

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a solid yellow circle at the bottom left, with several yellow dashed lines of varying lengths curving upwards and to the right, suggesting rays of light. The background is a solid orange color.

Coping with the Dual Pandemic and Distance Learning

Helping yourself and your kids

Presenters

- Alondra Anderson, School Psychologist, Autism Program
- David Earley, Pupil Personnel Worker
- Matthew Kamins, School Psychologist
- Christie Meuer, School Counselor
- Kate Musser, School Counselor

Outcomes

By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- **Understand the impact of COVID from different perspectives**
- **Identify actions parents can take to support their child**
- **Recognize warning signs of stress in children**
- **Understand what Diamond is doing to support students**



**COVID-19
impacts from
our kid's
perspective**

- I miss seeing and playing with my friends.
- I feel isolated.
- I am having trouble focusing.
- I am frustrated.
- I am worried.
- I get tired faster
- When will this be over?

COVID-19 impacts from parent's perspective

- How do I keep my children occupied?
- How do I help them to feel safe and secure?
- How can I help them keep up with schoolwork?
- I don't feel competent to be their teacher.
- I feel guilty when I must work and can't be there to support teaching & learning.
- I am frustrated.
- I am worried.
- I get tired faster.
- When will this be over?

Things to remember

- **Children look to their parents and other adults for guidance on how to react in stressful situations**
 - Acknowledge feelings and worries
 - Teach positive preventive measures
 - Overtly talk about their fears.
 - Convey a sense of control.
 - Teach problem solving/decision making skills
 - Recognize that they are adjusting to a very schedule
 - Balance work and other activities
 - Be creative and teach them good approaches to time management
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**Remain
calm, listen
and reflect,
offer
reassurance**

- **Be a role model – children will follow your lead**
- **Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19**
 - **Assure them that they are healthy, & you will make every effort to keep them safe and healthy**
 - **Listen thoughtfully to what they are saying and feeling & answer with reassurance and truth**
- **Explain why social distancing, wearing facial covering and hand washing are important**
- **Demonstrate deep breathing to help calm nerves**
- **Create and sustain a daily routine**
- **Identify projects that might help others**
- **Provide lots of hugs and positive attention (your child may need even more during this time)**

Monitor TV and Social Media



Watching frequent updates may increase fear and apprehension



TV updates and social media outlets are often not developmentally appropriate for kids and may cause anxiety or confusion



Dispel rumors and inaccurate information by sticking to known scientific facts



Provide alternatives to TV or Social media (games, reading, listening to music or drawing)

Take time to talk and be honest and accurate



Let your children's questions guide you. Answer truthfully but succinctly. Children feel empowered if they are in control. Control reduces fears



Explain simple safety steps



Correct misinformation



Stay up-to-date with facts
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Keep
explanations
age-appropriate**

- **Early elementary** – provide brief, simple information with easy to understand actions
 - **Upper elementary** – help them to separate reality from rumor. Discuss school, community, state and national efforts to manage COVID-19
 - **Middle and High School** – discuss in more depth, refer them to appropriate resources for facts. Engage them in decision-making, family plans, scheduling and helping with chores.
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**Be aware of
your children's
mental
wellness**

- **Most children will manage well with family and school supports**
- **Some children may show signs of worry or concern**
- **Some children may have risk factors that lead to more intense reactions (risk factors include pre-existing wellness issues, prior traumatic experiences or abuse, family instability, loss of a loved one).**

Monitor Signs & Symptoms

- **Preschooler-Kindergarten** - thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal
- **Elementary** - irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.
- **Adolescents**—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.

What are we doing at Diamond?

- Daily morning meetings with wellness check-ins with homeroom teachers.
- SEL and psychoeducational lessons classroom lessons
- Optional lunch bunches with school counselors
- Well-being team meetings to support student well-being and engagement
- Counselors and school psychologists available to meet with students as needed
- Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW) available to meet with parents
- Positive behavior supports in the virtual classroom including incentives, spirit days, Blue Dolphin student, monthly character trait focus

Additional Resources

- Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/prepare/children.html>
- Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use at Home, at Play, and Out and About, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>
- NASP COVID-19 Resource Center, <https://www.nasponline.org/COVID-19>