

CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

Dear Friends, As concerns of the pandemic continue making families and children anxious of what a new future holds for us, it is important to remember that children look to adults for guidance. During stressful events if adults appear overly worried, children’s anxieties may increase, too. It is important that adults reassure children and youth that health and school officials are working together to make a safer world for us. However, kids also need age-appropriate information. Providing children with preventive measures, talking openly about their fears, and giving them a sense of relief and some control could help reduce the risk of infection and anxiety. Take time to talk!

TALKING TO CHILDREN, A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ADULTS

Remain calm and reassuring

- Be mindful, kids will follow your verbal and non-verbal cues
- Remind them you and other adults in their lives are there to keep them safe and healthy
- Let kids talk openly about their feelings, listen and help to reframe their concerns into a appropriate outlook
- Demonstrate deep breathing and practice with kids; deep breathing is effective in calming the nervous system

Make yourself available

- Kids may need extra attention during this time
- It is important kids have sense of security knowing you are there to listen
- Tell them you love them and provide lots of affection

Monitor television and social media time

- Limit television and social media
- Try to avoid viewing/listening to media that may be upsetting when kids are present
- Talk to kids about factual information of the disease
- Avoid watching constant updates on the status of the disease
- Engage kids in other activities or games that are of interest to them

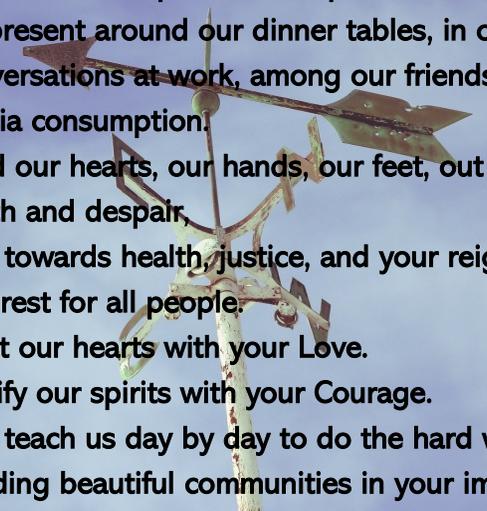
Keep normal routines as best you can

- A regular schedule can be reassuring
- Keep up with schoolwork and physical activities but do not push if children appear overwhelmed

Best practices for good hygiene and healthy lifestyle

- Encourage kids to practice good hygiene; the importance of hand washing to stop the spread of infections
- Cover their mouths with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, throwing tissue away immediately. Or sneeze/cough into the bend of their elbow
- No sharing of drinks or food
- Practice fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes
- Eating healthy, restful sleep and physical exercise promotes a healthy immune system and helps reduce anxiety

For additional resources please visit: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>



**GOD be our compass, our map, our north star.
Be present around our dinner tables, in our conversations at work, among our friends, and in our media consumption.
Lead our hearts, our hands, our feet, out of death and despair,
And towards health, justice, and your reign of peace and rest for all people.
Light our hearts with your Love.
Fortify our spirits with your Courage.
And teach us day by day to do the hard work of building beautiful communities in your image. AMEN.**

The CBMHS Warm Line is open and anyone can call: If you are experiencing emotional stress, side effects of the COVID19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order, reach out. Call Monday through Friday between 10am and 4pm and a licensed counselor will call you back within 24 hours! Call the Warmline to speak to a professional counselor who will listen and provide useful guidance to help you feel better. Receive information about resources and social services needs including depression, grief, anger, parenting support, substance abuse, shelter needs, and more. Request that an outreach call be made to someone who is isolated, lonely, or may not reach out on their own. But remember that the Warm Line is not a crisis hotline— If you need immediate assistance, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

**Middlesex, Somerset & Union County: (732) 867-8647
Monmouth & Ocean County: (732) 784-3394**