



Dear Parents,

For several weeks now we have dealt with schools across the state and country being closed. As we continue to grapple with what all this means and what the future holds, so are our children and teenagers. For High School seniors, this means no end of year celebrations (senior trips, prom, graduation), and for all, this means no official closure or farewell to friends, teachers, and school administrators. Much of our children's daily lives are spent in school and for some it has even become a second family. The abrupt loss of this can cause BIG EMOTIONS! Sadness, anger, frustration, and confusion are some of the emotions that may begin showing up in the home. And parents, it's not just the children, you may be experiencing similar emotions! Dealing with ALL that this pandemic has brought to surface is challenging many of us. Let's deal with it this week...let's Recognize, Reassure, and Regulate emotions, and Build Resilience.

Remember parents, Stay Positive and we will all work through this together.

Young Children (Birth to 12)

Pre-Teens & Teenagers

RECOGNIZE Emotions

Identify and acknowledge emotions...ignoring them can lead to intensified feelings and undesired behaviors like shutting down and acting out

❖ Be aware of your child's emotions

- In young children, negative emotions such as fear, frustration, sadness and anger can all manifest as the same or similar emotional outbursts.
- Be sure to acknowledge your child's emotions before moving to consequences

❖ Teach about emotions at an early age

- We all have them, let's name them.
- What are Emotions? (i.e. Anger, Fear, Frustration, Joy, Kindness, Love, Sadness, Trust etc.)
- How do you look/act when you feel a certain way?
- Talk about and role play ways to display emotions during times when emotions are not heightened

❖ Praise your child when he/she says what they feel

- Encouraging them to continue this practice
 - "Thank you for using your words and telling me how you feel?"
 - Great job solving that problem and being nice to each other while doing it"

❖ Be aware of changes in your teen's emotions and behavior

- Address changes early on to prevent from dealing with highly emotional situations later
- Offer opportunities for your child to express their emotions in a safe place

❖ For teenagers acknowledging and expressing emotions can be a scary and difficult thing

- Some may initially resist you (saying you wouldn't understand, or becoming angry when you acknowledge their emotions)
- Encourage your teen to recognize their emotions and practice communicating what they are feeling

❖ Catch them doing good

Praise your teen when they manage a difficult emotion or situation appropriately

REASSURE Self and Child(ren)

Let your child know it is okay to have a range of emotions...and it's okay to talk about them

- ❖ **Name emotions and verbally reassure children that it is okay to have a range of emotions.**
 - Many kids have outbursts and tantrums because they are unable to communicate a need
 - Heightened emotions manifest differently in everyone but can look like becoming upset or frustrated, crying, picking fights, etc.
 - Teach them to identify how they are feelings
- ❖ **Encourage your child to communicate**
 - When a child is dealing with tantrums help them find the words to express the emotion and verbalize their feelings

- ❖ **Name emotions and reassure teens that having a range of emotions is normal**
 - The transition from childhood to adolescence can heighten emotions
 - These emotions show up differently in everyone but can look like sadness, anxiety, withdrawal, becoming argumentative
 - Support them in identifying and understanding their emotions
 - Remind them that emotions and situations can change and get better
- ❖ **Encourage your child to communicate**
 - Be sure to listen carefully and allow them to express what they are feeling
 - Don't judge or try to "fix" what they are feeling, instead just be present and supportive
 - Allow your teen the space and time they need to process their emotions and be sure to check back in

REGULATE Emotions

Determine what you and your child need in order to manage emotions (ex. talks, walks, time apart, drawing....AND knowing when to get extra help)

- ❖ **Help your child develop coping strategies to manage emotions**
 - When angry, frustrated, etc.
 - Count up or down
 - Practice breathing
 - When excited or having pent energy
 - Take deep breaths
 - Exercise (run in place, videos, jumping jacks, etc.)
 - When worried, fearful, sad
 - Visual imagery
 - Drawing, coloring
 - Recall happy memory
 - Singing, music
- *This list is not comprehensive, and techniques may be used according to what works for your child (and you).
- ❖ **Understand how daily routines help with emotional regulation**
 - A Change in routines can heighten emotions in children
 - Being sleepy, hungry or not feeling well can also heighten emotions.
 - Build routines to ease transitions such as bedtime, nap time, and transitioning from playtime.
 - Plan ahead and anticipate when situations may cause challenges

- ❖ **Discuss and practice tools and strategies for your teen to manage their emotions**
 - Practice breathing exercises
 - Step 1. Hold their breath and count to 10,
 - Step 2. After 10, breathe out through the nose and say the word "relax" to themselves in a calm, soothing way,
 - Step 3. Breathe in and out through the nose once in six-second cycles (breathe in for 6 seconds and out for 6 seconds),
 - Return to Step 1 and repeat)
 - Positive thoughts, journaling, taking a walk or doing some form of exercise
- ❖ **Don't meet high emotion with high emotion**
 - When your teen is upset or frustrated try these steps
 - Stay calm and model self-regulation
 - Stop what you are doing and give your attention to your teen
 - Listen to what your teen has to say
 - Take time to gather your thoughts (take a few seconds and deep breath)
 - Ask if you can help and offer reassurance
 - If teen does not calm down allow for time apart to calm down
- ❖ **Know when to ask for help**
 - When emotions and behaviors extend beyond your ability to manage seek outside help (i.e. therapist, clergy, mentor, etc.)

Build RESILIENCE

Practice strategies that will increase you and your child's ability to recover from difficulties

❖ Help your children learn to problem solve

- Listen to your children, offer advice/solutions when they ask and model calmness when dealing with emotions
- Brainstorm ideas with your children and assist with walking through how the steps could play out
- Be careful not to solve the problem for them but be a support to build critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

❖ Teach them about perseverance and overcoming difficult situations

- When appropriate, share a story of when you overcame a challenge (ex. I used to be scared of thunder too, I learned to be brave and understand that thunder is nature's handclap)

❖ Ensure that children have caring relationships with positive interactions

❖ Model calming techniques like counting, deep breaths, and visual imagery to cope during difficult situations

❖ Help your teen learn to problem solve

- Listen to your teen
- Prompt them to explore solutions
- Be careful not to solve the problem for them but be supportive in building critical thinking skills

❖ Encourage reflection and self-awareness in your teen

- Teach teens to remain aware of their emotions and how they can impact their response
- Help teens understand that emotions fluctuate and encourage them to resist the urge to react impulsively
- Support your teen in identifying their body's response to stress (fight or flight, increased heart rates, muscle tightening, etc)
- Know when to ask for additional help

❖ Ensure that teens have caring relationships with positive interactions and influences

❖ Model being clear and calm when dealing with personal emotions



MECKLEBURG COUNTY
TRIPLE P
PARENT WEEKLY

Everyday Tips For Everyday Parents

EMOTIONS... WE'RE ALL HAVING THEM

- **Recognize:** Identify and acknowledge emotions... Ignoring them can lead to intensified feelings and undesired behaviors like shutting down and acting out
- **Reassure:** Let your child know it is okay to have a range of emotions... and it's okay to talk about them
- **Regulate:** Determine what you and your child need in order to manage emotions (talks, walks, time apart, drawing...AND knowing when to get extra help)
- **Resilience:** Practice strategies that will increase you and your child's ability to recover from difficulties

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