

The Parent's Page: Managing Anxiety & COVID-19

As we continue to navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents and caregivers are struggling with a variety of different anxieties surrounding the pandemic and changes. With schools & workplaces closing, some of us are left feeling uncertain on what will happen in the fall with school and childcare – how will parents and caregivers adapt to a new normal?

Firstly, it is important for those struggling with uncertain emotions to realize that it is completely normal to feel anxiety when facing a crisis – especially when it effects a large group of people and interferes with day-to-day life. COVID-19 has completely changed our lives and there will only be more changes happening as we learn to properly navigate this pandemic. Normalizing anxiety during this time can help all of us learn how to properly cope and work together to manage these emotions.

One way to help ease anxiety and questions regarding the pandemic is to listen to the experts surrounding COVID-19. Whether it be the CDC, governor's office, local Public Health agency or any professional entity meant to help manage COVID-19, learning to take professional advice and follow certain guidelines can help manage anxiety by knowing how to follow proper health & safety guidelines for a safer community.

Furthermore, it is also important to be mindful of certain anxieties and learning how to reach out to others regarding your emotions. Reaching out to family, friends, coworkers, etc. is extremely helpful in these times because it is healthy to express your emotions to someone you know and trust. Sometimes, it can even normalize your anxiety because many people are feeling the same way in these times especially. Even with practicing social distancing, that doesn't mean we can't practice social togetherness.

Another necessary coping strategy when learning to manage anxiety is focusing on self-care. Self-care activities vary from

person to person, but the most important thing to remember about self-care is that it should be enjoyable, stress free, and healthy for every individual. Some examples of healthy self-care activities include going for a walk/hike, swimming, boating, cooking with new nutritious ingredients, browsing farmers markets, learning a new instrument, reading, writing, and many more! Also, getting an adequate amount of sleep and following a balanced diet can help manage stress and anxiety.

Lastly, the one thing anxiety cannot take from us is our voice. If you're feeling hopeless, stressed out, or just at a total loss keep in mind you can ask the important questions and seek help.

If you have questions and concerns that you feel are not being answered regarding COVID-19 and school opening, childcare, going back to work, etc., in Sullivan County you can always contact these governing agencies requesting more information:

Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo:

518-474-8390

Office of U.S. Congressman Antonio Delgado:

845-295-6020

Assemblywoman Aileen M. Gunther:

845-794-5807

And if you feel as though you need to seek help regarding mental health, resources, health risks, stress, etc. regarding COVID-19, contact these state, national, and local Sullivan County agencies for more information:

Sullivan County Emergency Community Assistance Hotline:

845-807-0925

Sullivan County Public Health Services Info Line:

845-292-5910

Coronavirus Hotline:

888-364-3065

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

800-273-8255