

Refrigerator Notes
Tips for Parents to Cope with Social Distancing
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Spending weeks at home with limited resources and being cut off from work, other meaningful activities, and social contact can take a toll on mental health. The added strain of financial difficulties, physical illness, and home-schooling add to parental stress. Anxiety, depression, boredom, loneliness, difficulty sleeping, and frustration are normal reactions. To care for children effectively, parents must also look after themselves.

- Limit your exposure to news reports about Covid-19. Plan to check a reliable news source 1-2 times a day and then balance the news with work, household chores, reading, music, and other activities or hobbies.
- Try to create a regular routine of activities such as exercise, work, gardening or learning something new or time with children.
- Use social media to connect with family and friends and share your experiences and emotions.
- Eat healthy food, sleep well and exercise.
- Try not to catastrophize; stop negative thoughts to focus what you can do and not on what you can't do; remember you are doing social distancing to protect yourself and others. Remind yourself this will eventually be over.
- Use relaxation, mindfulness & yoga exercises; use positive imagery, muscle relaxation, and deep breathing to stay calm.
- Keep a positive attitude & accept there are events you cannot control.
- Model staying calm and patient for your children as this will help them feel safe and secure. Keep saying to yourself, *"We'll get through this," "We will figure out a way," "I know how uplifting it can be to empower and help others," "If I don't panic, I can problem solve more clearly," "I can ask for help and it is okay to talk about my feelings."*
- Take a break from interactions with your family members if you are not in control of your emotions. (e.g., *"I need a few minutes to calm down. I'm going to water the flowers for 10 minutes and will be back afterwards so we can continue this."*)
- Reassure your child that your family is your top priority and that your job is to keep them safe.