

On Behalf of AUHSD Student Support Services

Managing Stress and Coping During the Local and National Response to COVID-19

Dear Parents, Faculty, and Community Partners,

As the adults in all sectors of society make every attempt to address COVID-19 so that everyone's health and safety needs are met, we also want to address the mental health needs related to stress and fear, especially in children and youth.

An important message for our children to hear is a reassurance of safety. As feasibly as possible, ensure them that what is happening is for their own safety and wellbeing, as well as that of the community. Reassure them that school will resume as soon as possible.

Please provide your child with the assurance that school district leaders are making every effort to ensure that we continue to meet their educational needs while complying with official recommendations to respond appropriately to COVID-19 prevention efforts. Here are some tips for supporting your children during the response to this outbreak.

- Seize Opportunities for Communication – The more we talk to them, the less afraid they may feel
- Limit Your Children's Exposure to Media Coverage
- Let Your Children/Teens Know about Successful Community Efforts
- Continue with regular home routines (e.g., dinner, family fun nights)
- Empower children to do their part and focus on what they can control (i.e., playing games, other fun activities, social distancing, hand washing)
- Adults can model self-care (pay attention to your reactions, sleep well, and exercise)
- Listen and validate feelings

If you have a child who is dealing with mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, we encourage you to take additional steps to support your child. It is particularly essential during school closure, or the potential closure of community mental health service providers. However, know that this information may change quickly. Here are a few tips that you can apply:

- Check-in with your child and be an active listener
- Increase monitoring, you may need to make sure your child is not left alone
- If you or your child needs information, resources, or someone to talk to during difficult times, make a call or send a text to:
 - [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.suicidalifeline.org/): 1-800-273-8225
 - [NAMI HelpLine](https://www.nami.org/): 1-800-NAMI (6264) or email info@nami.org
 - [Crisis Text Line](https://www.crisistextline.com/): Text NAMI to 741-741

The links below will provide more detailed information for staff, students, and families.

- For Caregivers, Parents, and Staff:

- [Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreak \(SAMSHA, 2014\)](#)
- [Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks \(SAMSHA, 2020\)](#)

- For Students:
 - [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus](#)
 - [Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents](#)

- For Staff Only:
 - [Preparing for Infectious Disease Epidemics: Brief Tips for School Mental Health Professionals](#)
 - [Mental Health Benefit EPO and PPO Members](#)

Sincerely,

AUHSD | Student Support Services
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