

The School Based Mental Health Collaborative, made up of 14 local child serving organizations, finds it imperative to provide the community with strategies to support the mental health and resiliency of students as they return to school.

Self-Regulation

While we know children are resilient, it is important to equip them with tools or strategies that can be useful now, as well as in the future. Breathing exercises, mindfulness activities, music, art, and movement are excellent self-regulation strategies. Engage your child or students in an activity aimed at identifying what makes them feel calm and supported. Record these, encourage practice, and make the list readily available.

Access SMH Resources

Additional supports are available in many district communities. If you feel that your student would benefit from extra support, contact your school social worker or counselor about opportunities. Clinicians are available in schools to decrease barriers related to travel missed instructional time.

Validating Uncertainty

Children encounter uncertainty often and their experience of distress in response can be impacted by how adults around them react. Here are considerations when talking with children about uncertainties around COVID.

- Ask questions before reassuring (e.g., “How do you feel about wearing masks?”)
- Validate the feelings, no matter what they are (e.g., “I understand you are scared.”)
- Model talking about your feelings. Discussing feelings in developmentally appropriate ways models how to do it and that having different kinds of emotions is okay.
- Provide information that is appropriate to their age. Telling kids things that are overly complicated can be confusing and scary.
- Consider how COVID created an opportunity to build community and care for one another, especially the most vulnerable among us. While the pandemic has been difficult, identify the ways it has given us the chance to build our capacity for compassion.