



K-12 COUNSELOR
COFFEE TALK

HELLO & THANK YOU



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1.

**SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S
ADJUSTMENT DURING THE
COVID-19 CRISIS!**

SUPPORTING KIDS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

- > Keep routines in place.
- > Be creative about exercise and activities.
- > Manage your own anxiety.
- > Limit consumption of news.
- > Stay connected.
- > Make plans that are within your control.
- > Stay positive.
- > Check-in and set time to talk.

KEEP IT AGE APPROPRIATE!

Elementary School- provide brief, simple information that balances COVID-19 facts with reassurance. Model basic hygiene.

Middle School- Provide assistance in separating reality from rumors.

High School- Issues can be discussed in more depth. Refer them to appropriate sources for factual information. Engage them in decision-making.

Encourage all kids to verbalize their thoughts/feelings. Be a good listener!





HOW TO AVOID PASSING ON YOUR ANXIETY

Learn Healthy Techniques

As you learn methods to tolerate stress, you in turn will be teaching your child—who takes cues from your behavior.

Model Stress Tolerance

Be aware of your facial expressions, word choice, tone of voice, and intensity of emotion you express.

Explain Your Anxiety

It can be healthy for children to see their parents cope with stress every now and then, but you want to explain why you reacted the way that you did.

Know When to Disengage

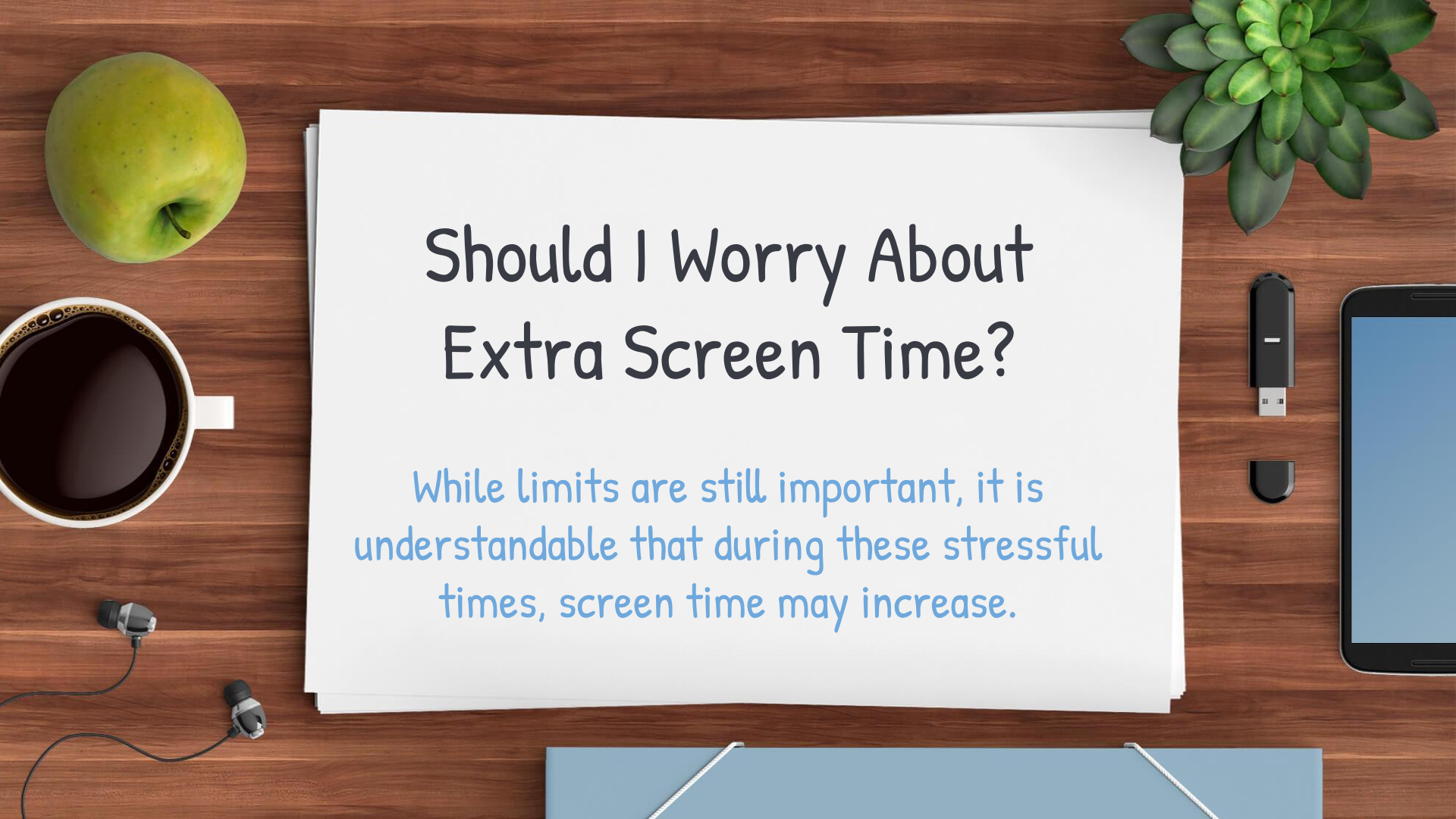
If you're feeling overwhelmed, step away and take a break, i.e. taking a shower, going outside for a walk, stepping into another room, taking a few deep breaths.

