

Building Positive Relationships

with your family during a pandemic



Positive relationships protect against stress. Social connectivity promotes mental health.

While it may be difficult to feel positive and stay connected during a pandemic, **Dr Chong Shang Chee**, Head & Senior Consultant and **Li Wei Wen**, Senior Staff Nurse at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital share how families can use the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen resilience and enhance connectedness.

Build on your relationships at home



Set aside time for positive activities and ensure that everyone – spouse and children – gets some attention. Even 10-15 minutes counts.



Use video and phone calls to connect with loved ones like extended family and close friends whom you cannot visit.

Set the stage for health and resilience



Exercise: Regular exercise uplifts your child's mood and enhances learning.



Sleep: Encourage good sleep habits even during the holidays. A consistent routine yields better sleep.



Control screen time: Select, co-view and discuss programmes with children.



Diet: Eat healthy as a family and maintain a balanced diet.

Practise compassion towards self and others

- Self-compassion means to be kind to yourself despite your doubts, anger or feelings of inadequacy.
- You are the best parent for your child. Be forgiving to yourself and family members as everyone adjusts to new routines.
- It may be normal to flare at each other when we are frustrated. Reconnect after that with a joyful activity, kind words and apologies.
- If you have a child with special needs, your child may express frustration in other ways. Give yourself even more self-compassion and learn to understand the meaning behind your child's behaviours.



- Allow space for self and set aside time for an activity that brings you joy. Most caregivers may neglect their needs when caring for their children, spouse or elderly.

Know what is unique about you and your child



- Positive relationships only happen when we understand differences in the ways we respond to stress.
- Some of us need quiet moments to de-stress, while others prefer talking or indulging in humour.
- While some children do well with a schedule, others may find this to be overly restrictive.
- Instead of forcing a child to conform, find a style that sits well with him or her.

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