

## COVID-19: Returning to School

# Managing Uncertainty

The unknown course of the pandemic is creating a great deal of uncertainty, including about whether or when children will be learning onsite or online, and what that will be like. This can bring up a flood of anxious worrying that can disrupt your moods, concentration and sleeping.



### The following tips can help calm worries during this uncertain time.

**Accept the discomfort of uncertainty.** Reframe distressing thoughts with constructive ones like, “This is the reality of this coronavirus pandemic, it will not last forever, and I can find ways to get through this uncomfortable time.”

**Rely on calming outlets.** When anxiety rises, resist the urge to reach for unhealthy snacks or an alcoholic beverage. Instead, make your go-to reaction something like drawing, working on a puzzle, yoga, walking, meditating or putting on music and dancing your socks off! Moving your body is one of the best ways to dissipate stress hormones.

**Respect that everyone copes differently.** You may feel that others are over- or underreacting to the pandemic, for example. And remember, faced with uncertainty, some people will need more time alone while others need more interaction time.

**Maintain routines.** Keeping to regular mealtimes, the same time to go to bed and rise, and getting dressed in the morning are all especially important to combat the feeling of disorientation when regular schedules are disrupted.

**Keep finding new ways to connect with others.** If multiple virtual gatherings have become more stressful than satisfying, take a break. Make a phone call just to check in with a friend or loved one, or text them a song or video you find uplifting. Even a brief connection can be deeply meaningful during this time.

### Consider a family meeting to discuss what's next.

You might review changes in school or business openings, for example, or what changes you could make in your family to keep everyone calm and feeling less overwhelmed.

**Recognize an adjustment period as quarantine recommendations change.** As businesses and schools open up and social isolation mandates change, accept that it will take time to adjust to the “new normal” way of doing things.

### Stay informed, but limit endless COVID-19 news.

Get the facts about the pandemic and virus from trusted national sources like the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Go to: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html)

### For information about COVID-19 in your state, search your state's health department:

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>

### Remember, safety and health come first.

Reach out to the right resources. If your place of business is reopening, for example, contact your HR department to understand your company's policies. And remember to get updates from your child's school!

If you are feeling overwhelmed, reach out to a licensed professional counselor for coping techniques to help you feel more calm and in control.

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