



# Taking Care of our Families during COVID-19



Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)  
HSE Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City & County

7th - April - 2020



## CAMHS and COVID-19: A Message from your CAMHS Team

To protect you and others in light of COVID-19 we are limiting our face to face contact to help prevent the spread of the virus. Where necessary, in urgent situations, we will still meet with your child. At the moment, we are providing support using phone calls and postal communication.

Please remember that if you have concerns about your child's mental health, or require support, please ring the clinics between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Please see contact details below.

- Dublin North Inner City Team: 01 879680
- Dublin North East City Team: 01 9026450
- Swords Team: 01 8075392
- Ballymun and Finglas Team: 01 8467219
- Dardale Team: 01 8771552
- Balbriggan Team: 01 9213355
- Castleknock and Blanchardstown Teams: 01 7956743



In the case of an emergency outside of these times, please phone your GP or attend your Accident and Emergency (A&E) Service. However, if you are worried that you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19 or flu, do not attend A&E or Urgent Care Centres, please contact your GP out of hours service for support.

-Dr AnneMarie Waldron, Clinical Director, HSE Dublin North City and County CAMHS



## Talking about COVID-19 with your family

1. It's normal for us to worry about our children and COVID-19. However, it is good to know that around the world very few cases have been reported in children. To find out more about children and COVID-19, please type this (<https://bit.ly/3dVpp9r>) into the search bar on the internet to access HSE information.
2. Start by acknowledging that it is OK to be concerned. Listen to your child and discuss their concerns with them.
3. The best way to communicate safely is by talking about worrying news with open, confident, clear and truthful facts. Talk to them about what they can do to look after themselves. Check in with them regularly to see if they are talking about this outbreak with friends and encourage them to come to you with any questions.
4. Find the balance in watching and listening to news. Encourage young people to use trusted sources of information and put time limits in place.
5. Talk about vulnerability and responsibility. Talk to your child about what it means to be in the 'vulnerable' population. You can use this as an opportunity for teaching children how to be a responsible citizen protecting others.



## Useful Online Family Resources



Spunout is a youth info website:  
[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)



Yourmentalhealth.ie has mental health information



Bodywhys website has information and resources for those with an eating disorder and their family. HSE Eating Disorders Self Care App also available:  
[www.bodywhys.ie](http://www.bodywhys.ie)



Childline - Free 24 hour counseling service for children and young people up to 19 years of age: 1800 66 66 66



Parentline - Support and guidance for parents: 1890 92 72 77



Jigsaw Online, mental health information for over 12s and parents/guardians:  
[www.jigsawonline.ie](http://www.jigsawonline.ie)



Teenline - Free 24/7 service for teenagers: 1800 833 634



Samaritans - Confidential support to those in crisis: 116 123



YoungMinds - Mental Health resources:  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

# Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Home



It is normal to be feeling a mix of emotions that will impact health and wellbeing. For those who were already experiencing mental health difficulties, the current situation may result in increased difficulties as a result of many factors including increased anxiety, lack of social interaction, disruption to routine, boredom, disruption to family life and not being able to do many of the activities we enjoyed.

Even though our movements are limited because of COVID-19, there are things we can do.

## FIND BALANCE



Get washed and dressed into day clothes and make your bed every morning. Organise a daily routine that involves a balance between activities that give you a sense of achievement (maybe doing a workout, cooking a new recipe), activities that help you connected with others (phone call with friends) and activities that you can do just for pleasure and relaxation (e.g. have a bath, read a book).

## TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME



Try not to think too far into the future and remember that these are temporary measures and you are not alone.

## GET ACTIVE



We know that exercise helps to regulate mood in addition to physical health benefits. Stay within 2km of your home during government restrictions.

## MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF (for parents and carers too)



Prioritise time to yourself, watch a favourite movie, do an art project, listen to a free gig or show online, clear out space you've wanted to for a long time.

## BE REALISTIC



Avoid burnout or exhaustion by having realistic expectations. Practice forgiveness and self-compassion. Be kind to yourself and others. This might include helping a younger sibling with school work or helping parents with household tasks.

## DON'T OVERLOAD ON INFORMATION



Put rules in place for social media/phone use in the home. Have time limits and screen free time. Parents/carers will need to support children with this and to negotiate with older young people around this.

## MANAGE CONFLICT



Try to keep emotions calm during this time. Avoid heated and continuous arguments. Review the argument later when you are feeling calmer.

## MAKE THE MOST OF IT



It could be easy to be pulled into focusing only on the challenges we face during this time. Enjoy time as a family. Enjoy doing new projects- could you create a special journal, photo diary or vlog.

Wishing all the young people that attend CAMHS and their families the best in these very difficult times. We hope you stay safe and well.