

Preventing, Recognizing & Dealing with Anxiety & Depression in Children & Teens: A Primer for Parents

Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, APRN-CNP, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN

Vice President for Health Promotion, University Chief Wellness Officer

Dean and Helene Fuld Health Trust Professor of Evidence-based Practice, College of Nursing

Executive Director, the Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for Evidence-based Practice

Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, College of Medicine

The Ohio State University

**Stay Calm
and Well**

Part II

Learn strategies and
resiliency skills to reduce
anxiety and overcome
today's issues.

 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF WELLNESS OFFICER



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

*Partners: College of Nursing, Buckeye Wellness,
YP4H, OSU Health Plan, Office of Human
Resources, Employee Assistance Program and
Office of Student Life*

Skills Building Week #6

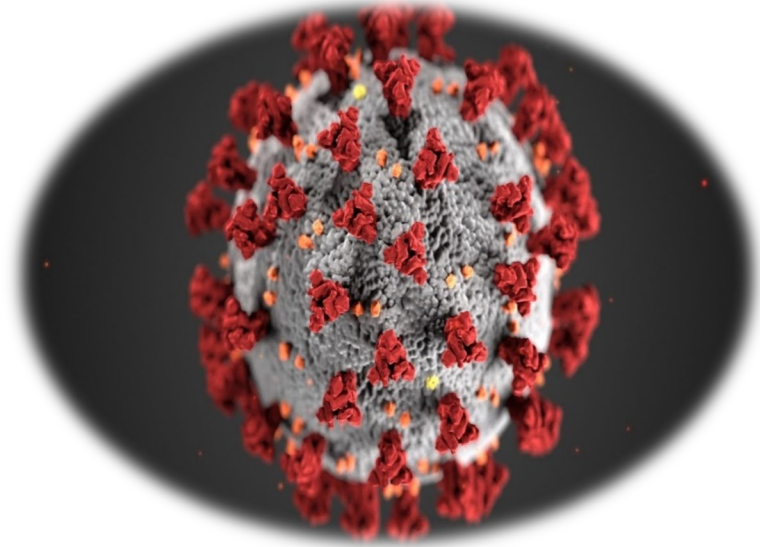
- Eating regular meals with good food variety helps us stay healthy.
 - “Sometimes foods” and “all the time foods”
 - Portion control
- Eat your colors!
- Losing weight should not mean eating really low calories.



COVID-19 is Triggering Mental Health Problems and Unhealthy Lifestyle Behaviors in Parents, Children and Teens

You are Not Alone!

- Feelings of **despair**
- Fear for **loved ones**
- Decreases in **job security**
- Increases in **loneliness**
- Mindset switch from “**thriving**” to “**survival**”
- **Zoom fatigue and burnout**
- **Increases in alcohol use**
- **Unhealthy eating patterns**



- Feelings of **hopelessness**
- Increases in **anxiety**
- Decreases in **financial security**
- **Social withdrawal**
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Declines in Physical Activity**



One in 5 children and teens has a mental health problem, yet less than 50% get treatment



Anxiety, depression and AD/HD are the three most common mental health disorders in children and teens

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 10 to 34 year olds



Risk Factors for Mental Health Problems in Children and Teens

- Parents who have mental health problems
- Poor self-esteem
- Lack of developmental assets (e.g., coping skills, optimism)
- Altered parenting
- Parental conflict, separation and divorce
- Chronic illness or handicap
- Hospitalization/trauma/life-threatening procedures
- Social isolation/bullied
- Stressful home/school environment
- Substance use
- Low SES
- Overweight/obesity



Anxiety

- **A complex pattern of reactions to a perceived threat**

- Cognitive

- Forgetfulness, rumination, poor judgment, decreased attention

- Behavioral

- Running away, anxious tapping, restless leg, aggression, trembling, or closing eyes

- Physiologic

- Tachycardia, tachypnea, diaphoresis, increased blood pressure, palpitations, chest tightness, muscle tension, GI upset/Stomach aches, headaches

- Subjective

- Irritability, helplessness, hopelessness, anger, decreased motivation, fear, images of bodily harm



