

Stresses on children in the time of COVID-19



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Disclosures

- none

Objectives

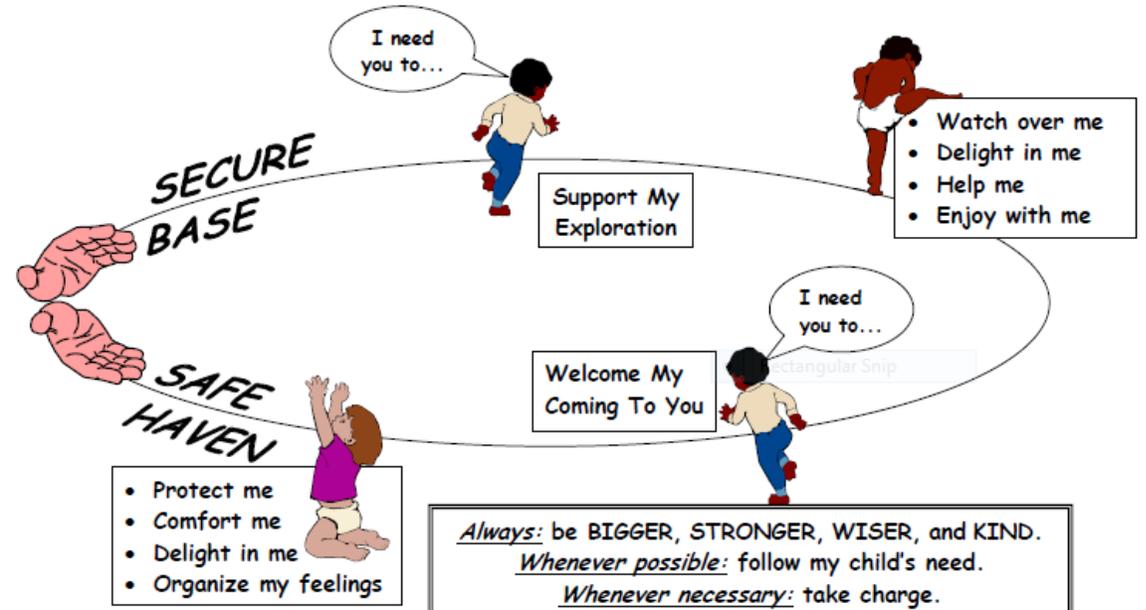
Participants will be able to:

- identify ways to cope with stress and uncertainty
- discuss how children may respond to a pandemic
- provide parents with tools to take care of themselves and their very young children



CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



Take care of yourself first

- acknowledge that taking care of others may be stressful
- know the symptoms of physical, mental and compassion fatigue
 - Have you become cynical or critical at work?
 - Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started?
 - Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, clients or your family?
 - Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
 - Do you find it hard to concentrate?
 - Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
 - Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
 - Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
 - Have your sleep habits changed?
 - Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?
- ask for help if you are feeling overwhelmed



Microjoys

- allow transition time from work to home
- use the 20 seconds to wash your hands to quickly meditate and breathe
- de-stress with deep breaths
- schedule enjoyable activities
- make a list of self care activities
- practice grounding to reconnect with the physical environment
- use all of your senses
- find a buddy to work on self-care and be accountable
- remember your “why” (you love your job-write it on your mirror!)
- take the mindfulness self-care scale <https://www.catherinecookcotton.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/MSCS-Brief-2018-Update.pdf>
- take a break from media coverage of COVID-19



How children respond

How a child potentially responds to an influenza pandemic may depend on:

- the extent of the outbreak
- the child's age
- the child's developmental level
- how adults in the child's life respond to the stress
- whether the child's school or childcare center is closed
- whether family members/friends become ill
- the media coverage
- pre-existing behavioral health issues
- pre-existing medical illnesses





