



HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MAINTAIN A **HAPPY HOME** **ENVIRONMENT**

By **Dr. Yasmin Siddiqui**

Can't go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money?

It is normal to get overwhelmed and feel stressed. This is also a chance to make better relationships with our family.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC



BE HONEST.

Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand. It is fine to say “We don’t know, but we are working on it; or we don’t know, but we think...”



END ON A GOOD NOTE.

Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can talk to you anytime.



BE OPEN AND LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD.

Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know. Listen to their suggestions and take them seriously.



SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR CHILD

Make your child feel loved. It can be through an activity of just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to you. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.

Ideas with your baby/toddler:

- Copy their facial expression and sounds.
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons.
- Stack cups or blocks.

Ideas with your young child:

- Read a book or look at pictures.
- Dance to music or sing songs!
- Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game!
- Help with school work.

Ideas with your teenager:

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends etc.
- Go for a walk around the house.
- Exercise together to their favorite music.
- Watch a movie together.

Quick Tip!

Make hand-washing and hygiene fun:

Make a 20-second song for washing hands. Add actions! Make a game to see how few times we can touch our faces with a reward for the least number of touch. (you can count for each other).

KEEPING IT POSITIVE

Say the behaviour you want to see.

Use positive words when telling your child what to do; like 'Please put your clothes away' instead of 'Don't make a mess'. Kids tend to respond to positive vocabulary much better.

Praise your child when they are behaving well.

Try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. They may not show it, but you'll see them doing that good thing again. It will also reassure them that you notice and care.

Help your teen stay connected.

Teens especially need to be able to communicate with their friends. Help your teen connect through social media and other safe distancing ways. This is something you can do together too!

It's all in the delivery.

Shouting at your child will just make you and them more stressed and angrier. Get your child's attention by using their name. Speak in a calm tone. (vocabulary much better).

Get real.

Can your child actually do what you are asking them? It is very hard for a child to keep quiet inside for a whole day but maybe they can keep quiet for 15 minutes while you are on a call. Set realistic goals or agreements with your child so that they can cooperate with you.

You are a model for your child's behavior.

If you practice keeping safe distances and hygiene yourself, and treat others with compassion, especially those who are sick or vulnerable – your children and teenagers will learn from you.




Quick Tip!


At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did. Praise yourself for what you did well today.

ACE YOUR WORK FROM HOME


Create a flexible but consistent daily routine.




Set up an in-house 'work-station' to separate mentally from the rest of the house.




Use your kid's naptime to finish tasks that require your complete focus.



Set aside a few cool toys that your kids can play with, or arrange special movie viewings only during your "work time".



Save time by making a list of everything you're going to do the next day, leave it in your work space.



Make a schedule for you and your child that has time for structured activities as well as free time.



Quick Tip!

Include a family workout session in your schedule. It helps maintain an energetic and positive vibe at home.

MANAGING BAD BEHAVIOR

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. This can be challenging when stuck at home.

Do you know
How Much
I Love You?



CONSISTENCY.

Consistent routines will reduce bad behaviour.

REDIRECT THEIR BEHAVIOR EARLY.

Stop it before it starts! Catching bad behavior early helps to easily redirect it from bad to good behavior. Address their bad behavior through something interesting or fun: "Come, let's go for a walk!"

GIVE RESPONSIBILITIES.

Give your children and teens simple jobs with responsibilities. Just make sure it is something they are able to do. And praise them when they do it!

USE CONSEQUENCES.

Consequences help teach our children responsibility for what they do. They also allow discipline that is controlled. This is more effective than hitting or shouting. Give your child a choice to follow your instruction before giving them the consequence. Try to stay calm when giving the consequence. Make sure they can follow through with the consequence. For example, taking away a teenager's phone for a week is hard to enforce. Taking it away for one hour is more realistic. Once the consequence is over, give your child a chance to do something good, and praise them for it.

KEEP CALM AND MANAGE STRESS

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so that you can support your family.

You are not alone.

Millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.

LIMIT USING YOUR PHONE AND T.V. IT LEADS TO ANXIETY AND PANIC.

Don't forget to take a break. You deserve it!

We all need a break sometimes. When your child is asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself.



Quick Tip!

Use this as an opportunity to learn something new. Anything that you always wanted to learn or do but couldn't due to lack of time.

2 MINUTE RELAXATION ACTIVITY

Try this 2-minute relaxation activity that you can do whenever you are feeling stressed or worried. You can also practice this with your child!

SET UP & GET COMFORTABLE.

Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap.

THINK, FEEL, BODY.

- Notice your thoughts. Notice if they are negative or positive.
- Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if you are happy or not.
- Notice how your body feels. Notice anything that hurts or is tense.

FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH.

- Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
- You may want to say to yourself "It's okay. Whatever it is, I am okay."
- Then just listen to your breath for a while.

COMING BACK.

- Notice how your whole body feels.
- Listen to the sounds in the room.

REFLECTING.

- Ask 'Do I feel different at all?'
- When you are ready, open your eyes.

Quick Tip!

When doing it with your child, speak out these instructions out loud clearly for them to follow through.



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