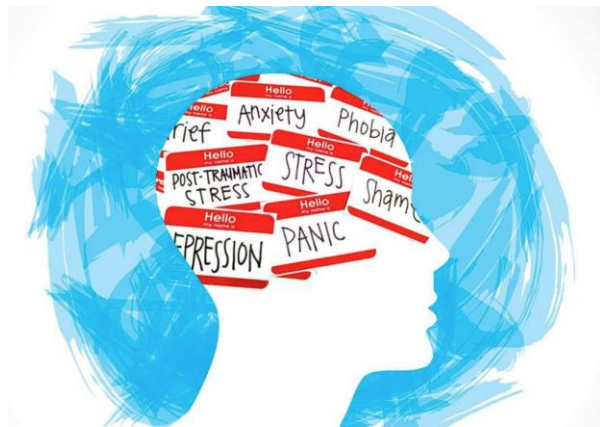
If your child shows any of the following, they may need extra help from a mental health provider: Increased aches and pain and focus on their body, changes in mood or behavior, clinginess and problems separating, isolation, and increased worries/inability to focus.

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# Post-Perm Newsletter

## Mental Wellness: The Corona Edition

- Research shows that adopted children are at higher risk for suffering from mental health disorders. Twelve to 14 percent of adopted children in the U.S. between 8 and 18 are diagnosed with a mental health diagnoses each year, and adopted children are twice as likely as children brought up with their biological parents to suffer from anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues.
- The Coronavirus only increases this propensity for mental unwellness.
- The rest of this month's newsletter will help you help your kids, no matter what age, to navigate through this pandemic and stay mentally well.



The [write-up](#) on UNICEF'S website [How Teenagers Can Protect Their Mental Health During Coronavirus](#) gives the following tips:

- Anxiety is normal and can even be helpful as it can remind us to protect ourselves by wearing masks, etc.
- Make sure you partake in distractions.
- Find creative ways to connect with your friends: meet at a park and remain 6 feet apart, set-up a weekly zoom party with your friends, bake cookies together through Facetime.
- Focus on yourself: Try something you've always wanted to do including taking an online yoga class, start a new book, create a journal, take up hiking.
- Feel your feelings: that's the only way through them. It's VERY normal right now to be frustrated with the limitations and sad because you miss your old life before the pandemic.

## Contact Us

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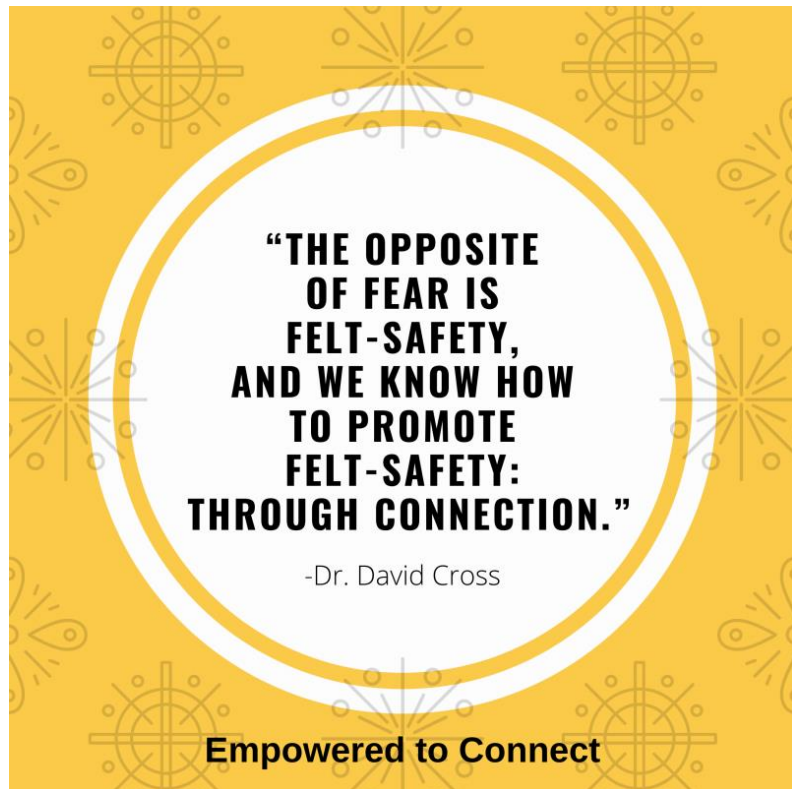
[We are on Facebook!](#)

Please send feedback and questions to:  
[kkupfer@jsofhnbg.org](mailto:kkupfer@jsofhnbg.org)

Every month we are going to have an “Ask the Director” column, featuring our very own Rachel Kuhr, Director of the AdoptionLinks Program. If you have a question for Rachel please send it to [kkupfer@jsofhnbg.org](mailto:kkupfer@jsofhnbg.org).



