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at **UWA EARLY HEAD STAR**

March 26, 2020

Hello EHS families,

At this time, information about COVID-19 is rapidly evolving as new details are confirmed and new questions emerge. In the event of an outbreak in our community, as a parent/caregiver, we understand that your first concern is about how to protect and take care of your children and family. Knowing important information about the outbreak and learning how to be prepared can reduce your stress and help calm likely anxieties. This resource will help you think about how an infectious disease outbreak might affect your family—both physically and emotionally—and what you can do to help your family cope. If you have any health-related questions or concerns, please contact your Center Director and I will continue to be a resource to them.

Stay safe,

Deidra Lewis, Health Specialist

Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Reducing Your Family's Risk: Hygiene, Medical Care & Supplies

Have all family members practice preventive behaviors including:



- Regularly washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water (length of the A-B-C song) or Happy Birthday (2 times).
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick and staying home when sick. Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or with the bend/crook of the arm when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep basic health supplies on hand (e.g., soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and a thermometer).
- Make sure you have a supply of medications taken regularly. If your child takes medication for a chronic condition, talk with your child's medical provider about plans to get a supply at home that will last through any period of home isolation for your family.

Coping with the Stress of an Infectious Disease Outbreak like COVID-19

Even if your family is prepared, an outbreak can be very stressful. To help your family cope with this stress, following these recommendations below can help:

- Focus on supporting children by encouraging questions and helping them understand the current situation.
- Talk about their feelings and validate these.
- Help them express their feelings through drawing or other activities.
- Clarify misinformation or misunderstandings about how the virus is spread and that not every respiratory disease is COVID-19.
- Provide comfort and a bit of extra patience.
- Check back in with your children on a regular basis or when the situation changes.



Scheduling & Activities

- Even if your family is isolated or quarantined, realize this will be temporary.
- Keep your family's schedule consistent when it comes to bedtimes, meals, and exercise.
- Make time to do things at home that have made you and your family feel better in other stressful situations, such as reading, watching movies, listening to music, playing games, exercising, or engaging in religious activities such as prayer.
- Recognize that feelings such as loneliness, boredom, fear of contracting disease, anxiety, stress, and panic are normal reactions to a stressful situation such as a disease outbreak.
- Help your family engage in fun and meaningful activities consistent with your family and cultural values.

Get support regarding your anxiety or stress by speaking to a trained counselor at SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or by texting TalkWithUS 66746.