

Covid-19 Parents' Guide

Top Tips:



Be Realistic: Remember that this isn't 'business as usual'. Your child isn't getting as much work done as you anticipated, or they've been set some work that you're struggling to understand - but that's totally fine. You aren't a teacher. You are doing your best, and your child is safe and loved.

Adjust Expectations: The younger the child, the less time they can sit and learn for, so regular breaks are important. Continue to practice essential literacy and numeracy work, but remember that learning can also take the form of arts and crafts, playing in the garden and games. If they're struggling to get the set work done, you can still encourage the practice of these skills: your child could write for pleasure about a subject of interest, make a comic, or role-play a game of shops so they can practice their numeracy with money.

Praise, Praise, Praise: Reassure them and let them know they're doing a good job! Try not to get caught up in trying to correct all of their mistakes. Instead, praise specific parts of their work and make sure you are pointing out all their hard effort. Praise the positive qualities they display such as their resilience, independence and empathy.

Be Reciprocal and Responsive: When your child's emotions are exploding, it can be very tempting to approach the situation using logic. E.g. 'Don't be so silly, of course I don't give your sister preferential treatment!' However, as nonsensical and frustrating as their feelings may seem to you, they are real and important to your child and it's vital that we acknowledge them in our response.

Don't explain or lecture or try to talk them out of their feelings. Just listen attentively and use nonverbal signals such as physical touch, empathetic facial expressions and a nurturing tone of voice. Acknowledge and validate their point of view,

even if you don't like their behaviour or necessarily agree with them. Once you've listened, reflect back what you've heard in order to comfort them. E.g. 'It seems like you're very angry and frustrated because...'

When they're back in a calm state and your child is receptive again, you can then deal with the specific issue that was raised. Moments of emotional flooding are not the best time for lessons to be learnt! When they're calm, you can discuss misbehaviour and its consequences. Help them understand their own feelings, help them to reflect on how their actions impacted others and involve them in thinking of how they can make it right again.

Think of it as this: It's as if you're a lifeguard who swims out, puts your arms around your child, and helps him to shore before telling him not to swim out so far next time. When your child is drowning in an emotional flood, this approach can be a life preserver that helps keep your child's head above water, and keeps you from being pulled under along with him.

Be Resourceful – Keeping children entertained doesn't have to cost money. Use the environment around you to create play activities. Children tend to have great imaginations and clear ideas of how they want to play. This could be making something with play-dough, junk modelling or papier-mache - Let your children experiment. To help with skills such as turn-taking and understanding perspectives of others, board games and playing cards are good examples.

Tap into their interests: No doubt there will be times when it will be difficult to get them motivated. If they are losing interest, try to think about things they like. If you follow their lead and join in, they'll be more motivated to keep going. Love LEGO? There are loads of great YouTube videos on how playing with LEGO helps you to learn maths and building skills. Kids love helping out: if they're interested in cooking, get them to help you make a meal. These are all valuable learning experiences!

Give choice where possible: Children may be more motivated to join in an activity they have chosen to do (even if it a hidden choice). For example, when creating your timetable, give two options for the morning. The one they choose can be

done now, and the other in the afternoon. Or try, 'We can do this work before a garden break, or after'. Hopefully this will mean it'll get done either way!

Flexibility is key: So the timetable says it's time to do maths, but your child is refusing. Remember some days will be tougher than others. However, if you're a little flexible, you'll soon find a way that works for both you and your kids, where everyone is getting things done most of the time. Present them with the options of doing an online maths tasks or a maths worksheet. If this is unsuccessful, find a different activity to do and come back to maths at another time.

ACE Activities - In order to maintain a healthy sense of wellbeing, both yourself and your children need to balance what you do within the day. We can use the acronym ACE to help us remember:

ACHIEVEMENT - allow time for activities which create a sense of achievement - work, chores, study

CONNECT - allow time for activities which give a sense of connecting with and being close to others e.g. with members of the household, or with wider family or friends via phone / video chat

ENJOYMENT - allow activities which foster a sense of enjoyment - play, fun, pleasure

Let them be the teacher: If they are getting restless and unsettled, it can be a good idea to let them be the teacher for a while. Get them to help you 'learn' your times tables. Just don't forget to get some answers wrong. This will give them a chance to correct you, which will help boost their confidence.

