

Glenrose Patient and Family Resource Centre

Volume 5 Issue 1

It's Not Just Me



I have to admit, this past week has caused my mind to whirl making it hard to focus at times. Going about our day now requires extra thought, extra consideration and new restriction where there wasn't before. Our normal comfortable, sometimes hectic routine, has been shaken up.

We are being inundated with information. Between television, radio, social media and email, the updates necessary to keep us informed, vigilant and safe, sometimes leave me feeling overloaded, overwhelmed, "overdone". I feel like I want to hide from all of it, yet need to stay tuned in to the almost daily changes. I used to think I would be happy living in the solitude of the wilderness and now I find social distancing and self-isolation such a challenge. Every member of our household has their own response to this upset and that only makes it more interesting as we each adapt to this blessedly temporary lifestyle.

During this time, when change and uncertainty affects both home and work, many families will face added multiple stressors. It is important that we look after ourselves and one another. We need to share resources and stay connected even if it's only through technology. While *finances* will be a primary concern for some, *physical health and mental well-being* will be equally important at this time. This newsletter aims to provide a few resources in all of these areas, so that we may continue to be the best we can be to support our families and one another.

To receive an electronic copy of upcoming newsletters
Please contact: PFRC@ahs.ca or call 780-735-7999 ext 15578

How can I support my child in this stressful time?

Source:

Alberta Government
Children's Mental Health

Caregiver considerations around the novel coronavirus/COVID-19

The introduction of the novel coronavirus/COVID-19 in Alberta has led to a wide-spread response by our governments, Alberta Health Services, schools, and community leaders. Facility closures and program changes have caused significant disruptions to the lives of many families. This may lead to increased stress in our homes and increase concerns in our children and youth.

As parents and caregivers, it is not always easy to turn our attention toward thinking about wellness when faced with uncertainties around health, work, finances, child care, etc. In times like these, parents and caregivers have a unique opportunity to model self-regulation and resiliency for our children. By being intentional about how we respond to challenges, we can help our children to build resilience and develop their own positive social stories about themselves, their communities, and 'the bigger picture'. Here are some tips to consider as you are supporting your family in this special time.

For more detail on the following and additional information go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

Calm: It's Contagious!

Some tips to keep in mind when talking with children about Coronavirus:

- Remain calm and reassuring
- Make yourself available to listen and talk
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma
- Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online
- Provide information that is honest and accurate
- Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs

Helping Children Cope

Source:

The National Traumatic Stress Network

Your children may respond differently to an outbreak depending on their age. Below are some reactions according to age group and the best ways you can respond:

AGE GROUP	REACTIONS	HOW TO HELP
PRESCHOOL	Fear of being alone, bad dreams Speech difficulties Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting Change in appetite Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors	Patience and tolerance Provide reassurance (verbal and physical) Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime Maintain regular family routines Avoid media exposure
SCHOOL-AGE (ages 6-12)	Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior Clinging, nightmares Sleep/appetite disturbance Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches) Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest Competition for parents' attention Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Play sessions and staying in touch with friends through telephone and Internet Regular exercise and stretching Engage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games) Participate in structured household chores Set gentle but firm limits Discuss the current outbreak and encourage questions. Include what is being done in the family and community Encourage expression through play and conversation Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Address any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation
ADOLESCENT (ages 13-18)	Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.) Sleep/appetite disturbance Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy Ignoring health promotion behaviors Isolating from peers and loved ones Concerns about stigma and injustices Avoiding/cutting school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Encourage continuation of routines Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force) Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviors Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak

(cont'd on next page)

The National Traumatic Stress Network cont'd

Self Care & Coping

- Modify your daily activities to meet the current reality of the situation and focus on what you can accomplish.
- Shift expectations and priorities to focus more on what gives you meaning, purpose, or fulfillment.
- Give yourself small breaks from the stress of the situation.
- Attempt to control self-defeating statements and replace them with more helpful thoughts. Here's a helpful checklist for identifying unhealthy thoughts and coping with them: <https://arfamiliesfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Cognitive-Distortions.pdf>
- Remember, you are a role model for your children. How you handle this stressful situation can affect how your children manage their worries.
- If your family has experienced a serious illness or the death of a loved one, find ways to support each other, including: Reach out to your friends and family, talking to them about the death of your loved one. Use telephone, email, or social media to communicate if necessary.
- Find ways to honor the death of your loved one. Some activities may be done as a family, while additional activities may be done individually.
- Seek religious/spiritual help or professional counseling for support. This may be available online or by telephone during an outbreak.

