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Public Education

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELL- BEING DURING TIMES OF CRISIS



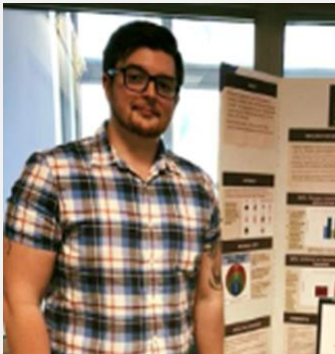
WELCOME



Tia Navelene Barnes, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS), is a social emotional learning researcher and evaluator. As a former educator of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), Dr. Barnes's research interests focus on creating environments where students with emotional and behavioral challenges can thrive.



Marika Ginsburg-Block, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the School of Education and program coordinator for the graduate program in school psychology. Her training is in school, community and clinical child psychology. Her research focuses primarily on investigating school-based, peer and parent mediated intervention programs for vulnerable youth, while also seeking to better understand the numerous mechanisms that lead to student achievement.



Ryan Palmer, Ed.S., NCSP (DASP Parliamentarian), is a graduate of University of Delaware's School Psychology program. Before completing internship, he worked as a family trauma therapist in 2017 through Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health. He interned and later worked in Caesar Rodney School District as a school psychologist from 2017-2019. In May 2019, he was awarded a Compassionate Champion Award by the Governor's office for his work in student trauma advocacy and staff trauma-informed readiness. He also works as a core team member with the DE DOE Social Emotional Learning Collaborative to create SEL standards and implementation resources. He currently works as a school psychologist for Cape Henlopen School District.

POLL QUESTIONS:



WHO IS ON THE CALL?



WHAT AGE GROUP(S) ARE THE CHILDREN YOU ARE CARING FOR?



OVERVIEW

- Crisis, change and children
- When to contact a professional?
- 8 universal strategies for helping children and teens cope with covid-19
- Strategies specific to social isolation and grief/loss
- Resources
- Q & A

COMMON INITIAL CRISIS REACTIONS

EMOTIONAL

Shock	Depression or sadness
Anger	Grief
Despair	Irritability
Phobias	Hypersensitivity
Terror or fear	Helplessness
Guilt	Hopelessness
Emotional numbing	Loss of pleasure from activities

PHYSICAL

Fatigue	Startle response
Insomnia	Headaches
Sleep disturbance	Decreased libido
Hyperarousal	Decreased appetite
Somatic Complaints	Gastrointestinal problems
Impaired immune response	

COGNITIVE

Impaired concentration	Decreased self-esteem
Memory impairment	Self-blame
Disbelief	Worries
Confusion	Nightmares
Distortion	Decreased self-efficacy
Intrusive thoughts or memories	
Impaired decision-making abilities	

INTERPERSONAL/BEHAVIORAL

Alienation	Aggression
School refusal	Crying easily
School impairment	Tantrums
Vocational impairment	Change in eating patterns
Regression in behavior	Risk Taking
Increased relationship conflict	Avoidance of reminders
Social withdrawal or social isolation	

Note. Compiled from Speier (2000); Young, Ford, Ruzek, Friedman, & Gusman (1998).

(From Stein & Brock, 2017)

CRISIS, CHANGE AND CHILDREN: COMMON THOUGHTS & FEELINGS

Common Thoughts	Feelings
Will we be okay?	Stressed, worried, nervous
I'm missing out on so many things- going out, seeing my grandparents, friends & teachers! My senior year is ruined, no prom, no graduation, no beach week!	Sad, disappointed, grief, loss
Why can't I go to school? I'm not used to cyber learning! I don't know what I'm supposed to do to get my schoolwork done?	Confused, anxious, unfocused
I can't stand being stuck at home anymore! All my friends are at the beach how come I can't go?	Frustrated, angry, lonely

CHILDREN & TEENS AT RISK



Pre-existing mental health problem



Prior traumatic experiences or abuse



Family instability



Loss of a loved one

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR



Preschoolers—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal.



Elementary school children—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.

WHEN TO
CONTACT A
PROFESSIONAL?

- Monitor children & teens at risk for more intense reactions
- Look for changes in behavior that last more than 2 weeks and are interfering with developmentally appropriate activities

REFERRALS & MH EMERGENCIES

<https://www.namidelaware.org/>

<https://www.delawareguidance.org/resources/>

DE Guidance 24-hour Mobile Response Hotline: 1-800-969- HELP (4357)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Please share:

- What concerns have children shared with you?
- What coping strategies have you modeled/shared with children?
- Have you reached out to professionals- if so whom?

