



Working for a Healthier  
Community

# The Valley Prevention News-for Parents

June 2020

## Parents & Caregivers

Give yourself grace during this time!  
Parenting + Pandemic = HARD WORK.



With Graduations and Moving Up Ceremonies being cancelled this year, many families are feeling the loss of a significant ritual. There has been lots of recognition of the loss that students are feeling, but not really much for the parents.

For parents with children graduating or moving up this year, the letdown can be huge. We want to acknowledge that it is as heartbreaking for you to be missing out on the traditional, formal, joyous and exuberant anticipated events, as it is for your children.

It's OK to mourn what you and your children are losing this year.

We hope you can find new ways to commemorate or find joy in the different celebrations this spring.

Congratulations to you and your children!

-DVCP Staff & Members

Check out these friendly reminders from Sonya Richardson-Thomas, LPC, that can help lead with love in the midst of stress and chaos.



### PRACTICAL PARENTING TIPS THAT LEAD WITH LOVE DURING STRESSFUL TIMES



#### CONNECTION BEFORE CORRECTION

Hear the WHY and REGULATE the feeling, THEN correct the behavior. Your child will be able to listen to you, think, and correct their behavior better AFTER their strong emotions have subsided and they are calm again.



#### SOOTHING TOUCH & WORDS

Calming touch and words help kids become regulated and ready to move towards finding solutions. Remember: THINKING comes after feelings. They won't be able to process what you are saying about their behavior until they are able to calm themselves.



#### HELP YOUR CHILD PROBLEM-SOLVE

When parent/child conflict inevitably arises, here are some good questions to help your child problem-solve: What are your ideas/solutions? How could this be different next time? What is the NEXT best thing to do?



#### BREATHE

The ONLY stress symptom we can control is breathing! Simply drop your breathing from your chest to your belly. Belly breathing tells your brain that the threat is lessening and this will help you relax.



#### MOVE YOUR FEET

BEFORE the big feelings come, head outside and move OR carry books and boxes from one floor to the next ...movement is a researched stress reliever!

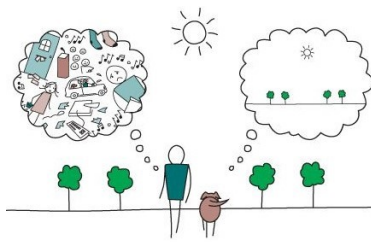


#### ENGAGE YOUR SENSES

Take a minute to find 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste. Very effective in relieving anxiety!

Resource provided by Parent Up. Find out more at [ParentUpKC.com/blog](https://parentupkc.com/blog).  
Content provided by Sonya Richardson Thomas, LPC. Follow her at  
[Facebook.com/SRTFamilyTherapy](https://facebook.com/SRTFamilyTherapy).

Full blog post here: <https://parentupkc.com/we-are-supposed-to-feel/>



Mind Full, or Mindful?

## Staying Mindful of Our Stressed Children

With schools closed and routines changed, many children are experiencing isolation, stress, and disengagement from school and friends, which can present some health risks. Parents and other adults can offer mindfulness strategies to improve children's health.

Research shows such strategies reduce chronic stress and its impacts, like depression and anxiety. At its core, being mindful is being aware of one's moment-to-moment experience.

Stress-reduction tools are more important than ever for our children. Here are some ways you can tread mindfully with your children on the new ground COVID-19 has created:

- ◆ **Journal** - Provide journaling assignments as a way for children to sort through a sea of complex emotions. You can provide a prompt for focus or simply ask students to "brain dump" outside stresses into a journal page. This can be done in any way the child chooses (words, pictures, collaging, etc.).
- ◆ **Counting breaths** - Transition into or out of new activities with a directed pause for a few deep breaths paired with counting. Counting inhales and exhales relaxes the body, gives the mind an anchor point, and prevents racing thoughts.
- ◆ **Five-senses meditation** - Ask children to notice and name what they are currently experiencing through their five senses: sound, sight, touch, taste, and smell. Bringing attention to the physical senses keeps them in the here and now.
- ◆ **Prevent multitasking** - Multitasking decreases productivity and increases stress. In your home-schooling, limit distractions.
- ◆ **Be intentional** - Be transparent with your children about how and why you are introducing mindfulness to them. Share with them the science behind mindfulness and continue to train yourself in its practice.
- ◆ **Practice (Self-) Compassion** - Let go of self-judgment and perfectionism. When a bobble presents itself in your own life, role model what it looks like to be gracious with yourself during this challenge and for your children to see.
- ◆ **Music and Nature** - Where possible, find ways for your child to experience immersion in music or nature they enjoy. Both are entry points into the benefits of mindfulness. Even in close quarters, children who can open a window or stick in an ear bud can start to find healthy solutions to stress.

