



Supporting the Emotional Health of Students During the COVID-19 Crisis

Our society is currently facing unprecedented events resulting in increased challenges to parents. While HDS teachers and staff work diligently to continue academics through distance learning, you may have concerns about how you can further support the *emotional health* of your student through this time.

The following are some thoughts to keep in mind as you navigate the upcoming days at home with your student:

Find ways to stay connected with family and friends.

- Consider allowing older children, within limits, to utilize social media or texting to stay in touch with peers.
- Use FaceTime, Skype, Google Hangouts, or similar Apps to maintain contact.
- Allow younger children to take and send digital pictures to friends and family.

Maintain routines.

- Routines can greatly reduce anxiety for children and adults alike.
- Simple ideas include maintaining a morning routine and having meals at around the same time each day. Consider keeping already established bedtimes on weekdays.
- Daily exercise and play are essential for a child's physical and mental health. If you can't get outside, freeze dance and video dance games are great! GoNoodle on Youtube is a favorite of educators.
- Don't overplan. Make sure to build in downtime for everyone.

Manage the information to which your child is exposed.

- Consider limiting news on television, social media, and other devices.
- Engage in age-appropriate conversations about COVID-19.
 - [CDC: Talking with your children about Coronavirus Disease](#)
 - [Talking to children about COVID-19: A Parent Resource](#)
- Practice with your child what they can do to stay healthy (proper hand washing, social distancing).

Have some fun!

- Pull out some board games or puzzles.
- Play active games as a family.
- Cook a meal together.
- Have a family movie night.

While being cooped up with your family can be a great opportunity for quality time, your child may exhibit changes in behaviors or mood despite all your best intentions. Younger children often have trouble verbalizing stress and may act out behaviorally. Tweens and teens may feel socially isolated.

I will continue to be available for support to Hancock Families throughout this time. Please feel free to reach out to me via email at amaheer@hancockdayschool.org.

Finally, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has opened up their Disaster Distress Helpline and offers 24/7 counseling services by calling 1-800-985-5990.

Sincerely,
Allison Maher, School Counselor