HOW ARE YOU
HELPING
CHILDREN
COPE
WITH THE
CURRENT
CRISIS?

8 UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES FOR HELPING CHILDREN AND TEENS COPE WITH COVID-19

1. Make time to listen- empathy
2. Model calm & reassuring reactions to changes
3. **Provide accurate age appropriate information**
4. Avoid negativity & blame
5. Monitor television & social media- Generate alternate activities
6. Teach them how to reduce risk with healthy practices
7. **Teach them how to control their stress (strategies for thinking and doing)**
8. Develop a routine/schedule

ACCURATE AGE APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

Young children:

- Emphasize that the grown ups are keeping them safe

Elementary school:

- Explain how you are going to stay safe, teach them strategies

Middle school/High school:

- Share facts with them (CDC guidelines), Discuss issues such as injustices during outbreak

TEACH HOW TO CONTROL STRESS

Thinking

Thinking strategies:

- **Positive thinking**, visualization/imagery, meditation, mindfulness

Doing

Doing strategies:

- **Deep breathing**, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, listening to music, playing with play dough, writing in a journal, helping others

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING: COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL FRAMEWORK

THOUGHTS→	FEELINGS→	BEHAVIORS→
Unhelpful: Everyone is really upset. No one knows what to do. We are not safe from corona virus.	Afraid, worried, sad	Clingy, withdrawn, tearful
Helpful: My family and teachers are here for me. I know how to protect myself. I can talk with adults about my concerns and they will listen to me.	Confident, relaxed	Healthy choices, help seeking

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING:
COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL FRAMEWORK

THOUGHTS→	FEELINGS→	BEHAVIORS→
Unhelpful		
Helpful		

MINDFULNESS

- “Mindfulness means ***paying attention*** in a particular way; ***on purpose***; in the ***present moment***, and ***non-judgmentally***”
– Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Mindfulness is associated with...
 - Reduced anxiety in children and adolescents
 - Lower depression and increased happiness adolescents
 - Increased social skills in children



MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

STOP

Five senses activity

Mindfulness jar

Mindful hike

Mindfulness with food or candy

Gratitude journal

Kindness meditation

Positive affirmation



DEEP BREATHING

SCRIPT FOR DEEP BREATHING ACTIVITY

We are going to relax right now. First, reach your arms up way above your head toward the ceiling. Stretch your body tall. Now let your arms fall gently to your side.

Start to feel the heaviness of your arms, and your legs. I want you to take a moment to get comfortable. Think about how your body feels in your chair.

Now close your eyes softly. Once your eyes are closed, take a deep breath...now breathe out, emptying all of the air completely. Like you're blowing out all the candles on a birthday cake. Breathe in slowly...and out slowly.

Take a deep breath in through your nose to the count of (4) and out through your mouth to the count of (4). Breathe in...2...3...4...HOLD...2...3...exhale...2...3...4...

Feel the tightness leaving your body, bit by bit, with each breath.

Now place your hand gently on your stomach. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and feel your stomach press against your hands. When you exhale, feel your belly button reach toward your back.

Let's repeat this again, in through your nose...out through your mouth.

Start to notice the sounds around the room. This might be the sound of the air conditioner, or even the sound of other students sitting in their chairs...

You may be thinking of something. Picture the thought in your head. Now take that thought and place it in a bubble. Now watch that bubble, that thought, drift away. If another thought comes into your mind, do the same thing: place it in a bubble and let it drift away. (Pause)

Again, you are going to take a deep breath in through your nose to the count of (4) and out through your mouth to the count of (4). . . . Slowly open your eyes. Notice how your body feels. You may feel more relaxed.

(From Stein & Brock, 2017)

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL ISOLATION FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Developmental importance of peers

