

QUICK BYTES

TRAUMA NETWORK FOR CHILDREN



Self-care for Parents and Caregivers of Children and Teenagers

Brought to you by the PTSS team (KKH) - June 2020

1. Give yourself a breather

If you are feeling tired, stressed, mentally-drained, or even inadequate as a parent or caregiver, these feelings are very natural and you are not alone. Many of us can empathise with one other on the challenges of juggling work duties and ensuring our children's safety during this COVID-19 period. All the more let us not forget to give ourselves a breather every once in a while. By learning to pace ourselves, we become better able to weather difficult periods such as this.



2. Be socially apart, but not socially distant

Being apart does not mean you have to be alone! Many of us are experiencing some form of worry, anxiety, or even frustration as a result of COVID-19. It is thus important for you to stay connected with your family members and loved ones, and draw strength from one another. Socialising is a two-way street, in receiving support from others, you may very well be also providing a timely listening ear for your loved ones. Consider setting up online meal dates with friends, or have virtual family get-togethers via video conferencing!



3. Keeping up with the routines

COVID-19 has brought about uncertainty on what to expect of the future. For some of us, this can be anxiety-inducing or even fear-provoking. What then can you do to restore predictability in your life? Stick to routines! What are routines? Routines are the usual times you wake up to eat your breakfast, the usual people you have conversations with, or even the usual work tasks you do each morning. By sticking to routines, you create a safe and stable environment for yourself, which is twice as important now as you tide through an unprecedented pandemic.



4. Emotional Distancing from Media

Reports on COVID-19 are constantly available readily in media and social media. While you cannot control how saturated media is with such news, you can control how saturated your mind is with such news. Being aware of current affairs is important, but you can also be selective in exposing yourself to news sources if it starts making you feel distressed. Tune in only when you are ready. If you find yourself feeling affected (e.g. more irritable, frustrated, or worried) after catching up on news and current affairs, here are some things you can do to 'tune out' and give yourself some space: Switch off the news channel, or news notifications from phone applications; tune in to videos or read materials which you find motivating or uplifting. And if you still feel the need to be updated with the news, consider reading only just the headlines.



5. Adopt healthy lifestyle habits



A balanced diet, adequate sleep, and regular exercise keeps illnesses at bay. Make small, sustainable changes in your lifestyle to give your body the resources needed to stay healthy, and care for your children. For example, give yourself an extra 20 to 30 minutes of sleep every alternate day, snack on fruits instead of biscuits or sweets, and set aside 10 to 20 minutes every other day to introduce a little more movement in your body, such as stretching, brisk-walking, or simple strength-training exercises.



Trauma Network
for Children



The Stay Prepared – Trauma Network for Children (TNC) programme is a joint collaboration between KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) and Temasek Foundation. It aims to enhance the psychosocial capability of the Singapore community to support children and youth after crises or traumatic events.