

A Focus on Mental Health and Wellness
During School Closures
 April 3, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is focused on supporting the mental health and wellness of children, families, and educators during this time of school closure.

Schools have been seeking innovative methods to utilize new technologies to support student and adult mental health and wellness. Taking into consideration the need to be physically distant, while maintaining social and emotional connections, the Student Services/Prevention and Wellness Team is providing the following mental health and wellness resources, organized by the four topic areas below:

- General Mental Health and Wellness
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellness
- Parent, Caregiver, and Educator Mental Health and Wellness
- Positive Parenting and Safe Home Environments

General Mental Health and Wellness

During this unprecedented time, we may find ourselves experiencing life challenges we never expected. These challenges can create different reactions. It is important to be aware of our needs and seek help when needed. The resources below can offer individuals with community assistance.

General Mental Health and Wellness Resources	
Link:	Description
SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline	<p>The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress.</p> <p>This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.</p>
Mental Health America Resource List by County	<p>Clickable map with resources, by county in Wisconsin from Mental Health America.</p>

Wisconsin Community Program, Social Service and Human Service Agencies	DHS site providing links and contacts for each county mental health services agency.
Taking Care of Yourself	Fact sheet from National Child Traumatic Stress Network that outlines ideas for self-care by promoting awareness, balance, & connection.
Mental Health America and COVID	To aid individuals and communities during this time, Mental Health America has compiled a range of resources and information. These link to resources on mental health considerations during for disease outbreaks, managing stress and anxiety, financial support, tools for connecting, crisis response and hotlines, resources for mental health providers, parents, caregivers, older adults, and LGBTQ+ specific resources.
Navigating a Mental Health Crisis	NAMI infographic for dealing with a mental health crisis.
List of Museums, Zoos, Aquariums, and Theme Parks Offering Virtual Tours	This comprehensive list provides opportunities to connect to art and culture.
Self-Management Toolkit	Two notable resources from UW-Stout: 1. <i>Flourishing of the Human Spirit: What if... Acknowledge and explore what makes us fearful as well as healthy ways to cope with those fears.</i> 2. <i>Flourishing of the Human Spirit: Re-framing in this Time of Change - Reflect on ways you can foster contentment and satisfaction, hope and optimism, as well as flow and happiness.</i>

Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellness Supports

Children are now spending much more time at home and little to no time with peers or friends due to the need to maintain physical distancing. Due to these significant changes in daily routines, children and adolescents benefit from adult support in managing the physical, social and emotional responses that may present during this challenging time.

Building resilience skills can assist children in coping with stress and anxiety. Key components of building resilience include building and maintaining positive social relationships, developing positive attitudes and emotions, strengthening the ability to control one's own behavior, and having a sense of competence. The resources below can help caregivers develop and implement strategies and activities that support to build resilience in children and adolescents. It's important to remember that different children will need different levels of support.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Resources

Link:	Description
Coronavirus Isolation: Ten Lessons to Help Kids Cope (Allina Health)	Coping lessons and activities to help teens and younger kids during this challenging time.
Simple Activities for children & Adolescents (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)	List of simple games and activities parents and children can do together that do not use screens and require few or no materials.
Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19 (National Association of School Psychologists)	The National Association of School Psychologists Families has provided tips to help families across the country adapting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Anxiety & Anxiety Disorders in Children: Information for Parents	This resource can help caregivers recognize the difference between developmentally appropriate signs of anxiety and those that may need additional services or support to address. It also provides strategies to implement at home for supporting children that demonstrate the more typical responses to anxiety.
Well-Being Toolkit for Children, Educators and Parents (UW-Madison - Center for Healthy Minds)	This well-being toolkit is intended for educators, parents and caregivers of children. They have included tips, audio and video practices, their Kindness Curriculum and more resources for you.
Helping Children Cope with Emergencies (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)	CDC resources to help children cope in emergencies and identify factors that influence the emotional impact on children. What you can do to help children cope with a disaster: before, during, and after.
Center for Suicide Awareness Hopeline	<p>From the Hopeline Site: "HOPELINE™, offered by Center for Suicide Awareness, is a text-in (versus voice call-in) free emotional support service providing hope, help, and support when it's needed most.</p> <p>HOPELINE™ serves anyone in any type of situation, providing them access to free, 24/7 emotional support and information they need via the medium already used and trusted: text.</p>
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis. If you need help, please dial 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

<p>The Trevor Project Programs and Services</p> <p>How LGBTQ Youth Can Cope with Anxiety and Stress During Covid-19 (The Trevor Project)</p>	<p>A national organization focused on crisis and suicide prevention efforts among LGBT youth: 1-866-488-7386. Resources include crisis intervention lines (phone, text and chat options), suicide prevention and community resources.</p>
<p>Resources for Challenging Times (genderspectrum.org)</p>	<p>Gender Spectrum is a national organization focused on creating gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens.</p>
<p>LGBTQIA+ youth resources</p>	<p>This website highlights helpful national, statewide, and MMSD-specific supports for LGBTQIA+ students.</p>
<p>How teenagers can protect their mental health during coronavirus (COVID-19)</p>	<p>For teenagers that may be feeling alone, isolated, or anxious while dealing with physical and social distancing, UNICEF provides a list of six strategies that teens can use to manage their feelings and emotions during this difficult time.</p>

Parent, Caregiver, and Educator Mental Health and Wellness Resources

Whether we are a parent, caregiver, or educator, we often focus on the needs of others before attending to ourselves. While a little bit of stress can build resilience, too much stress can wear us down and even make us sick. Just as we all have triggers that result in stress, we also have physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral indicators that tell us our stress level is too high. It is important to recognize and pay attention to these indicators. The resources below can support you; and ultimately help you help your child or student.

