

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Awareness of Ourselves: Coping by Staying Connected

Overview:

Staying connected with significant family members by talking about our feelings is important because everyone has had to significantly change how we are living our lives and we do not know when we will get back to life as usual. This uncertainty can contribute to anxiety. It is important to first be aware of this feeling of anxiety and then think about how to reduce the anxiety. One way of reducing anxiety is to be proactive by engaging in new routines at home. Creating and maintaining routines such as setting up a schedule which begins with an emotional check in time, will help them feel safe and connected to you. This will give them the opportunity to share their feelings through words rather than through just their behavior alone. If they are only using behavior to show their feelings of frustration and disappointment, it is important to give them an outlet to process their emotions. The outlet may be talking, being creative and even using music and movement. The important thing is that there be a time of shared experience in order to increase their sense of calm during this time of uncertainty.

Objectives:

Using new strategies that help us cope with the anxiety of this recent change

Child Goals:

I can express my feelings by “checking in” and talking with an adult about what coping strategies or activities I could use to feel better.

Vocabulary:

Coping strategies
Uncertainty
Routines
Proactive
Anxiety
Aware

Learn- 5 minutes

We can cope better with the changes we are experiencing. If we can check-in emotionally or maintain a routine with our child that gives them an opportunity to discuss their feelings in the very beginning of the day. Remember, children look to their adults as models on how to react to new situations. If you can remain calm or become calm, they will also keep calm.

Discussion Questions:

- What is anxiety ? Anxiety comes from worrying or thinking about all the “what if” type of questions.
- What are some activities to start the day in a positive way?
- How can you work together to talk about feelings and make sure to discuss how the day went?
- What are some routines we can put in place at the end of the day to get ready for bedtime?

Practice-10 minutes

Starting the day in a positive way with a “check in”, whether it is done by just talking with the child or having them rate themselves on a stress thermometer (see Lesson 2).

Have a checkup during the afternoon or at lunch to ask how they are doing.

Ask what is one thing they are thankful for during this time?

Have a check-out at the end of the day by asking what did they like most about today or if they could change one thing about today what would it be?

Note:

1. Being honest but helping your child find a positive in the situation will greatly as they get older and mature.

2. Practicing gratitude by talking about one thing your family is grateful for each morning and evening may help strengthen your relationship and lessen anxiety.

3. Monitor their behavior and seek out support from your pediatrician if they show prolonged upset that

Find the positives of this very unexpected situation and discuss them with your child can help your child start the day off in a more positive way. Some examples of positives during this time are, getting to do more activities at home, and learning how to create a schedule that works for them. We don't have control over the pandemic, but we can control our activities and the schedules we create at home.

does not reduce despite your efforts.

4. Teaching children positive coping strategies when they are calm instead of “in the heat of the moment” will give them a chance to practice these new coping skills before they need them.

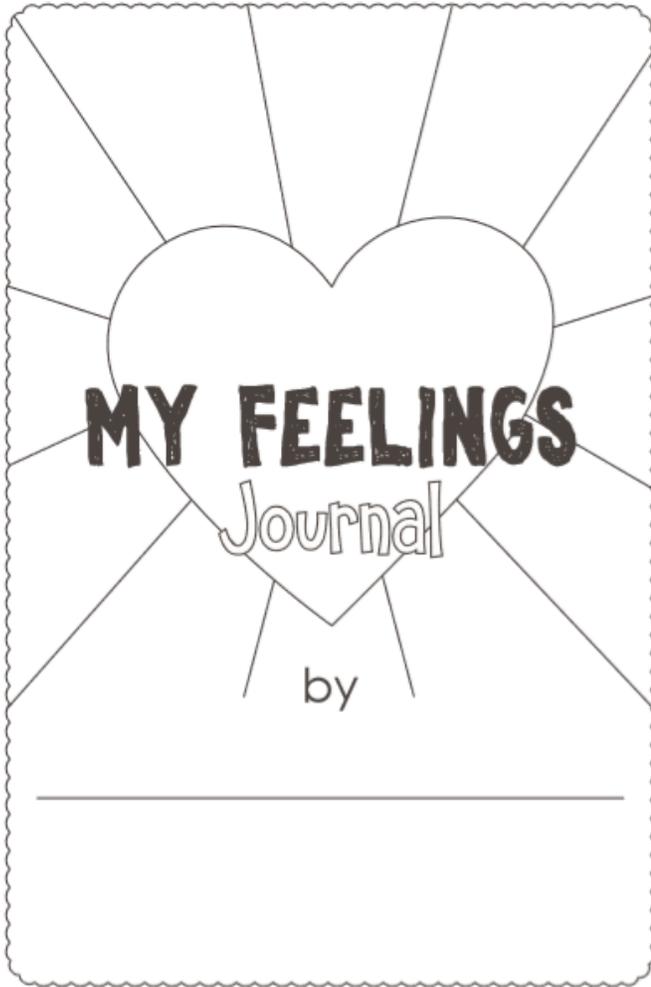
5. For adults: limit the amount of media exposure/news you hear in the morning and how much your child is hearing overall.

Deeper Dive: 5 to 10 minutes

Another way of checking in is by journaling using the attached pages. Try to establish a routine by encouraging your child to become more aware of their feelings and then talk about what they can do to feel better if they are experiencing an uncomfortable feeling. Validate that their feelings are ok and expected given the very unexpected circumstances caused by the current pandemic. It is advisable not to pretend that all is ok as we are all experiencing some level of anxiety.

Activities:

- Read a book to your child(ren).
- Play a card or board game
- Take your child for a walk and talk about the things you see on the journey.
- When upset or crying have child take 5 deep breathes or count to 10 very slowly
- limit the amount of media exposure/news you hear in the morning and at night



Day 1

I am feeling _____

- THIS IS A
- COMFORTABLE**
 - UNCOMFORTABLE**
- FEELING

Day 2

I am feeling _____

THIS IS A

- COMFORTABLE**
 - UNCOMFORTABLE**
- FEELING

Day 3

I am feeling _____

THIS IS A

- COMFORTABLE**
 - UNCOMFORTABLE**
- FEELING

Day 4

I am feeling _____

THIS IS A

- COMFORTABLE**
 - UNCOMFORTABLE**
- FEELING**

Day 5

I am feeling _____

THIS IS A

- COMFORTABLE**
 - UNCOMFORTABLE**
- FEELING**

Resources:

[Talking to kids about Coronavirus by Child Mind Institute](#)

[National Association of School Psychology Building Engagement and Motivation](#)

[Anxiety and Coping by Child Mind Institute](#)

[Controlling Emotions](#)

[How to start SEL at home](#)