Look after yourself: With children at home, we can often put ourselves last. But it is easier to look after them if we look after ourselves too. Here are somethings you can do to help yourself:

- Talk to your partner, friends, or family. It helps to talk about how you're feeling. Speaking to other adults can help give you perspective and they might have advice to offer as well.

- Make time just for you each week. It's important to take some time for you. It could be a bath, a movie you want to watch, or having a cup of tea.
- Try to get enough sleep. This might feel impossible at times, but even going to bed a little earlier could make a difference.
- Stay active. A walk helps to keep your body and mind active and reduce your stress.
- Remember that you're not alone - many of us are struggling at the moment

Timetables

Our children are used to following timetables at school and setting one for home will help you structure your days and keep consistency we all need in these times of change.

Timetables can be personalised and changed easily. Invite your child to help put the timetable together so that they feel included and involved. At the beginning of each week you could print off a blank one to colour and draw in as an activity. For younger children, or children who like visuals, you can cut out pictures that represent activities and blue tac them onto the timetable. Alternatively, if your child is IT savvy- get them on the computer to fill in their timetables. Timetables can be weekly or daily.

Remember that some days you may struggle to stick to a timetable religiously! - sometimes flexibility is key

If there are any changes to the routine, tell your child what the changes are and why. For example, "it is raining outside so we can't play in the garden. Let's do a YouTube exercise class, you can help me pick which one we do".

Visuals for timetables can be found here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-c-006-editable-ks1-visual-timetable>

An example of a visual timetable

	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00
Monday	literacy	IT	maths	lunch	art	music	home	club
Tuesday	maths	PE	literacy	lunch	story	drama	home	club
Wednesday	literacy	maths	IT	lunch	art	PE	home	club
Thursday	IT	literacy	maths	lunch	cookery	cookery	home	club
Friday	literacy	maths	PE	lunch	IT	music	home	club

Day timetable example

CHARLIE'S TIMETABLE-MONDAY

8 am Breakfast

9 am PE with Joe Wicks

10 am Maths activities and work from school

11 am Break

11.20 am English (reading Charlie and the chocolate factory)

12:20 pm Lunch break

1.20 pm Mindfulness activity

1.45 pm Art project

2.30 pm cooking- biscuits

3 pm end of school day, facetime grandma

Today's lunch is:

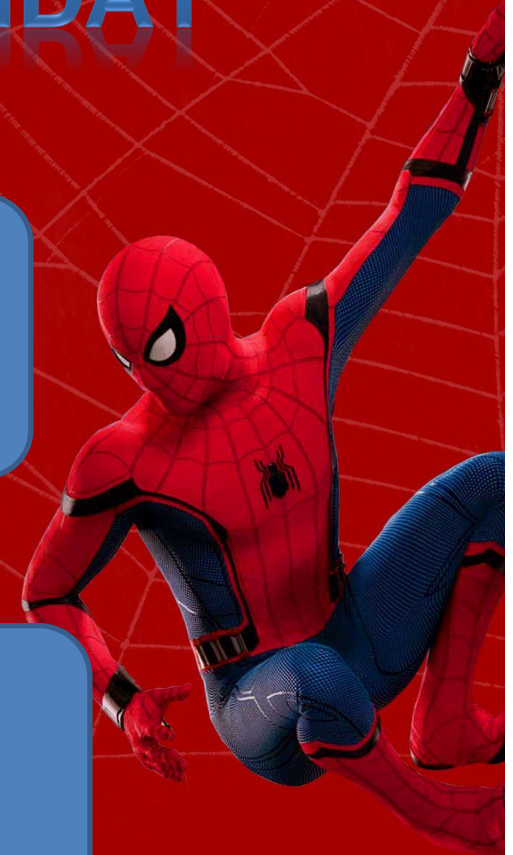
Cheese or tuna sandwich and crisps

Break activities options today are:

Craft table

Colouring books

Football in the garden



Weekly timetable example



House Rules: Classes often agree class rules at the beginning of the school year. Clear boundaries help children feel safe. You may find it useful to make new house rules in this new normal to support each other. Agree this as a household and put it up somewhere everyone can see to remind you all of it throughout the day. Establishing rules will help keep structure and routine. Make the rules are achievable and true for everyone in the house, and remember to be consistent.