Find a Support System

Rely on the people in your life to step in or offer words of support (therapists, friends, family, co-parents). You can also find support online through blogs, parent forums, and social media

Practice Self-Compassion

Remember to be reasonable and kind to yourself.



Should I Worry About Extra Screen Time?

While limits are still important, it is understandable that during these stressful times, screen time may increase.

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the top left is a white coffee cup filled with dark coffee. Below it is a piece of golden-brown bread with seeds. To the right is a small potted plant with green grass-like leaves. In the bottom right is a silver laptop keyboard. At the bottom center is a black fountain pen. A light blue clipboard with a black clip is in the center, holding a white sheet of paper with text.

Tips for Managing Screen Time

- > Use social media/technology for staying connected.
- > Active parent engagement and oversight.
- > Maintain control and talk about new limits.
- > Increase “healthy” activities
- > Minimize screen exacerbated anxiety.
- > Model with your own screen time.



HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR KIDS TO SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

C- Connection: "I see you're frustrated; it's hard right now because you want to come play in my office."

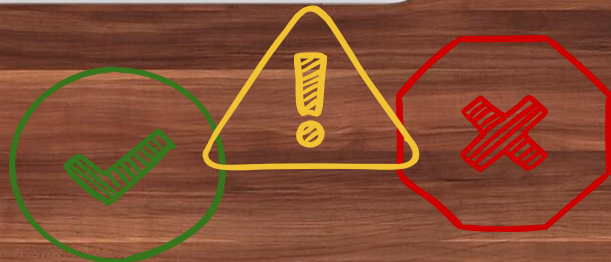
L- Limit: "I am going to be on a conference call for 20 minutes, and I need help keeping my office quiet, so I'm going to ask that you play in the living room."

E- Empowerment: What would you like to do for 20 minutes?"

A- Accountability: Set a timer and create an agreement saying, "When this timer goes off, we can play together. I'll shut my computer, and you can come on in!" this helps build trust.

R- Reconnection: "Thank you for giving me space to make my call; I know that might not have been easy, but I appreciate your effort! Let's play until my next meeting in an hour!"

