



# OC Bien Well

Volume 1 || ISSUE 1 || May 2020

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*Welcome* to Bien Well, a monthly newsletter out of the Open Campus Academy of Sport (OCAS). This newsletter is a part of the Open Campus (OC) Wellness Programme for staff and students. The objective of this newsletter is to share information on the interconnected dimensions of wellness and highlight other OC wellness initiatives in the hope that we can be better educated on the full circle of living well and be our best selves.

### Wellness Dimensions

We will be focussing on the nine (9) dimensions of wellness as identified by The Ohio State University (n.d.).

- **Emotional Wellness**  
The emotionally-well person can identify, express and manage the entire range of feelings and would consider seeking assistance to address areas of concern.
- **Occupational (Career) Wellness**  
The professionally-well person engages in work to gain personal satisfaction and enrichment, consistent with values, goals and lifestyle.
- **Social Wellness**  
The socially-well person has a network of support based on interdependence, mutual trust, respect and has developed a sensitivity and awareness towards the feelings of others.
- **Spiritual Wellness**  
The spiritually-well person seeks harmony and balance by openly exploring the depth of human purpose, meaning and connection through dialogue and self-reflection.
- **Physical Wellness**  
The physically-well person gets an adequate amount of sleep, eats a balanced and nutritious diet, engages in exercise for 150 minutes per week, attends regular medical check-ups and practices safe and healthy sexual relations.
- **Financial Wellness**  
The financially-well person is fully aware of financial state and budgets, saves and manages finances in order to achieve realistic goals.
- **Intellectual Wellness**  
The intellectually-well person values lifelong learning and seeks to foster critical thinking, develop moral reasoning, expand worldviews and engage in education for the pursuit of knowledge.

#### • Creative Wellness

The creatively-well person values and actively participates in a diverse range of arts and cultural experiences as a means to understand and appreciate the surrounding world.

#### • Environmental Wellness

The environmentally-well person recognizes the responsibility to preserve, protect and improve the environment and appreciates the interconnectedness of nature and the individual.



We will not attempt to cover all the dimensions of wellness in each edition of Bien Well but will zero-in on a few at a time. In this first edition, we want to share some tips with you on living a healthy, active lifestyle and how to weather this storm at home during this critical period and beyond. We will also give you a sneak peek into other initiatives to come from the wellness programme.

Wellness isn't a static standard. It is a journey made up of everyday activities that can be achieved anywhere – at school, at work, and for the next few weeks, definitely at home, as we seek to flatten the curve of the dreaded Coronavirus that is sweeping the globe and affecting almost every aspect of our lives.

This issue of Bien Well features articles/contributions from OC staff with specializations in relevant areas and we wish to thank these individuals for contributing to the development of the newsletter. A special "thank you" to Ms. Soyinett Whyte, Multimedia Specialist in the Course Development Department of the Academic Programming & Delivery Division (APAD), for the graphics and formatting of the newsletter.

Your questions and feedback on this first edition are welcome. Please contact us using the email address below. Best wishes and we hope you enjoy Bien Well! Let us all be #healthyathome.