For example:

Do's

Tidy the house after each activity

Listen to everyone in the house

Respect each other

Listen to adults

Be safe always

Try every task

Don'ts

Be rude

Hurt others- including hitting, kick and being mean

Swear

Ignore instructions

Talk over people

We will always try to:

Be kind to each other

Understand other people's feelings

Compromise

Learn something new everyday

Be open and honest

Time out cards can help children self-regulate and take themselves away from a situation to calm down. Set up time out cards rules with your children to make sure they are used positively. For example:

Time out card rules:

I will use the time out card when I am angry or upset

I will go to my craft area of the living room for 5 minutes where I will sit/play with some activities to try and help me

After 5 minutes Mum will come and check on me and see if I am ready or not. If I am I will show side 2 and re-join.

If I am not ready I will show side 1. After 10 minutes, if I am still not ready on my own, I will tell mum and we will talk.

Side 1

I am upset/angry/confused



I need a time out and will follow the time out rules.

Side 2

I am ready to join in again now.



Incorporate regular breaks throughout the day: These little breaks will keep the structure of the day more manageable. As the children don't have a playground to burn off steam 3 times a day, you may find that more shorter breaks throughout the day are more helpful than one or two longer breaks. Sensory breaks can be a good way to get rid of some energy and break from the task. A sensory break is just a fancy word for a 'brain break' that involves movement or physical activity.

Creative sensory/movement break activities can be found here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t3-s-138-sensory-brain-break-activity-cards>



This article talks about sensory break ideas for the classroom, but they can also be used at home too <https://www.teachstarter.com/gb/blog/sensory-and-movement-break-ideas-for-the-classroom-gb/>

Interactive and engaging projects will keep children engaged and interested in this time. They are more likely to stick to the routine if there is an engaging opportunity. For example, a Family tree project could be a great way to combine history and art. Make a big tree and contact those in your family who might not have heard from you in a while (they will be free to help) and fill in a family tree to learn about the history of your family. This project could be a set activity to work on at a set time each day.

Reward charts: Reward charts can be a good incentive to keep your child motivated and on task. They are easily made and personalised. Decide with you child together what will count as a point and what the rewards will be. Make these realistic and available now. Don't promise a trip to the cinema for example.



Choice of rewards (every blue square =1)

Chocolate bar

20 minutes free time on ipad

Choose family film to watch

5 minutes extra on the phone to grandma

Josie will get 1 star for the following:

