

Six tips for parenting during uncertain times

1. Care for yourself

Parenting can often be challenging, especially during difficult and uncertain times. Everyone has times when they feel very stressed or upset. It is harder to be generous and supportive of others when we have our own big emotions to work through. Take some time to think about what makes you feel good, and how you can include some of these things in your day. It may take some energy to get practising these things, but soon you will feel energised by doing them.



What can you do to nurture yourself, and feel good?

Make yourself a list of what makes you feel good and pick something each day to do for you. Some ideas include:

- Have some time just for you. You may sit and look out of the window, give yourself a massage, practice some breathing, listen to some music, move/stretch your body.
- Use a family schedule or routine to help everyone plan their days. (The human mind likes to know what to expect. Otherwise, it gets more anxious.)
- Listen to a guided meditation. Try searching Youtube for meditation suggestions in your language or visit www.mrctas.org.au/phoenix-centre-resources/
- Read some inspirational messages
- Try to regularly think of three things you are grateful for
- Pray or give thanks to God
- Go to bed early. Practice good sleep routines such as no screens one hour before bed and sticking to a regular bedtime.

2. Maintain Social Connections

While we are staying physically apart, it's even more important to maintain social connection to protect our emotional wellbeing. Remember to do this while keeping physical distance as much as possible.



You can do this by:

- Talking with family and friends via video chat or phone
- If talking live isn't an option, write emails or letters to friends and family
- Make encouraging posters and signs and put them in your windows to support your neighbours
- Go outside and say hello to neighbours and friends. Just make sure to keep 1.5 meters away from anyone who doesn't live with you.

3. Take a break (with or without children)

Remember you're not alone — everyone is struggling with these unexpected changes to our lives, and many of us need some extra support. Be kind to yourself and understand that you can't do it all.



If you feel overwhelmed, find a way to give your stress response a rest. Take a walk around the block. Try a few minutes of meditation or deep breathing. Call a friend or support service. When you can find ways to give yourself a break, you'll return to your children better able to meet their needs.

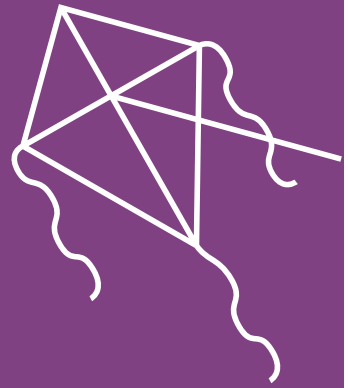
4. Validate children's feelings

Children look to us to see how to respond, especially in new and difficult situations. We don't need to have all the answers but what supports them is acknowledging their feelings. Respond to your child's feelings by accepting them, listening and sitting with your child in their feeling of disappointment for example, instead of trying to fix or talk them out of it.



5. Get outside with your family

Exercise boosts your mood, gives you energy and reduces the physical feelings of stress and anxiety. Research shows kids who spend time outside in nature are calmer, happier, healthier, more creative and do better in school.



You could:

- Go for a walk around the block and notice the different gardens
- Blow bubbles outdoors and watch them float away
- Walk to your local park
- Plant a garden.

6. Laughter

Laughter reduces the stress hormones in the body. It also increases the bonding hormones, so you feel safer with someone you've been laughing with. Get siblings laughing together to reduce competition, and get everyone laughing together to reduce the tension of 24/7 togetherness.



Remember:

If you don't see an improvement in four weeks, or are concerned, please contact professional help, like a counsellor at the Phoenix Centre or your GP.

Contact the Phoenix Centre: 03 6234 9138

After Hours Support:

Tasmanian Lifeline (8am to 8pm every day) 1800 98 44 34

Lifeline (24 hours a day, every day) 13 11 14

Resources used to create this document:

- Harvard University Centre for Developing Child
- Australian Childhood Foundation
- Lifeline