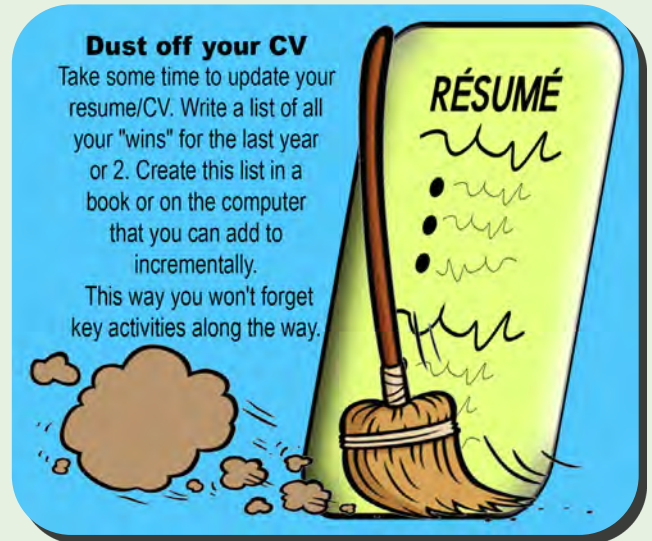
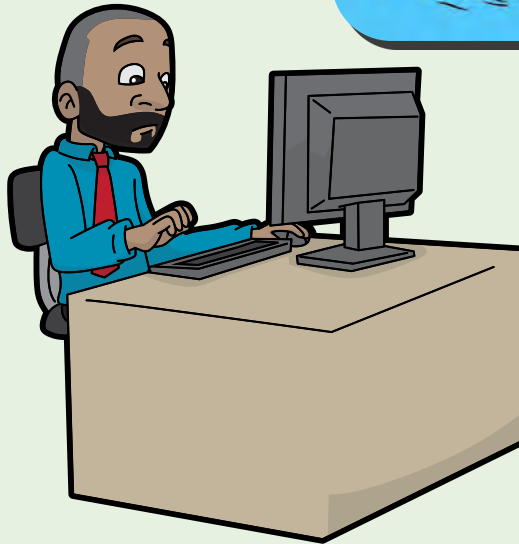
*Sincerely, Dayna Smith, Editor-in-Chief  
Sports Activity Development Officer, OCAS  
Email: [ocbienwell@open.uwi.edu](mailto:ocbienwell@open.uwi.edu)*

# OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

Everybody is staying at home, for the most part, during this pandemic. You are either enjoying this extra time with your loved ones or are tearing out your hair with everyone sharing the same space, all day, everyday. This will be the new normal for the next few weeks, and possibly months. We're all operating in a new paradigm and some people have never worked from home before, but we still need to be productive in the remote work environment. Set yourself up for success using some of these dos and don'ts for making the shift to a work-from-home arrangement.

## - Work- from-Home (WFH) Dos & Don'ts

- Maintain work/study structure & schedule.
- Set up a designated work space from which to operate over the next few weeks. Hopefully you have a comfortable desk/table and chair to operate from in a well-lit room. Try to limit outside distractions/noise, where possible.
- Get ready for work as you normally would. Shower and have breakfast and then get dressed in comfortable clothing for the climate if you're now in a space without air conditioning. But keep a polo nearby in case you are called into a quick video call.
- Though the physical environment may be different, still try to keep your regular working hours. Log in on time and work through the day as you normally would. If this is not possible, restructure your schedule to accommodate your work/study and tending to your kids or loved ones who are also home during this time; keep your supervisor in the loop.

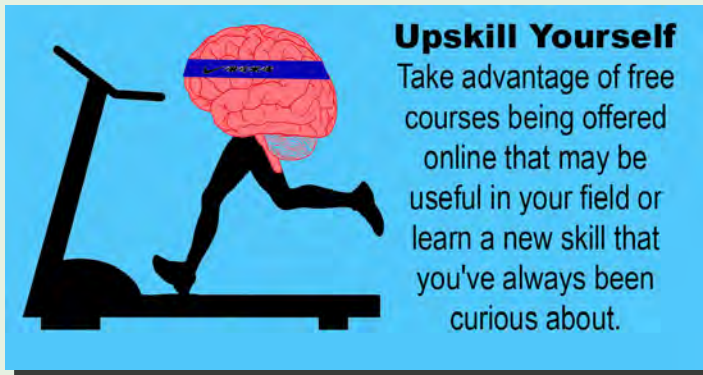


## - Step away from the computer or your desk ever so often

- Don't forget to schedule or make allowances for your water/coffee/bathroom break.
- Carve out some time for physical activity throughout the day, whether it means going up or down the stairs at home a couple of times or taking a brisk walk around the house.
- Have a nice long stretch or step outside for some fresh air and sunlight to get re-energized for your next session.

## - Don't Overdo it

- Some persons may neglect their health and may actually spend more time "at work" than usual since they're operating from home. Try to maintain balance in your life and "go dark" (outside of emergencies) once you've done your hours.
- Keep your bottle of water nearby so that you keep hydrated.
- Don't forget to eat lunch. Don't be tempted to reach for the kids' snacks instead of having a balanced meal.



