

Coping with Uncertainty: A Webinar for Parents

May 28. 2020

Safe and Inclusive Schools



Overview



- The psychology of our response to the pandemic: Understanding the Impact
- Acceptance and Permission
- Coping and Thriving
- Parenting During COVID: Responding to Your Child's Needs
- School and Community Supports: When it's Time to Seek Help

**Sounds like thunder
outside but with the
way 2020 is going it
could be Godzilla**

Psychology of Fear and Anxiety



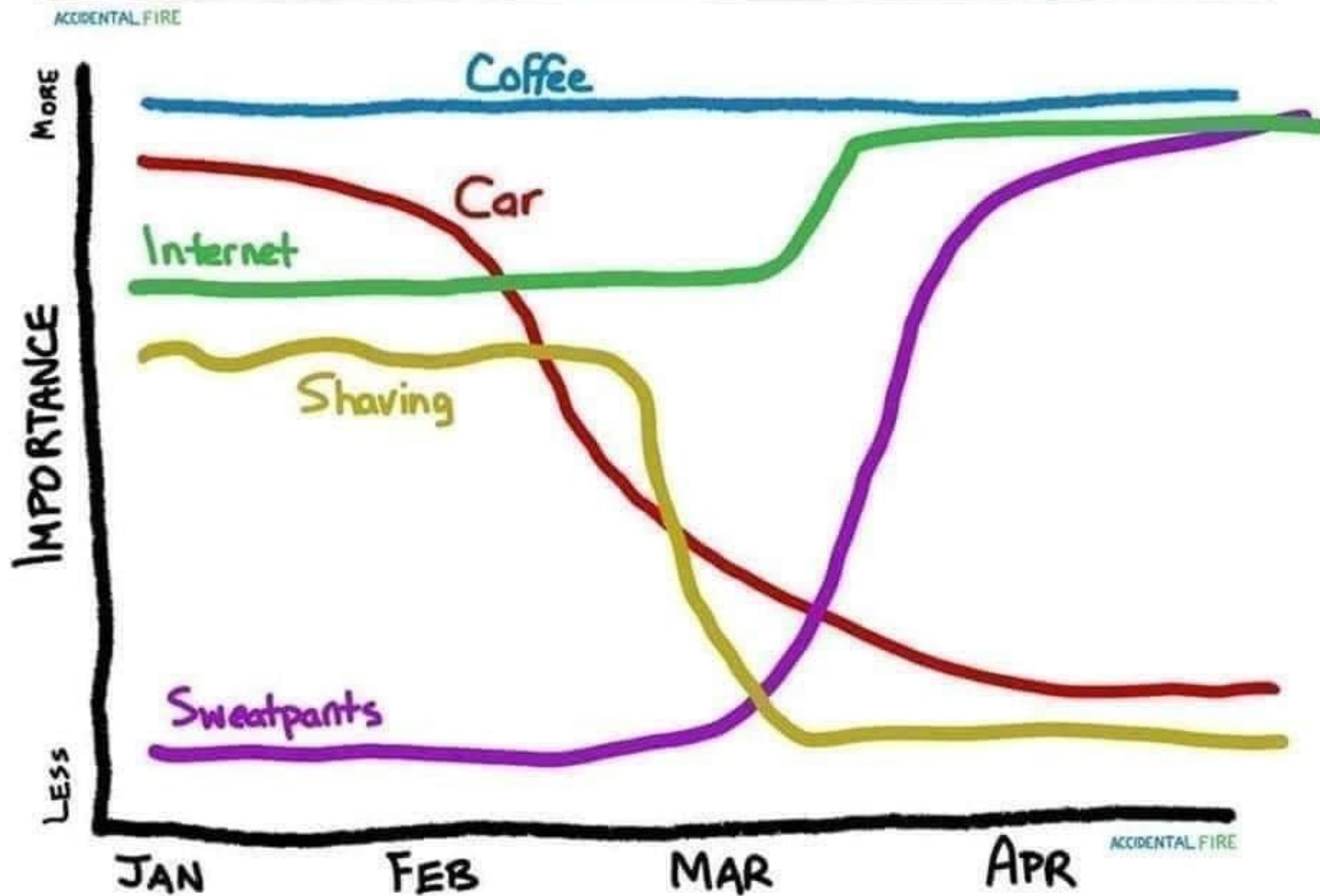
- Fight, flight or freeze and the primal brain
- Anxiety and depression=normal reaction to abnormal situation?
- Global impact zone= everyone impacted (yet not all the same- we are in the same storm but in different boats)
- Already existing individual and family dynamics are intensified now
- Uncertainty- many sources of information and inconsistent messages

