

## Tips for children on keeping calm and carrying on

This guidance sheet is aimed at children or primary age and up to twelve or so. It sits alongside three other sheets:

- managing your own anxiety as adults (or indeed young people)
- how to talk with your young child about the coronavirus epidemic
- how to talk with older children and adolescents about the coronavirus

You can use the sheet as a talking point with your child or print it off to refer back to with them.

## It's Ok to feel worried

These are unusual times with schools closed and a lot of families spending a lot of time together at home. It is very normal to feel worried, excited or just a bit muddled at this time and here are some tips for making sure you look after yourself.

- Make sure you keep talking with your parent or carer – they will be able to help you understand why you are feeling like you are and help find ways of feeling better.
- It's OK to ask them questions. They might not know the answers but can explain simply what we *do* know and help you find ways of staying safe and feeling happy.
- Try to have a special time with them when you have a chance to talk about your day and share any worries or good things that have happened to you.
- Make sure you have some fun each and every day.
- Make sure you find ways of being kind and helpful to someone else each and every day.
- Try to keep busy if you are feeling busy – your school will be helping you with ideas.
- Keep in touch with friends and other family members somehow.
- And understand that this *will* all be over – we just don't know when.

## Tips for worry busting

- **Make a feelings clock.** Sit down with your grown up and come up with lots and lots of words to describe feelings: happy, sad, worried, excited, unsure, tired, full of energy...Then choose the twelve that you fell most at the moment. Make a clock dial to go on your bedroom wall with smiley/sad faces (etc.) and a pointer. Use it to indicate your feelings each day as you wake up.
- **Create a busy pot.** Cut lots of cards and write or draw on each one an activity that you'd like to do at home (check each one out with your grown-up when you've finished) – such as build a den, mix a pancake, make a home for beetles, rearrange my bedroom, draw a football team on cards with sticks to move them, a film night, a photo album, a teddy bears picnic, a song session for a baby brother, a Skype playtime, an assault course with the cushions,

design a treasure hunt, write a story, make a joke book, plan a puppet show...Put them in your pot and draw one out when you want to or when you feel bored.

- **Create a pamper pot.** Now do the same with activities which will help you relax and slow down when you need to - have a pamper session, do mum's hair, have cuddle-time, watch a favourite film, spend time on the internet with Grandad, down time with a friend on facetime, enjoy a leisurely bath time, write your diary, make a happy memory box, help to make your favourite teatime treat, teach your pet a new trick....
- **Find a routine.** If it helps, make a big plan of what you are going to do each day, mixing in school-time activities, busy-time activities, pamper-time activities and exercise. You might not stick to it exactly, but knowing what come next in the day helps to stop people feeling worried.
- **Sleep well.** Often when people feel worried, they find it hard to sleep well. Have a regular wind-down routine leading up to bedtime. Stick to a regular time. Avoid being too active or having screen-time in the hour before bedtime and make sure your bedroom is a peaceful place to relax.
- **Take exercise.** What is your favourite sport or activity for being active? You don't have your friends and teams around you so think of a skill you want to get better at that will support your sport. Try a daily exercise programme or get your family and friends to sponsor you on a challenge. When you're being very active, it's almost impossible to feel worried at the same time.
- **Take a breath.** Practise slow breathing as a way of keeping you calm. Lie on your back, think of a beautiful and peaceful place you'd like to be in, and relax each part of your body as you breathe slowly and deeply.
- **Tell your story.** Life is different being at home like this – so make sure you tell your story. This could be a picture each day, a diary, a collection of photos, a daily video clip; one day your friends, family and teachers are going to want to read about everything you got up to.
- Stay calm, be safe, and look after yourself to stay well.