## - Stay Connected

- If your company or department has instituted WFH, it is under the condition that you can still be reached, should the need arise, so ensure that you are logged into your work chat or Skype during work hours.
- It can be very easy to become isolated during remote work. Have your water cooler or tea time conversations with colleagues via work chat or Skype so that you maintain camaraderie and stress relief virtually.



# EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

## **Stress Management**

Many of us are filled with a myriad of feelings as we navigate the adjustments and challenges that come with staying safe during the current pandemic. We have had to modify our daily lives, including our work setting and functions, personal activities and social interactions. The changes, themselves, and aspects of the changes could result in internal and external factors that can cause us to feel displaced and stressed. Rest assured that this involuntary response to such a drastic and immediate change is normal and an expected one, and we may find ourselves constantly worrying and asking questions such as: How do I now balance working from home while simultaneously homeschooling my child? What happens if I or a loved one gets COVID-19? I am so worried about COVID-19, what if this situation becomes my new normal? When will I be able to be in a social gathering again? When will it be safe for my parents/grandparents to be in public again? In this article we will examine what is stress, how to identify stressors, and ways to cope and respond to stress during the pandemic.

Stress is associated with physiological and/or psychological alterations in the body in response to stressors and can impact how we feel and behave (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d.). Some of the changes include fatigue, difficulties concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, shortness of breath, and elevated blood pressure. Under "normal" circumstances the body normalizes once the stressor is removed, however, in this prolonged time of uncertainty it is possible for the stress to turn chronic, which can have long lasting effects on our body and overall health. Therefore, it is vital for us to engage in effective coping strategies to better deal with our various stressors. The APA (2007) suggests the following actions to assist in the management of your stress:

1. **Understand How You Stress:** What do you do (thoughts and behaviours) when you're stressed versus when you're not stressed?
2. **Identify Your Sources of Stress:** Stressors can be internal i.e. feelings and thoughts, such as fears, uncertainties, particular beliefs, or external i.e. situations and events that happen to us. To assist in identifying the source of the stress, the Mayo Clinic (2019) recommends writing a list of the situations, concerns and challenges that you are currently facing. From this list, you can classify your stressors and initiate various coping mechanisms.
3. **Learn Your Own Stress Signals:** What are the physical and psychological changes that occur to let you know that you are stressed? For example, do you get irritable? Can't sleep? Feel overwhelmed? Ruminating on negative thoughts? Crying spells? Erratic outbursts?

4. **Recognize How You Deal with Stress:** Coping can be adaptive - increases our function and addresses the stressor (eg. seeking help/support) or maladaptive - does not address the root cause of stress and is avoidant (eg. Substance abuse, self-blaming and denial). Avoid the latter, as this will prolong the effect of your stressor.
5. **Find healthy ways to manage stress:** There are many things that we can do to help alleviate stress, whether it is problem oriented such as creating a list, talking to someone - there are online counselling options and other resources - or emotional oriented such as meditation, prayer, acceptance, exercise (virtual gym).
6. **Self-Care:** Engage in safe activities that will alleviate the effects of the stressor eg. Family games, listening to your favourite music, DIY nail spa, engage your friends/family in an online challenge (baking, reading, exercise etc.), gardening, setup activities in your backyard, etc. These activities may also be done virtually with family and friends.
7. **Social Support:** Reach out to friends and family. Create WhatsApp group chats. Have virtual parties. If you have a child/children seek advice from other parents.

