

Supporting Young People During This Difficult Period



Have the conversation and offer reassurance

Starting the conversation around Covid-19 can be very difficult, but it is important to provide young people with an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings around this as well as ask questions. In line with the St Ninian's leaflet 'Starting the Conversation around Mental Health: A Parents' Guide' it is important that you remain calm when speaking to the young person and if they don't want to talk, or aren't ready, give them space. Agree a way for them to let you know when they are, such as leaving a note or sending a text, then facilitate the conversation on their terms. During this unpredictable time it is important to remember that offloading their worries and offering reassurance may be enough. However, if they are looking for your help and advice to cope with the situation remember to be realistic and optimistic.

Provide accurate information

It is so important that you offer factual information to young people whilst monitoring their access to social media and broadcasting news in order to ensure that they do not become overwhelmed. To be clear providing factual information is helpful, but adjusting the amount and detail to match their age is crucial. The NHS provides updated, accurate information at www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus. As well as this East Renfrewshire Psychological services have issued the following helpful advice <https://edpsy.org.uk/blog/2020/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-children-families-and-professionals/>

Focus on strengths and support of others

Focus on your own and your child's strengths to get through this time, and remind them of the many strengths they have to help them cope when they feel worried. St Ninian's positive mental health website will have regular updates providing tips and strategies to facilitate this as well as offering support.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/snhspositivementalhealth/>

Try to follow a routine

Try to continue with whatever normal family routines that you can. If you are self-isolating, try to keep normal waking hours and get dressed each day. If you normally eat together as a family, continue to do that too. Think about structuring the weekdays around the 'school day' a copy of a timetable to complete for this time through the St Ninian's distance learning programme booklet link below:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/public/StNinians/uploads/sites/103/2020/03/18163856/Home-Timetable-Example.pdf>

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/public/StNinians/uploads/sites/103/2020/03/18163845/Blank-Timetable.pdf>

As per the example timetable encourage pupils to log in to their google classrooms at the same time they would attend this subject.

Remember weekends will continue as normal and ensure indoor treats and fun activities are still planned.

Consider this period of time as an 'opportunity'

Although this may feel hard, look on this time as an opportunity to do more things together as a family. Have fun reading, exercising and learning life skills together. Learn a new skill and do the things that you usually say "If I had more time I would....."

Practice mindfulness

Use websites to facilitate mindfulness and positive changes. Within St Ninian's the majority of young people have been introduced to the app 'stop, breathe and think' through assembly inputs or attending groups like mindful art and the resilience group. This is app directly aimed at teenagers and young adults. It allows for a simple 'check in' and then generates personalised guided exercises, guided journaling and other helpful support to navigate challenges with resiliency and calm.

Stop, breathe and think has proven to achieve the following outcomes:



DECREASES STRESS AND ANXIETY



INCREASES EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND REGULATION



MAINTAINS STRONG COMMUNICATION AND KIND RELATIONSHIPS

Download the app by following this link

<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>

In addition, look on the positive mental health page for posts on how to practice daily tasks in a mindful way around the house or in the garden.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/snhpositive/mentalhealth/>

THE **WORLD** IS CHANGED BY *your* **example** NOT YOUR OPINION

Looking after yourself and staying connected

This is a difficult time and we all cope with stressful times in a variety of different ways. It is important to make sure you look after your own health and wellbeing so that you can continue to support your child and others who rely on you. This means keeping a routine yourself, maintaining verbal and virtual contact with friends and family, exercising and ensuring health eating and drinking habits continue.

Although it can be helpful to keep up-to-date with official guidance and information surrounding Covid-19, try to limit the exposure you all have; this can increase worry.

Instead, look for positive and accurate on-line messages and supports, for example

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/> provides helpful calendars and clear positive advice:

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/news/covid-19-how-to-respond>

