



DAILY 4 TO KEEP US
HEALTHY
IN STRESSFUL TIMES



Managing Uncertainty and Anxiety: Routine Engagement in Meaningful Activity Promotes Health & Hope

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Engaging in meaningful activity provides purpose, productivity and fulfillment (1). During challenging and uncertain times, the importance of meaningful activity is magnified and can provide hope while promoting physical and mental health. People who engage in meaningful activities say they feel happier and healthier (2).

The Co-Vid 19 Pandemic has caused significant challenges and uncertainty for all Canadians. Decreased access to physical and mental health programs can create a sense of worry. Excessive exposure to frightening news, increased uncertainty and a lack of routine can increase stress and anxiety, especially for children. Many of the children and families that I work with are wondering about strategies to manage this difficult time. Many of the stroke survivors that I volunteer with will be self-isolating for a significant period of time due to increased risk.

A quick resource review, aimed to support physical and mental health, produced these **4 Tenants** that may help us all get through this challenge together and potentially come out of this with some new skills:

Tenant #1: Inform Yourself – with Facts and Hope

“You are what you eat”. Choose your information source carefully and create a “balanced diet” by seeking out positive, hopeful stories. Consider limiting tv news, especially for children – it can be overwhelming to hear/see scary forecasts and negative news stories all day long, leading to increased anxiety (3). Checking a well-informed news source once or twice/day, providing a child friendly explanation and focusing on how humanity is pulling together, can reduce anxiety and help children feel hopeful.

A few Fact-based sources:

- The World Health Organization:
www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports
- CTV News: www.ctvnews.ca
- Scientific American:
<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/flattening-the-covid-19-curves>

A few HOPE-based sources:

- www.goodnewsnetwork.org and their podcast “Good News Gurus”
- www.globalgoodness.ca
- www.instagram.com/globalpositivenews/?hl=en



“Everything mentionable is manageable...Look for the helpers”. Mr. Rogers

It is important for parents to help kids identify and validate feelings of fear or worry and provide reassurance that we are all coming together to manage this challenge. Focus on the health professionals that are treating the sick, researchers who are working on developing medications & a vaccine, governments that are getting the right equipment and providing financial support. Focus on the neighbours that are helping one another. Focus on what you can do to help your family members and community. **“Preparation & Planning, Not Panic”**, WHO (3)

Tenant #2: Identify Meaningful Activities

It is highly likely that we will see school closures and the need for “social distancing” extend beyond April 5, 2020. For a clear understanding of social distancing, read or listen to this message from Toronto’s chief medical officer: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/having-friends-over-for-coffee-is-not-social-distancing-toronto-s-top-doctor-1.4858783>

It is important to find meaningful activities that we can carry out in our homes or outdoors with safe distancing from friends and neighbours. If at all possible, families need to prepare to be at home. Playdates are not recommended at this time. Games that result in shared tools or close contact can share germs (ie. Basketball, soccer). The reality of the need to avoid non-essential contact may result in people feeling overwhelmed, isolated and bored. It can be helpful to identify meaningful activities that can help you get through this time of change.

It is likely that we will all need to adjust routines for some time. During stressful times, it is important to prioritize health and safety. With reduced access to teachers, we may want to reduce academic pressure and increase focus on skill development through daily life activities. The next few months may provide some opportunities for children to increase their independence for life skills such as cooking, cleaning, organizing and staying connected with family/friends through written and typed mediums. An easy formula to stay balanced: **The Daily 4 - Each day, try to do something for your body, brain, spirit and family team.** Some of the examples below have links to further information. Your family can create their own list of preferred activities:

 Body	 Brain	 Spirit	 Team Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk or Bicycle • Let kids build obstacle courses • Ball hockey • Skipping Songs • Garden or yard work • Learn a physical skill ie. Buttons, Tying shoes, • Take time to eat well and get sleep to stay healthy • Self Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bubble Bath ○ Massage ○ Home made foot scrubs ○ Trim/paint nails ○ Home facials ○ Aromatherapy • Exercise at home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free online classes www.huffpost.com/entry/free-online-workout_b_7722024 ○ VON and YMCA may offer free videos too ○ Kids Yoga sites ○ Yoga with Adrienne ○ 7 min workout app ○ Wii Fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (individuals, together, audio books, You Tube stories, Choose Your Own Adventures) • Puzzles • Board & Card Games – see Book & Game List • Word Searches • Virtual Tours www.insider.com/museums-theme-parks-offer-virtual-tours-ideal-for-social-distancing-2020-3 • Drawing • Learn to draw worksheets and on-line videos • Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmzjCPQv3y8 • Educational Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to music • Create playlists • Try Meditation & Mindfulness Activities • Play/Cuddle with a pet • Religious institutions are offering video service & encouraging group prayer • Keep a journal of inspirational quotes • Create a Vision Board (individually or as a family) • Stay Connected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call or FaceTime family or friends ○ Send e-mails to family/friends (let the kids type) ○ Write letters or postcards ○ Create sidewalk chalk art or positive quotes in your neighborhood ○ Share a joke/riddle of the day at meal time ○ Create a “Neighbour Network” – a call list or use NextDoor app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Meal Prep • Organize cupboards • Team clean your home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dishes ○ Laundry ○ Clean bathrooms ○ Sweep ○ Mop Floors ○ Empty Garbage bins ○ Dust ○ Wash windows ○ Wash walls ○ Clean out the garage ○ Sweep the porch/deck ○ Clean your car • Organize your room (s) • Re-arrange your room • Organize your computer files • Organize your photos or create a photo book • Go for a walk and pick up garbage in your neighbourhood • Consider donating to the food bank or a charity like The United Way • Cut the lawn and consider cutting the neighbours lawn (soon!)