Keep in mind, stress management is an active process that involves making healthy choices daily. It is therefore important to be aware of the factors that can increase or decrease our stress, and how they affect us, and from there make healthy coping choices. Fortunately, our increased access to the internet has widened our options to access credible information and enable us to stay in communication with family, friends, colleagues and professionals who are able to provide different levels of support as we maneuver the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you want additional information on stress, its impact and stress management techniques, please visit:

- The American Psychological Association:  
<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/>
- The American Institute of Stress:  
<http://www.stress.org/stress-effects/>

Sarah Bailey-Belafonte - Jr Research Fellow  
Janel Brown - Programme Officer  
Social Work Training and Research Centre



Staff & students are encouraged to use the counselling service where needed. The e-mail addresses to access counselling are as follows: [counseling.staff@open.uwi.edu](mailto:counseling.staff@open.uwi.edu) and [counseling.students@open.uwi.edu](mailto:counseling.students@open.uwi.edu)

## SOCIAL WELLNESS

From the start of this pandemic we have been told to practice social distancing but what we really ought to say is that we should be practicing physical distancing. Being physically distant while remaining socially connected is very important in these times (WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove, 2020). So, what can we do?

Check in on friends and family and those in your community. The elderly and those with underlying conditions are most at risk with coronavirus so lend a helping hand to get groceries and medication, and also facilitate payment of bills. Encourage them to practice physical distancing but be socially connected by keeping in contact with loved ones and communities (like church) via phone or WhatsApp, if possible.

There are those in our communities and families who are struggling even more with the happenings surrounding the pandemic. Create a little care package that can be shared with persons in need, such as persons recently laid off, the elderly, and the differently abled. Make it a family affair by including your children in creating and even decorating the package/ note.

If you can afford it, buy a takeout or delivery meal from a small business owner who may be feeling the crunch of reduced traffic due to COVID-19 distancing restrictions. Pay ahead for a future service with your hairdresser or barber to help keep their business afloat. Try to make contact with local farmers to purchase any surplus of meat and produce that were earmarked for hotels and tourist attractions that are now closed.

History shows that the communities that survive and effectively rebuild after a crisis have strong social networks and share information with one

another. Let us each do our part to keep our communities healthy and strong.



The poster features the UWI Open Campus logo at the top left. The main title 'OC Got STARS' is in large, gold, 3D letters, with a star in the 'A'. Silhouettes of performers are shown around the title. A vintage microphone is on the right. The background is orange and yellow with starbursts.

**Virtual Concert**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020**  
 - SHOWTIME -  
 8:00 PM (EC) | 7:00 PM (JAMAICA) | 6:00 PM (BELIZE)

*Music By*  
  
**DAVID DEGREE**

Bring your talent and come to perform for the OC community. If you wish to perform please send an e-mail to the following persons:  
 Staff: [olwen.edwards-pile@open.uwi.edu](mailto:olwen.edwards-pile@open.uwi.edu)  
 Students: [faith.campbell2@my.open.uwi.edu](mailto:faith.campbell2@my.open.uwi.edu)  
 Performers should register by midnight on Sunday May 10, 2020

Wear the Open Campus colour & represent with your country's flag  
 A Zoom link will be provided closer to the event

A row of 15 small icons representing various Caribbean islands and territories: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos.


An OCAS Initiative.


## KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE


### AVOID

- Close contact with people who are sick
- Touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Sharing cups, plates or other personal items.



 Clean and disinfect your home frequently.

 Have at least a 30-day supply of your prescription medications, health supplies, and food.

 Cover face with tissue or elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

Get rest, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.



## PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Engaging in physical activity can contribute positively to almost all aspects of wellness. It can help to manage weight, assist with mental clarity, relieve stress and improve mood. Consistent physical activity can help improve respiratory health and bone function, and reduce the likelihood of contracting non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) defines non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) as “a group of conditions that are not passed from person to person and are mainly of a long duration and progress slowly. [...] They are mainly a result of a combination of genetic, environmental, behavioural and metabolic risk factors, such as, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol, air pollution, stress and overweight/obesity.”<sup>1</sup> The Caribbean is noted as having some of the highest levels of NCDs in the world and NCDs are the leading causes of death (Healthy Caribbean Coalition n.d)<sup>2</sup>. Some of these include hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancers, diseases that increase one’s susceptibility of COVID-19 (World Health Organization, n.d)<sup>3</sup>.

