

F O C U S

Vista Psychological & Counseling Centre, LLC

COVID-19 Managing Anxiety and Stress

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. People who may respond more strongly with the stress of a crisis include: older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19, children and teens, people who are helping with the response to COVID-19 like doctors and other health care providers or first responders, people who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use. Stress

The Viral Poem

"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, modes, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

Kitty O Meara

during an infectious disease outbreak can include: fear and worry about your own health and the health of loved ones, changes in sleep or eating patterns, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, worsening of chronic health problems and, increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. **People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.** **Additional information can be found at samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness.** Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger. Things that you can do to help support yourself include: taking breaks from watching, reading, or listening to new stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs. Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy. Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row. Reduce stress in yourself and in others. Sharing facts about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an



outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stress and allow you to connect with them. Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared. Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include: excessive crying or irritation in younger children, returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting), excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens, poor school performance or avoiding school, difficulty with attention and concentration, avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past, unexplained headaches or body pain, use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. There are many things you can do to support your child. Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand. Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how

to cope. Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand. Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities. Be a role model: take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members. Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional toll on you. There are things you can do to reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions: Acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event. Learn the symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt). Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic. Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy such as spending time with friends and family, exercising, or reading a book. Take a break from media coverage of COVID-19. Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak. Being

separated from others if a healthcare provider thinks you may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be stressful, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine. Some feelings include: mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine; fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones; stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19; sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious; guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine; other emotional or mental health changes. Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from quarantine. **Source:** **Center for Disease Control**, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html

**Cheerfulness is the best promoter
of health and is as friendly to the
mind as to the body.**

Joseph Addison

When Boys Go Silent

What makes teen boys stop talking—and how concerned should you be? When my son was little, he was funny and affectionate. He had a million questions and he loved to ask them. He was shy with people he didn't know well but was voluble and entertaining with close friends and family. There was very little I didn't know about his days his dreams, his friends, and his ambitions. We were buddies. And then came middle school. First he got tall and awkward and started to smell like a teenager. I was expecting those changes. But I was not expecting his personality to change. By age 14, my formerly sweet and chatty son was giving me the silent treatment. He uttered only the briefest of answers to questions and never asked any of his own. He rarely came out of his room and, when he did, he was sullen and hostile, if he spoke at all. In short, he was doing an excellent impression of every portrayal I'd ever seen of teenage boys who amassed weapons and subsequently went on murderous rampages. He scared me. Why do teen boys stop talking? Was his total silence an indicator that he was about to snap? As it turns out, neither my son's behavior nor my worries about it were unusual. "Going silent has been the response of freshly pubescent boys since the species developed," Miles Groth, a professor of psychology at Wagner College and the author of the *Boys to Men* blog at *Psychology Today* told me. "It is nothing new," he added.

"(It's not) related to our times or current events. At this age, he pointed out, boys are going through a lot of physical changes. They are very self-conscious, examining the way they are being perceived by adults, peers, and members of the opposite sex, or in some cases the same sex," says Groth. That self-consciousness makes them less likely to commit themselves by speaking. "Middle school ([/gk/articles/seventh-grade-worst-year-ever/](#)) is the onset of adolescence for most boys, and a resulting social insecurity," says Dr. John Duffy, author *The Available Parent: Expert Advice for Raising Successful, Resilient, and Connected Teens and Tweens*. The less said, the less to be ridiculed for. In this way, the silence is a self-protective defense. While worried parents might naturally leap to a nightmare scenario like I did, chances are good that an ad silence is normal. It's just one symptom of the massive physical and mental changes caused by puberty. "Most boys grow out of this phase with minimal damage done," says Duffy. "From a parental point of view, it can be daunting and scary, as silence can read as insulating, or even depression. Check in with your middle school son from time to time to ensure he is okay. But keep in mind that, developmentally, his silence is likely somewhere within the norm.

Even my son's laconic replies to my questions are typical of many boys as they become men, says Katey McPherson, Exec. Dir. of the Gurian Institute and co-author of the book *Why Teens Fail: What to Fix*. "Women have more connective tissue between the right and the left brain," she observes. "We process language much more quickly than men. I think women overwhelm their boys with words. Instead of letting fear inform our response to this normal change in many boys' demeanor, Groth suggest that we start instead by looking for what is going right. Does your son have hobbies? Enjoy socializing with friends? Does he show an interesting engaging with the world? If the answer is yes, it's a good sign that his new monosyllabic style of speaking is normal. Of course, this may be difficult information to track down if he won't talk. But it may not be that he won't talk so much as that he can't get words out in his current hormonal crisis especially when faced with Mom bombarding him with more questions in response to the few utterances he manages to eke out. "Take him out for a walk," suggests McPherson. "Throw a ball around. Get him moving. And ask him one or two questions at a time." Since long frank conversations may be on hold for a while, another way to stay

informed is by being involved in his life online. Parents should always be paying attention to how their kids use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social platforms because that is where teens' lives play out. Ask him what happened on Twitter today, or to show you the social app his friends are using lately or to see something funny from Vine. You will learn about him while you are learning about his social media habits. If your son is withdrawn from his peers, expresses hopelessness, or is using or abusing substances, those are signs that it's time to pay attention—and seek help. "Someone who is quiet and sitting by himself is not necessarily depressed," explains Groth. "That person might be very ruminative and serious. A depressed person feels that there

is no way out. They feel trapped, that there is no solution, that nothing is going to fix this." Generally speaking, when girls are hurting, they are more likely to be forthcoming about sharing their feelings. But boys who are experiencing depression, because they are more likely to clam up, may fly under the radar completely. "The suicide rate for teen boys is four times as high as it is for teen girls," says Groth. "Not talking to you is pretty standard. But if he is also not talking to his peers, anyone outside the home, or anyone else, I would be more worried." My son eventually emerged from his silence. It was a long and worrisome road strewn with signs that he was experiencing dark thoughts and depression. He threatened suicide, withdrew from friends and hid in his room.

I took his threats seriously and got him help. We went through it together. Both of us made mistakes. I made it clear, throughout, that he was loved and that he was not the first teenager to feel this way. He finally came out the other side, much the same way someone recovers from a long pernicious flu. Now 20, my son is once again chatty, voluble, funny, and willing to share his dreams and observations. Once again, we are buddies. Only now, he can drive when we go out. **Source:**
Christina Tynan-Wood,
October, 15, 2016 at
www.greatschools.org/gk/author//christinatynan-wood/

CBD Decreases Social Anxiety in Teens

A recent study found the cannabidiol (CBD) decreased symptoms of social anxiety disorder in teenagers. Becoming increasingly common, the disorder is characterized by a fear of social situations and leads teens to isolate themselves. In the small study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, Japanese teenagers with social anxiety who used 300 mg of CBD oil daily for four weeks experienced a decrease in anxiety symptoms and behaviors. Teens taking a placebo oil did not see

these improvements. Half of the teens who took CBD also sought out additional treatment, including medications and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), compared to none in the placebo group. A combination of medications and CBT has been found to be effective in treating social anxiety. The author suggested that the CBD reduced anxiety around social stigmas associated with mental health issues and psychiatrists, allowing the teenagers to seek help. Though more research is needed



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the author concluded that taking CBD daily could be useful in reducing social anxiety, without the negative side effects associated with traditional anxiety medications. **Source:**
Posted on 01/16/20 by
MarijuanaDoctors.com in CBD
Resources