

COVID *for Kids*

FACT SHEET

Mental health experts suggest that people should pay attention to their ideas, their feelings, and their actions when dealing with situations. Here are some things for kids to consider:

Ideas

Try to keep these in mind, so you think clearly about COVID-19. Careful thinking helps us manage difficult situations. To deal with situations that could harm you, it is important to have accurate ideas about the situation.

So, *know the facts*:

- Talk to your parents to help you find good sources of information
 - Your doctor is one good source, but your parents can help you locate and understand reliable information from the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institute of Health, and local public health experts. See the links at the end. Also, for a fun source of information, you could turn to a Sesame Street video (<https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>; if you are young or young at heart) or the American Academy of Pediatrics healthykids (<https://healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>) site if you are a teen.
- Here are the basics:
 - COVID-19 comes from a virus.
 - It is so small you cannot see it.
 - It gets into your body through small drops of water that come from people that have caught COVID-19.
 - These drops are usually passed through the air when someone talks, coughs, or sneezes.
 - They can get in your body when you breathe them in or if they land on your body and in a short time you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - COVID-19 is harmful.
 - It can make people sick.
 - Children and teens can become sick.
 - Most children who catch COVID-19 do not become very sick.
 - Teens that catch COVID-19 can become seriously sick more often.
 - Children and teens can carry COVID-19 in their bodies and pass it along to other people, including older people who can become very sick.
 - Common symptoms experienced by children and teens with COVID-19 include: fever, sore throat, cough that is hard to control and makes it difficult to breath, diarrhea/vomiting/stomachache, headaches.
- Your body has built-in disease fighters.
 - These fighters do their best when you take care of your health.
 - Get enough sleep
 - Eat well
 - Get some exercise

What Is Cognitive Behavior Therapy?

Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Therapy are types of treatment that are based firmly on research findings. These approaches aid people in achieving specific changes or goals. Changes or goals might involve:

A way of acting: controlling salt or alcohol intake, taking medications as prescribed;

A way of feeling: helping a person manage stress;

A way of thinking: understanding that diet and exercise affect blood pressure;

A way of dealing with physical or medical problems: using behavioral techniques to control diet;

A way of coping: learning to take an active role in one's own health

Behavior Therapists and Cognitive Behavior Therapists usually focus more on the current situation and its solution, rather than the past. They concentrate on a person's views and beliefs about their life, not on personality traits. Behavior Therapists and Cognitive Behavior Therapists treat individuals, parents, children, couples, and families. Replacing ways of living that do not work well with ways of living that work, and giving people more control over their lives, are common goals of behavior and cognitive behavior therapy.

- These fighters also do their best when you keep problem items out of your body.
- You can protect your body.
 - There is more information coming up which tells about the best behaviors to use.

Tune Into Your Ideas

- You may be worried about yourself, your family, and people that you know.
- Be aware of reasonable and accurate ideas and keep them in your thinking.
 - Basically COVID-19 is harmful and people should be cautious.
 - And you and others can reduce your risk of catching it if careful behaviors are used.
- Be aware of worried ideas that may be exaggerations or myths, such as
 - Ideas that are too positive and not correct, for instance:
 - I am healthy, I could never catch COVID-19.*
 - If I eat right, I will not catch COVID-19.*
 - I do not need to use careful actions.*
 - COVID-19 is going away after all these months.*
 - I can spend time with people even if they are not wearing masks.*
 - COVID-19 is not real.*
 - Ideas that are too negative and not correct
 - I have to keep away from all people all of the time.*
 - I could catch COVID-19 by touching anything even if I wash my hands, stay away from people, and everyone has been wearing masks.*
 - I cannot let any item from the outside come into my house.*
 - I cannot see family members even if we stay far apart.*
- Talk to your parents or other people you trust about your ideas.

Feelings

Noticing your feelings is very useful when dealing with possible problems and real problems.

