



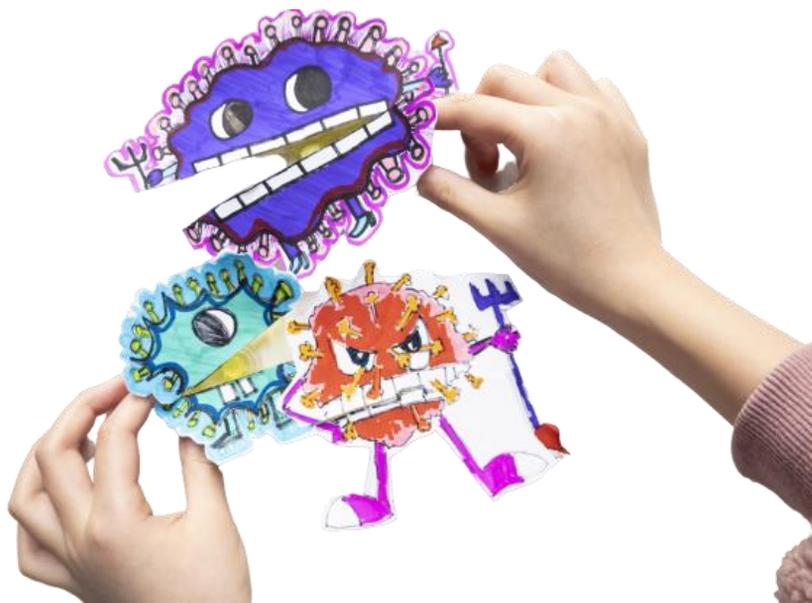
INFORMATION MEMO TO FAMILIES ON COVID-19



The COVID-19 epidemic is now a reality and a part of the imagination of children and adolescents as well as those of parents. There is no doubt that this unprecedented time and the uncertainties associated with it can threaten our sense of security and control. It is normal that our level of concern has increased.

In this context, our routines have inevitably been affected. The new health and safety regulations, the lock-down measures and the travel restrictions, the worry about the professional and economic disruptions which result from it, are all likely to increase worries and anxieties.

So how can we best support our children and adolescents through this period? How to find the right words without dramatizing or minimizing? What pitfalls should we avoid not to be overwhelmed emotionally and psychically?



ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CHILD FEARS

It is essential to listen to your child and to allow them to verbalize their fears. Given the massive media coverage of the current health situation and the fact that adults conversations are mainly focused on worrying events, it is totally understandable that any child is worried about what is happening and the impact it could have on their lives and family.

It is just natural to try to minimize your child's fears. Unlike the question of the wolf or the monster under the bed, we cannot ignore reality and the basis of its fears. Rather, it is about recognizing and accepting them so that you can normalize them. Your role here, is to help your child contain his/her fears by helping them to plan for a future when things will return to normal.



ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

The main point here is to avoid projecting ideas that your child does not have. As such, you will have to start from his/her own perceptions : what they have understood, what they have picked up, and what he/she thinks about it in order to provide them with an appropriate answer.

This will allow you to stay close to their concerns and make some "corrections" if necessary. You have to keep in mind that some children may misunderstand things or wrongly associate them.

- **Answer their questions peacefully and trustfully with simple messages and a vocabulary adapted to the age and the maturity of the child.**
- **Give information that tells the truth (don't speculate).**
- **Avoid focusing on anxiety-provoking information.**
- **Explain the implemented measures and legitimize them by explaining their purpose.**
- **Favor neutral communication, neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic.**
- **If the subject is discussed during a time bringing together children of different ages, give priority to the youngest and take the time to talk apart with the older one.**

Be sure to listen to your teenagers and help them to develop their critical thinking skills (social networks, rumors, "fake news").



AN EXCEPTIONAL PHASE

It is important to explain to the youngest that the current situation is only a phase, a period with a beginning and which will one day be over. Indeed, it will one day come to an end and daily life will return to normal.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

In this exceptional context, travel restriction measures are preventing most of the trips and family gatherings cannot be made.

For the little ones, the family environment is important and can quickly be affected with anxiety and worry ("will mom / dad continue to travel?"; "How are grandpa and granny?").

It is also important for some children, but especially for adolescents to maintain a certain level of contact with their friends.

Video calling tools like Webex, Zoom, Facetime, Whatsapp or Skype can then be an alternative to face-to-face contact.



ADOLESCENTS' DEFIANCE

For teenagers, the difficulty will be to accept the various injunctions imposed by the situation (hygiene, social distancing, restricted gatherings) and to find a balance between these and their desire for independence and assertiveness.

A delicate task that belongs to you parents! Take the opportunity to fuel the dialogue and to question this essential issue of civic and moral responsibility.

NEED FOR A ROUTINE

The family rules and routines have undoubtedly been affected by the measures imposed by the various institutions (Schools, companies, Government, Embassy).

Maintaining certain habits and introducing new routines will help children and adolescents to feel comfortable and safe at home. Any new framework needs to be explained so that children can assimilate it and become part of a dynamic of stability.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS PARENTS

Anxiety is contagious! Preserve yourself as adults in order to be able to support your children as peacefully as possible.



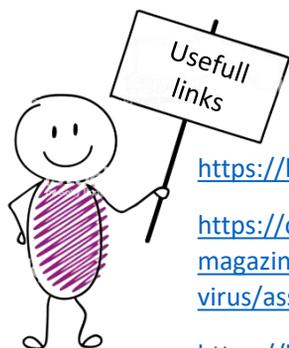
Psychologists remain fully available by phone/visio for parents and students.

Primary School
Carole Rouviere

psy.elementaire@ifs.edu.sg
+65 6805 0113

Secondary School
Cathy Mang

psy.secondaire@ifs.edu.sg
+65 6805 0109



<https://letsfindout.scholastic.com/issues/2018-19/010319.html>

[https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/content/dam/classroom-magazines/magazines/home-page-logged-out/editorial/coronavirus/assets/Infographic hand washing.pdf](https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/content/dam/classroom-magazines/magazines/home-page-logged-out/editorial/coronavirus/assets/Infographic_hand_washing.pdf)

<https://kpcnotebook.scholastic.com/post/coping-coronavirus-china>

