

A Conversation on Supporting Families During COVID-19

April 13, 2020

The Institute for Innovation & Implementation Resources:

- [HIPAA-Compliant Technology During COVID-19](#)
- [Communicating with Your Audience During COVID-19: Five Essential Tips](#)
- [Managing & Responding to COVID-19: Special Guidance on Wraparound](#)
- [Managing & Responding to COVID-19: Special Guidance on FOCUS](#)
- [A State-by-State Guide to COVID-19 Telehealth Medicaid Expansions](#)
- [Telebehavioral Health: Tech to Connect with Youth & Families TA Network](#)

Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association (FREDLA)

- [Resources for Talking with Children and Youth About Coronavirus](#)
- [Telehealth Resources by Category](#)

Community Resources Shared in Conversation Chat:

Federal Resources

- [SAMHSA COVID-19 Information for Discretionary Grant Recipients](#)
- [CDC Guide to Stress and Coping During COVID-19](#)
- In Spanish: [SAMHSA Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)
- In Spanish: [SAMHSA Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
- [Latest HIPAA Guidance](#)
- [CDC Infographics on Caring for Yourself or Others Who Have Been Infected](#)

Resources for Youth & Families

- [Judge Baker Children's Center COVID-19 Family Resources](#)
- [GoodNight with Dolly Parton](#)
- [Thriving at Home: A Mental Wellness Workbook for Children and their Families During Quarantine](#)
- [Coronavirus Guide for Kids](#)
- [Cosmic Kids: Yoga, Mindfulness, Relaxation for Kids](#)
- [My Hero is You: how kids can fight COVID-19](#)
- [A Certain Kind of Sick](#)
- [Caroline Conquers Her Corona Fears: A Kids Coping & Coloring Book](#)
- [NetSmartz Online Safety Web Series for Kids K-5](#)

- [Voices of Youth: COVID-19: your voices against stigma and discrimination](#)
- [Bear hunts and encouraging words are signs of COVID-19 times](#)

Social Marketing & PSA Examples

- [Julia Louis-Dreyfus's COVID-19 PSA Hilariously Highlights the Importance of Beauty Professionals](#)
- [Univision Teams with Listos California on Pandemic PSA Campaign](#)
- [Matthew McConaughey is 'at war' with COVID-19 in new PSA](#)

Safety Plan Resources

- [Domestic Violence Safety Plan](#)
- [Love is Respect Safety Plan](#)

News Articles & Other Resources

- [Yale's Happiness Course: The Science of Well-Being by Laurie Santos](#)
- [Children's Behavioral Health Initiative Provider FAQ Massachusetts](#)
- [Child & Family Services COVID-19 Updates & Info Hawaii](#)
- [Racism Impact of Health on Children and Teens](#)
- [Free Yoga Online](#)
- [Trauma Training PTSD "A New ERA"](#)

Comments from the Chat Box. Thank you for sharing!

How have you engaged families in contributing to what support looks like during COVID-19?

- We are calling families or using Zoom
- We have been having kids write letters to their parents
- We have also used Google duo and Facetime
- Our agency has a checklist that we review with our parents and kids every time we talk with them either via phone or telehealth
- We also call them 2 times a week
- We did a brief survey monkey to ask the parents what they need during this time. Then we created a weekly Parent Support group on Zoom
- Sending packets to give families ideas of ways to do fun activities with their child
- We have been sending age-appropriate activity packets by mail weekly, including coping techniques and encouraging activities of interests they haven't been able to do with their busy schedule
- Encouraging families to sign into Google Classroom if the teacher/school is offering that so classmates can continue to see each other
- Virtual Scavenger Hunts have helped to engage the families as an icebreaker before starting the support services via video conference or telephone call