Some islands are on full lockdown or under some form of quarantine as regional governments try to slow the spread of COVID-19. Citizens have flocked to local supermarkets and are stocking up, especially, on non-perishable, canned food items, much like they would during a hurricane. The issue is that many of these items are heavily processed and full of sodium (salt) and sugar. This teamed with a shortage of fresh agricultural produce and overeating and snacking out of boredom can lead to an uptick in poor health outcomes.

NCDs are preventable and can be controlled with regular physical activity and a balanced diet. During this stressful time continue to maintain a balanced diet or work towards eating a diet low in salt and sugars, moderate fats and full of nutrient-dense foods. Stay hydrated by consuming lots of water and reducing your consumption of sugary drinks. On your next food run, leave some of the processed snacks behind and ensure that fresh fruits and vegetables are in your cart. Take your supplements to boost your immunity and overall well-being and if you’re

on medication, stay on top of your prescriptions and follow your doctor’s orders.

It is always important to keep active and healthy, regardless of age and stage. It can help you feel better, do better, sleep better, and look better! It’s never too late to start exercising. If you’re new to it or haven’t done it in a while, start slow, keep going, modify moves to your ability and soon enough you’ll be able to do more and feel better in no time.

In these coming weeks of remote work and school, remember to get up and move a little to offset the risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Explore the internet for ideas and resources.

Here’s a simple workout to do at home. No equipment, so no excuses! Keep a bottle of water handy.

*Let’s go!*

- 10 Jumping Jacks
- 10 squats
- 10 calf raises
- 10 side reaches

**Rest as needed**  
*Repeat 2 – 4 times*



Jumping Jacks



Squats



Calf Raises

1. <https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/NCD/Overview>

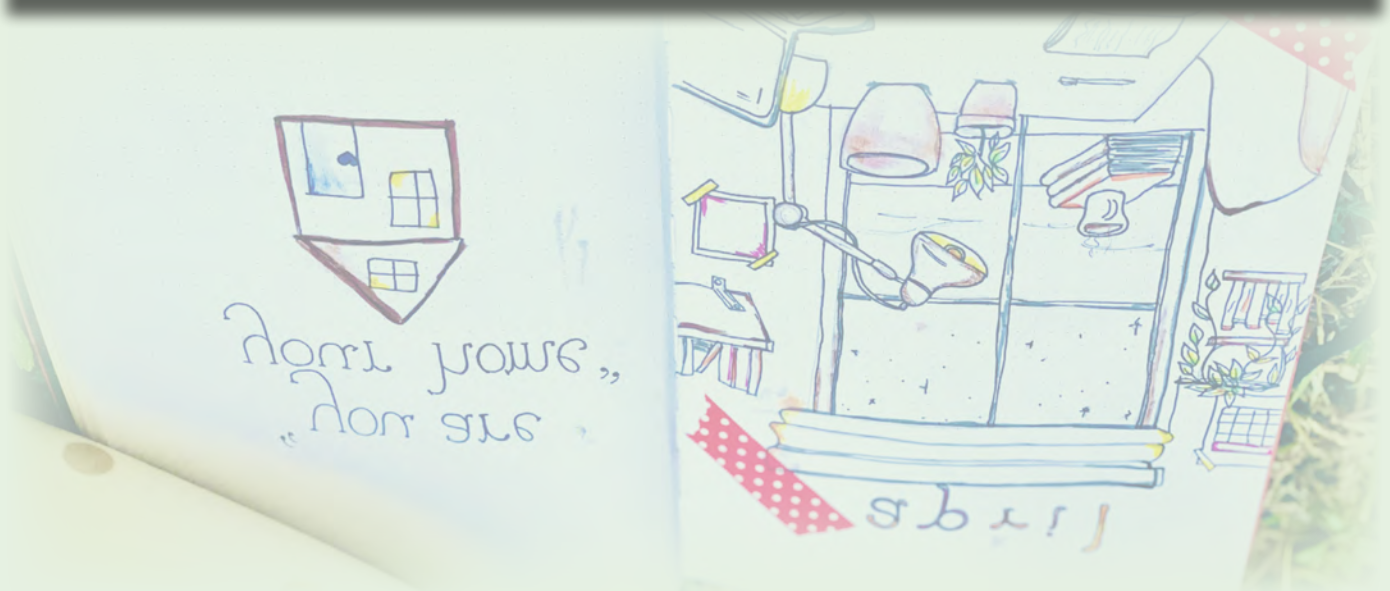
2. <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/coronavirus-covid-19/>

