



School Support During COVID-19 From Willowbrooke at Tanner

School time is stressful for students, parents and teachers every year, but 2020 and the COVID-19 virus bring a number of new dynamics and it is important to talk about and work to develop ways to manage those new dynamics.

Anxiety is 100% normal for everyone during these challenging days of the pandemic. Here are some steps to help:

- Acknowledge the anxiety
- Talk about how you are feeling and encourage others to talk as well
- Use the many resources available to help you and your loved ones, including Willowbrooke at Tanner and national crisis hotlines

There are many things to worry about during a pandemic, social distancing and isolation:

- Your own health status
- Concerns for others whom you may have exposed to the disease or who may have exposed you
- Resentment that family and friends may feel if they have to be quarantined because of you
- Monitoring yourself for signs and symptoms of the disease, or having others monitoring you
- Time taken off from work or the potential for lost income and job security
- Challenges securing what you need: groceries and personal care items
- Concern about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care
- Uncertainty or frustration about how long you will need to remain in this situation or uncertainty about the future
- Loneliness about being cut off from loved ones and the rest of the world
- Anger if you think you were exposed to the disease out of the negligence of others
- Boredom and frustration if you are not able to work or engage in normal activities
- Uncertainty or ambivalence about the situation
- A desire to use drug or alcohol to cope
- Symptoms of depression, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite or sleeping too little or too much

Tips for helping children

- Children's reactions to situations are influenced by how the adults around them react.
- **Behaviors to watch out for:**
 - Excessive crying or irritation in younger children.
 - Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting).
 - Excessive worry or sadness.
 - Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.
 - Irritability and "acting out" behaviors in teens.
 - Poor school performance or avoiding school.



- Difficulties with attention and concentration.
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past.
- Unexplained headaches or body pain.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- **Ways to support your child:**
 - Talk with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child can understand.
 - Reassure your child that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn from you how to cope with stress.
 - Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
 - Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
 - Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
 - Spending time with your child in meaningful activities, reading together, exercising, playing board games.

Tips for parents

- Take care of your emotional health. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Tips for teachers/school personnel

Recognize the symptoms of stress you may be experiencing.

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed



- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Know the common work-related factors that can add to stress during a pandemic:

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job
- Feelings that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule

Follow these tips to build resilience and manage job stress.

- Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).
 - Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
 - Talk openly with employers, employees, and unions about how the pandemic is affecting work. Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
 - Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.
 - Keep a regular sleep schedule
 - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
 - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
 - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
 - Practice mindfulness strategies- deep breathing, guided imagery, grounding etc.
 - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.

Accessing Willowbrooke at Tanner therapy resources

- In-school
 - Willowbrooke at Tanner educates teachers and staff on services available for students
 - Teachers provide referrals to school counselors who make referrals to Willowbrooke at Tanner online
 - Telehealth appointments can be done by phone or computer during the school day
- Willowbrooke at Tanner Help Line
 - 24-hour 770-812-9511
 - Schedule a free, confidential screening appointment with a counselor