

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

PARENTING DURING CRISIS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESILIENCE

In the face of this global event we know as COVID-19, people are challenged in ways that they may have never imagined.

This is especially true for parents.

Under ordinary circumstances, parents are able to take solace in their efforts to create safe environments, routines, and predictability for their children. When things are “normal” parents are able to concentrate on their children’s needs for play, belonging, self-esteem, and creativity.

We are experiencing an unprecedented event. These types of difficulties can create additional challenges for parents. For example, balancing working from home while

simultaneously homeschooling more than one child. Some parents are experiencing limited access to extended family

and friends or to local community

resources. Other parents are

in even more complex

scenarios such as

college students

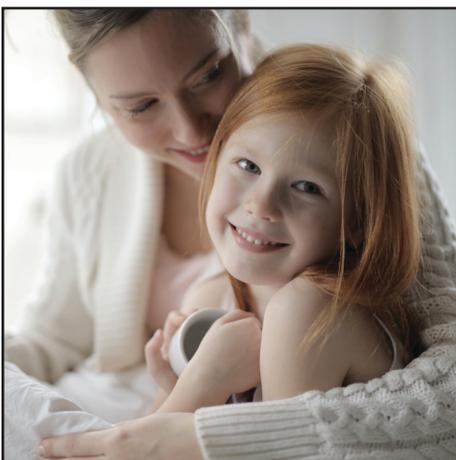
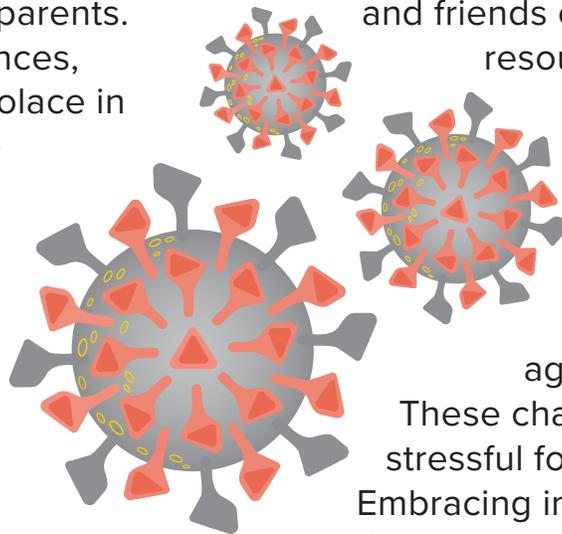
returning home and

being unemployed or

having to care for their aging parent in their homes.

These changes in routine can be stressful for kids and their parents.

Embracing imperfection and modeling resilience during this time is very important. Raymond Lindquist says “Courage is the power to let go of the familiar.” Let’s examine opportunities for parents to bring their families closer.



TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

> Start the conversation. Start with what your child already knows. Keep the information simple and developmentally appropriate. [Click here for a great resource on Top Parenting Tips during COVID-19.](#)

> Limit screen time. Children need information but they do not need to become inundated with countless hours of reports, statistics and outcomes (this applies to adults as well).

> Highlight our helpers and heroes. There are reports everywhere detailing the efforts of humans who are making a difference to others. Take time with your children and share positive stories.

HONEY, WE'RE HOME

- > Our attitude matters. As you know, children learn more from their parent's actions than they do from their words. Be mindful of the fact that they are watching and listening so take the opportunity to teach resilience. "I know that you are scared right now but I want you to know that as a family, we are making every effort to stay safe."
- > Be real about your feelings and allow your children to have theirs. *Inside Out* by Disney is a great way to discuss feelings with younger children. Invite a discussion about emotions and validate your children's feelings.
- > Maintain virtual connections with others. "Since we can't visit with grandma right now, let's FaceTime her or have a Zoom session." You can also make "low contact" deliveries to family members who are immune compromised.
- > Be creative. Limit screens (TV's, phones, games, etc.) Utilize movies but don't forget about other activities such as books, crafts, cooking, limited outdoor activities or time with pets.



FINDING YOUR FLOW

- > Emphasize agency. Many people are choosing to practice safety measures so help your children understand not only the "what" but the "why."
- > Practice and teach self-care. Take breaks and time outs if needed. Kids need breaks too and they also have "bad" days. It's allowed. Try to see things from their perspective.
- > Make memories. In the midst of it all, life is moving forward so focus on capturing the moments as they happen. Try not to miss the good. Good is still happening.
- > Focus on being flexible. It is true that kids need structure and routines. However, you know the specifics and limits of your own situation so allow yourself permission to adjust as needed.

Connection, creativity and flexibility are all hallmarks of resilience. In a world where there is so much that we cannot control, parents have an opportunity to influence and connect with their children. Reach out for professional support if needed. The EACC is here for you and your family.