

Building a safe and supportive environment

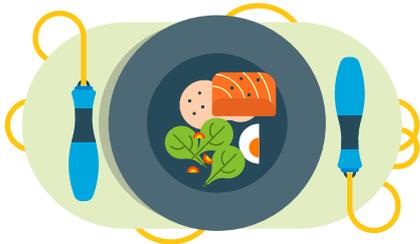
during COVID-19



Safe distancing measures during this COVID-19 pandemic can cause us to feel stressed or isolated.

Pang Lee Yien, Senior Medical Social Worker at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital, shares some strategies on how we can build a safe and supportive environment for ourselves and those around us.

Self-care allows us to maintain a healthy relationship with ourselves and empowers us to cope better



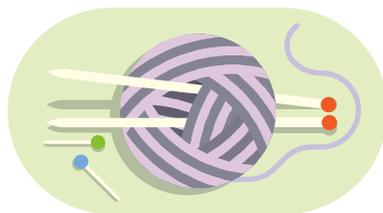
Take care of yourself by maintaining a healthy diet, keeping active and having regular sleep routines. These can help you to remain calm when stressed.



Focus on connecting with family members instead of completing tasks with them. Lower your expectations about building on your child's skills or academic work.



Practise self-compassion. Celebrate small wins daily, no matter how small they seem.



Balance reading COVID-19 related news with other activities that you enjoy.

Managing conflicts and tension at home



Allocate areas of the home for each family member:

It is helpful to give each person a safe space to calm down first before trying to attend to the issue.



Have open conversations to support siblings of children with special needs:

This helps them understand why their sibling with special needs behave a certain way. Set aside one-on-one time for a special activity with each child.



Focus on and praise the positive:

Adequate amounts of positive attention may help to reduce your child's need for attention through negative behaviours.

Encourage your child to tell you when his or her sibling does something positive. Brainstorm ideas with your child on how to document good deeds in the family.

Stress looks different for everyone

It is important to recognise signs of stress in order to get timely support. Here are some possible symptoms:



Emotional:

Being short-tempered, irritable, worrying more than usual



Physical:

Feeling more tired, unexplained aches, breathing faster, having a faster heart rate, change in appetite, sleep problems



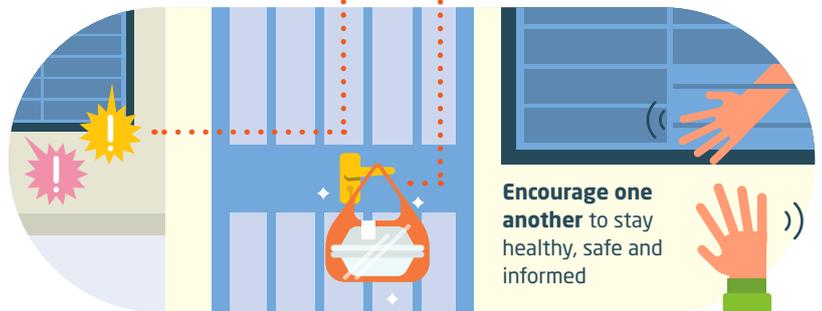
Mental:

Difficulty concentrating, being more forgetful, having difficulty making decisions

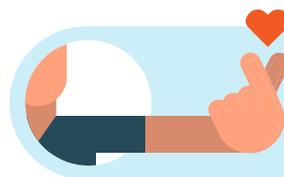
Supporting your neighbourhood and community

Look out for neighbours in distress, e.g. tension in the home can lead to family violence

Lend a hand to those with little access to resources



Encourage one another to stay healthy, safe and informed



It's ok to ask for help!

National CARE Hotline:
1800-202-6868

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