

COVID-19 for Parents

Tips for Supporting Students

WEST-MEC TIPS ADAPTED FROM CHILD MIND INSTITUTE

A photograph of the word "ROUTINE" spelled out using light-colored wooden blocks. The blocks are arranged in a slightly curved line on a white sheet of lined paper. The paper has horizontal blue lines and is resting on a dark brown, textured surface.

ROUTINE

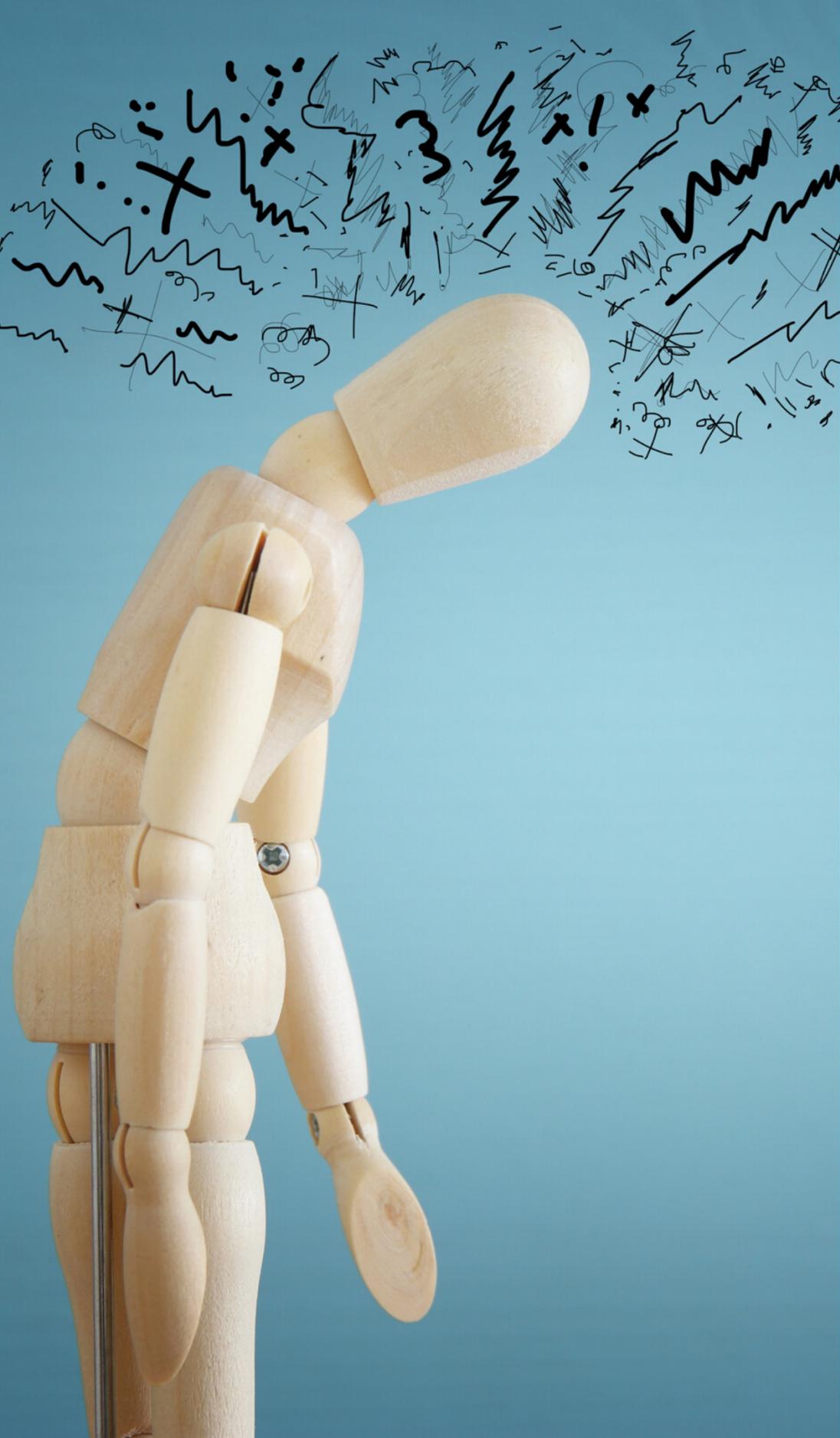
Keep Routines In Place

- Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress
- Stick to regular schedules, even if home all day
- Get up, eat, study, and go to bed at regular times