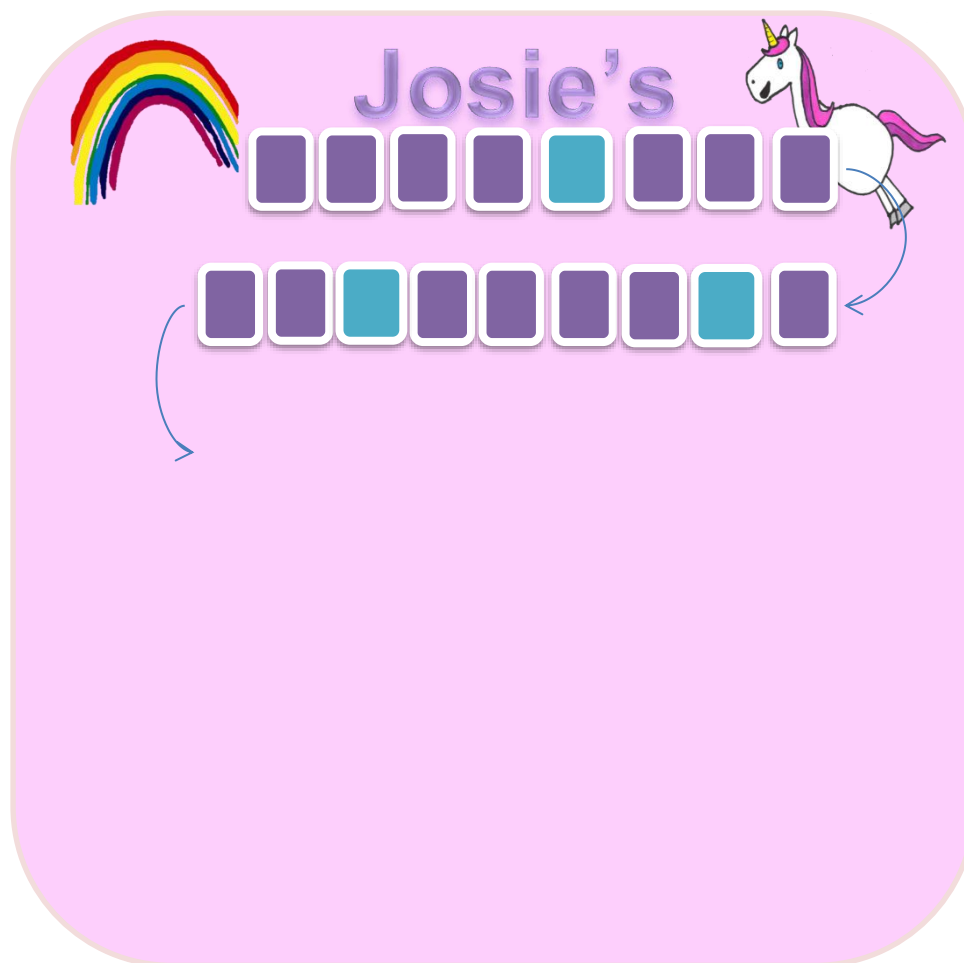
Tidying room when asked

Trying all work set by school

Following house rules

Being kind to others in the house

Using her words to explain when



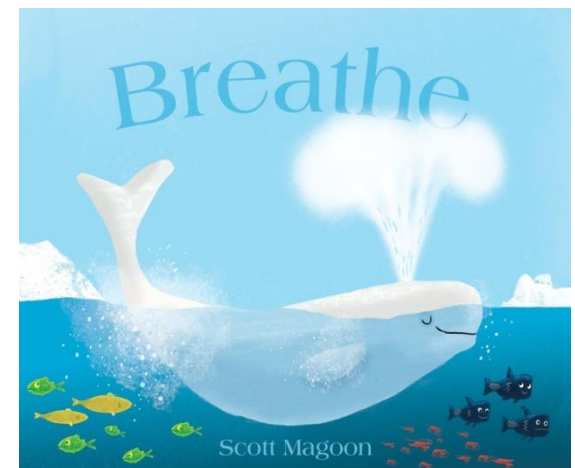
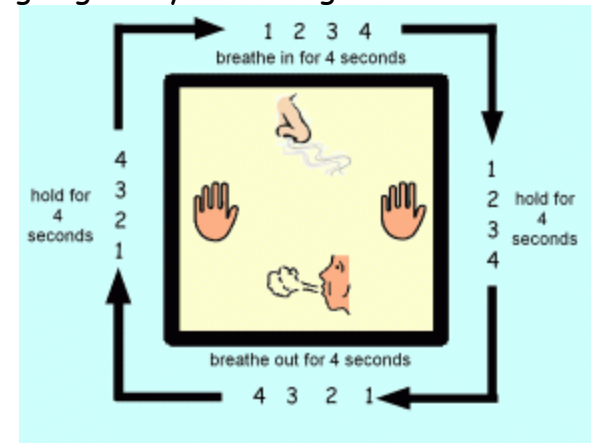
Activity ideas for Wellbeing and Mental Health

In this time of uncertainty, mental health and wellbeing for everyone is a priority. Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with whatever we're doing at the moment — free from distraction. Mindfulness techniques and activities can be a great way to break up the day and calm down in stressful situations. Having mindfulness activities planned throughout your day can help transitions between activities run smoothly and keep the routine going. They are also good to use if an activity is not going so well.

