

# MENTAL WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We wanted to take a minute to recognize that taking care of our and our students' mental health is particularly important during this uncertain and potentially stressful time. Currently, everywhere we turn, we are hearing about COVID-19. It has taken over the news, social media, and most conversations that we are all having. With that being said, it is important to understand that everyone is reacting differently to all of this information that they are receiving. We realize that anyone at any time may experience anxiety related to our current situation and all the changes that are occurring around us right now, regardless of prior anxiety or mental health concerns.

The important thing to remember is that how we respond to stress as adults, has a direct influence on children's responses to stress. Be mindful when discussing your own concerns around this topic and try to be reassuring to your child. The following information will hopefully help you navigate through this challenging time and provide you with some resources to focus on relaxation and stress management. Sincerely,

Tamrah Rouleau and Wendy Doran  
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## KEEPING AN EYE ON MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19.

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In a time of uncertainty, children can experience a combination of emotions. Some children worry more than others due to their environment, mental health, and social influences. Students began to notice the impact of COVID-19 when physical/social distancing became a reality. School and social events were postponed or canceled. Students expressed excitement about a three-day weekend, possible school closure, and fear of the unknown.

One of my adolescent clients said his worries came flooding in when the sports season ended early. He expressed how the team bonded over the disappointment of the season ending early. The student expressed some concerns about becoming ill and how he was going to take precautions over the weekend. On the bright side, he came up with a plan for healthy distractions that included; spending time with his family and catching up on some shows. His thoughts and feelings were validated. He realized it was reasonable to be curious and have questions about the situation. He embraced the conflicted feelings of fear and gratitude.

### TAKE A PEEK!

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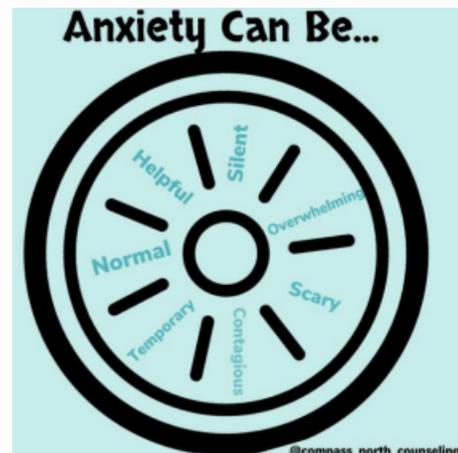
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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It was at this moment I realized, despite complaints about going to school, it's the familiarity that provides comfort. There are resources at school students appreciate more than they realize. A school is a place child gather and connect with their peers and professionals. They have access to necessities like food, shelter, and a sense of security and independence. In a time when change is inevitable, please be aware of how uncertainty can impact mental health. Surprisingly, stress and anxiety can present silently in some children. They might be unsure of how to identify their feelings. It is essential to check in with your child to see how they are feeling. When children gain clarity, they begin to understand physical symptoms, which can alleviate fears and increase mood.

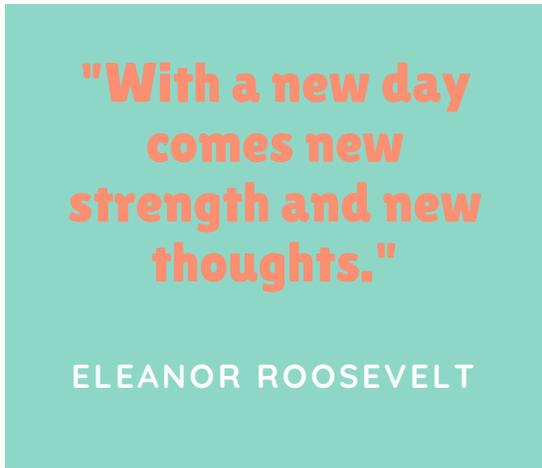
Fear and happiness can be contagious. Children can become anxious if their peers or the adults around them appear uncertain or worried. Although it is outside of our control how other people's moods and behaviors come across, it is inside our control how we act and behave. Acknowledging fears in themselves will teach children to self-regulate.

Focusing on self-care can create new neural pathways in managing anxiety healthily. Most importantly, validate that anxiety is temporary, normal, scary, and overwhelming all at the same time. Learning to manage stress and anxiety takes time and practice. The silver lining is fear can be helpful. When levels of cortisol rise, adrenaline rushes in. Encourage your child to use the energy boost to complete tasks at home or remote learning assignments.