“No Road Map for This”



- Seeking control (when control has been taken away)-so what CAN I control?
- Macro vs. micro- focusing on where you can make an impact
- Education at a time of global pandemic=crisis education (this is not the same as online learning)
- Discovering your own resilience and the power of connection

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE IN 2020, SO FAR



Coping and Thriving

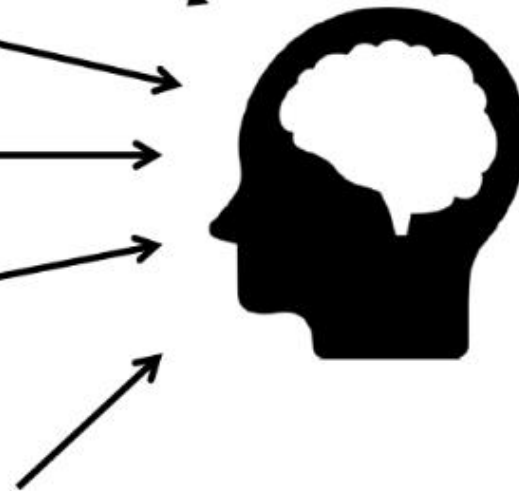


- Focus on coping, see it as a continuum of learning, growing, and thriving
- Self-care foundations: eat well, sleep, move your body
- Boundaries- important for well-being and functioning- time to be together, time to be apart, work pressures
- Limiting media exposure and why this is important for adults and for children and youth



Basic Needs (\$)

- Healthy food, housing
- Face-to-face contact
- Nature / Physical activity
- Sleep



Belonging,
Purpose,
Meaning, Hope*

“**Healthy stress**” to grow...

* Health Canada, First Nations
Mental Wellness Continuum
Framework, 2014

<https://cheo.echoontario.ca>

Mental and Physical Health Foundations

Exercise?!

I thought you said
Extra Fries!

Acceptance and Permission

- This is not a competition: we are coping during a global pandemic and looking after our health and protecting the health of others
- Purpose is not to come out of the other side a newer, shinier version of yourself
- Flow with the experience, accept your feelings and give yourself permission to have good and bad days
- We are modelling for our children that we are imperfect but continue to persevere through learning and resilience! With change, comes growth



