



Miami-Dade County Employee Assistance Program



Managing Family Mental Wellness in the age of COVID-19

As schools close and workplaces go remote to prevent the spread of COVID-19, parents everywhere are struggling to keep children healthy and occupied.

Here are tips from the Miami-Dade County EAP clinicians to help calm fears, manage stress and increase your family's emotional resilience.

Wellness Tip:

Focus on what you can control in these moments of hardship. Focus on the unknown and controllable does not change the outcome.



**Miami-Dade County
Human Resources
Department
Employee Assistance Program**

**601 NW 1st Court
Miami, FL 33136**

Office: 305-375-3293

Emotional Wellness Stream:

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/28dc7326-8d6f-4855-b3a2-70d7f6e8ca01>

Keep your daily routines as much as possible:

The experts all agree that setting and sticking to a regular schedule is key, even when you're all at home all day. Kids should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. The schedule can mimic a school or day camp schedule, changing activities at predictable intervals, and alternating periods of study and play.

Manage your own anxiety

It's completely understandable to be anxious right now. Just be mindful that your anxiety has a big impact on our kids. Keeping your worries in check will help your whole family navigate this uncertain situation as easily as possible. For those moments when you do catch yourself feeling anxious or overwhelmed, step away and take a break. That could look like taking a shower or going outside or into another room and taking a few deep breaths.

You can also check out the EAP's Emotional Wellness channel for Miami-Dade employees on Stream for tips and resources:
<https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/28dc7326-8d6f-4855-b3a2-70d7f6e8ca01>.

Limit consumption of news

Staying informed is important, but it's a good idea to limit consumption of news and social media that has the potential to feed your anxiety, and that of your kids. Turn the TV off and mute or unfollow friends or co-workers who are prone to sharing panic-inducing posts.

Stay in touch virtually

Keep your support network strong, even when you're only able to call or text friends and family. Socializing plays an important role in regulating your mood and helping you stay grounded. And the same is true for your children.

Let kids use social media (within reason) and Skype or FaceTime to stay connected to peers even if they aren't usually allowed to do so.

Communication can help kids feel less alone and mitigate some of the stress that comes from being away from friends.

Make plans

In the face of events that are scary and largely out of our control, it's important to be proactive about what you *can* control. Making plans helps you visualize the near future. How can your kids have virtual play dates? What can your family do that would be fun outside? Make lists that kids can add to. Seeing your problem solve in response to this crisis can be instructive and reassuring for kids.

Check in periodically

Young children may be oblivious to the facts of the situation, but they may still feel unsettled by the changes in routine, or pick up on the fact that people around them are worried and upset. Plan to check in with your children periodically and give them the chance to process any worries they may be having.

Children who are experiencing tantrums more than usual, being defiant or acting out may actually be feeling anxious. Pick a calm, undistracted time and gently ask how they're feeling and make sure to respond to outbursts in a calm, consistent, comforting way.

Accept and ask for help

Reach out to your support network of family and friends. If you have a partner at home, agree that you'll trade off when it comes to childcare. Especially if one or both of you are working from home and have younger children.

If you, a family member or a team member are struggling with feelings or emotions that are hindering your/their ability to engage in daily life please feel free to reach out to our team at Miami-Dade Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Our EAP counselors focus on supporting employees with internal and external resources that assist in setting the foundation for restoration or enhancement of emotional and mental wellness

Due to current CDC recommendations, the EAP is also providing telephonic assessments for all employees that are in need of assistance. To set up telephonic assessment with an EAP counselor at no cost please **call 305-375-3293** or **email Jessica.Hughes-Fillette@miamidade.gov**. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.