## REDUCING FEARS AROUND COVID-19

Please check in with your child and encourage them to talk about the worries they are having. Validate their fears and provide them with facts. Explain why hand-washing is essential to not only keep them healthy but to slow the spread of the illness. Explain the purpose of remote learning as a protective factor for global health. Talk about the precautions and reasons for social distancing.



## HEALTHY DISTRACTIONS

### GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Here are 67 Templates, Ideas and Apps

### GO FOR A WALK/HIKE

Enjoy the beautiful outdoors and fresh air by going for a family walk/hike.

### VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

HERE'S 33 NATIONAL PARK TOURS YOU CAN TAKE VIRTUALLY FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME



# TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

GO TO OUR RELAXATION ROOM ON OUR WEBSITE:  
[HTTP://BMSSCHLCNSLNG.WEEBLY.COM/](http://BMSSCHLCNSLNG.WEEBLY.COM/)

Try to keep things as normal as possible. While schedules are changing, please encourage your child to be dedicated to academics and reach out to their teachers, tutors, counselors, or peers for assistance. Please encourage them to take breaks and focus on physical and mental health.

After all, we are all impacted and trying to be flexible with the current situation. Praise your children for using their strengths while navigating the challenges they will experience. Give them validation and support as needed. As a community, we will work through this together.

## Take a social media break

- Turn off electronics including TVs and cellphones. Take a break from the news.

## Create a playlist

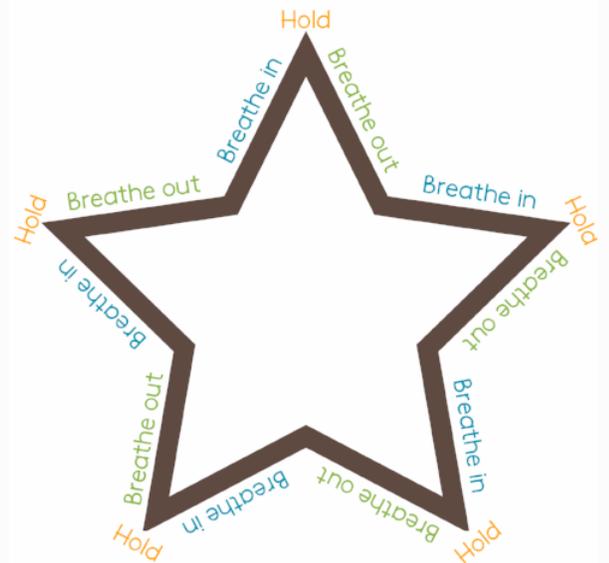
- Create a playlist of upbeat songs that make you happy.

## Write a letter and mail it

- Write a letter to a family member or friend.
- Nursing homes aren't allowing visitors, send letters to our local nursing homes.

## Breathe

- Take a minute to do deep breathing exercises or guided meditation



# A SAMPLE REMOTE LEARNING DAILY SCHEDULE



8:00-9:00 AM	GOOD MORNING! WAKE UP, EAT BREAKFAST, GET DRESSED, BRUSH TEETH AND MAKE YOUR BED	
9:00-10:00 AM	ACADEMIC TIME	
10:00-10:15 AM	BREAK: CALL FRIENDS, CHAT, GET OUTSIDE, HAVE A SNACK	
10:15-11:15 AM	ACADEMIC TIME	
11:15-11:30 AM	BREAK: CALL FRIENDS, CHAT, GET OUTSIDE, HAVE A SNACK	
11:30-12:00 PM	CREATIVE TIME: DRAW, CRAFTS, MUSIC, COOK/BAKE	
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH AND OUTDOOR TIME	
1:00-2:00 PM	QUIET ACTIVITY: READING, PUZZLE, YOGA, JOURNALING	
2:00-3:00 PM	ACADEMIC TIME	
3:00-3:15 PM	BREAK: CALL FRIENDS, CHAT, HAVE A SNACK	
3:15-4:00 PM	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/OUTDOOR TIME	



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please remember that additional tips and tools for managing stress can always be found on our BMS School Counseling Website: <http://bmsschlcnslng.weebly.com/>

Attached you will find a couple resources and a link below, that will help with communicating and supporting students around COVID-19 concerns, questions or comments.

[Child Mind Institute: Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus](https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/)

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

[5 Ways to Help Teens Manage Anxiety About the Coronavirus](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagersanxiety.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimeswell)

[https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagersanxiety.html?  
smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimeswell](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagersanxiety.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimeswell)

[CDC: Mental Health and Coping COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html)

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[COVID-19 parent handout NASP/NASN](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