Social Stories and Things to Do

Social Stories for children - sometimes it is better understood through pictures

- https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/flu_teaching_story_final%20%281%29.pdf
- https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

Things to Do – when it seems you've done it all (and its FREE)

- <https://familyguide.com/boredom-busters-110-fun-at-home-activities-for-families-kids-2/>
- <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

As an Adult

What to do if you're anxious or worried about coronavirus (COVID-19)

Source:

Anxiety Canada

Life is uncertain. We all know it and it can make people anxious. But there are times when world events bring forward even greater uncertainty in daily life, which in turn can make us even more anxious than usual. The coronavirus outbreak is one of these times for many people. How can you manage this anxiety and worry during these uncertain times? Here are a few suggestions.

Be self-compassionate

Even people who don't usually struggle with anxiety are experiencing more worry and anxiety now. So: don't be too hard on yourself if you're experiencing more anxiety than usual.

If you've been practicing cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) you're probably already experienced at tolerating uncertainty. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can to cope in a difficult situation.

Limit the news & unplug from social media

Understandably coronavirus is the lead story for most news outlets. People on social media are likewise sharing information and stories, some of which are accurate but others may have little to do with reality. The general public is interested and wants to know the latest details. Yet when our attention is drawn to something, we are more likely to focus on it and continue thinking about it.

As we think about and focus more on coronavirus, the PERCEPTION of threat increases (not the actual risk but our perception of it). By limiting or eliminating contact with media you can help yourself manage your own anxiety and worry. If you cannot eliminate contact with media, control it: Make sure that your information only comes from reputable sources, such as [the following links]:

- [Alberta Health Services](#) [*substituted for local coverage*]
- [Government of Canada](#)

If you do watch or read the news, try to limit how often you do:

- Commit to only checking in a couple of times a day.
- Set a regular time when you check the news everyday. Standardizing the times you check will help to both think less about it and to reduce fighting with yourself to check.
- Disable news alerts on your phone so that you get updates when you want them.
- It can also be helpful to rely on family and friends to provide major updates thereby

Stop talking about coronavirus

Water cooler chat with coworkers and sharing the latest details with family and friends will be common. But: it keeps us thinking about it, which will influence our sense of threat/risk.

To counteract this, don't initiate the conversation and change the subject if it does come up. If you're comfortable doing so, ask friends and family to not discuss the coronavirus news updates with you. Not only will this help you feel less anxious, it'll help others too.

For the full article refer to

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/what-to-do-if-you-are-anxious-or-worried-about-coronavirus-covid-19/>



Financial Supports Related to Covid-19

The Alberta government will provide immediate financial relief to Alberta's families and vulnerable populations.

Albertans should be focused on their health and not worry about whether they can pay their bills so we have put a number of options in place for those struggling financially.

***** Refer to the following link for current information:**

<https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-supports-for-albertans.aspx>

Emergency isolation support

This will be a temporary program for working adult Albertans who must self-isolate because they meet the Government of Alberta's published criteria for [self-isolation](#), including persons who are the sole care-giver for a dependent who must self-isolate because they meet the public health criteria, and who will not have another source of pay or compensation while they are self-isolated.

Utility payment deferral

Residential customers can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days to ensure no one will be cut off, regardless of the service provider.

This program is available to Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19. For example, those who have lost their employment or had to leave work to take care of an ill family member.

Student loans repayment deferral

We are implementing a six-month, interest free, moratorium on Alberta student loan payments for all Albertans in the process of repaying these loans.

Alberta Student Loan repayments will be paused for 6 months, beginning March 30, 2020.

Interest will not accrue during this period. This mirrors the approach of the Canada Student Loans Program.

Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause.

Borrowers may continue making payments during this period if they choose and this will not affect their eligibility to receive the benefit.

Banks and credit unions

ATB financial customers

Personal banking customers can apply for a deferral on their ATB loans, lines of credit and mortgages for up to 6 months.

Alberta Credit Unions

Credit union members will have access to a variety of programs and solutions designed to ease difficulties with loan payments and short-term cash flow.

Contact your credit union to work out a plan for your personal situation



The Government of Canada is taking immediate, significant and decisive action to help Canadians facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

On March 18, 2020, the Prime Minister announced a new set of economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. These measures, delivered as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, will provide up to \$27 billion in direct support to Canadian workers and businesses.

