

# Helping kids deal with COVID-19

The words COVID-19 or coronavirus bring up a variety of thoughts and feelings that we are all dealing with.

Children may be struggling a bit more with worry and concern based on the changes that are directly affecting them as a result of COVID-19. This includes school closures, cancellation of sports activities, church events or other social activities, isolation from friends, and the need for social distancing and/or quarantine. While these emergency measures are put in place to protect all of us by preventing the spread of infection, the idea of quarantine may evoke fear based on what children have seen recently on the news or from what may have been depicted in the past in movies and books.

Parents, teachers, and other trusted adults can provide reassurance to children by taking time to listen to their concerns, share accurate information, and limit their exposure to media that is focused on the pandemic.



Children and adults alike, whether they have an existing behavioral health issue or not, may find themselves experiencing feelings of anxiety, fear, restlessness, hopelessness, or depression related to the uncertainty of COVID-19. It seems that there are constant messages in the media that, while meant to provide us with helpful information, are sometimes conflicting and may increase these feelings.

Fortunately, there are many resources available to help in a time of crisis. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers practical tips on taking care of one's behavioral health needs during this time of social distancing and isolation. One tip is to reach out to people you trust to help reduce feelings of anxiety, isolation, and depression. Telephone, text messaging, Skype, and other social media platforms are great ways of staying connected!

**Visit [www.dss.sd.gov](http://www.dss.sd.gov) for additional resources.**