

# COPING with COVID-19

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During these unprecedented times, it is as important to look after your mental health as it is your physical health and to establish positive routines, so you have a solid structure in place upon which you can rely. Below are suggestions to foster positive mental health routines.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR:

Please know, your school is still here to support you while you are engaged in learning from home. Your teachers, counsellor, and administrators care about you. Reach out to them if you need to. You can connect with your counsellor in the following ways:

- Book an appointment online: [fraserheights.counsellorappointments.com](https://fraserheights.counsellorappointments.com) (Be sure to have your correct contact information.)
- Reach out to us by email.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BUILD YOUR MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCY:

1. It is important to **REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT IN THIS ALONE.** While you cannot be with your neighbours, friends, and extended family in person, reaching out and finding other ways to connect with loved ones is important for your overall well-being. We can find connection in being #AloneTogether. Your school is here to support you in this, as well.
2. **REMEMBER TO BREATHE.** In particular, if you find yourself in a moment of stress, start with your breath. Focus on slowly breathing in to the count of four. Hold that breath to the count of four. Release slowly for the count of four. And hold to the count of four. Repeat. This is called Square Breathing, and it helps calm you down by getting you to focus on your breath, not your stress, as well as slowing down your intake of oxygen and providing bio-feedback. (Other relaxation techniques are also available.)
3. It is important to **ESTABLISH A ROUTINE.** Our regular day-to-day has been thrown off. As soon as possible, create new routines and establish a new normal. This will give your day structure and purpose. Set your alarm and wake up at a regular time each day. Shower, eat, and get dressed, as you normally would when going to school. Work on school work. Build in breaks. Take lunch. Reward yourself after a productive day's work. These are all things over which you have control. It is important to focus on what you can control.
4. **LIMIT YOUR NEWS INTAKE.** While the news is available and unlimited, our capacity to deal with it is not. Make a conscious choice to check in once a day (or not) and then turn it off. Re-focus on what matters to you, and what you have the ability to action in your own

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life. (Ensure you are getting your news from reputable news sources like the CBC, or Government of BC or Canada; beware, as there is a lot of misinformation posted on Facebook.)

5. Healthy body, healthy mind. It is important you get moving and **EXERCISE DAILY**. It could be going for a walk around the block (observing social distancing), or following a YouTube video on stretching, or an exercise routine in your living room. The key is to be physically active in some way, every day, and go outside to get some fresh air.
6. **BE MINDFUL OF WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR**. Start a daily Gratitude Journal, for yourself or to share. Find the things (big or small) in life for which you are thankful. Or, make a list of your enjoyments, and try to engage in one daily.
7. **BE AWARE OF YOUR SCREEN-TIME**. Technology can provide a good distraction, but too much also breeds depressing thoughts and feelings. Take note of how much time you spend on your screen, and make it a conscious choice. There is healthy screen-time and unhealthy screen-time.
8. **HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY SCREEN-TIME**. There is healthy screen-time and unhealthy screen-time, not just in quantity, but also in quality. Social media can be a positive way to keep in touch with friends and family. Avoid negativity, comparing yourself to others, commiserating with friends or gossiping. Rather, focus on checking-in with others and sharing in positive conversations. Another healthy use of screen-time is exploring health and well-being websites and using Smartphone apps (see below). When watching Netflix or YouTube, be purposeful in the shows you watch. Just like the news, high intensity dramas or films based in fear will have an affect on your overall mood.
9. **MAKE YOURSELF A SANCTUARY**. Find a space where you are currently living that you can make into a special place. String up lights in your bedroom. Take a bath with some aromatherapy. Make a comfy nest by taking some pillows and blankets into the closet with some good music. Add posters or photos or collage on the wall of favourite places. Wherever it is, spend some quality time making it your own, and enjoy spending time there.

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## ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

- [AnxietyCanada.ca](https://www.anxietycanada.ca)
- [KeltyMentalHealth.ca](https://www.keltymentalhealth.ca)
- [YouthSpace.ca](https://www.youthspace.ca)
- [eMentalHealth.ca](https://www.eMentalHealth.ca)
- [HereToHelp.bc.ca](https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)
- [WalkAlong.ca](https://www.walkalong.ca)

## MENTAL HEALTH SMARTPHONE APPS:

- MindShift
- BoosterBuddy
- HeadSpace
- InsightTimer
- Calm

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER FOR CHILDREN:

- **Kids Help Phone**
  - Offers 24/7 free confidential professional online & telephone counselling
  - Information and Live Chat: [KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
  - Talk with a counsellor: 1.800.668.6868
  - Text with a counsellor: Text CONNECT to 686868

## ORGANIZATIONS:

- **CYMH (Child and Youth Mental Health)**
  - CYMH is part of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and offers a range of free and voluntary mental health services and supports for children from 0-18 years of age and their families. These include assessments, therapy, and referrals to specialized programs.
  - To locate your local community CYMH office, call 811.
  - For a resource guide on “Managing Anxiety and Stress in Families with Children and Youth During the COVID-19 Outbreak” type in the following link: [tinyurl.com/wpybrjb](https://tinyurl.com/wpybrjb)
- **Moving Forward Family Services**
  - Individual & Family Counselling available in multiple languages
  - Cost: No-fee and low-fee counselling available
  - Contact: 778.321.3054
  - Email: [counsellor@movingforwardfamilyservices.com](mailto:counsellor@movingforwardfamilyservices.com)
- **FamilySmart and the Parent In Residence (PIR) program**
  - A non-profit of services and supports for families who are parenting a child with a mental health challenge.
  - [FamilySmart.ca](https://www.familysmart.ca) or call, toll free: 1.855.887.8004
  - Email: [info@familysmart.ca](mailto:info@familysmart.ca)