***** Refer to the following link for the most current information:**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/introduces-canada-emergency-response-benefit-to-help-workers-and-businesses.html>

Support for individuals

General support for individuals

- [Increasing the Canada Child Benefit this year](#)
- [Extra time to file income taxes](#)
- [Mortgage support](#)

Support for people facing unemployment

- [Improved access to Employment Insurance](#)
- [The new Emergency Support Benefit](#)

Support for people sick or quarantined

- [Improved access to Employment Insurance Sickness Benefit](#)
- [The new Emergency Care Benefit](#)

Support for people unable to work

- [The new Emergency Care Benefit](#)

Support for people with low and modest income

- [Increased goods and services tax credit this year](#)
- [Enhancing the Reaching Home initiative](#)
- [Support women's shelters and sexual assault centers](#)
- [A new Indigenous Community Support Fund](#)

Support for seniors

- [Eased the rules for Registered Retirement Income Funds](#)

Support for students and recent graduates

- [A moratorium on the repayment of Canada Student Loans](#)

Additional Resources for Families

Social distancing and self isolation can be hard on all of us

To Support Your Children

- Alberta Health Services – Children, Youth and Families Addiction and Mental Health
Caregiver Education
Video and PDF Resources
<https://www.cyfcaregivereducation.ca/videos>
- Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre – **Mental Health, Healthy Living, Challenges and Disorders, Substance Use and Medications**
Video and PDF Resources
<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/parents-caregivers>
- Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre - **Hidden Depression in Youth: Beyond the Blues**
Webinar Video
<http://mediasite.phsa.ca/Mediasite/Play/fcc12ff092d94a36a53093212a28713b1d>
- Child Mind Institute – **Concerns, Disorders, Symptom Checker**
<https://childmind.org/audience/for-families/>

To Support Yourself

- Alberta Health Services – **Information for Albertans on novel corona virus (COVID-19)**
Updated daily – Prevention, Risk, Symptoms – online assessment, Emergency Kit
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16997.aspx>
- Alberta Health Services – **Addictions and Mental Health for Adults**
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16443.aspx>
- Alberta Health Services – **Healthy Together – Mental Wellness Moments**
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1tOF1I5ZoUVdu5tVzAqjOxblGbEXr9q>
- Alberta Health Services – **MyHealth Alberta**
Non-Covid19 Symptom checker (including mental health), recommendations on home treatment, when to see a doctor and how to prepare for the medical appointment
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/MyHealthVideos.aspx>
- Alberta Health Services – **Help In Tough Times** – Links and Important Phones Numbers
Social and Community Supports, Food Banks, Mental Health, Stress, Suicide, Grief
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/page16759.aspx>

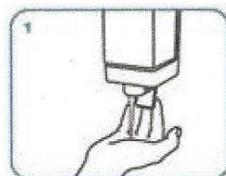
Financial

- **Aids to Daily Living** – Bulletin #80 – respiratory benefits
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/1442d933-14e5-407e-afb3-0cff0d2b73bb/resource/0f73227b-49b7-4e3b-8364-aaedd6817bf7/download/health-aadl-bulletin-80-2020-03.pdf>

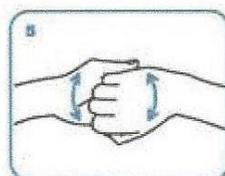
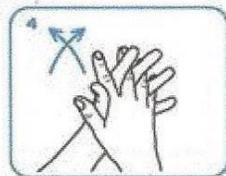
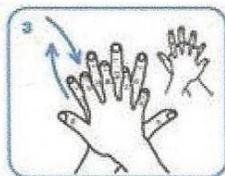
How to Hand Wash

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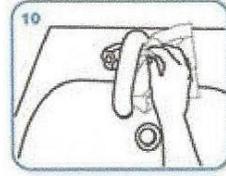
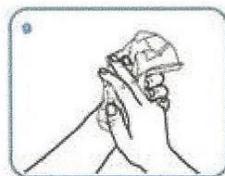
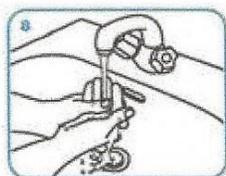
If you have any questions or comments regarding this information please contact the Infection Prevention & Control Hand Hygiene Program at: Hand.Hygiene@ahs.ca



- Roll up long sleeves and push up any wrist accessories
- Wet hands with warm water
- Apply enough soap to cover surfaces of the hands



- Vigorously rub soap over palms, backs of hands and wrists
- Include space between fingers, fingertips and thumbs
- Procedure should take 15 to 30 seconds



- Rinse under warm, running water
- Pat hands dry with disposable towel
- Turn tap off with the disposable towel

Periodically apply AHS-provided hand lotion for skin integrity.

Adapted with permission from The World Health Organization

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