

# Supporting children during COVID-19

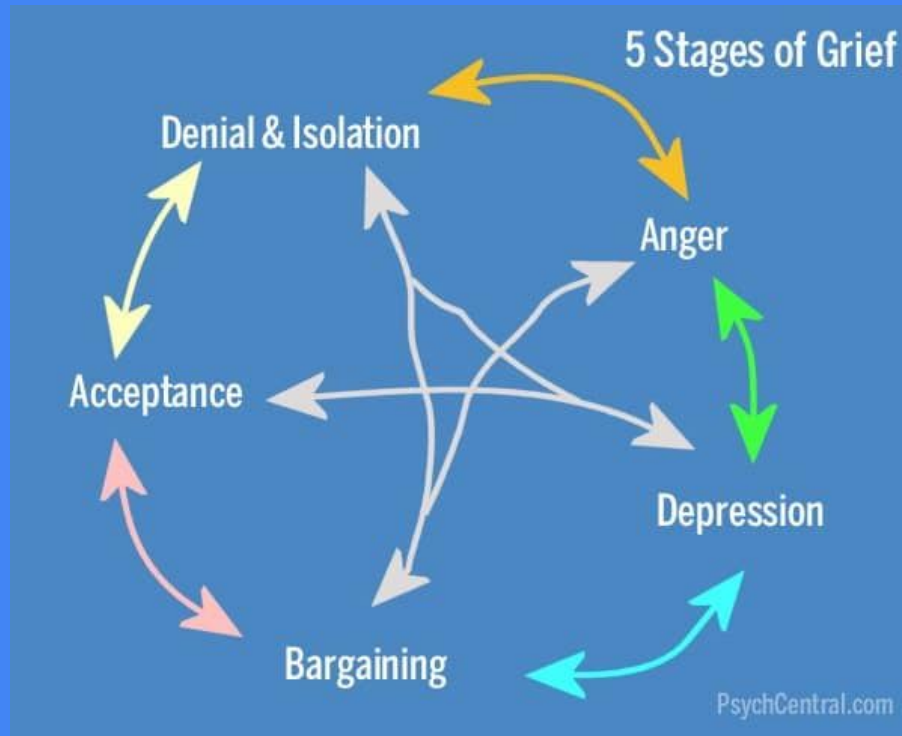
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Put on your  
oxygen mask  
first, before  
assisting your  
child



# Grief Process



# Children need to know...

1. Am I safe?

2. Am I loved?

3. What can I learn from this?

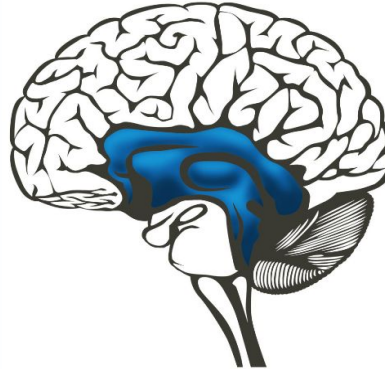
## Safety, Connection and Problem-Solving



### Survival State

#### BRAIN STEM

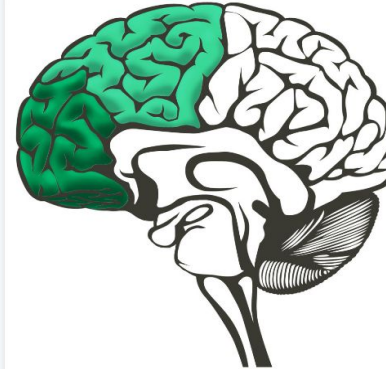
The Survival State represents the primal brain and asks the question, "Am I safe?" The only way to soothe the Survival State is through the creation of *Safety*.



### Emotional State

#### LIMBIC SYSTEM

This Brain State represents mid-level functionality and asks the question, "Am I loved?" The only way to soothe an upset emotional state is through *Connection*.



### Executive State

#### PREFRONTAL LOBES

The Executive State represents the optimal state for problem-solving and learning. This Brain State asks the question, "What can I learn from this?"

# Creating Sense of Safety

1. Routines and predictability
2. Dedicated place to do schoolwork
3. Morning and evening rituals
4. Reduce exposure to adult conversations/concerns (economy, job losses, etc.)
5. Limit/eliminate exposure to news reports
6. Honest, age appropriate conversations re: COVID-19
7. Be approachable and answer questions asked, and no more

# Creating Connection

1. Recognize and name feelings “Name it to Tame it”
2. Conduct feelings check-in each morning
  - a. Use one word to describe how you are feeling right now
  - b. Pick a [feeling face](#)
  - c. Scale of 1- 10, how are you feeling?
  - d. Feeling weather forecast (sunny = happy, rainy = sad, thunderstorms = angry and so on)
3. Attunement activity each night
  - a. Read book together (read to or alternate paragraphs, pages)
  - b. Review highs and lows from the day
  - c. Give specific praise (something that can be duplicated)
  - d. Mindfulness, breathing and relaxation techniques, meditation, prayer together

# Ready to Problem-Solve and Learn

1. Plan for the day
2. Prepare for transitions
  - a. “Wipe” off current activity
  - b. First, then statements
  - c. Dance break/Stretching/Yoga poses ([GoNoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com))
  - d. Give warnings and reminders - remember to allow wait time when redirecting
  - e. Timers/countdown clocks
3. Brain Breaks
4. Model and support review of progress with labeled, specific praise
5. 5:1 Positive to negative comments
6. Appropriate expectations for online learning and this unusual time

# What story do you want to tell?

When you and your child recall this time of quarantine in 5 to 10 years, what story do you want to tell? What will they remember?

- Family Spirit Week
- Family Dinners/Invite a virtual guest to dinner
- Creative Projects
- Virtual Playdates and Celebrations
- Acts of kindness
- Gratitude



# Concerns

## Signs and Symptoms of Depression and/or Anxiety in Children

Sadness

Low Energy

Irritability

Edginess, tension, restlessness

Easily triggered to overreact emotionally

Crying spells

Changes in sleeping patterns (increase or decrease, nightmares) ‘

Changes in eating patterns (increase or decrease)

Self-deprecating comments

Social Withdrawal

Concentration difficulties

Change in bathroom habits

Complains of stomachaches/headaches frequently

Excessively clingy

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

**Viktor E. Frankl**

# Resources

- EAP counseling services through your employer
- Many insurance providers are covering out of pocket costs for access to telemental health services during this quarantine period
- Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255
- Signs and Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety in Children [Anxiety and Depression in Children](#)
- For older kids and families: Gratitude Journal <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/gratitude>
- For adults and teens: The Science of Well Being (Free Online Yale University course) <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>
- For all ages: Breathing/calming/meditation apps ([Headspace: Meditation and Sleep Made Simple](#), [Calm - The #1 App for Meditation and Sleep](#), [GoNoodle: Home](#)- also for Brain Breaks for children)

# Resources

- For parents: [Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19](#)
- For parents: [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)
- For children: [Coronavirus: A Book for Children](#)
- For children: [COVID-19 Time Capsule Journal for Kids](#)

# Thank you and Best Wishes!

Feel free to reach out and follow up with any questions/concerns:

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