- It has been months since COVID-19 first showed up. It is known that people all around the world are tense, frustrated, sad, and worn-out.
 - Don't be surprised if you have some of these feelings too.
- So, tune into your feelings.
- Use your feelings to know if you should take some action.
 - Notice if you are fearful, nervous, sad, or angry more than usual.
 - It is fine to have feelings that are uncomfortable, but if they are strong and get in your way, don't keep them to yourself.
 - *Fear* will show up if you are in unsafe situations.
 - Use fear signals to take actions to be safe.*
 - This could happen if you are close to people who are not taking precautions, like not wearing a mask.*
 - *Anxiety* will show up when you are worried about the future.
 - Use anxiety to get prepared for following a safe path.*
 - *Sadness* can show up if you are isolated or you have lost a special person.
 - Sadness will happen if you lost someone, and that is expected.*
 - If you are isolated and sad, use the feeling to come up with new plans to get connected with others more often.*
 - *Anger* can come around if you are frustrated and are confined.
 - If you can't do the activities that you like, if you can't see friends in the usual way, if you have been spending too much time with your family and you are getting annoyed by them, you may feel angry*

How to Get Help

If you are looking for help, either for yourself or someone else, you may be tempted to call someone who advertises in a local publication or who comes up from a search of the Internet. You may, or may not, find a competent therapist in this manner. It is wise to check on the credentials of a psychotherapist. It is expected that competent therapists hold advanced academic degrees. They should be listed as members of professional organizations, such as the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies or the American Psychological Association. Of course, they should be licensed to practice in your state. You can find competent specialists who are affiliated with local universities or mental health facilities or who are listed on the websites of professional organizations. You may, of course, visit our website (www.abct.org) and click on "Find a CBT Therapist"

Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) is an interdisciplinary organization committed to the advancement of a scientific approach to the understanding and amelioration of problems of the human condition. These aims are achieved through the investigation and application of behavioral, cognitive, and other evidence-based principles to assessment, prevention, and treatment.

www.abct.org

Use feelings of anger to get energized to change things that you can. Be creative, but not destructive

- Feeling *calm* is possible, but could be a problem.

Being calm because your feelings are worn out can be a problem.

It may mean you are losing energy and you are getting ready to withdraw.

Actions

If you keep track of your ideas and use careful thinking and if you notice your feelings, you can take useful actions.

- The safe behaviors to use are:
 - Wear a mask to protect other people.
 - Stay at a safe distance from other people to protect yourself and them.
 - Wash your hand often and use sanitizer when you can't wash them.
 - Do not touch your face or parts of your face without washing your hands or using sanitizer.
 - Let your parents or other adults know if you do not feel safe because you see people who are not following these safe behaviors.
- Ask questions
 - Do not keep your ideas to yourself.
 - Tell people what you are thinking to make sure your ideas make sense.
 - Keep asking questions because new information keeps coming out.
- Notice your feelings and talk about them.
 - Do not keep your feelings to yourself.
- Be careful how you act when you have troubled feelings.
 - If you are *nervous or anxious* be careful about shutting down or avoiding reasonable situations.
 - If you are *sad* do not become completely inactive or withdrawn.
 - If you are *angry or frustrated* be careful how you talk and act, don't take action that harms your relationships, yourself, your stuff, or other people's stuff.
- Talk about the problems you are having in this tough situation.
 - By talking about the problems, people can help you come up with ways to cope.
 - The problems could be dealing with school.
 - The problems could be limited contact with friends.
 - The problems could be missing relatives.
 - The problems could be worried about important people and their health and safety.
 - Talking about these and other problems that come up will let you get ideas that you had not thought of before.
- And, consider these general behaviors that are good for you any time:
 - Find times and ways to stay connected with friends and family in safe ways.
 - Keep active and exercise—moving your body relieves stress, staying involved in activities that you like helps your mood.
 - Eat right and get enough sleep.
 - Look for fun activities that distract you from the difficult situations.
 - Do not pay attention to the news too often and ask people in your family to do the same.
 - Keep up with your school work as well as possible.
 - Tell people if you are having a really hard time so that they can get help for you.
 - Let your family know if you do not feel well so you can get checked out.