Common Fears and Worries in Children and Youth

3-6 years	Strange, loud, or abrupt noises Ghosts, witches, other “supernatural beings” Separation from parents and being lost Sleeping alone at night (nightmares) Going to school Physical harm/rejection by specific individuals at school Darkness Medical encounters Thunder and other natural events
7-8 years:	The dark/dark places Real-life catastrophes as seen on TV, movies, and books Not being liked Being late for school or left out of school or family events Physical harm from or rejection by specific individuals at school



Common Fears and Worries in Children and Youth

8-9 years:	Personal humiliation Failure in school or play Being caught in a lie Being the victim of physical violence Parents fighting, separating, or being hurt
9-11 years:	Failure in school or sports Illness/Death Specific phobic reactions (i.e. animals/heights) Sinister types
Adolescents	New experiences Social competence School (academic, athletic, social) performance Looking and acting strange Death or life-threatening illness or disease Loosing possessions/being violated



Signs of Depression in *Infants, Toddlers/Preschoolers*

Feeding difficulties

Sleep disturbances

Irritable

Poor eye contact

Irritable or apathetic

Behavior problems

Excessive tantrums

Aggression

Irritability

Regression



Signs of Depression in School-Age Children**



- Sadness
- Irritability/anger
- Impulsive
- Crying spells
- Loss of pleasure or interest in activities
- Frequent complaints that *no one likes me*
- ***Somatic complaints***
- Externalizing (i.e., acting out) behaviors
- Drop in grades



****Often misdiagnosed as AD/HD**



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Signs of Depression in Adolescents

- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Self-hatred/worthlessness
- **Anger/irritability**
- Self-destructive behavior
- Withdrawal
- Loss of pleasure/interest in activities
- Neurovegetative symptoms (e.g., decrease or increase in sleep, appetite and concentration)
- **Drug and alcohol use common**
- Drop in grades
- **Comorbidity with anxiety common**



