



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Manitoba and Winnipeg
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Manitoba et Winnipeg
La santé mentale pour tous



years of
community
ans dans la
communauté

Talking to your Children about COVID-19

Talking with children about COVID-19 can help them make sense of all of the information they may be hearing in the news or from family members' conversations. Without explanation, children can find the information scary and begin to worry that they, their family, or friends might get sick. Parents and caregivers can provide accurate, sensitive information in a way that reduces their fear and helps them feel supported. Below are some tips for how to talk to children about COVID-19 as well as some additional links to resources for further information.

Speak calmly: Children will pick up on the anxiety in a parent's voice. Make sure to use a calm voice when talking to your children about COVID-19 but also if you are talking about the news in your house when children are present.

Find out what they know: Ask children what they have heard and what they think know about COVID-19. This will give you a place to start.

Listen to their fears: It is natural for parents to want to reduce a child's fear by saying they don't have to be afraid but that can be interpreted as they aren't allowed to be afraid. Validate and normalize their fears and offer reassurance in the form of good information, "It does feel scary to hear about people dying. Did you know that most people who have it don't even know it or have just a cough?"

Give them control: Help them to feel in control by teaching them what they can do to help themselves and family members stay healthy. This includes how to properly wash their hands, eat well and get good sleep. Be a role model for them and do the same for yourself.

Encourage them to keep talking about their feelings: Sometimes children will feel like they need to be happy for others or don't feel like they can talk about how they feel. By listening to their fears and encouraging them to talk about their feelings as they come up, children may feel more open to sharing and more supported in the long run. An example for them is of a pop bottle: if they don't talk about their feelings as they come up, it's like putting the top on a pop bottle, shaking it and waiting for it to explode. It's much more manageable for the fizz to come out a few bubbles at a time.

Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/kids-what-is-coronavirus-comic-1.5503127>

The CMHA Service Navigation Hub (SNH) provides information on a range of topics related to mental health, mental illness, distress and strategies connected to resilience.

When you connect to the SNH they listen and assess your situation; provide immediate support; educate and provide consultation on your rights and to determine next possible steps of action – whether to proceed with intake to CMHA programs or to refer to appropriate community supports.

You can reach them directly at: 204-775-6442 or email at: hub@cmhawpg.mb.ca

Visit: [service navigation hub](#) for more detailed information on the support a Recovery Navigation Specialist can provide as well as other crisis supports within Manitoba.