

VPH Family Resources During Coronavirus Closure

As adults, we are managing the fast paced changes and updates on the Coronavirus. And because of this, we may feel an increased level of anxiety. It's important to be mindful that our children may experience the same. Our children might be asking questions and be worrying. It's important to listen to their concerns, remain calm and keep routines and structure in place as best as possible.

Below is some information that may be helpful to review to aid support you in having conversations with children. Also included is a list of community resources and some tips around how to manage anxiety and ideas on how to keep busy!

Resources on talking to children about the Coronavirus

- [How to Talk to Kids and Teens About the Coronavirus](#)
- [How to Talk to Children about the Coronavirus](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)

Resources:

Food/Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holyoke Public Schools Food Pick-Up/ Drop-off HPS is offering breakfast and lunch to all students at the front doors of ANY of the following schools at the following times and days: Donahue, Holyoke High School North, Kelly, Lawrence, and Sullivan schools from 10:00 AM-12:30 PM (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays). Any student living in Holyoke and those living in shelters can access the food, including siblings. Also, Denise arranged times with vanpool to drop off breakfast and lunch at the following shelters: Franklin St., Northampton St (hotel), and Dwight St. If you have questions about the food deliveries, please reach out to Denise at derodriguez@hps.holyoke.ma.us
Free Internet Access (Comcast)	Comcast/Spectrum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comcast Increases Access to and Speeds of Internet Essentials to Support Americans Through Coronavirus Pandemic<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ offering new customers 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month.○ 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.○ https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19 (with Spanish link) ● In the link, there is a map to find all of the hotspots near you: https://wifi.xfinity.com/
2-1-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mass 211 is the centralized hub for comprehensive information about and referral to the complete spectrum of services in Massachusetts that address the social determinants of healthy lives and communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They provide a stigma free 24/7 contact center and public portal website that empowers people with the information they need to make informed decisions and to get the right help for their circumstances. ○ Mass 211 can be contacted simply by dialing 211 from most phones and is the only organization in Massachusetts that can be contacted using this easy to remember three-digit number. ○ https://www.helpsteps.com/hs/home/#/
Mental Health Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>24/7 Crisis Lines (413) 733-6661 or in-person assessment (you need to call first to see if clinicians are available) to 417 Liberty Street, Entrance B, Springfield</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>BHN's Crisis Program provides 24/7 front line response to individuals of all ages who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis, regardless of insurance.</i> ○ <i>BHN provides services on a mobile basis, including home and community-based settings or in an emergency department when needed.</i> ○ <i>24/7 response and stabilization services for individuals of all ages who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis</i> ○ https://www.bhninc.org/services-and-programs/emergency-services ● National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. ○ https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/ ● Domestic Violence Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Domestic Violence Hotline Call 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224 or CHAT at thehotline.org ● Safe Passage Hotline Call 413-586-5066, 1-888-345-5282 toll free
Freebies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Scholastic came up with a way to keep kids busy and learning while school closures keep them home during the coronavirus pandemic.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Scholastic Classroom offering free</i> ○ https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html

- Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing.
- Even when schools are closed, you can keep the learning going with these special cross-curricular journeys. Every day includes four separate learning experiences, each built around a thrilling, meaningful story or video.
- EkhartYoga:
 - is offering free yoga : 12 free yoga and meditation classes, specifically designed to help relieve stress and anxiety to support anyone directly affected - physically or emotionally - by the coronavirus outbreak. 100% free, no payment details required.
 - <https://relief.ekhartyoga.com/>
- Fun Brain:
 - Created for kids in grades Pre-K through 8, Funbrain.com has been the leader in free educational games for kids since 1997. Funbrain offers hundreds of games, books, comics, and videos that develop skills in math, reading, problem-solving and literacy
 - <https://www.funbrain.com/books/tom-gates-excellent-excuses-and-other-good-stuff/page/7>
- Other free educational links from little ones to teens:
 - <https://pbskids.org/>
 - <https://www.sesamestreet.org/>
 - <http://www.duckduckmoose.com/>
 - <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/explore>
 - <http://www.gutenberg.org/>
 - <https://ywp.nanowrimo.org/>
 - <https://www.sciencefriday.com/>
 - <https://www.howstuffworks.com/>

Tips:

- **Stress and Coping:**
 - <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2020/3/13/21178234/coronavirus-covid-19-school-closures-kids-home>
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
 - https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath?utm_source=lifecycle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=difficult_times_nonsubs_031720
- **Life at Home:**

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tarahaelle/2020/03/15/101-ideas-to-keep-your-kids-busy-during-coronavirus-closures/#739fb70274a4>
- <https://time.com/5803373/coronavirus-kids-at-home-activities/>

Steps to support your mental wellbeing:

- **Connect with other people:**
 - Be Social While Social Distancing -Get connected on-line. There are plenty of online options to video chat with friends and family
 - Shut off the TV and play games with your children
- **Be physically active:**
 - Besides the health benefits, it's also good to stay active to ward off going stir crazy from being cooped up for an extended period of time.
 - EkhartYoga: is offering free yoga :<https://relief.ekhartiyoga.com/>
 - Just because your home you still need to release all that energy with physical exercise like a dance party, Kidz Bop videos, or you tube kids yoga like cosmic kids yoga
- **Be compassionate:**
 - Towards yourself and your children. We have never experienced anything like the current crisis, and all of us are pioneers.
- **Look on the Bright side:** Trying to find something good in a bad situation appears to be particularly effective in reducing anxiety
 - One amazing benefit of having children at home is that it eliminates the stress that comes with getting everyone out of the house each morning.
 - Have a family meeting and let every family member talk about what they want to get out of this break.
 - Fun Ideas
 - Reconnect with family
 - Carve out some fun time with your family
 - Put music on and just dance
 - Have game nights with board games
 - Cook meals together
 - Read together-get into that book that you have not had time for