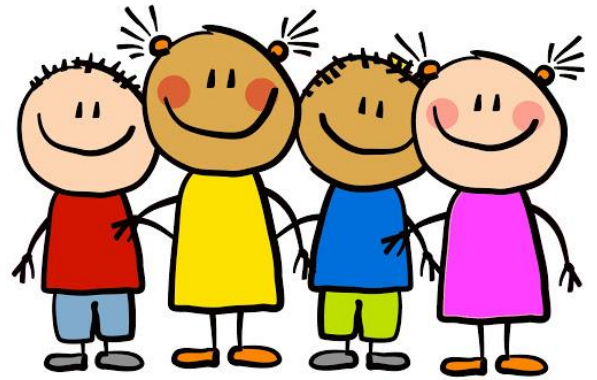


Western Wayne Middle School students and families,

I can't believe it's been almost a month since I saw your smiling faces... I hope you are all staying safe, practicing social distancing, reading, being outside, and enjoying extra time with loved ones. On the next few pages, you'll find some tips to help you stay happy and stress-free. ☺



As your school counselor, Mr. Totsky and Mrs. Jacques are available as a resource to you and your child via email Monday-Friday, 8:00am-3:00pm at ljacques@westernwayne.org and jtotsky@westernwayne.org. If you (child or parent) would like to schedule a time to touch base on the phone, please send an email, including a contact number and preferred time (between 8am and 3pm). Please allow 24-48 hours for a response. Keep in mind that school staff will be calling from blocked phone numbers.

Disclaimer: do not rely on email for mental health crises or other emergencies. If you or your child is experiencing a mental health crisis, please utilize one of the hotline resources listed on page 3 of this document.

Do your best to take care of yourself and each other.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jacques and Mr. Totsky

School Counselors

Western Wayne Middle School

Student Resources

Coping Skills: Here are some things you can do if you are feeling stressed or upset. Many of these we have practiced before!

Star Breathing



Enjoy Nature



Art

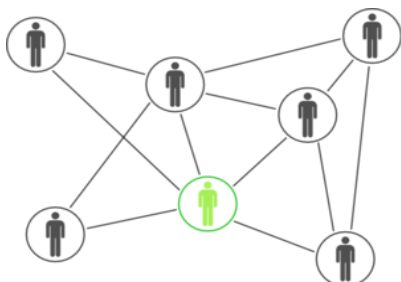


Things to Remember and Practice

1. Take Deep Belly Breaths
2. Do Acts of Kindness
3. Gratitude
4. Exercise, eat healthy, get outside
5. Focus on what you can control

Keep a Journal: This is a very special time that we are experiencing right now. Even the grown-ups in your life have never dealt with something like this. It is very different... sometimes scary or confusing. Other times, it might feel fun and new.

Writing down or drawing every day can be a great way to help you feel better. If you do use a journal, make sure you keep it in a safe place- don't throw it out once we go back to school. Think of how cool it will be to pull your journal out 10 or 50 years from now. We are living through an important part of history, and your journal will be like your own personal history book... how cool!



Stay Connected: Even though you can't be with your friends or visit your cousins, there are lots of ways that you can still talk to some of your favorite people. Ask your parents if you can make a phone call, Skype, or FaceTime with friends and family. If you know their address, you can even send a card or letter! Make it a goal to talk to at least one person outside of your home every day.

Parent/Guardian Resources

PA Support & Referral Helpline

The Department of Human Services (DHS) launched a statewide Support & Referral Helpline staffed by skilled and compassionate staff who will be available 24/7 to assist Pennsylvanians struggling with anxiety and other challenging emotions due to the COVID-19 emergency and refer them to community-based resources that can further help to meet individual needs.

Wayne County Victim's Intervention program 570-253-4401

Wayne County Drug and Alcohol 570-253-6022

The number to call is 1-855-284-2494.

For TTY, dial 724-631-5600.

Many other resources also remain available to Pennsylvanians in need of support, including:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio: 1-888-628-9454

Crisis Text Line: Text "PA" to 741-741

Veteran Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

Get Help Now Hotline (for substance use disorders): 1-800-662-4357

Pennsylvania Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-888-772-7227

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1-800-799-7233

Tips for Discussing COVID-19 With Your Children (from childmind.org)

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere. Many parents are wondering how to discuss the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute.

- **Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Not talking about something can actually make kids worry *more*. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- **Be developmentally appropriate.** Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- **Take your cues from your child.** Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions. Your goal is to avoid encouraging frightening fantasies.
- **Deal with your own anxiety.** "When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus," warns Dr. Domingues. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- **Be reassuring.** Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child that kids actually seem to have milder symptoms.
- **Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.** An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Jamie Howard, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, notes, "Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe." We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. The CDC recommends thoroughly washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom.
- **Stick to routine.** "We don't like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now," advises Dr. Domingues. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.
- **Keep talking.** Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. "Let them know that the lines of communication are going to be open," says Dr. Domingues. "You can say, 'Even though we don't have the answers to everything right now, know that once we know more, mom or dad will let you know, too.'"