<p>Parent, Caregiver, and Educator Mental Health and Wellness Resources</p>	
<p>Link:</p>	<p>Description</p>
<p>Supporting Families During COVID-19</p>	<p>Child Mind Institute: Supporting Families During COVID-19, including live chats with clinicians, phone consultations, daily tips, and remote evaluations and telemedicine. Also includes resources for parents such as coping with the coronavirus, anxiety, and managing discipline and behavior resources.</p>

<p>Care for Caregivers: Tips for Families and Educators (NASP)</p>	<p>“Parents, teachers, and other caregivers play a critical role in helping children cope with crises, often ignoring their own needs in the process. However, caregivers must take good care of themselves so they are able to take good care of the children in their charge.”</p>
<p>DHS - COVID-19: Resilient Wisconsin</p>	<p>Webpage from Resilient Wisconsin that includes tips to feel stronger and more connected and resources for coping with the mental and emotional struggles of this situation.</p>
<p>How You and Your Kids Can De-Stress During Coronavirus (PBSKids)</p>	<p>Simple steps and tools targeting parents and children on how to manage the day to day stress of sustained social isolation and anxiety caused by the current situation. The site also includes resources on how to talk to children about the pandemic.</p>
<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics Advises Parents Experiencing Stress over COVID-19</p>	<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics provides a simple list for parents or caregivers of techniques to employ to manage increased stress or anxiety in their children.</p>
<p>What Do We Do with All These Feelings</p> <p>CASEL CARES: Strategies for Being Your Best Possible 'SEL'f with Dr. Marc Brackett</p>	<p>Emotion Scientist Blog-Marc Brackett, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.</p> <p>YouTube video connecting the SEL community with experts to address how SEL can be most helpful in response to today’s circumstances. Featuring Dr. Marc Brackett.</p>
<p>Staying Resilient During COVID-19</p>	<p>Compassion Resilience Toolkit: Staying Resilient During Covid-19.</p>
<p>Supportive Practices for Mental Health Professionals During Pandemic-Related Social Distancing</p>	<p>Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network considerations for supporting wellness, balance, and connection of the mental health professional.</p>
<p>You Are Not Alone – Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health</p>	<p>Free 20 minute calls (video or voice) to connect and discuss challenges. Not meant to be formal therapy, but rather a resource to connect with other direct service providers or educators to talk through challenges or stress due to the current situation. Parents or caregivers can also use it.</p>

Positive Parenting and Safe Home Environments

Many parents may feel alone during this time, so it is imperative to stay connected and seek help when needed. Keep in mind that we are all doing our best to manage and support our families during this challenging time. Whether you are accessing resources for yourself or to share with others, the following list below can help support parents and caregivers of children and adolescents in coping and striving for positive and safe home environments.

Positive Parenting and Safe Home Environments	
Link:	Description
National Parent Helpline: 1-855- 4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736)	Call the National Parent Helpline to get emotional support from a trained Advocate to become an empowered and stronger parent. Available: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
National Child Abuse Hotline: Text or Call 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) Childhelp Hotline	The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. The hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who provide assistance in over 170 languages. The hotline offers crisis intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All texts and calls are confidential.
Family Resource Centers	Family Resource Centers (FRCs) provide services and support to strengthen families. The FRCs across Wisconsin are community focused and each FRC provides different classes and services. FRCs provide parents and caregivers with parent education, tools, and strategies around healthy child development, and they can also provide invaluable information about community resources.
Managing Problem Behavior at Home	The Child Mind Institute provides concrete steps to manage child behavior and effectively respond to problem behavior.
CDC Parenting Videos and Many Parenting Resources	The CDC provides videos of positive parenting skills. The second link brings you to the main parenting page that has interactive tools on how to handle common parenting challenges, articles, resources by child age, and more.
Triple P - Positive Parenting Program	Virtual parenting support through the Triple P program is available to families in light of COVID. You'll find tips for a range of issues, from raising toddlers to learning how to cope with complex problems at home. If you have any questions about Triple P, please email tripleP@chw.org .

Positive Parenting & COVID-19: 10 Tips to Help Keep the Calm at Home	The American Academy of Pediatrics provides positive parenting and healthy approaches to discipline.
Parenting Handouts and Worksheets	University of Washington Medicine Harborview Medical Center provides a large list of links to helpful parenting handouts and worksheets such as caregiver behavior plans, guidelines for effective discipline, and tracking behavior (Spanish versions also).
Tips for Coping with a New Baby During COVID-19	The American Academy of Pediatrics provides practical suggestions and additional resource links for new parents.
Behavior Problems - Article and Resources	The Child Mind Institute provides information and articles to help explore the best way to handle behavior problems in children including sibling fighting, lying, tantrums, and discipline.
Tip Sheet for Parents and Caregivers	A chapter from the Prevention Guide from The Child Welfare Information Gateway. The tip sheets are not intended to tell the whole story; they merely provide a starting point for a discussion. The information focuses on concrete steps that parents can take to strengthen their family.
Action for Happiness Coping Calendar	This Coping Calendar has 30 suggested actions to help reduce stress and stay connected.
Virtual Pinwheel Display for Child Abuse Prevention Month (April)	Download a coloring sheet and share in your window and on facebook to show support for Child Abuse Prevention.

For more mental health and wellness resources, please contact the Student Services/Prevention and Wellness team, at dpisspw@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 266-8960. For information on COVID-19 and its impact on K-12 Education and Libraries, please visit the DPI's [COVID-19 webpage](#).