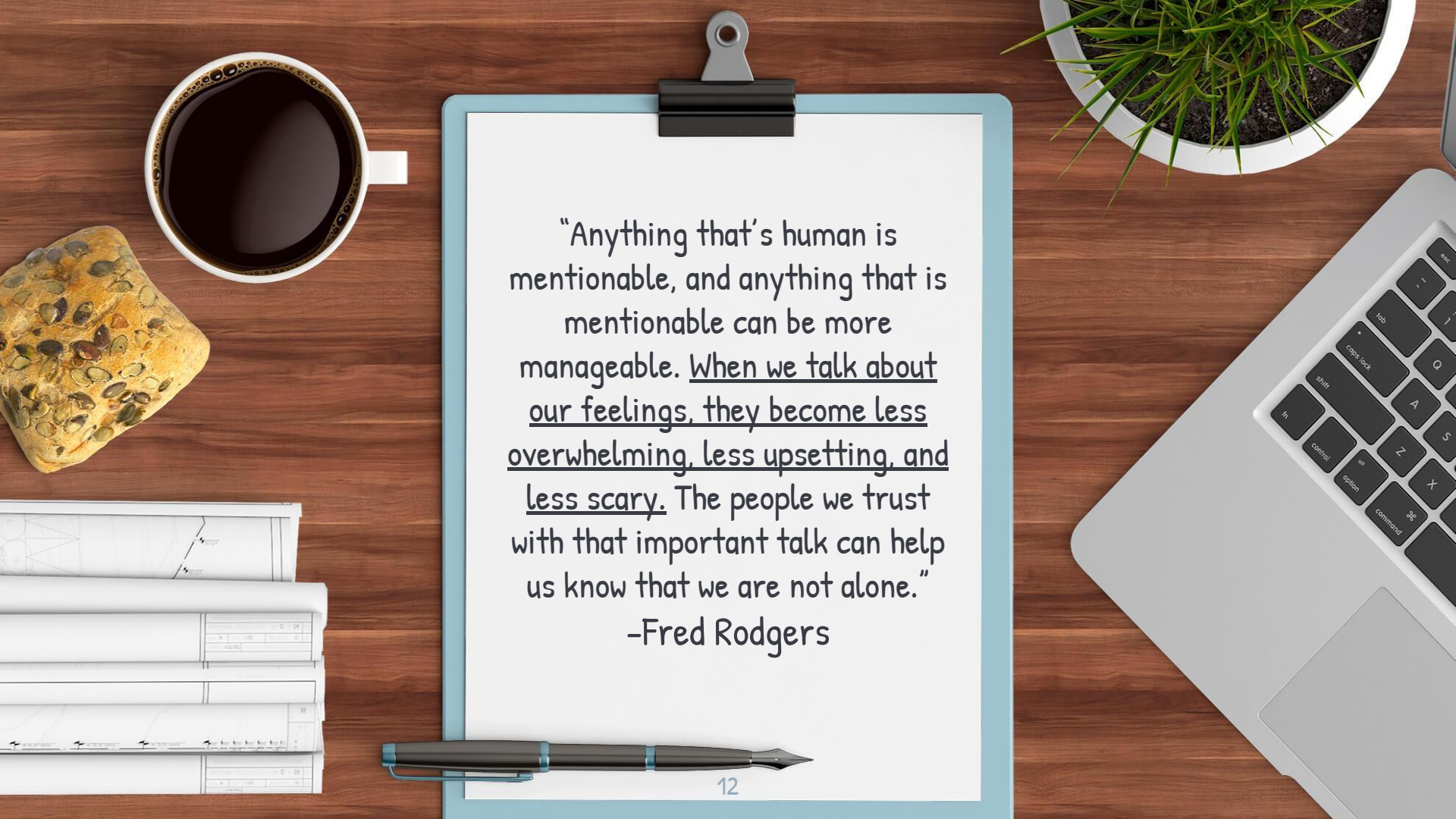
MegAnne Ford - Certified Parenting Coach



2.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE SIGNS:

Does my child need additional support?

A top-down view of a wooden desk. On the left, there is a white cup of dark coffee, a loaf of bread with seeds, and a stack of papers. On the right, there is a silver laptop, a small potted plant, and a blue clipboard with a white sheet of paper. The paper has a quote by Fred Rogers. A black pen is lying horizontally at the bottom of the clipboard.

“Anything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone.”

-Fred Rodgers

SOME STRUGGLES ARE NORMAL...

but understanding when
your child may need
additional support is
important. Trust your
instincts and during this
time of drastic change,
and know it's ok.



WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

- > Have frequent tantrums or are intensely irritable much of the time.
- > Often talk about fears or worries.
- > Complain about frequent stomach-aches or headaches with no known medical cause.
- > Are in constant motion and have difficulty concentrating (*except* when they are watching videos or playing video-games).
- > Sleep too much or too little, have frequent nightmares, or seem sleepy during the day.
- > Are not interested in playing with other children or have difficulty making friends.
- > Want to avoid going to school or other social settings.
- > Struggle academically or have experienced a recent decline in grades.
- > Repeat actions or check things many times out of fear that something bad may happen.

WARNING SIGNS FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- > Have lost interest in things that they used to enjoy.
- > Sleep too much or too little, or seem sleepy throughout the day and have low energy.
- > Are spending more and more time alone, and avoid social activities with friends or family.
- > Fear gaining weight, or diet or exercise excessively.
- > Engage in self-harm behaviors (e.g., cutting or burning their skin).
- > Smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.
- > Engage in risky or destructive behavior alone or with friends.
- > Have thoughts of suicide.
- > Have periods of highly elevated energy and activity, and require much less sleep than usual.
- > Say that they think someone is trying to control their mind or that they hear things that other people cannot hear.



Step 1: Pause.

This step is important because instead of acting on feelings right away, you stop yourself and think things through. Count to 100 or say the alphabet backwards.

Step 2: Acknowledge What You're Feeling.

