

Victoria Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre

Bi-Weekly Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to our newsletter, in this issue you will find insight, advice and resources from our counsellors about taking care of yourself during these uncertain times.

COVID-19 Resources

bigfeelingsstorybook

- A free PDF download of a children's story book on fight, flight, freeze and big emotions

communityresources

- A list of community resources and their availability during the pandemic

communitybusinesses

- A list of community businesses and what they are offering during the pandemic

<https://vcapcc.com/resources>

- Under COVID-19 Resources you will find a word document to download that contains resources regarding the pandemic

Keeping Children Safe Online

<https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/signup>

- tips for parents to help keep kids safe while online and out of school

https://protectkidsonline.ca/app/en/emerging_issue_s-13_to_15

- Emerging online risks to youth based on age

If you need immediate assistance, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest hospital

Crisis and Support Websites

<https://youthinbc.com/>

- Online chat with crisis responders for youth, available between noon and 1am

<https://crisiscentrechat.ca/>

- Online chat with crisis responders for adults, available between noon and 1am

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/support-myself>

- Self help for mental health and substance abuse

Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1-888-494-3888

- Available 24/7 for crisis support

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

- 24-hour confidential and anonymous support for youth between 5-20 years of age

Hope for Wellness: 1-855-242-3310

- 24/7 crisis and counselling support for First Nations and Inuit

Youth Space: 778-783-0177 (text)

- Open 6pm - midnight providing crisis and emotional support chat

Youth Against Violence: 1-800-680-4264

- Available 24/7 and in your language if you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others

Parents, Take Care of Yourself

As a parent, navigating through the ever changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic while working, maintaining a household, and homeschooling your children is HARD! In addition, feelings of disbelief and uncertainty about our current global reality and how it affects our children can feel overwhelming. In this newsletter we would like to acknowledge the challenges parents are facing in these times and offer resources that focus on self care and social support.

Notice Your Thoughts and Expectations

Many parents are feeling the pressure to 'do it all' while juggling the overwhelm of self isolation. If you haven't been baking perfect loaves of bread every day or fit your advanced yoga routine in between your child's online schooling yet - you're not alone and you are doing enough. With these difficult circumstances of uncertainty and change, thoughts about not doing, or being enough can increase stress. If you notice negative thoughts and feelings about yourself or your parenting, take care of yourself as best you can and reboot. How can you remind yourself you are doing the best you can in extremely difficult circumstances? Who can you lean on for support? What do you need to do for yourself to unplug?

Finding Joy in Routine

The purpose of this newsletter is not to add impossible suggestions to your daily routine that is already busy and overwhelming. Instead of adding more to your day, how can you shift your focus to include your needs? A renowned trauma researcher, Bessel VanderKolk, in a recent video about coping with uncertainty and self isolation, stressed the importance of incorporating in your day small things that give you joy. After eating my daughter's cold leftover Kraft Dinner drowned in ketchup for lunch for the third day in a row, I took Bessel's advice to heart. Last week, I gave up cold Kraft Dinner leftovers and started making lunches for myself which are simple and MUCH more enjoyable. How can you shift focus to include things in your day that give you sparks of joy?

Parents, Take Care of Yourself

What can you do to unplug?

For many parents, “unplugging” from daily routines feels impossible. Even if it means sitting in the bathroom for five minutes - we can’t stress enough the importance of taking breaks to shift your focus on yourself and what you need. In addition to modelling self care for your children, taking time to reboot also helps you to better support your children. How can you take a break in your day today?

Social Support

We are Relational Beings - and social connections with our family, friends, and community are the foundations of our social web of daily interaction. However, in this unprecedented and uncertain time, trying to maintain physical distancing requirements to flatten the curve and keep ourselves, our families, and communities safe and healthy has deeply impacted how we socially connect to others. This means that we have needed to drastically change and shift our perspectives and practices of social interaction, from face-to-face to online meetings, group FaceTime calls, and Zoom family dinners. With all the technology available to many of us (but not all) some of us have been able to maintain and keep connected in different ways, while some of us may struggle with either having the means and access to such technology or we struggle to still feel connected when using social media, or online platforms for our relational interactions. Firstly, it is important to remember that this will not last forever, that we will be able to hug our friends and family again - and that daily life may shift a little, but our need to be with one another will always remain. Secondly, there are other ways to be connected, in the ‘olden days of yore’ (or my childhood) we used to write letters and send cards as a way of saying we love and miss our friends and family - send a card to say hello, or make a package full of comfort items, draw or paint a picture or make a craft (and if you can’t send this now, keep it until you see your loved one again and you can gift them then). Finally, if you are on social media or have internet access through computer or the phone there are many online groups that have formed during the pandemic as a way of connecting people: for parents, people who love to bake or cook, art, music, videogames - the list seems infinite. Look for ways to connect in any way you can, and hold on as we get through this together we will come out the other side knowing how meaningful and important those social connections are to our health and wellbeing - and perhaps we will cherish them even more

Parents, Take Care of Yourself

Moving and Mindfulness

Engaging in mindfulness practices can enhance mental wellness, decrease stress and improve sleep, energy and focus. Setting aside 10mins, whether with your children or ideally on your own can really make a difference. One of our favourite free apps is INSIGHT TIMER! Check it out here: insighttimer.com

There are hundreds of Chi Kung and Yoga videos on Youtube. Here are some very quick practices that can be readily integrated into a busy day:

Qigong for Beginners: Breath and Relax in 2 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfMKc6u41f8>

Yoga Desk Exercises:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAUf7aajBWE&t=288s>

Here's a Quarantine yoga workout for parent and child (worth a try at least!):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZvwocNiMaM>

Resources

This podcast has some great easy tips and information for parents-you can listen to it while doing Chi Kung!

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/podcastcovid19>

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/info/parenting-during-covid-19>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3399-our-favorite-books-for-families-facing-tough-times>

The Gottman Institute: Mindful Parenting

How to respond rather than react

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/mindful-parenting-how-to-respond-instead-of-react/>

Psychology Today article with step-by-step ways to practice being a mindful parent everyday:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/going-beyond-intelligence/202001/mindfulness-parenting>

Child Mind Institute: article and resources on practicing mindful parenting

<https://childmind.org/article/mindful-parenting-2/>