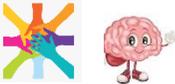
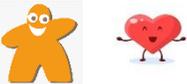
Our Favourite Activities

 Body	 Brain	 Spirit	 Team Work

Tenant #3: Create a Routine & Celebrate Success

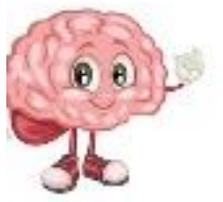
Everyone must find the balance that works for them/their family. Some people manage well with very little or flexible planning. Others prefer or require structure and routine to accomplish goals. Children tend to do well with clear expectations, organized routines and consistency, especially during times of stress. This doesn't mean that unstructured "down time" can't be part of the plan.

I have provided an example of a daily routine to consider. You choose how much is right for your family. It is ideal to have children assist in creating the family routine. They can type, write or draw the routine. Post the routine in a central location (ie. Fridge) or in their bedroom(s). Celebrate together when a family member completes a goal (ie. Learns to cook a recipe, learns to tie their shoes, reads a difficult book).

	<p style="text-align: center;">Self-Care & Nutrition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Create a wake-up routine that you find relaxing, Bathe as needed, Get Dressed Kids can help make a healthy breakfast, let them learn to cook</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Brain Activity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose a Cognitive Activity</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Body Break</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose a Physical Activity</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prepare lunch – try a new recipe if you have time</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Productivity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose a Productive Activity</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">REST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pretend you are Spanish and have a Siesta or Quiet Time. Play quiet calming music</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Connect</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose an Emotional/Spiritual Activity</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prepare Dinner – Kids can help with food prep, setting the table, clearing the table. Eat together and share a fun fact, joke/riddle or positive story over dinner.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Body Break</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If weather permits, get outside for a walk. Fresh air can help with sleep</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Relaxation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose a relaxing Cognitive or Emotional/Social activity</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Self-Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Create a calming bed time routine, wash face, brush teeth, read a positive story or journal about gratitude, Get into PJs, consider stretching or meditation</p>

Printable - Some kids may prefer to have their own re-usable daily worksheet. You can put this in a plastic page protector or laminate so that the child can print or draw their Daily 4 Plan each day:

Today's Daily 4

My Favourite Part of Today was:

Tenant #4: Seek Support When Needed

“Dealing with COVID is stressful. For most of us, the measures being taken with COVID have been unprecedented in how disruptive they are to our lives, our families and our friends. On the one hand, it is understandable that anyone would feel stressed out by the current situation. On the other hand, overreacting and coping in negative ways are not helpful. Humanity has faced other stressful times and survived. The good news is that there are many positive ways to cope and be resilient.”⁽³⁾

Many people have had to cancel/re-schedule their therapy sessions for the next while. There are numerous clinics offering Video or Telephone Consultation and Coaching, which can support parents and children to continue working on their physical and mental health goals at home. Reach out to your therapist if you would like to organize a Telehealth Coaching Session for you/your child.

There are also helpful parenting and mental health resources available on-line:

- www.ementalhealth.ca/Toronto/Mental-Wellness-and-Resiliency-while-Coping-with-COVID-19-Coronavirus/index.php?m=article&ID=62192
- www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html
- www.cpa.ca/corona-virus/
- www.autism.org/coronavirus-impact-home-all-day-basic-supports-and-strategies-to-get-us-through-and-keep-us-sane/

Why is your friendly neighbourhood OT sending you this message?

Occupational therapists work in contexts that promote good mental health and well-being, with the intention of both preventing the onset of mental health problems, and facilitating recovery for those experiencing mental health difficulties. Occupational therapists enable the participation and engagement of people in everyday living by using a holistic, bio-psychosocial, person-centred approach that encourages individuals to use their existing capabilities and strengths. WFOT, 2019 ⁽⁵⁾

Wishing everyone a sense of community & hope at this time. Be well

Sincerely, Nicole

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References

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