Erikson's Psychosocial Stages Summary Chart



Stage	Basic Conflict	Important Events	Key Questions to be answered	Outcome
Infancy (0 to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding/ Comfort	Is my world safe?	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
Early Childhood (2 to 3)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toilet Training/ Dressing	Can I do things by myself or need I always rely on others?	Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Success leads to feeling of autonomy, failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
Preschool (3 to 5)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Exploration/ Play	Am I good or bad?	Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this state leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.
School Age (6 to 11)	Industry vs. Inferiority	School/ Activities	How can I be good?	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feeling of inferiority.
Adolescence (12 to 18)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Social Relationships/ Identity	Who am I and where am I going?	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.
Young Adult (19 to 40)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Intimate Relationships	Am I loved and wanted?	Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
Middle Adulthood (40 to 65)	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Work and Parenthood	Will I provide something of real value?	Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
Maturity (65 to death)	Ego Identity vs. Despair	Reflection on life	Have I lived a full life?	Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Success at this state leads to a feeling of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.

What to do

- children need to be well informed
- ask them what they know and think first
- make sure children understand what it is, how it is spread
- address specific questions to lessen fears/minimize misconceptions
- involve them in gathering supplies, “helper”
- teach them about handwashing and hygiene
- how to cough/sneeze
- distancing and no sharing food or drinks
- be matter of fact, only enough info., don't scare them/exacerbate anxiety



*Wash, wash, wash your
hands,*

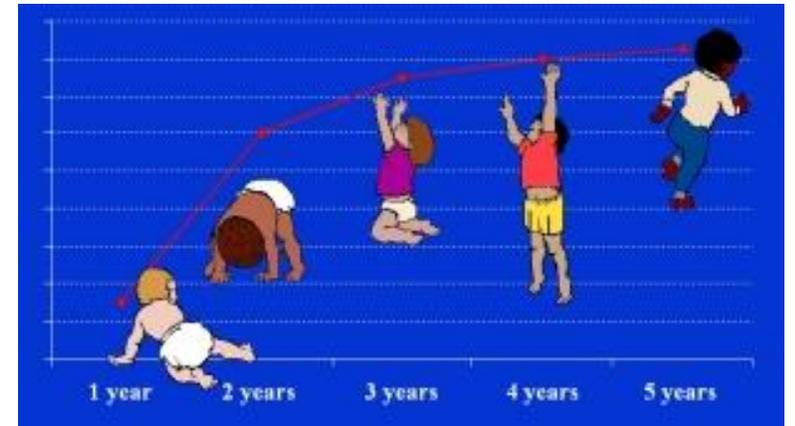
*Get them very clean,
Do the rub, do the scrub,
Germs are very mean.*

*Wash, wash, wash your
hands,*

*We should sing this twice,
Do the rub, do the scrub,
Being clean is nice!*

How to help parents

- children react to what they see and feel from their parent/primary caregiver
- infants especially rely on their parent for security during stressful events
- a change in routine/loss of a parent due to illness can cause regression/detachment
- how babies respond to a traumatic life event (pandemic) depends on the impact of the illness/stress on their primary caregiver
- the availability of these caregivers to meet the psychosocial needs of the infants
- toddlers also rely on the availability of parents for their well-being and feeling of safety
- changes in their routine and independence will cause increased stress
- preschoolers are more cognitively “savvy”, don’t understand cause and effect, and may feel somehow responsible and develop feelings of guilt



How to help parents

- provide parent education
- provide anticipatory guidance
- watch for behavior changes
- maintain routine
- allow access to friends
- don't stress about changes in sleep/appetite
- be a role model by taking good care of yourself
- reassure child, answer their questions and tell them they are **safe**
- limit exposure to news coverage, social media
- encourage caregivers, parents to access support and/or behavioral health services for themselves and their loved ones



Resources

- <https://zerotothrive.org/covid-19/covid-19-kids/>
- <https://www.allianceaimh.org/new-gallery/z8thudu3t0wo86o0mwqriqitmny8la>
- <https://zerotothrive.org/covid-19/covid-19-parents/>
- https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//pandemic_flu_parents_guide_helping_families_cope_pandemic_flu.pdf
- Murray, C.J.S. (2010), A Collaborative Approach to Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Children During an Influenza Pandemic. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 15: 135-143. doi:[10.1111/j.1744-6155.2009.00229.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6155.2009.00229.x)
- <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>
- NM Connect-call, text and access mental health resources
<https://vimeo.com/403526554/303b8436ac>
- <https://www.nmcrisisline.com/>