

# Educators during COVID-19

## Support during challenging times

The effort to address COVID-19 is extremely important for us all. It poses a range of challenges to educators as they work to adapt to ensuring learning can continue during these uncertain times. CAMH has designed a **resource hub** provide information and suggestions about how best to cope during the pandemic. This time may be very challenging for children and adolescents. Young people may sense the health and financial anxieties of their parents and worry about their own health and that of other family members, while trying to adjust to remote learning.

The transition to remote learning is also difficult for educators and students' parents. The technology learning curve for remote teaching may be a steep one for everyone. What's more, in some instances, remote learning has shone a spot light on the realities for many families across Canada – language barriers, technological literacy, the have-and-have-nots of who has access to computers and reliable internet, and the disparity between children who have supportive parents engaged in their education and those who do not. All of these factors shape the reality for educators today.

Children of all ages are facing their own interpretation of what COVID-19 means for their lives. Some are relishing the extra time with their parents. In other homes, substance use, domestic violence or neglect may be intensified. Some children have backyards in which to play. Others might be living in windowless apartments with many other family members. What all Canadians, of every age, share is a collective concern over how long this new reality will last for and what life will look like on the other side of the pandemic. There are evidence-based tools and support that can help you, and the people in your network, to better weather the stresses of this pandemic.



### Talking to Children about COVID-19

For many children, school is an anchor to their lives. The loss of schedule, social interaction and physical activity can be challenging for children and adolescents, some of whom might not understand the reasons for school closures and the cancellation of extracurricular activities. Other children and adolescents may be missing the additional aspects of school, like breakfast and lunch programs, access to non-family supportive adults, and access to books and computers. In talking to children and adolescents about COVID-19, like other difficult topics, it is important to listen, ask questions to understand the young person's COVID-19-related knowledge and experiences as well as their approach to managing any stresses they may be experiencing, and to respond to questions with developmentally appropriate and accurate information.

**[Click here for a tip sheet](#)** on talking to children about COVID-19

For some children and youth, their existing mental health concerns may worsen. For others, new mental health concerns may arise. Teachers have an important role to play in knowing about resources available both through school and community-based services,

Visit **[Covid with Kids](#)** for additional mental health resources available to children and youth, and their families



## Creativity, Activity and Service

Many educators are familiar with the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) framework, which might also be helpful during these challenging times. Age appropriate activities for students could include:

- **Creativity:** Exploring ideas through artwork, photography, writing or performances.
- **Activity:** Physical exertion to help encourage to a healthy lifestyle (in ways that are still safe while practicing physical distancing).
- **Service:** Posting messages of hope in their windows to share with the community or taking on more chores to help at home. For pre-teens and teens, they may have more sophisticated ideas about how to help, like baking for neighbours who are health care workers, or creating video messages of hope and gratitude to share with elders living in long-term care facilities.



## Coping with Your Own Stress and Anxiety

The COVID-19 pandemic can cause stress and anxiety because it is disrupting normal life for many people all at once. While it is important to be informed and to take action to limit the spread of infection, the amount of information and attention on this topic can increase stress and anxiety. You, as educators, should also take time to find outlets that help you manage stress, like being creative, physical exercise, and mindfulness, in whatever ways make you feel best.

[Click here for strategies](#) to maintain your mental wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Challenging Worries and Anxious Thoughts

High levels of anxiety and stress are usually fuelled by the way we think. With so much unknown, it is common to feel worries and anxious. CAMH has prepared some ways to work through these thoughts.

[Click here for some suggestions](#) on dealing with challenging worries and anxious thoughts.



## Dealing with problems in a structured way

It is normal to feel overwhelmed. In addition to being a teacher, you might also be juggling care for children or other family members. It can be useful to identify which things are actually problems that need to be solved or addressed and which are worries that can wait to be addressed or may not necessarily reflect your current reality.

[Here are some steps](#) you can take if you are feeling overwhelmed.