Tip of the week: Connection

As we’re settling into some sort of routine with e-learning and balancing the roles of parent, teacher, partner, employee, chef, etc., many parents are reporting that their children are a hot mess! A common symptom of prolonged exposure to stress is regressive behaviors including:

• Baby talk
• Toileting accidents
• Clingy behavior
• Tantrums
• Meltdowns
• Sleep disruptions: nightmares
• Back talk
• Stubbornness
• Fighting with siblings
• Lashing out

This is normal during times of stress and it will almost certainly go away once the crisis passes. Parental stress around regression will worsen it. See it as a signal that your child’s nervous system is distressed and could use some comfort! Use your detective skills to determine what your child is signaling with their behavior; they usually lack the insight to ask for what they need as everything feels confusing.

Take a moment and breathe: this is stressful for everyone. Routines create a sense of predictability and safety. Now that most of our routines have been interrupted we are left on edge which can look and feel like irritability, sadness, anxiety, lethargy and foggy thinking. Recognize it for what it is and use kindness with yourself and child, judgements will make it worse. We are where we are for this moment in time. This lack of control in our daily lives can be very uncomfortable for most of us. Children are trying to go back to a time when things were easier and their parents comforted them.

Helpful interventions include: establishing new predictable routines, connecting with your child, taking a mini stress break to reorganize your brain. Mindful parenting creates safety within the parent-child relationship which will calm the child’s nervous system and promote wellbeing.

Connecting activities can be fun like doing a puzzle, playing a card game or going on a walk together. When the parent has a calm organized brain the child’s brain will strive to match the calmness.

Routines

Daily schedules and chore chart

Connection

Key jar: Fun questions to ask your kids
Make your own chalk
Mom & me yoga

Stress Break

Family workout
Deep breaths
Self compassion mediation

Community Help

Eviction Information
Food
Rental/Financial/Utilities
Unemployment

Dometic Violence Hotline - 800-799-7233
Child Abuse Hotline - 800-252-2873
Sexual Assault Support - 800-656-4673
Suicide Hotline - 800-273-8255

Illinois residents can text "TALK" to 552-029 to be connected with a mental health professional.