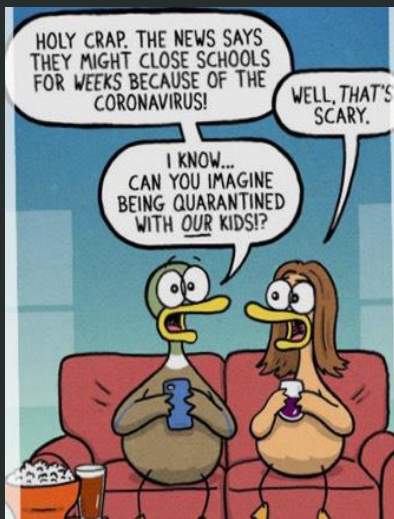
One of the best ways to help your children thrive is to connect with them. This is more true than ever during this Pandemic. A fabulous way to connect to a child of any age is to create together. Please check out this [link](#) for making Reset Stones. Boys will like these too. This activity will supply your whole family a chance to have fun, relax, and even laugh together.



Did you know circles symbolize promise? Try this family [activity](#) to create either an indoor or outdoor circle with your kids for more ways to connect. These projects will help keep your whole family grounded in the present.

Dear Director,

I know all that about the oxygen masks, how I am supposed to take care of myself so that I can take care of my kids, but things are really stressful right now, with some kids in school fulltime and some part in and part at home, and Head Start all virtual, and trying to keep up with my own work from home and the laundry and the special therapist and that garden we put in (together) during early quarantine that is now overflowing with peppers and tomatoes and basil and these really big cucumbers but now high school football is back and nobody wants to help me harvest, let alone can. I am not sleeping well, and my kids are all wild all the time, and the oxygen mask better have laughing gas, or I don't think I'll make it!!! Advice?



First, take a deep breath. Not just to catch it but because the oxygen in that breath, the deep breaths we get “from our belly” is what your brain needs right now. Then take another, and then probably a third. This is all about priorities, and that little voice in your head that will judge you at times and find you “less than” a perfect parent. You want to do right by each of your children, and each one has slightly different needs, at different times. And you want to manage yourself and your household in a safe way through this pandemic. And you want to feel okay yourself. And you can't do it all.

So don't, or at least stop trying to do it all. Step back and look at your priorities. Then size up your support system to help you work on that list. Then, rearrange the list to what is doable so that you can have a sense of accomplishment. I have always wondered, if we set the bar of success ourselves, why don't we set it at a level we can reach? I mean, you get to decide if you are a good-enough parent to each of your children, and a good-enough person in your adult life. Judging yourself by what you think other people think of you, that is a waste of time, for real.

Whatever you are worrying about, we will get through this. First, you and your children need a sense of security, of safety, so that everybody's brains are quiet enough to learn. So keep your home safe and secure. If that means certain people are out for now, so be it, Zoom them. But maybe look at your support people for those you trust to help you when things feel out of control. Second, if you make any parenting decisions that your kids don't like, remind them “because I love you and want you to be safe.” Third, help you kids feel less out of control by being more in control yourself, particularly of your emotions. Your ability to self-manage your anxiety and anger and sadness not only helps you, it shows your children how to do it, if you do it “out loud.” So if you need to remove yourself to calm down, do it, and verbalize it so you model for your children how to cope with your feelings. Saying, “I am angry that you and your sister are fighting, so I am going to stomp around in the yard until we can talk” is so much better than losing it on them. Make sure they know that having feelings is good, as long as how you show them is safe.

But the most important thing you can do for yourself is to find joy in simple, everyday things, both for yourself and your children. Lying in bed a few minutes to watch the sun through the curtains. Having canned beans and left-over cake for lunch. A tickle fight that delays bedtime. The hug after the meltdown. Taking note of these simple things will help you get through the hard times, especially as a parent. You need to be able to recall the last good thing that happened in your life when you are struggling. I suggest watching your children sleep at the end of the day knowing you did your best, and not letting anybody else tell you otherwise.