



Helping Kids Through Anxiety

Presentation Notes

What have we learned which we should maximize during this time?

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Anxiety/ excessive fears or worries - We talk about this because we know that 1-in-4 kids deal with anxiety and girls are twice as likely as boys to have anxiety. Knowing how to handle all of this our kids' and our own emotions isn't easy. But here are a few things to keep in mind to help:

Some signs you may notice if the child is feeling anxious or fearful... are there mood or behavior changes? Kids tend to have noticeable shifts in behavior when in distress. That could look like being withdrawn for a child who is usually more outgoing, or outward behavioral issues for a child who'll is usually well behaved.

1. Get the facts: Anxiety is proven to decrease with facts. Stay informed by viewing experts and established sites. This is not just reading everything on social media and watching the news 24/7. This is checking out sites like the CDC and WHO (World health organization).
2. Validate child's fears: We might not agree with how a child may be expressing themselves, but avoid dismissing their fears. Encourage conversation. Share the truth with them in an age appropriate way. I understand that you are feeling that way it totally makes sense what else are you feeling... then clear up an info that isn't accurate with truth. Encourage the expression of all emotions and be available to listen when they want to talk. Normalize what they are feeling... It is normal to have some of those thoughts in a time like this.
3. Limit media coverage: News stories about the spread of the virus are everywhere and are dramatized often. Monitor how much media you and the kids are exposed to. Turn off the TV around younger children. Anxiety tends to spiral with overexposure to scary information or just over consumption of information. Keep informed but take mental breaks.
4. Discuss disruptions: Have a conversation about how to prepare for the disruptions of life that are being thrown our way. Talk about how it is hard to anticipate what disruptions might come. Let them know that time frames might get disrupted... Some kids are very scheduled and being off from a time can be hard.

5. Maintain Perspective: Keep in mind what and who truly matter in life. Maintain your social connection. While we are socially distancing ourselves it is important for people to know they are not isolated and alone. Anxiety rises when people feel alone. There are still ways we can socially network with the all of the technology we have these days. It helps to maintain a sense of safety and normalcy. Flexibility and a great sense of humor are great skills to practice as we manage uncertainty and anxiety.

A couple fun and helpful ideas...

1. Make a family daily gratitude journal.
2. Make a family values list. Post it in a place where it can be referred to when making decisions.
3. Make a fear jar... Write down fears on a piece of paper and put them in a box decorated with verses and positive quotes... this can allow the child the chance to release the fears they have.
4. Make a poster board collage of pictures. words and verses that promote positive thinking.
5. Feel the gift of family in these moments.
6. Praise and pray / break and play
 1. Encourage families to set aside time to worship as a family... declare victory over our lives and over this Virus in Jesus name. Take time and thank him because we know he has already won the battle... Praise and find joy because we know this too shall pass.
 2. Take communion and pray... We are all in this together, one way or another. Families read the word together and declare it over your homes. Post scripture on walls, fill our hearts with the word.... Not all the facts of the virus... (we are aware of the facts but we don't want the facts and fears to out way the Word of God in our hearts)
 3. And then break and play... Encourage families to run/ jump/ wrestle/ play and laugh together...