**When Symptoms Interfere with Concentration/Functioning
and are Persistent, Intervention is Needed**

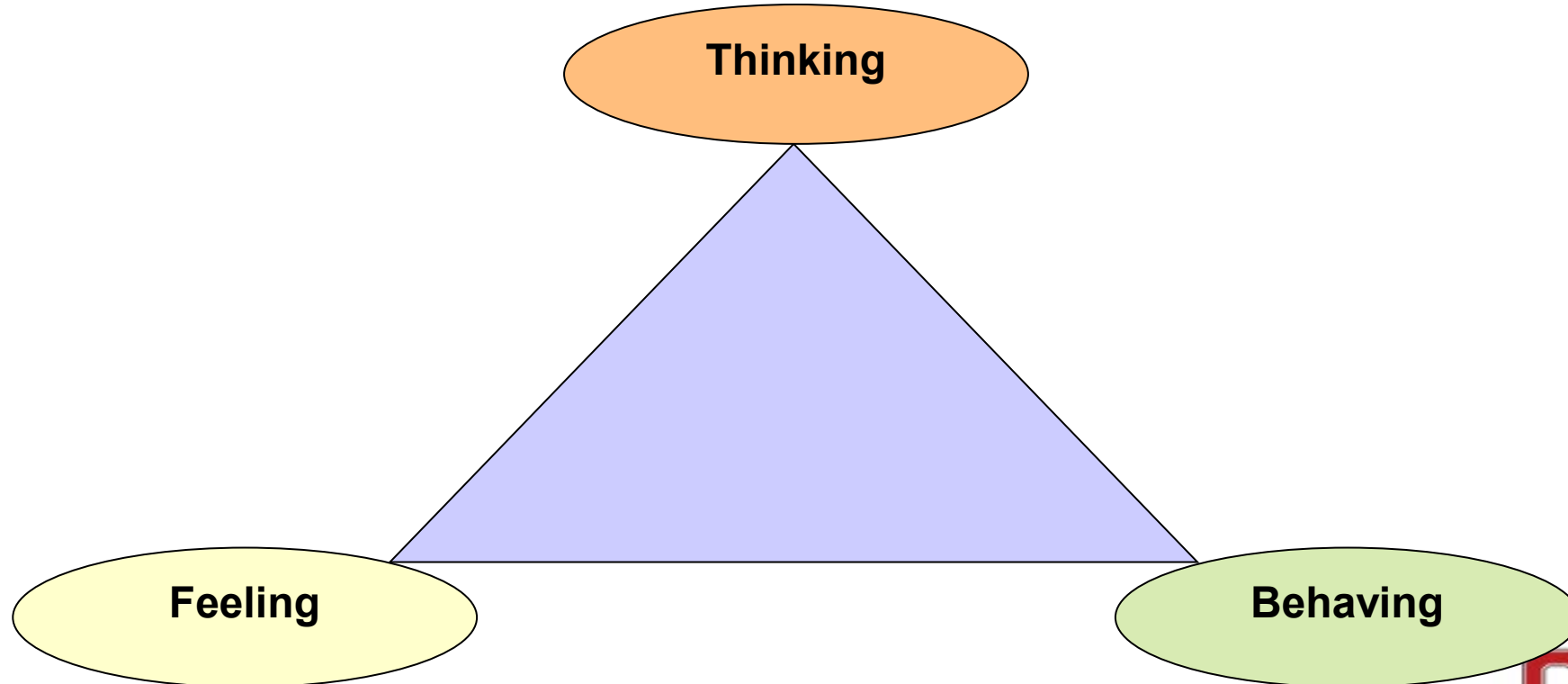


Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Cognitive-Behavioral Skills Building Programs for Depression and Anxiety in Children and Teens

- Findings from multiple studies, including systematic reviews and randomized controlled trials, support the efficacy of CBT in reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms; great first line treatment for mild to moderate symptoms
- Few children and teens receive evidence-based CBT due to the shortage of mental health providers
- American Psychological Association (APA) has a psychologist locator at <https://locator.apa.org/>
- Association of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapists <https://www.abct.org/Help/index.cfm?m=mFindHelp&fa=dFindHelp>



CBT and CBT-Skills Building Focuses on the Thinking, Feeling and Behaving Triangle



CBT Teaches the ABCs

STRESSOR (Activator or trigger)



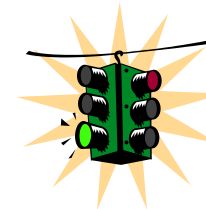
NEGATIVE THOUGHT TO STOP (negative Belief)



**REPLACE THE NEGATIVE WITH A POSITIVE
THOUGHT**



**POSITIVE EMOTION & BEHAVIOR
(Consequence)**



Help Your Child/Teen to Catch Their Automatic Negative Thoughts

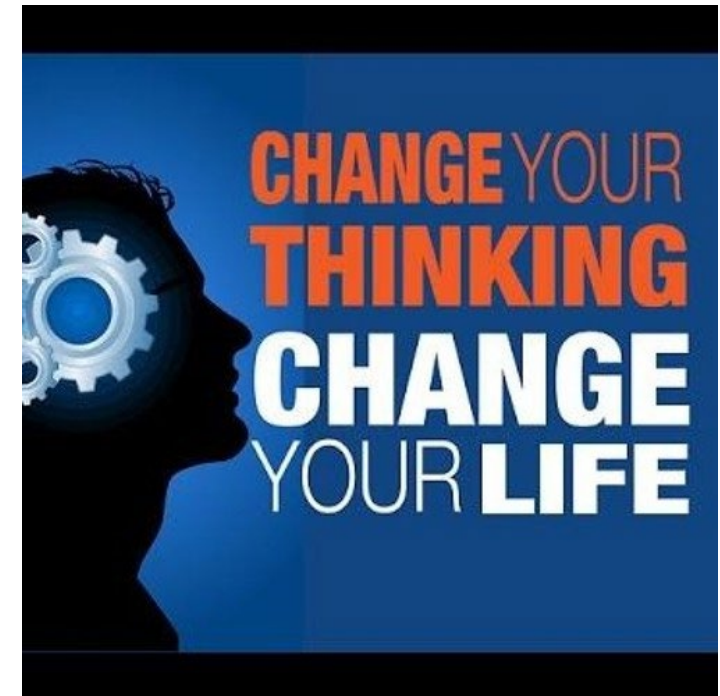
- When you notice his/her mood has changed or intensified, or is going in a negative direction, ask:

What was just going through your mind?