Negative consequences of social isolation

Vulnerable groups

Stigma & rejection

SUPPORTING CHILDREN
AND TEENS
WHO ARE EXPERIENCING
SOCIAL ISOLATION

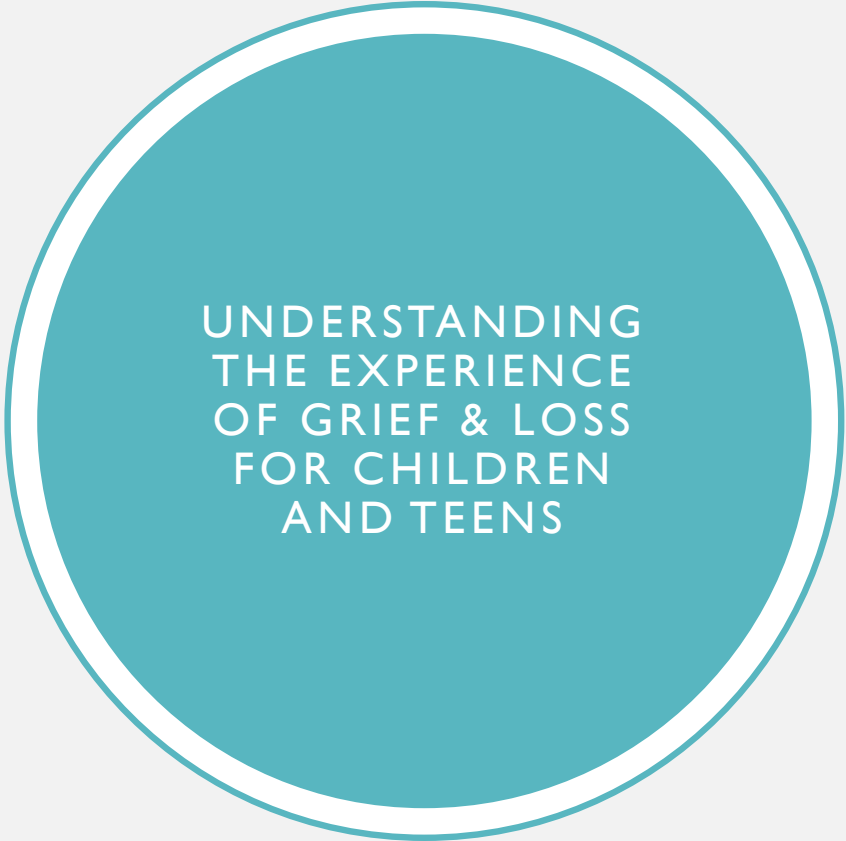
Maintain social connections while social distancing

Use of technology to create opportunities for collaborative learning & social interaction in online learning contexts

SEL at home and at school

Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak

Harness the powerful nature of peer influence



UNDERSTANDING
THE EXPERIENCE
OF GRIEF & LOSS
FOR CHILDREN
AND TEENS

Four phases of grief:

1. Shock and Numbness
2. Yearning and Searching
3. Disorientation and
Disorganization
4. Reorganization and Resolution

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF GRIEF & LOSS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

- **Preschoolers:** regressive behaviors, decreased verbalization, increased anxiety
- **Elementary:** decreased academic performance, attention/concentration, and attendance; irritability, aggression, and disruptive behaviors; somatic complaints; sleep/eating disturbances; social withdrawal; guilt, depression, and anxiety; and repeated telling of the event
- **Middle and High Schoolers:** decreased academic performance, attention/concentration, and attendance; avoidance, withdrawal, high risk behaviors or substance abuse, difficulty with peer relations, nightmares, flashbacks, and emotional numbing or depression

Home	School
Family self-care	Listen, acknowledge feelings; check in with family & student to determine needs
Establish family routines & goals for each day	Maintain a normal routine in your classroom
Reach out & stay connected with family, friends and grief resources	Engage classmates, seek out peer support groups (if desired)
Share information & practices your family finds comforting	Share resources & be sensitive to cultural differences in expressing grief and honoring the dead
Make time for remembering loved ones/reflecting on the loss	Allow students to share feelings or engage in other activities like writing, drawing, listening to music, or playing a game
Embrace diversions	Engage students in activities they previously enjoyed

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND TEENS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING GRIEF & LOSS

RECAP AND REFLECTION

RECAP

8 universal strategies for helping children and teens cope with COVID

3 stress reduction techniques

5 strategies specific to social isolation

6 strategies specific to grief/loss

REFLECTION

What strategy will you introduce?

What supports will you need?

RESOURCES

Here today:

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Ryan Palmer, Delaware Association for School Psychologists, <http://www.dasponline.org>

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For more information:

Center for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

Child Mind Institute: <https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

DE PBS Project <http://whl.oet.udel.edu/pbs/resources-for-families/>

National Alliance for Grieving Children: <https://childrengrieve.org/about-us/news/covid-19>

National Association of School Psychologists: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center>

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement <https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/covid-19-pandemic-resources/>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/all-nctsn-resources?page=2>

Scholastic & Yale Child Study Center: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/education/coronavirusworkbook/index.html>

For all of the resources associated with this webinar, please visit:

<https://www.cei.udel.edu/ppe/community-partners/professional-learning-for-educators>

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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