- Charting the LifeCourse Tools developed by University of Missouri Family to Family Health Information Center...helping families come up with ways to have respite, general tools
- Zoom Office Hours daily for parents and separate hour for students
- Created a parent Google classroom
- Sent one of my family seeds to try to give them something different to do at home
- Tweeting daily resources for families, therapists are calling families daily
- Use the Remind app for daily greetings
- Using SeeSaw app which is very young child friendly
- Sending letters and photos through mail and email
- Facebook video chat
- Made slide shows with indoor and outdoor games send out to families
- We are using tablets to provide to families and childcare centers for tele-health consultation at this time
- Vidyo is the technology we are using
- Zoom Pictionary with kids
- Put together a list of 100+ activities for the kids I work with that are free and fun. I've been working on this list with the kids during sessions
- Helping families set a goal for the week and helping find the resources needed to complete goals
- Doing mindfulness virtual groups twice a week
- We started a new podcast for families
- Use Doxy.me
- Prerecorded reading books, sharing pets and small parts of our lives through video
- Supporting parents whose children are in the child welfare system: We are talking with parents about how to support them in virtual visits with their children. Since then we have started practicing zoom or google duo to help them learn to navigate it and come up with activities they can do with their children as well as forging a relationship/shared parenting with caregivers who have their children
- Keeping our website updated daily with resources and links, specifically related to COVID
- Watch videos with clients, draw together, tic tac toes
- Friday family game nights via Zoom
- We do story time each day at noon for children at home to enjoy with their parents and talk about what is going on and do a 'shout out' to children whose birthday it is or other current events to share with them
- Regarding licensed childcare centers and preschool: I provided newsletter articles to go out to all directors, emailed these to directors I have worked with, and I created a video on deep breathing for preschoolers for our state education dept. to use on their website
- Providing two trainings per week, one during the lunch hour then rotate the other between different times of day, evenings, Saturday mornings
- For those with autism and I/DD, social stories are helpful

- Foster Family Support & Licensing: When we schedule a visit in the home, we try to include the whole family which includes the foster child; This is to give them a feel of normalcy with the caseworker, etc. that we are still assisting them and dealing with concerns even though our normalcy has changed. Also keeping our families informed with what is going on, but in a way that is not "scary" or might cause anxieties. Also using the above procedure for family visits as well
- We have been reaching out to special ed. directors to encourage them to work collaboratively with us as we support families
- When we call the parent or child we ask if they can talk if they answer no then ask what time is good for you to call you back, at this time we are flexible
- I'm a grandparent raising three grandchildren - teens, I wrote a COVID-19 crisis plan in the event that one or more of us got sick; it included what room to stay in, how to stay safe, how to call for help, etc.; it eased my anxiety

What strategies are you using to combat stress when the normal avenues aren't available?

- Learning the cello
- Pray
- Meditation
- Run
- Yoga
- Music
- Netflix
- Crochet
- Puzzles
- Crafting
- Walking outside with a friend on the phone
- Garden
- Zoom happy hours
- Weightlifting with my kids
- Riding my bike
- Nap
- Cooking
- Watching movies with my family
- Hot bath
- Cleaning
- Making masks to donate
- Playing with my kids
- Family trail walks
- Disconnecting in the afternoons
- Online museum tours
- Video games

- Learning new languages to help in my work
- Journaling
- Reading
- Singing
- Getting dressed up for dinner some nights

How are you supporting others to address milestones?

- We have family's hosting Zoom dinners with other family and friends
- Setting the table with the "good" china
- We dressed up for Easter and everyone that we chatted with were so surprised by it
- We had a birthday parade for relative yesterday; we didn't leave our cars
- We're playing trivia games on zoom
- Porch pictures are awesome too
- Our office is sending out Happy Grams to schools to include in the lunches
- Gift card showers for moms to be or new parents
- Sending birthday cards to kids who can't have a big party
- Did a parade for the students in different neighborhoods with signs, etc. and rode by the student's homes?
- Holding virtual prom with friends from your home while dressed up in your prom dress
- We had a chocolate cake delivered to a kiddo for his birthday and sent his mom a cocktail
- Sending packages via mail
- I've sent all of my kid's homemade cards
- Opening all meetings with the opportunity for Celebrations
- I find that it is so appreciated just to acknowledge the craziness that is going on and what it is doing to everyone, adults included; They are thrilled when I ask how THEY are doing
- Social stories for those with autism and i/dd
- Virtual bat mitzvah; virtual Seder
- Sending out food gift cards
- FaceTime Charades
- A client told me today that his parents are going to have him walk around the backyard in his cap and gown since he may not have a traditional graduation
- Creating art with kids and displaying for neighborhood families out on walks to view
- Neighbors put teddy bears in their windows giving parents the opportunity to get out for a walk with the kids to look for how many bears they could find
- For early learners be cautious not to overwhelm with too much structure just because parents are at home more; Allow children to ease into a new structure with parents