Is this thought really true?

Is this thinking helpful?

Do you have evidence to back this up?



Positive Ways to Teach Children and Teens to COPE

- Talking about how you feel
- **Physical activity- at least 60 minutes a day**
- Seeking out family and friends for support and help
- Writing your thoughts and feelings in a journal
- Turning a negative thought in response to a stressor into a positive one
- Taking one bite of the elephant at a time when you start something new



Teaching Self-Regulation of Emotions

- Positive self-talk
- Counting to 100 or saying the ABCs
- Deep breathing (take a deep breath for 4 seconds, and hold it for 7 seconds, then breath out slowly for 8 seconds through your mouth)
- Walk away and find a quiet place to put your head down and practice relaxation breathing
- Find a friend or adult who will listen and support you
- Leave and go for a walk



Daily Positive Affirmations Can Help Your Children and Teens Develop Positive Mindsets and Confidence



A young girl with dark hair is peeking over a large, ornate book. The book has a yellow cover with a black repeating pattern and a dark brown spine. The title 'THE WORLD'S BEST FAIRY TALES' is visible on the spine. The girl's eyes are looking over the top of the book. The background is a soft, out-of-focus purple and green.

Reading 5 Minutes in a Positive Book Every Morning and Night

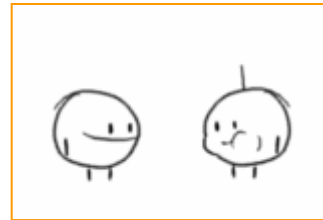
Mindfulness (An Evidence-based Strategy for Anxiety)

