Counseling and Support Services for Youth

May 1

Parent Stress

Click the buttons below to find the resource!

Tips from a Therapist and Working Parent

Parent Podcast - Quarantine CASSY

Supporting Kids During School Closure

Creating a New Normal

CASSY Presentations

May 5th
12 PM

For Parents!

Parenting in a Pandemic

Ana Homayoun

Ana will offer strategies to help you support your teenagers with executive functioning (organizing, planning, prioritizing) during a difficult time of remote learning.

May 5th
4 PM

For High School Students!

Learning in a Pandemic

A talk directly to teens on how to handle this time and manage distractions. Will have strategies for a 20-25 minute presentation as well as a Q&A to follow.
Dear all of us,

When our school announced closing its doors, I fell in a state of shock.

Homeschooling my children has never in my wildest dreams been anything I could see myself doing. There have been good reasons for me to work outside of the home, not just the obvious financial ones. Although I hold a Master’s degree in Education, schooling my own children has never occurred to me as a good choice for our family.

Since the shelter in place took effect, I am exactly doing the thing, I thought I never would: homeschooling my kids. In addition to this more or less full-time job, I, like millions of other parents, work from home and so does my husband.

Let me tell you that the first week in quarantine has been a disaster. And that is probably an understatement. Nothing got done, lots of yelling, everyone was confused and wanted nothing more than our old life back. We were all pushed out of our comfort zones.

After some sleepless nights and some soul searching, we finally reinvented our cooperation and created some rules and set new priorities that now help us navigate these challenging times halfway decently. Our new “normal” is a life in progress but with these adaptations, the new “normal” feels manageable.

Here are the top 10 things that help our family to stay afloat:

From your CASSY Therapist,

Melanie Wendt
Parents: How to Lower Stress Levels

10 Tips from a Therapist and Working Parent

1. Most Importantly: Lower the Bar!
   
   Now is not the time to be overly ambitious. Although it sounds fancy to learn a new language, engage in sour dough starters, and finally clean out all your closets. Extra projects that cause any type of stress have no business during a crisis. Let go and slow down.

2. Invest in Self-Care
   
   The phrase that you cannot pour from an empty cup probably was never more valid than today. In order to serve and be of support to others, in this case serving our employers, children, and spouses, we first need to make sure we are in a position to do so. Investing in self-care looks different for all of us. For our family, it meant that my husband converted part of a room into a workout space, where he is now doing his yoga moves and strength-building exercises every day. My self-care plans involve digging in the dirt, planting vegetables while ignoring the constant “mom, mom” calls, and I also ride my bike for an hour a day. For others, self-care could be scheduling a daily bath with candles and music, others might need to hop in the car and drive a scenic route while blasting favorite songs. The center of self-care is rooted in re-charging your batteries. You know best, what fills you up.

3. Build and Maintain a Regular Schedule
   
   This includes distinguishing between weekday and weekend as well as work and playtime during the day. Especially children thrive on routine. In our family, mornings are work time, afternoons are playtime – at least for the kids and on some good days even for us adults. We find that doing work first and playing later creates an incentive to be productive and somewhat mimics the school schedule that kids are used to from before schools closed its doors.

4. Open and Closed Doors:
   
   Having clear rules did wonder for us. When my husband and I are in calls or zoom meetings, the doors are closed and kids are aware that when a door is closed, it means “do not enter!” If a child is in need of something during this time, they can either ask a sibling for help or need to wait until a door opens. Once a call/meeting is over, the door opens and interruptions are possible. A nice side effect of this rule is that it teaches children patience, self-reliance, and team-work.

5. Prioritize Sleep
   
   Sleep has never been more important than now. Not only does it work as a protecting factor to keep our immune system running effectively and therefore fight off potential infections, but it also is key for our mental health. Many clinical studies show a direct link between sleep hygiene and mental health. Chores can easily be done the next day but you can’t catch up on sleep the next day.
Parents: How to Lower Stress Levels

10 Tips from a Therapist and Working Parent

6 Divide Chores
Have a family meeting and create a list of things that need to be done on a regular basis. All household members can participate and even grade school children are able to pitch in. Examples of chores that kids can do are: bringing out garbage, setting and clearing the table, load/unload the dishwasher, get the mail, vacuum the house, fold laundry, feed pets, be in charge of their rooms. Dividing chores fairly and somewhat equally strengthens the feeling of being in this together.

7 Be Compassionate to Yourself
You didn’t set up your life like that, so please don’t feel you need to excel at this set-up. Remembering the rule of impermanence is key. This too will pass. We are in a state of emergency that will change in the future and some form of normalcy will return, I promise!

8 Leave Your House
For our family, spending time outside and in nature works as a natural Xanax. It puts things in perspective, it allows for physical movement, it builds that much-needed vitamin D. The benefits of leaving your desk to spend time in nature are worth the dirty dishes and the unwritten email. I personally also believe that it is worth the extra math assignment that didn’t get done.

9 Alternate Shifts with Partner
If you are in a situation like us, where both parents need to work from home while homeschooling the kids, it is essential to come up with a schedule that allows one person to work uninterrupted for some time, while the other person is doing the check-ins with the kids.

10 Remember that we are ALL in this Together
Some days all of the above tips and tricks will work great and you will feel productive and accomplished. On most days though, we struggle. Schedules change, kids have meltdowns, groceries run out, the dog didn’t get his walk and we are all out of socks because, well, there was no time or even no priority to do the laundry. But who cares, zoom meetings only show the top half of our bodies.
5 Sanity-saving tips for parents during quarantine!

Create Structure and Set Expectations

Bedtimes and boundaries are still important! Remember, kids and adolescents crave structure and the normalcy of a routine.

Determine what kind of a schedule will work best for your family and enforce it! And don’t forget to set aside time for family bonding!

Divide and Conquer

Seize the opportunity to delegate some tasks to your kiddos... this teaches them a valuable lesson about teamwork.

Divvying up the household chores will lighten your load, reinforce the structure and routine you’ve created for the family, and even help to curb complaints of boredom.

Re-Examine Resources

Now is the time to lean on your supports and external resources, especially if you find yourself wearing more “hats” than usual.

With regards to academics, how can teachers, counselors, therapists, tutors, and others in your community offer support to your student? Ask for help!

Self Soothe

Make self-care a priority, give yourself a breather, and model self-soothing for your children.

Properly resourcing yourself will give you more bandwidth to tackle challenges, and it’ll be much easier to keep your cool emotionally when the going gets tough!

Practice Gratitude

Find time every day to practice gratitude. Whether it’s first thing in the morning, right before bed, or as a family bonding exercise around the dinner table. Focusing intentionally on gratitude during trying times can help to restore a sense of internal peace, and encourage a more hopeful outlook on the future.

CASSY Therapist - Melisa Moran
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020 @ 12:00 PM PST/ 3 PM EST

PARENTING DURING THE PANDEMIC: TIPS FOR PARENTS

Join noted author and educator Ana Homayoun as she offers practical real-time advice for parents.

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020 @ 4:00 PM PST/ 7 PM EST

A REAL-LIFE GUIDE TO NAVIGATING SCHOOL CLOSURE AND REMOTE LEARNING: STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

Join noted author and educator Ana Homayoun as she offers practical real-time advice for students.