Spiritual & Mental Health for Children & Teens During COVID-19

#COVID19church | #SpiritualFirstAid

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Humanitarian Disaster Institute

NAE | National Association of Evangelicals
Opening Prayer/Scripture

Rev. Dr. Nicole Martin
Executive Director of Trauma Healing,
American Bible Society
Meet your hosts.

Jamie Aten, Ph.D.
@drjamieaten

Kent Annan, M.Div.
@kentannan
Faithfully respond, don't fearfully panic.

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Spiritual First Aid Manual & Resources Now Available

spiritualfirstaidhub.com
At the Humanitarian Disaster Institute (HDI), our mission has always been to help the church prepare and care for a disaster-filled world. During this time, we’ve set our focus on helping churches and families respond and weather this pandemic.

Below are a compilation of resources curated by our team and students in the M.A. Humanitarian & Disaster Leadership program especially to help you care for your children and family in these unprecedented times.

Kid's Book

**Alisa and the Coronavirus**
Spur conversation with your children about COVID-19's impact on our daily lives with this children's book, written by Gena L. Thomas with her four-year-old daughter Juniper. Each page includes a
About today.

Questions
To ask questions during the webinar, use the Q&A or chat function at the bottom of your screen. We will save all questions for the end. If we don’t get to your question but you need an urgent response, please email hdi@wheaton.edu.

Tweet and Share
Please share the information using our hashtag.
#COVID19church and/or #SpiritualFirstAid

Webinar Recording
We will be recording today’s webinar and posting it on our online hub: wheaton.edu/hdi-covid19.
Meet your panel.

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Beth Cunningham, Psy.D.
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Pam King, Ph.D.
The Thrive Center for Human Development
@drpamking @thrivecenter
Spiritual & Mental Health for Children & Teens During COVID-19
Why mental health of children and adolescents?

A wide range of emotions are normal in response to difficult experiences such as the current pandemic.

Children and adolescents may not yet have developed effective skills to identify, communicate about, and manage their emotions.

Many children and adolescents display their emotions in other ways such as:

- Irritability/tantrums
- Sleep problems/nightsmares
- Withdrawal from others
- Clinging behaviors
- Decreased interest in activities
- Physical complaints
- Seeking reassurances from adults
- Reluctance to leave home
- Increased risk-taking behaviors
Create space for them to reflect and process

LISTEN WELL TO WHAT THEY SHARE
| **ASK** | engaging, open-ended questions | “What made you smile today?”  
“What was difficult about today?” |
|---------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **REFLECT** | what you hear | “It sounds like…”  
“I hear some [anger/sadness] in your voice as you talk about that.” |
| **NOTICE** | facial expressions | “It looks like you were feeling a big emotion when you said that.”  
“It seems like you’re upset about something.” |
| **NORMALIZE** | feelings | “A lot of people are feeling that way right now.”  
“I’m feeling [insert emotion] too.”  
“I think I would be feeling that way too.” |
| **RESPOND** | without judgment | “It’s okay to feel that way.” |
Give developmentally-appropriate information

- Watching the news, sharing information from news articles and social media, and discussing information about the pandemic are not appropriate for all ages.
- Be careful what your child/adolescent hears and monitor your child’s/adolescent’s media consumption.
- Use social stories to talk to younger children about the pandemic.

https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trinka-and-sam-fighting-the-big-virus
https://www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com/childrens-book-email
Model openness to new information and to different perspectives as well as kindness to all regardless of their perspectives.

- Remember, people are making the best decisions they can based on the information they have and their personal circumstances.
- Children and adolescents pick up on the judgments you make about how others are handling the pandemic and on the way you treat others.
Model and encourage engagement in coping strategies
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<th>RELAXATION STRATEGIES</th>
<th>HIGH-ENERGY STRATEGIES</th>
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<td>Rubbing something soothing</td>
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<td>Balancing a feather</td>
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<td>Tightening/relaxing muscles</td>
<td>Popping bubble wrap</td>
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<th>ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>THINKING STRATEGIES</th>
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<td>Grounding with 5-4-3-2-1 senses</td>
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<td>Reading a book</td>
<td>Identifying what can/can’t control</td>
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<td>Playing a game</td>
<td>Journaling/drawing how I feel</td>
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<td>Participating in a hobby</td>
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<td>Engaging in Christian fellowship</td>
<td>Practicing gratitude</td>
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<td>Spending time in nature</td>
<td>Applying Scripture to situation</td>
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Surviving COVID or Thriving Through COVID

Pam King, Ph.D.
Thrive Center
Fuller Theological Seminary
Youth as problems to be solved?
Or as resources to be developed?
SURVIVING
Just getting by. Just making it.

THRIVING
Optimal or vital growth.
SURVIVING
Just getting by. Just making it.
Not just about how we cope.

THRIVING
Optimal or vital growth.
Living with hope.
SURVIVING
Me and Mine.

THRIVING
We. Us. Ours. Yours. Theirs.
THRIVING is vigorous growth.
THRIVING is vigorous growth. But not all growth is good growth.
THRIVING is adaptive growth towards telos (purpose).
THRIVING: Sounds great—but how in the face of constant disruption and disappointment?
What is PURPOSE?
PURPOSE is ENDURING + ACTIONABLE GOAL MEANINGFUL TO SELF MAKES A CONTRIBUTION BEYOND THE SELF

Damon, William (2009). Path to Purpose,
Pursuing something one is passionate about, makes a contribution, aligned with values, and acting on it.
PURPOSE found at the intersection of:

- SELF
- BECOMING MORE CHRIST LIKE (VALUES + IDEALS)
- OTHER
Pursuing Purpose in COVID!

1. Grounded
2. Connected
3. Directed
Pursuing Purpose in COVID!

Stay Grounded:

- Word of God—our beliefs, faith, and values (what gives hope, what grounds you?)
- To your physical body (what hurts, what works)?
- Feelings and emotions (good, bad, and the ugly)
- Pray, meditate, breath, reflect, journal
- Linger—don’t loiter!
PURSUING PURPOSE IN COVID!

STAY CONNECTED:

- God—kids have different responses
- People matter: Known and loved
- Social tidiness
- Be intentional. More is not always more. Go for depth and significance. Youth pastors.
- Reflect, but laugh and play
Pursuing Purpose in COVID!

Stay Directed

- Towards purpose: actionable goal, self, other, ideals
- Where’s the joy?
- Mirror, affirm, support
PURSUING PURPOSE IN COVID!

1. GROUNDED
2. CONNECTED
3. DIRECTED
“THIS BEING SO... WHAT?”
REALITY...

ALL BETS ARE OFF!...

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX...

BE PATIENT.

LAUGH. PRAY. BREATHE. REPEAT.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
RESOURCES:

www.thethrivecenter.org

@ThriveCenter and @DrPamKing

Resources for thriving through COVID in English and Spanish

https://thethrivecenter.org/
https://thethrivecenter.org/staying-grounded-connected-directed/
https://thethrivecenter.org/contemplation-and-covid-19/
2 great books:

The Path to Purpose by William Damon (2009)
Just out: Joy: A Guide for Youth Ministry
(check out chapter on joy and purpose by Pam King & Steve Argue)
THRIVE ON!

www.thethrivecenter.org
@ThriveCenter
@drpamking
Questions?

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Thank you!

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