

10 Tips for Managing Your Mental Health Gr. 4-6

It's really important during this time of COVID-19 not only to take care of our bodies, but also our minds. The following tips will help you pay attention to your mind and help you feel like you can be active in taking care of yourself.

1. **Fight the effects of being stuck inside by staying connected.** You can do this with friends and family by talking on the phone, or using an online video that your parents can set up. Your friendships can stay strong and healthy as long as you connect with them. All you have to do is say "Hi!" Try calling the one person you are most comfortable with as you will no doubt feel less alone. Feeling alone all the time can make you feel sad and down.
2. Maybe **take a break from electronics.** Instead, try some other activities that you enjoy. Hearing the news in the time of COVID-19 can be very worrisome and taking this break will likely make you worry less. Remember though, worrying is a normal response to COVID-19, but worrying too much is not good for you. You can also talk to someone you trust about your feelings if you feel that your worry is out of control.
3. **Staying physically active** doesn't only help your body, it also can help your mind. It's important to eat in a healthy way as well. You can stay physically active by following YouTube exercises, dancing, or just by playing. The health of your body and mind are so important and connected. You'll be better prepared to deal with Covid-19 and how it affects your life if your body is as healthy as it can be.
4. **Try to be aware of what stresses** you out during Covid-19. You can try to avoid what stresses you out the most, or if you can't, you can learn to deal with the stress. Stress is a part of life and affects people in different ways. Rather than react quickly to stress (like yelling, storming out of a room), it's good to figure out ways to respond. People deal with stress in many ways and talking to your parents, or a trusted love one is a good start. Work with them to identify ways to reduce stress.



5. **Sleep is more important than ever right now.** Try to go to bed at a regular time each day and practice good habits to get better sleep. Good sleep is important for both your mind and body. A regular sleep schedule is an important part of keeping a routine during a time when things might not feel the same as before.
6. **Take a moment to notice each of your senses every day** – what you see, hear, smell, feel, taste. Try to ‘be’ in the moment and breathe – this is called mindfulness. Try not to worry about the future and remind yourself to stay in the present. This is good for your mental health. Practicing mindfulness meditation is a wonderful way to make you feel less anxious and help you feel better in general. You can find a lot of examples on YouTube.
7. **Reach out to a friend or family member** if your feelings become overwhelming because being stuck inside can bring up feelings such as frustration, anger, and sadness. Although Covid-19 can be really hard to deal with, there is no reason you have to suffer. Please remember that you are not alone!
8. **Have some alone time** - if you’re home with other people all the time, it is ok and healthy to do this. You may need time to simply calm yourself from the daily family activity inside. There is no reason to feel guilty about this, as we all need time to relax by ourselves. Take this time to close your eyes, read a book, try the above exercises of mindfulness and guided imagery, or talk by phone or video to a friend.
9. **If you live with someone who worries way too much** or is really bummed out about Covid-19, it’s important not to criticize them. Remember how you feel when you’re worried or sad about something. Usually, you would want someone to listen to you and understand what you’re saying. Your family member likely needs that, so tell a parent about your concern.
10. **Remind yourself that Covid-19 will come to an end.** In fact, you may need to remind yourself often, especially these days when it’s so easy to get caught up in the negative things. As the saying goes, this too shall pass, even though it may not always feel like it. Keep your head up, and know this is a temporary reality that we need to work through with our loved ones.