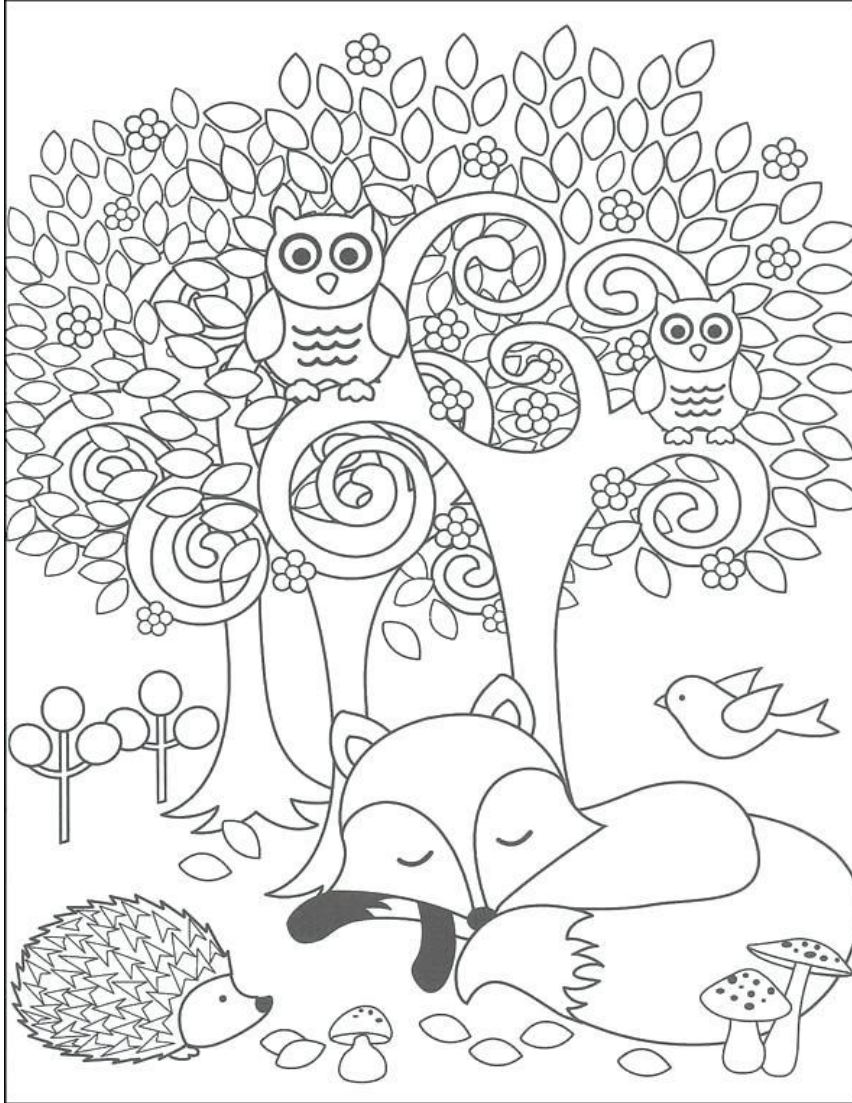
Breathing techniques can help to calm our bodies and minds down. Try box breathing. Get your child to breathe in for 4 seconds, hold their breath for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4, and hold that breath out for 4. It can heighten performance and concentration while also being a powerful stress reliever

Colour breathing - Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes. Imagine a colour that feels good to you e.g. the blue of the sky or the warm yellow of the sun. As you breathe in, imagine this colour slowly spreading through your whole body. Notice how this makes you feel. Now, imagine the colour of your worry and as you breathe out, slowly let this colour leave your body.

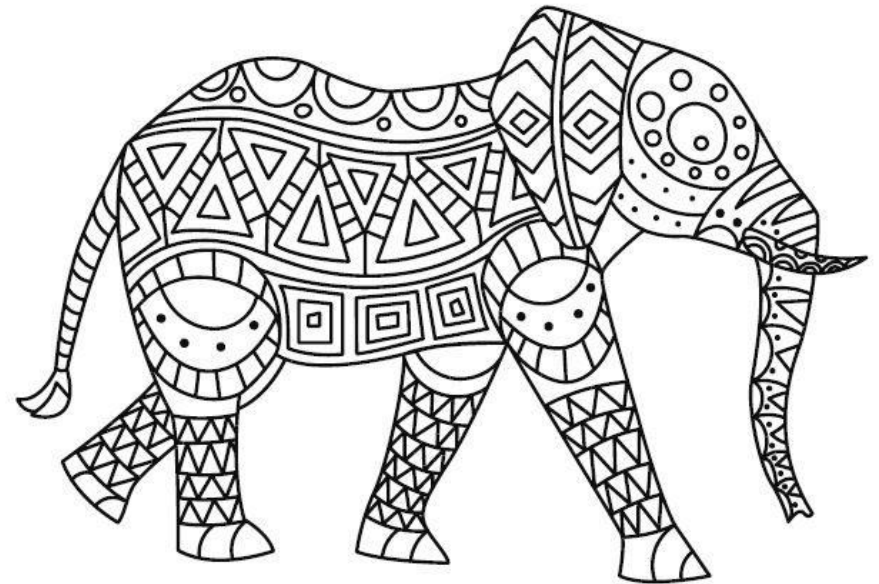
Tummy breathing - Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes. Put one hand on your tummy. As you slowly breathe in through your nose, feel your tummy expand like a balloon. Breathe slowly out through your mouth.