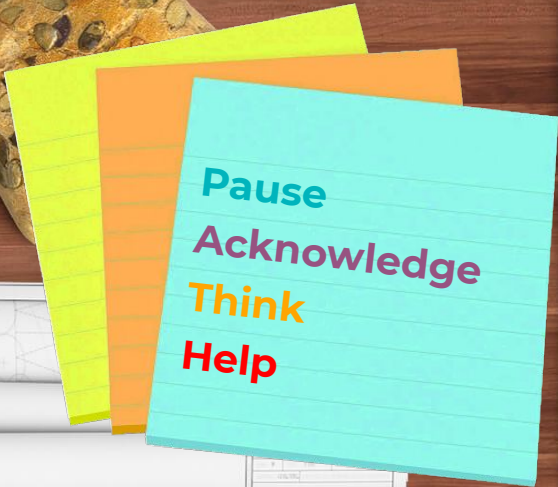
For example, are you mad at someone, or are you sad because your feelings were hurt by what they did? Whatever it is that you are feeling, it is ok to feel that way.

Step 3: Think.

Now that you have taken a few moments to figure out what exactly it is that you are feeling, think about how you can make yourself feel better.

Step 4: Help.

Take an action to help yourself based upon what you came up with in the "Think" step.



Pause
Acknowledge
Think
Help



3.

**HOW TO PREPARE YOUR
CHILD TO TRANSITION BACK
TO SCHOOL.**

"Transitions are almost always signs of growth, but they can bring feelings of loss. To get somewhere new, we may have to leave somewhere else behind."

— Fred Rogers



ELEMENTARY TRANSITIONS AND CONCERNS

Establish and Maintain a Routine!

Start preparing children for the upcoming transition 1-2 weeks before the start of school. Get back into morning/bedtime routines and balancing their day.

Be Honest and Have Open Communication!

Talk to your children about any differences they may experience when returning to school. Also explain any safety tips, healthy coping skills, and ways to reach out to people they can talk to.

Be Understanding and Supportive!

Your child may be anxious and worried about their return to school. Understand their feelings and let them have an outlet to express themselves. Validate them and their worries and acknowledge that starting school again can be difficult.

Sadness Over Missing Events (end-of year field-trips and celebrations)

Let them understand and talk through their feelings. Reinforce that their feelings are ok and normal. Work with your children in thinking of new ways to celebrate (virtual field-trips, family exercises, picnics, etc.) and talk about the things to look forward to.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION AND CONCERNS

Avoid “red-flag” statements. For example, “Your teachers will expect more of you now that you are back in school vs online.” These type of statements can trigger stress and put undue pressure on teens.

Acknowledge feelings rather than dismissing them with “Everything will be okay.” Instead **ask** open ended questions about their concerns. Listen & acknowledge their feelings as normal, and then talk about coping skills (journaling, meditation, music)

Create a plan of action for things that are causing anxiety. Ex. I’m afraid I’ll get lost. What if I miss being at home? What if I don’t have any friends in my classes?

Try solution-focused strategies: What did you do that helped last time you experienced: missing home, not having friends in your class, getting lost. This encourages students to think creatively and find their own solutions.

If transitioning to a new school:

-**Explore** the school’s website with your child. Search for virtual tours, announcements, schedules, and events. If you can’t visit the school, try to drive by one day.

-**Avoid** overreacting about grades. Let your child adjust the first few weeks.

-**Encourage** your child to ask for help from teachers, classmates, or counselors.

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION AND CONCERNS

- > Sadness over loss of developmental milestones (graduation, prom, grad-bash, on-campus living).
 - Let them feel how they are feeling.
 - Work with your senior in brainstorming ways to celebrate, i.e a virtual graduation ceremony or a makeup prom.
- > College concerns:
 - Cancelled orientations, decision deadlines, campus visits.
 - Many colleges already have virtual tours online.
 - Join social media groups to get to know other students.
 - Many schools moved their decision deadlines to June 1st.
 - Connect with admissions advisers.
 - Communicate and stay-informed, discuss pros and cons.



Be kind to yourself!

RESOURCES

[Helpful vs Harmful: Ways to Manage Emotions](#)

[Helping Teens Learn to Manage Transitions](#)

[How to Manage Your Mental Health When Feeling Stressed During Covid-19](#)

[Sesame Street-Caring](#)

[Smoothing your Child's Transition to Middle School](#)

[Teens & COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities During the Outbreak](#)

[Youth Mental Health: Emotions Matter](#)



THANKS!

Any questions?

Parent Feedback Form