Fun things that you can do to stay in the present moment

Chew a piece of gum and count how many chews it takes to lose its flavor

Bounce a ball 50 times and count along the way

Make clapping sounds and have your friends repeat the pattern



Great Book: *The Present* by Spencer Johnson

Great apps to teach mindfulness: *Headspace* and *Calm*





Shifting the Paradigm from Crisis Intervention to Prevention

Build Resiliency and Cognitive-behavioral/Coping Skills

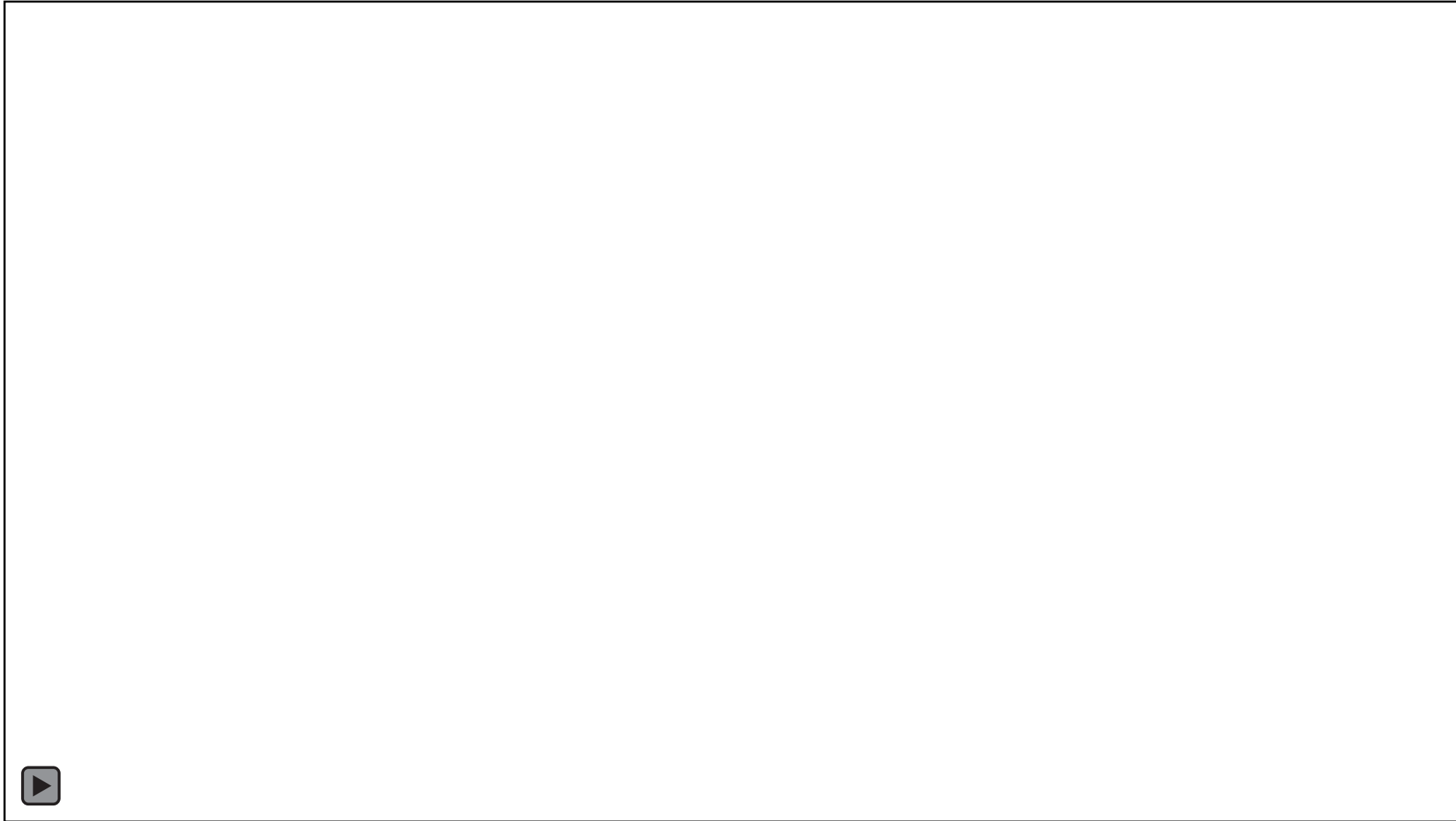
- Composure
- Patience
- Optimism
- Gratitude
- Acceptance
- Kindness
- Sense of purpose
- Forgiveness
- Connection

-Amit Sood, Mayo Clinic



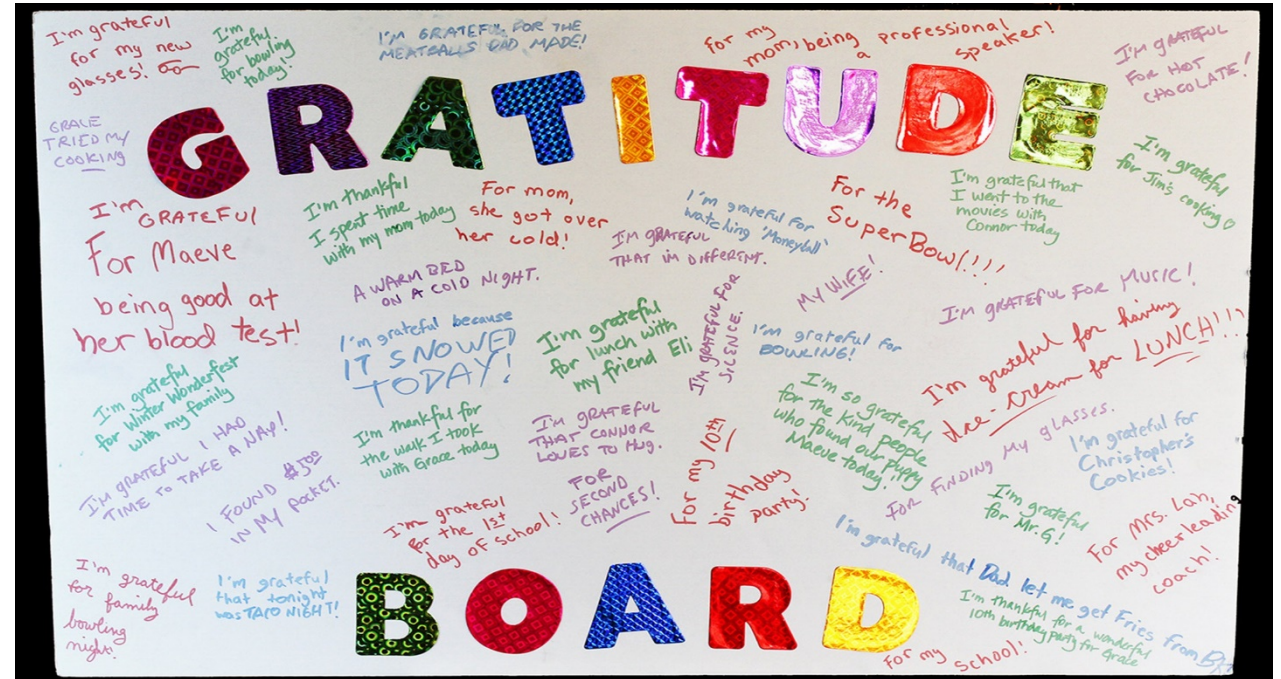
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Optimism: A Protective Factor