3. <https://www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---physical-activity>

## CREATIVE WELLNESS

♪ *These are some serious times* ♪ as the song says. As the world is practicing social distancing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, some are feeling alone, anxious about what is currently going on and unsure of the future. Bombarded by constant breaking news, lockdowns, stats and death tolls, some have retreated to the creative arts for distraction and/or as outlets of creative expression to navigate the myriad of thoughts, emotions and feelings that come in such times.

This inspired the creation of The UWI Open Campus #TogetherApart Creative Space, the brainchild of Jamie-Lee Rocke, Programme Manager, Continuing & Professional Education Centre. This virtual space will house the artistic work of our OC staff & students with the overarching intent to encourage, inspire and foster creativity. Because creative expression comes in many forms, all are welcome to submit pieces to [ocbienwell@open.uwi.edu](mailto:ocbienwell@open.uwi.edu) as we stand united to get through this pandemic #TogetherApart.



## KID'S CORNER



This is a special section to assist parents who may be struggling with juggling home-schooling and keeping their kids occupied during this crisis, all while managing their own schedules and work/study.

Here are a few tips from Bloom Early Childhood Centres of Excellence Jamaica & Trinidad & Tobago for managing your kids while you're all at home.

### Self Care is Important

- Just like in an airplane, you have to put your oxygen mask on first before helping others. Though it's difficult, finding even a minute or two for yourself will go a long way in supporting your family as well. Just taking three deep breaths into your belly where your exhale is longer than your inhale will help.<sup>1</sup>

### Create a Schedule/Routine

- Children of all ages thrive on routine and can help you to create a schedule. The "home-school" day does not have to last as long as a typical school day. Remember, they are with peers during that time doing other things or waiting for peers to be assisted. The same amount of "work" might be able to be accomplished in less time at home. Children, like you, also need time and compassion to adjust to this situation.
- Your child can help you to make the schedule to help them to stick to it and to offer input, such as "I need to move a little before I start school work, or I prefer to get some work done before breakfast." Work together to make a visual schedule with drawings for younger children. Use timers or clocks to help little children understand, and give them a warning when transitions are imminent. For example, say "in 5 minutes we will get ready for lunch but we can play later." Always honour the commitments you make.
- This will also help you to get some work done. You can give younger children mini challenges/tasks such as building a structure with 5 colours, or drawing an alternate ending for a story. Set the timer for no more than 20-30 minutes and tell your child they can interrupt you 2 times as you work somewhere where you can keep an eye on them.

### Everything Can Be a Fun Learning Experience

- It's okay if sometimes you don't stick to your routine. Our routine may have to change or your child isn't in the mood to do the work they've been set. There are always opportunities for fun learning experiences. Young children can help you to set the table for lunch and learn about sorting utensils and one-to-one correspondence (one plate for each person). At the same time, they can develop their finger strength when they're rolling dough or putting clothespins on the line. Older children can learn important life skills like doing the laundry or cooking simple foods, and know that they're valuable members of the family.

### You Already Have Everything You Need

- You don't need to buy anything if you embrace your inner hoarder. Look around the house for interesting ways to use household items, especially for young children. Rocks can turn into counters, household items traced on a paper can be a matching puzzle, and empty yogurt cups can be musical instruments, items to practice pouring, blocks, hats for dolls, boats for water play... you name it.
- Children can help to label and decorate boxes and arrange their items in appealing ways as they set up their child-friendly spaces they can play in independently while you get some work done (finally).

There are a lot of online resources out there as well as simple activity suggestions. If you need to lean on screen time a little more than usual, it's okay. Thank you for all that you are doing at this difficult, unprecedented time. Go easy on yourself; you really are doing a great job!

*Cathryn O'Sullivan, Programme Leader,  
Bloom Early Childhood Centre of Excellence Jamaica*

**World Health Organization**

### Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.

Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.

Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

*How to cope with stress during 2019-nCoV outbreak:* <https://tinyurl.com/vr9owsn>

1. A list of helpful resources can be found here - <https://bit.ly/bloomathome>
2. [www.sesamestreet.org/caring](http://www.sesamestreet.org/caring) has activities, supportive videos for children and parents, free e-books and easy self-care tips for parents: [www.sesamestreet.org/caring](http://www.sesamestreet.org/caring) has activities, supportive videos for children and parents, free e-books and easy self-care tips for parents:



## KEEP THEM ACTIVE!

You must remember that both you and your children need to stay active. Ordinarily they would have had play time or physical education class outdoors and extra-curricular physical activity hobbies after school. Make sure to schedule PE time into their daily activities. Have them join you in your daily workout session.



### STORY TELLING IS A GREAT TEACHING TOOL

Storytelling is a wonderful way to learn about many aspects of life. English author, Neil Gaiman (n.d.) said "We owe it to ourselves to tell stories."

Storytelling can assist with:

- Holistic development
- Developing healthy habits
- Building character
- Developing social consciousness
- Sparking creativity
- Developing imagination
- Enhancing literacy
- Integrating technology
- Learning about historic events etc.

#### Ways to Tell Stories

There are no predefined modes for telling stories, however it is important to have an objective in mind. You can sit on a chair or become cosy on the floor. You can read from a book or use technological tools to help you, it all depends on your objective.

Yes folks, storytelling becomes more meaningful when you attach an objective to it. Let's say you want your child to learn a bit about being responsible, instead of belabouring the issue with words, find a supportive story (the internet has tons) with an interesting character and reinforce your point. Mind you, children like to transform into characters, so ensure you find a likeable one.

#### Active Learning

Children are active learners and it is important for them to see themselves as active participants in the storytelling process. Younger children can be encouraged to turn the pages of books or swipe the screen during storytelling. They can be used as sound effects or action characters. For example, "the fire truck drove quickly to the scene of the fire with the siren blaring (ooouiiiiwiiouuiiwi)."

#### Reading Game

Research has shown that play is the natural language of the child, therefore **integrating reading games into the reading regime definitely helps with making the reading process more appealing.**

- A Story-Along
- Develop reading clubs (decide on books, set a timeline to complete reading)
- Make reading props (puppets, costumes, flashcards)
- Role-playing or re-enactments
- Write a story

A **Story-Along** is done similar to a sing-a-long and works best with primary school aged or older children. One person starts the story with at least 2-3 sentences and passes to the next person, that other person will expand on what was said. This goes on until the last person brings the story to an end. You can incorporate rules, such as, each person must use two full sentences, the story must have a problem or dilemma and there must be a solution (your story, your rules).

**Developing a reading club** can work well during the stay-at-home period because it encourages virtual social connections with peers and other families. Children can decide on a story and share the book or link among various households (each child should get a chance to choose a story). A timeframe can be set for reading and/or listening to the story and then they meet virtually to discuss the story.

**Making props** assists with helping children to make the story come to life. Props are supportive tools for connecting children to the characters and bring elements of the story alive. The use of recyclable items are quite appropriate. Mismatched socks and old jewellery can be used to make puppets. Old clothing, curtains and unused utensils are valuable items to create costumes and design a scene.

Storytelling can become more exciting when family members **role-play or re-enact** them. This simply requires parents to "free up" and loosen up and allow themselves to be transformed into characters. Children enjoy seeing their parents and family members being child-like by showing different sides of themselves.

Children are natural storytellers and will be delighted to try writing a story. Writing stories allow children to see their ideas come alive in words. With a little prompting from parents to come up with a theme or genre and, of course, with some writing assistance, I am sure they will be willing to write a story. Once written, ensure the masterpiece is shared with family members for encouragement.

You can't do storytelling wrong so just have fun, create a routine & make it meaningful.

*Nicole Romany*, Early Childhood Coordinator,  
Bloom Early Childhood Centre of Excellence Trinidad & Tobago