How are you helping families manage home schooling and daily responsibilities?

- We need to let folks know it is ok not to be able to get it all done, to give themselves some grace; don't let school stress you out; it is ok if they don't finish all of their assignments
- Parents are being asked to take on so much. Some don't have the hardware (computers, laptops, etc.) some don't have internet, and some don't know how to use the technology. We need to give families permission to give themselves abundant grace in this time
- We officially make our contact calls and invite questions about online learning but don't address the amount of work being done

How are your processes & protocols changing right now?

- Working remotely
- No parent child visits, no in person visits unless necessary, no court but providing court reports
- The ability to do telehealth from home
- Creating a telework policy
- Virtual meetings
- Family contacts have gone from 4% of our work to 75%
- Staff is being supervised via online
- Pausing all groups
- Setting up and training facilitators to switch from in-person support groups to virtual groups
- See children more with the entire family
- Weekly online family and youth peer support groups; social skills groups taking place via Video Chat
- We went to online teaching for kindergarten and early education overnight... the demands were great... we needed to take a breather and work things out; Parents are overwhelmed
- Family childcare providers went from their routines in MD to needing to be approved for essential personnel children; the changes interrupted income streams
- Becoming more tech savvy
- I'm used to having a very flexible schedule as a school-based therapist... If a client I want to see isn't at school, then I just see another client. I feel like I'm getting a new sense of empathy for Outpatient therapists when I schedule sessions with clients and then they don't answer the phone or respond to a video chat
- We have had more oversight/logs to fill out to make sure we are actually working since we're all working from home
- We increased the amount of reimbursement the families get and are paying up front instead of making them wait until the end of the month; allowing them to purchase technology related items
- Our Family Org is applying for the Payroll Protection program

- We thought we collaborated with our partner programs throughout our community before...that has increased a ton; supporting each other's work to not duplicate and fill in gaps where possible; it's inspiring
- I have noticed that there is more flex time in work schedules; with teaching kids at home it can't be 9 to 5 any longer
- We purchased iPads for all of the families in our WRAP program to stay connected and the services have now increased
- The managers on our team have grown closer through this crisis and we communicate much more than we did pre-COVID
- I have been preparing myself for telehealth as the normal for the next 12-18 months since the first of these events I attended on 3/26. I can see pros and cons for sure in my rural area of PA in using Telehealth
- Some families will prefer telehealth, and some will hate it - we need to be sure to gather that information from families so that we can implement programs and services in ways that fit each family based on their preferences and what they find effective

For Child Welfare...how are you ensuring the safety of children, parents, and foster parents with regard to court order in person visitation and maintaining connections for families during this time?

- We have gone to a daily team meeting to support Parent Allies who are supporting parents. The work is so intense, critical and requires a lot of planning even more so as we work from home and provide support from afar. Even creating safety about dropping off food boxes or other basic needs like diapers. Also, to support Parent Allies so they do not become overwhelmed at what can be a very sad and anxiety provoking time
- We are trying to complete collaborative sessions with non-clinical staff to decrease stress on families
- Our school based health centers have reached out to student parents individually to let them know we are available by phone or virtual visits; we have collaborated with the School district to allow parents to be utilized via student Chromebooks; it was being blocked, but IT did a great job of removing it so parents could have the tech to utilize the virtual visit
- Were able to get donated iPads so kids in a family to do virtual story time and or games with childcare workers while the parents do virtual visits with staff