Information taken from FCD Prevention Works Prevention Source e-Journal-May 28, 2020.  
(Authors: Corinne Brisbois, Jen Danforth, Diana Hu)

[www.fcd.org](http://www.fcd.org)

### Resources:

Commonsense Media and Survey Monkey. (2020). "Coronavirus and Teenagers." Accessed Online May 20, 2020: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/common-sense-media-coronavirus/>

Romeo, R.D. (2013). "The Teenage Brain: The Stress Response and the Adolescent Brain." Current Directions in Psychological Science. Accessed Online May 20, 2020:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0963721413475445>

## Misc. Resources

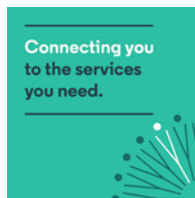


### Vermont 211:

Hotline for any kind of help you may need. Free, confidential service. Find out about hundreds of important community resources, like drug and alcohol programs, emergency food and shelter, disability services, counseling, senior services, healthcare, child care, legal assistance, transportation needs, educational and volunteer opportunities, and much more. [www.vermont211.org/](http://www.vermont211.org/) or dial 2-1-1.

### Statewide Resource Guide from Building Bright Futures

(covers COVID-19, Mental Health, Basic Needs, Childcare, Safety, Health, & Community Partners)  
<https://buildingbrightfutures.org/coronavirus/>



**Vermont Help Line:** Drug & Alcohol Support Services. 802-565-LINK  
[www.vthelplink.org](http://www.vthelplink.org)

### Resources For Helping Teens to Successfully Quit Vaping

A research-based free service from the Vermont Department of Health. Confidential 24/7 support.  
 1-800-QUIT-NOW  
[www.802quits.org/teen-vaping](http://www.802quits.org/teen-vaping)

**Support for Parents & Caregivers**-Partnership for Drug Free Kids . Receive regular messages on how to help yourself and your loved one during these challenging times. Topics include how to communicate effectively, how to deal with a family member risking exposure to COVID-19, how to model healthy coping behaviors and more. Text COVID to 55753 to get started.

**Need Masks?** Call DV Rotary at 802-922-4583



### Just for Fun....Some Family Dinnertime Riddles:

- 1) Each morning I appear to lie at your feet. On a bright sunny day we're most likely to meet. All day I will follow no matter how fast you run, yet I nearly perish in the midday sun. What am I?
  - 2) I am usually made in silence quite often before a flame. I cost nothing and the sky is the limit. What am I?
  - 3) What is always in front of you but can't be seen?
  - 4) Where can you find cities, towns, shops, and streets but no people?
- (Answers are on the bottom of page 4)

## Ways for You to Nurture Yourself:



**Make a Playlist of Happy Songs.**

**Connect with Someone You Haven't Seen in a While.**



**Dance!**

**Try a New Exercise for Your Body And/Or Mind.**



**Find Something That Makes You Laugh.**

**Organize a Cluttered Space.**

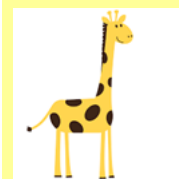


**Sit Outside and Read a Good Book.**

**Take a Social Media Break.**



**Take a Virtual Museum Tour**  
[www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours](http://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours)



**Watch the Giraffe Cam on Earth-cam.com**

Some of these ideas were taken from:  
[CounselingTeacher.com](http://CounselingTeacher.com)

## Deerfield Valley Community Partnership

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### From the DVCP Staff...



We hope you have seen our DVCP Hello Sign that has been traveling from Wilmington to Whitingham to Halifax to Readsboro to Stamford and to Dover! This is our effort to let you know that we are thinking of you all during this crazy time in all of our lives. If we can assist you in any way, please be in touch.

We are guessing that during this Stay at Home order- you are finding your family eating dinners together more often. Did you know that having regular family

dinners can do a lot more for your kids than simply keeping them healthy and well nourished? National research shows sitting down and sharing a meal can help kids and teens resist the temptations of drugs and alcohol.

In a report from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), teens who have infrequent family dinners (fewer than three per week) are almost four times more likely to use tobacco, more than twice as likely to use alcohol and marijuana, and less likely to perform well academically, when compared to teens who have frequent family dinners (five to seven per week). So.....enjoy those family dinners and the positive outcomes that result!

Stay Safe,  
-Cindy, Shelley, Jen and Karen.

*Page 3 Riddle Answers: 1) A Shadow; 2) A Wish; 3) the Future; 4) A Map*

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