

Update from your School Nurse

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Recognize the signs of stress

During these challenging times children may show signs of stress in a number of ways

- **Unusual clinging** -reassure them that they are safe and offer a comfort item like a special toy
- **Angry behavior , irritability or tantrums**-children don't always have words to describe how they are feeling and may act out
- **Sleep issues**- your child may sleep more than usual or have trouble falling sleeping
- **Eating changes**- Eating too much or too little can both be reactions to stress
- **Getting sick more often**- Stress shows up as physical symptoms . Children may complain of headaches or stomachaches

Stress management for kids

These strategies can help

- **Sleep well**- sleep experts recommend 9-12 hours of sleep for 6 to 12 year old and 8-10 hours for teens. Limit screen use at night.
- **Exercise**- at least 60 minutes or more of activity per day is recommended
- **Keep routines**- children will feel that they can depend on some things not changing
- **Model healthy ways of coping**-children look to adults to see how they should feel
- **Spend time together**- Make time for fun, laughing, moving and playing together brings joy
- **Get outside**- spending time in nature is an effective way to relieve stress and improve overall well-being
- **Breathe**- Breathing can help lower stress and refocus self.
- Breathe in like you are smelling a flower, breathe out like you are blowing out birthday candles.
- Arms up and breathe in, arms down and breathe out.
- Pretend your belly is a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.
- **Create a Calm Down Spot**-You can create a place specially designed to allow to calm down in a few steps. Find a spot and make it cozy , ask your child for help with that - maybe they can place a favorite blanket or stuffed animal inside. Explain how to use it and practice before. When they are starting to escalate, catch it early and give them a calm reminder about their calm down spot

Grounding Exercises

Grounding techniques are a powerful tool to help kids calm down and manage worry

1. **5-4-3-2-1 Senses-identify**
 - 5 things you see
 - 4 things you hear
 - 3 things you smell
 - 2 things you touch
 - 1 thing you taste
2. **Stomp Stomp Blow**- Stomp the left foot, then stomp the right foot ,then exhale deeply. Continue the pattern and blow away anxious thoughts.
3. **ABC around the room**- have your child look around the room and name something that starts with A, then B, then C and continue- check in and see how they are feeling once they reach the end.
4. **Give yourself a hug**- squeeze tight!
5. **Object focus**- keep something available with different textures or colors. Have your child hold it in their hands and focus on the item.