Ways to Practice Gratitude with Your Family

- Create a gratitude board and have everyone write down 2 people or things you are thankful for each day
- Have your children start a gratitude journal
- Write thank you cards
- Make phone calls
- Read gratitude quotes
- Make it a habit to do small tokens of appreciation



Limit your Children's Screen Time and Exposure to Negative News & Social Media



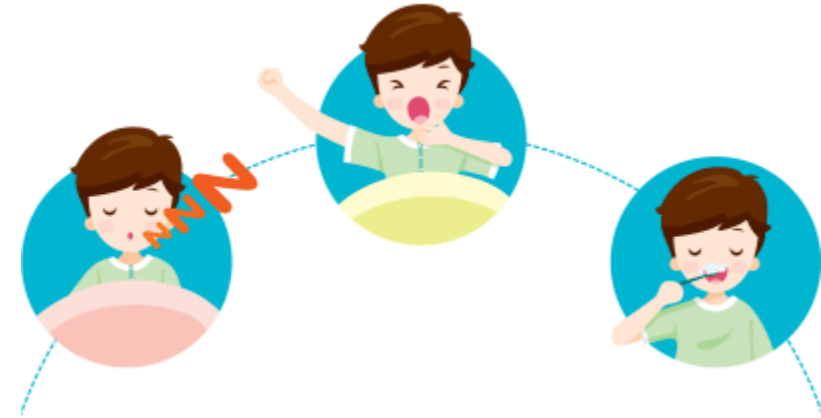
[Coronavirus: Three more deaths, 2 in Franklin County, as DeWine calls for state hiring freeze, budget cuts](#)

[Ohio Sees 6 More Deaths, Passes 6,500 COVID-19 Infections](#)



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Maintain Structure, Routines and Plan Family Activities that Promote Health & Wellbeing



Take Care of YOU!

Parental anxiety, mood and how you role model coping with stress will affect your children





COPE with COVID

Control the things that you can, not the things you can't
Open up and share your feelings
Practice daily stress reduction tactics, including physical activity
Engage in mindfulness; be here now; *worry will not help!*

Count your blessings daily
Overturn negative thoughts to positive
Volunteer to help others
Identify helpful supports and resources
Do your part to prevent spread of the virus

- Bern Melnyk

go.osu.edu/copingwithcovid19 for the Stay Calm and
Well through COVID-19 Series Presentations



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
WELLNESS OFFICER

Important Last Points

- Prevention and Early Intervention is Key
- There is hope: effective evidence-based treatment exists!





Thank You

Office of the Chief Wellness Officer and
Buckeye Wellness

We appreciate your feedback!
Please complete a brief survey following this
presentation



This survey will be sent via email to all registrants.
This and all future series recordings can be found at:
<https://u.osu.edu/keepcalmcovid192/recorded-webinars/>

Stay tuned for Stay Well and Calm III
Join us for Moving and Mindful Mondays!



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY