

# Hints and tips for managing anxiety/worry during coronavirus 2020

## CHILDREN

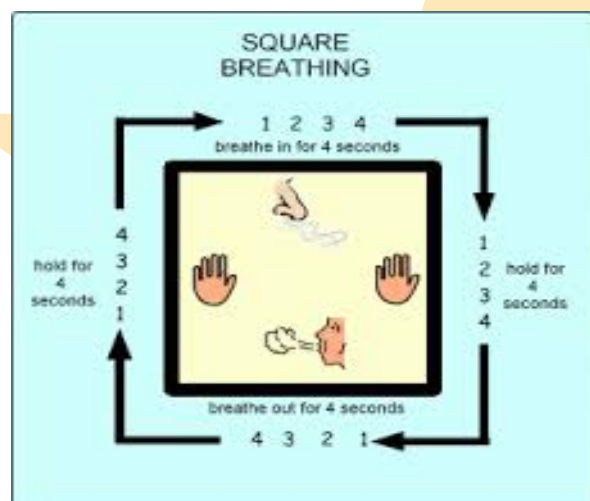
Children/Kids from [childmind.org](http://childmind.org)

Children worry more when they are kept in the dark.

- **Welcome their questions** – help your children to be heard and get fact based information that is more likely to reassure them as opposed to what they might be hearing from anywhere else.
- **Do not avoid their questions** – become comfortable with saying, ‘I don’t know’. Teaching children how to tolerate uncertainty is key to reducing anxiety and helping them to build resilience.
- **Set the tone** – These conversations will help you set the emotional tone.
- **Be developmentally appropriate** – do not volunteer too much information as this may be overwhelming. Instead, answer their questions honestly and clearly. It’s okay if you can’t answer everything – being available is what matters.
- **Take your cues from your child** – invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about coronavirus and how this makes them feel. Your goal here is to avoid encouraging frightening stories in their head.
- **Deal with your own anxiety** – If you have heard any upsetting or worrying news about the virus, take time to calm yourself down before trying to have a conversation or trying to answer your child’s questions.
- **Be reassuring** – hearing about the death toll may worry your child, that they might catch it. It’s helpful to reassure your child that very few kids are getting sick, and that they are unlikely to catch it.
- **Focus on what you are doing to stay safe** – emphasise the safety precautions that you and others have in place. Remind them that washing their hands is actually helping everyone. Involve them in your family’s safety routines.
- **Keep talking** – Even though we don’t have the answers right now, let them know that when we learn more, you will let them know too.

## **SOME HELPFUL EXERCISES/ACTIVITIES**

**BREATHING TECHNIQUES** - teaching your child to self-regulate when they have meltdowns, anxiety and emotional grounding trouble: the best way to do this is to regulate their breathing



**Circle of control** - When our worries aren't real ones that can't be problem solved, it might help to think

about the circle of control. Most things in life that we worry about are things we cannot control. We are more likely to find an answer to the problem if we focus on things that are within our control.



**What can you control at the moment?**  
Make a list of the things you can control:

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**GROUNDING TECHNIQUE** - A great tool for children when they feel anxiety is to try and ground them in the moment. To do this try and help them take notice of their body using their senses. Take a deep breath in and use your senses to notice

- Five things you can SEE
- Four things you can HEAR
- Three things you can TOUCH
- Two things you can SMELL
- One thing you can TASTE

TRY WRITING THEM DOWN:

See .....

Hear .....

Touch .....

Smell .....

Taste .....

**Worry Jar** - unhelpful thoughts can make us worry more. When you're feeling worried it can be difficult to share these worries with the people around us. Write down your worries and place them in this jar. Once a week, take time to check if there are any worries and then talk about them together.

