

Parenting in a Pandemic

An Informational Newsletter from Relate Counseling Center

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:



Join Relate Counseling Center therapists on Friday, January 29 from 12-1 pm for a free Facebook Live webinar on navigating parenting challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Simply visit our Facebook page at the designated time to tune into the webinar.



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Tips for Parenting Through Distance Learning

By **Melissa French, MSW, LGSW**
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As we ring in the New Year and the holidays come to an end, we are often left with the letdown of all the festivities, celebrations, and activities. We find ourselves re-engaging into our day-to-day life without the excitement and anticipation the holidays may bring. It is yet, another adjustment that we make, which is typically just getting back into the “swing” of things. However, this year we also are navigating through a pandemic, which brings added stresses, transitions, questions, and uncertainty for ourselves and our child(ren).

Additionally, as in-person school models are being rolled out, many of us are preparing for the impact this has on not only our children, but ourselves as parents and the family as a whole. Here are a few tools that can be helpful.

Compassion. Compassion can be defined as the acknowledgement of someone’s suffering and the desire to alleviate it. As we reflect on this, we are able to think of multiple examples of providing compassion towards others. However, an important question remains: “When was the last time you employed compassion with yourself?” This is often a hard question to answer. It is important to acknowledge the vast number of things you are juggling and the stress that comes along with it. Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself permission to take a break, permission to let go of expectations of (continued on page 2)



Parenting Tips (contd.)

getting everything done, permission to take a moment to breathe and find space for your own well-being. Be compassionate towards yourself by engaging in an activity that you enjoy; even a small amount of time can make a big difference. Remember, you deserve alleviation from the many stressors you're experiencing, hence acknowledge all you do and be kind and gentle with yourself.

Provide Space for Conversations. Just like you, children need space to talk about and process their thoughts and feelings, as well as, ask questions. It is important for them to have their thoughts, feelings, and questions acknowledged. Let them speak freely and validate how they may be feeling. During conversations, follow your child's lead. Answer questions honestly and if you do not know the answer, it is "okay" to communicate you are unsure and you will figure it out together. If your child does not have questions or concerns, it is a great time to talk about things they find important to them. By doing this, you are fostering positive connection and sending messaging that you are available and interested when things are good as well as tough. By providing opportunities to talk openly, kids experience feelings of support, reassurance, and relational connection.

Create Meaning. We all enjoy having something to look forward to and now that the holidays are over and we get back to our day-to-day life in a pandemic, this can be challenging. Events or activities to look forward to can be simple and provide opportunity to remain connected with each other. Think about things that your family likes to do together. This could be movie night, a special meal, an outdoor activity, game night, arts & crafts, karaoke, reading together; whatever this is for your family, plan an "event". Think about what would make it special, this could include dressing up, a special treat/snack, handing out simple event invitations or reminders; snuggling, everyone in pajamas, or whatever your family comes up with. The important piece to remember is to create an event that is "meaningful" to your family and provide relational connection and something to look forward to.

Melissa is a school-based therapist at Relate Counseling Center. She can be reached at mfrench@relatemn.org.

Stay Connected with Relate:

Check our website and social media pages for up-to-date information on parenting groups and resources.



Parenting Resource Corner:



Podcast recommendation:

Feeling overwhelmed?

[Check out this podcast from Brené Brown on burnout and how to complete the stress cycle.](#)



**CHILD MIND[®]
INSTITUTE**

Online resources: We love everything put out by Child Mind Institute. Check out some of our therapists' favorite online resources from CMI:

- [Preventing Parent Burnout](#)
- [How Parents Can Help Kids Bounce Back from the Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- [Tips for Nurturing and Protecting Kids at Home During Coronavirus](#)