New Activities and Exercise

- Incorporate new activities into your routine
 - Examples: puzzles, family game night, baking together
- Build in activities to get exercise (mindful of social distancing)
- Think about your favorite activities as a teenager (before screen time) and create lists of activities



Manage Your Own Anxiety

- It is understandable to be anxious right now due to medical and financial concerns
- How adults manage anxiety has a huge impact on our youth
- Avoid "catastrophic thinking"-assuming every cough is COVID-19 or dwelling on worst-case scenarios
- When you do feel anxious, try to avoid talking about your concerns with youth in the room
- If overwhelmed, step away, take a break and utilize coping skills



Limit Intake of News

- Staying informed is important, but too much information can feed anxiety
- Turn off the TV frequently
- Mute or unfollow friends on social media who share panic-ridden posts
- Take a social media break or begin follow accounts that take your mind off the crisis



Socialize - Virtually

- Keep your solid support network
- Socialization plays an important role in improving your mood and reducing anxiety
- Call or text friends and family often
- Let youth utilize social media, FaceTime, Skype, texting and calls (all within reason) to stay connected to their peer network
- Communication with peers can help youth feel closer to friends and lowers stress levels



Make Plans

- COVID-19 and school closures make many aspects of life feel out of control
- Be proactive- control what you can
- Make lists that youth can add to so they feel they are contributing to family problem solving
 - How can youth "hangout" virtually with friends?
 - How can your family maintain traditions around holidays?
 - What activities can youth do outside with social distancing restrictions?
 - What are favorite foods your family can make during this time?



Stay Positive

- Whether youth are excited or upset about school closures for the remainder of the year, phrase your support in a positive manner
- Help youth find the positives in a situation
- Encourage youth to engage in positive journaling or daily gratitudes to increase focus on the positive thought processes



Keep Open Lines of Communication

- Talk to youth in a clear, reasonable way
- Keep communication age appropriate
- Youth do not need to know all details of concerns, keep it simple based on age and the need to know in order to calm worries
- No information, just like too much information, can cause anxiety. Appropriate levels of knowledge can be calming



Make a Point to Check In

- Youth can feel unsettled by changes of routine and the anxiety of people around them
- Plan check in times with youth on how they are feeling and any concerns they may need to address
- Recognize changes in behavior such as acting out, increased defiance, and anxiety can be in response to worry



Forgive Yourself

- Remember to be kind and reasonable to yourself
- We all want to be the best parenting self we can
- Forgive yourself if you are not the image of parenting perfection during this time
- Maintain structure and routine, but allow yourself to relax boundaries on technology etc. a bit during this unique time
- Boundaries can be re-instituted when life returns to normal



Accept and Ask for Help

- Accept help from friends and family
- Accept help whether to locate a needed grocery item or trading off time responsible for assisting youth with homework or watching younger children
- Don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it—whether for chores around the house, or a much needed break from work and household responsibilities
- Find balance that works for you and your family
- Working as a team will help the entire family stay busy and make sure no one person is feeling overwhelmed



Community Resources

- Call 2-1-1 for general information on COVID-19
- website <https://211arizona.org/covid-19/>
- The Disaster Distress Helpline offers counseling services via telephone and in multiple languages
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>
- Enter your zip code to find a food bank near you
 - <http://www.azfoodbanks.org/index.php/foodbank/index/>
- Find free and almost free services in Maricopa County
 - <https://www.findhelpphx.org/>



We Are Here To Help

West-MEC Support

- Central Campus Counselor- April Tyrrell, 623.209.8069
- Northeast Campus Counselor- Monica Hook, 623.772.4221
- Northwest Campus Counselor- Kristina Guy, 623.877.6923
- Southwest Campus Counselor- Denise Saldamando, 623.872.6276
- Director of Student Services- Marilyn Babyar, 623.738.0019
- Post-Secondary Partnerships Manager- Speranta Klees, 623.738.0018
- Exceptional Student Services Manager- Shelly Thome, 623.738.0026



**West-MEC Families-
Stay Safe, Positive, and
Healthy**