Mindfulness colouring- Mindfulness colouring can be a great time for the children to do something creating and keep busy while parents have a quiet moment! It can also be great to help you relax too, so grab some pens...



There are lots of great resources online, search for your child's special interest to encourage engagement. There are even lots of Paw Patrol colouring sheets to print off Mindfulness colouring examples



5

Fun MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES *for children*

by Big Life Journal

1 "JUST ONE BREATH" BREATHING ACTIVITY

- Find a relaxing place, sit comfortably, and set a timer for one minute.
- Breathe deeply in and out while paying attention to any sensations you notice or sounds you hear.
- Take another slow deep breath, imagine the air moving down into the lungs and back up.
- Take one more deep breath and hold for a moment, then release it.



2 CREATE A GLITTER JAR

- Finding a jar or plastic bottle and allow your child to decorate it however they like.
- Fill the bottle up 3/4 of the way with water. Next, add clear glue, food coloring, and glitter then shake.
- Seal the lid and you are ready to go.



3 HEARTBEAT EXERCISE

- Ask your child to stand up and either jump up and down or do jumping jacks for one minute.
- At the end of that minute, have them place their hand on their heart and pay attention to how their heartbeat and their breathing feels.



4 GOING ON A SAFARI

- Go outside on an exciting adventure, try picking up a small rock or touching a plant or flower.
- Notice the bugs or the birds. Take a moment to kneel down and touch the earth.
- Walk mindfully paying close attention to everything. Make sure you walk in silence because you want to notice all those little details.



5 TENSE AND RELEASE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly releasing.
- Next, squeeze the large muscles in the calves for 5 seconds, then gently release. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles for 5 seconds then gently release.
- Continue moving up the body for more relaxation.



Big Life Journal - biglifejournal.com

Learning resources and online sessions:

Technology and resources online are expanding and very useful. Use what you think your child will engage well with to keep them motivated.

Twinkl- Have lots of activities to keep tasks interesting. They are currently free; normally teachers have to pay for a subscription. <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>

Bitesize- Is a free BBC website covering various topics in the curriculum <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z6x992p>

Carol Vorderman maths support- Carol has set up a maths website, normally £2 a week, this is currently free and includes live maths sessions and maths tasks. <https://www.themathsfactor.com/>

David Walliams audio books- David has released 30 free audio books to listen to. Whether you use this as a bedtime story or to support literacy tasks the link is here: <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/> and here: <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Myleene Klass Music lessons- Music might be a part of the curriculum parents are less confident with (like maths). Myleene has set up a youtube channel to support music lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrixYBn6jFXsXQ/videos>

Museum and Zoo tours are also available online for free- <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/>

Rob Biddulph Art lessons- on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPeyVoZyBzY>

Geek Gurl Diaries IT lessons - online <https://www.youtube.com/user/GeekGurlDiaries>

Advice for helping your child if they're worried about covid-19 or anxious:

Children's Commissioner- This is a great document on what corona is and also has some ideas about what to do at home.
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/cco-childrens-guide-to-coronavirus.pdf>

World Health Organisation – How to help children cope with stress: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Anna Freud: Advice for parents whose children are worried: <https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/> Advice for teenagers who are worried: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Headspace: An app available on apple and android, lots of mindfulness exercises to help us to slow down, take stock and tune in to what is important to us.

ACT Companion: An app available on apple and android containing lots of exercises to help us take note of our experiences and begin to refocus on what matters to us. This app is currently free when using the voucher code:

ChildLine- Comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling. They also have some great games to use as breaks and rewards that focus on wellbeing. <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/>