Coronacoaster

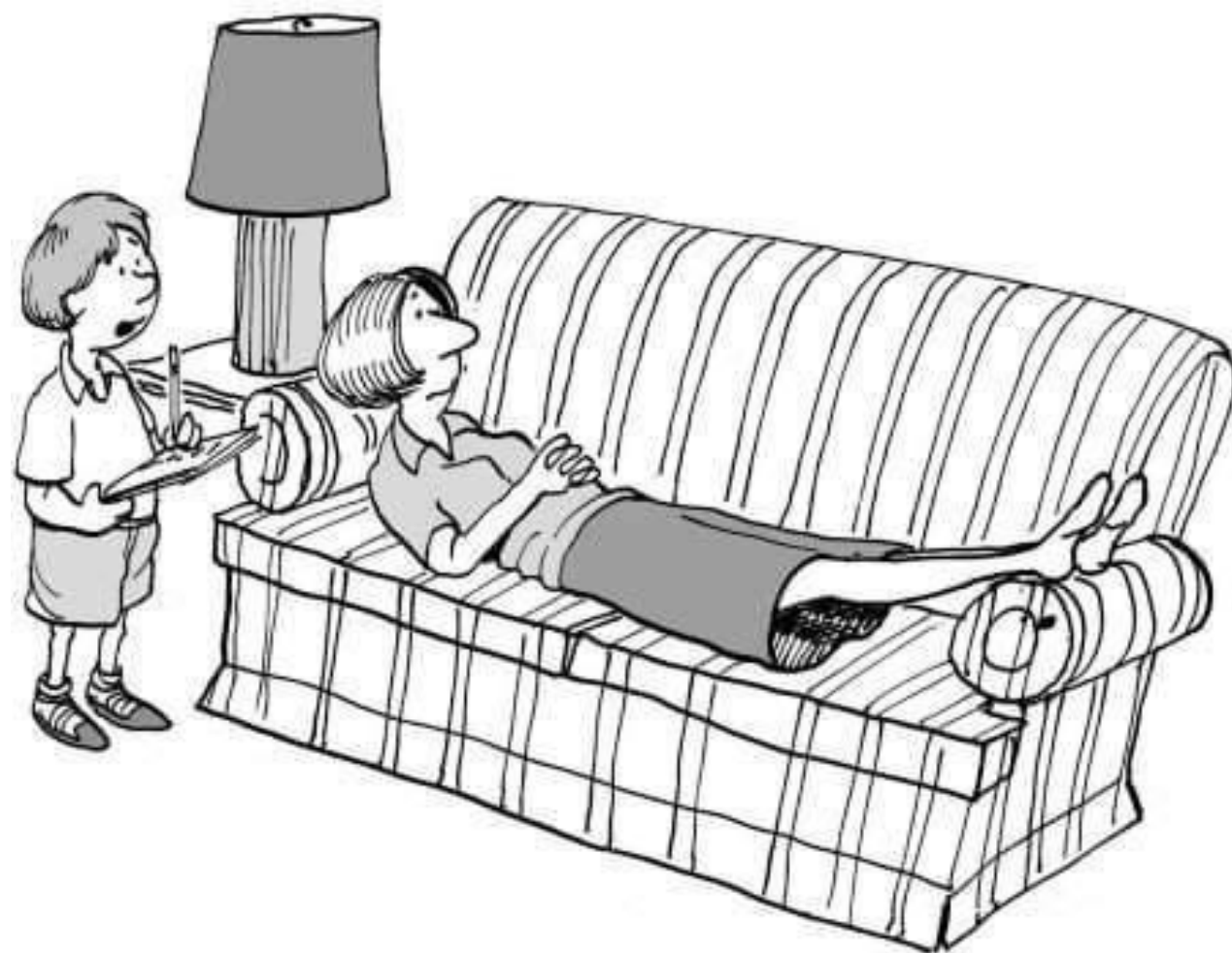
noun: The ups and downs of the pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing workouts & baking sourdough, the next you're crying, drinking wine for breakfast & missing people you don't even like.

COVID Parenting Survival Tips

- **Focus on what you can control:**
 - Looking after yourself
 - “Putting on your own oxygen mask”
 - Self-compassion- be kind to yourself as you would be to a good friend
 - Lower your expectations
 - Remind yourself that as a parent- you already are a master at managing things
 - Stay calm, model empathy and kindness to your children
 - Try not to personalize the emotions of others as reflection on you-reframe
 - Build your own support network and team

Let go of the responsibility of worrying about things you cannot change





"I'll read out my homework questions.
You say the first thing that comes into your mind."



Bored Zone

- People become bored when they do not have sufficient stimulation -- or when they are unable to provide their own stimulation.



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- "I'm bored, there's nothing to do!"
- Teen is bored, under stimulated.
- Teen may seek out stimulation in:
 - Healthy ways:
"Anything I can help out with?"
"Anything I can do?"
 - Unhealthy ways:
e.g. fighting with siblings,
destroying things, seeking out
divertive attention.

Pause (k)



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Allow boredom in the hope this will encourage creativity , otherwise...
- Provide daily routines, activities, or experiences that will provide sufficient stimulation and arousal, such as:
 - Sensory input (e.g. sound, visual, touch, movement).
 - Emotional stimulation.
 - Social stimulation.
 - Intellectual stimulation.
- Give chores every time your teen complains of being bored.



RESOURCES

- [Ontario Science Centre](#)
- [Make a Kahoot](#)
- Websites with some activities:
<https://www.empoweredsinglemoms.com/fun-activities-for-teens-when-bored/>
<https://parentingteenagersacademy.com/boredom/>

WORRIES AND ANXIETY



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE

- **Thoughts**
 - "I'm worried about ____".
- **Feelings**
 - Sad, mad (e.g. tantrums), worried.
- **Behaviours**
 - Regressing (i.e. acting like a younger child), clinginess.
 - Sleep problems.
 - Bed wetting.
- **Physical complaints**
 - Sore stomach, headaches.



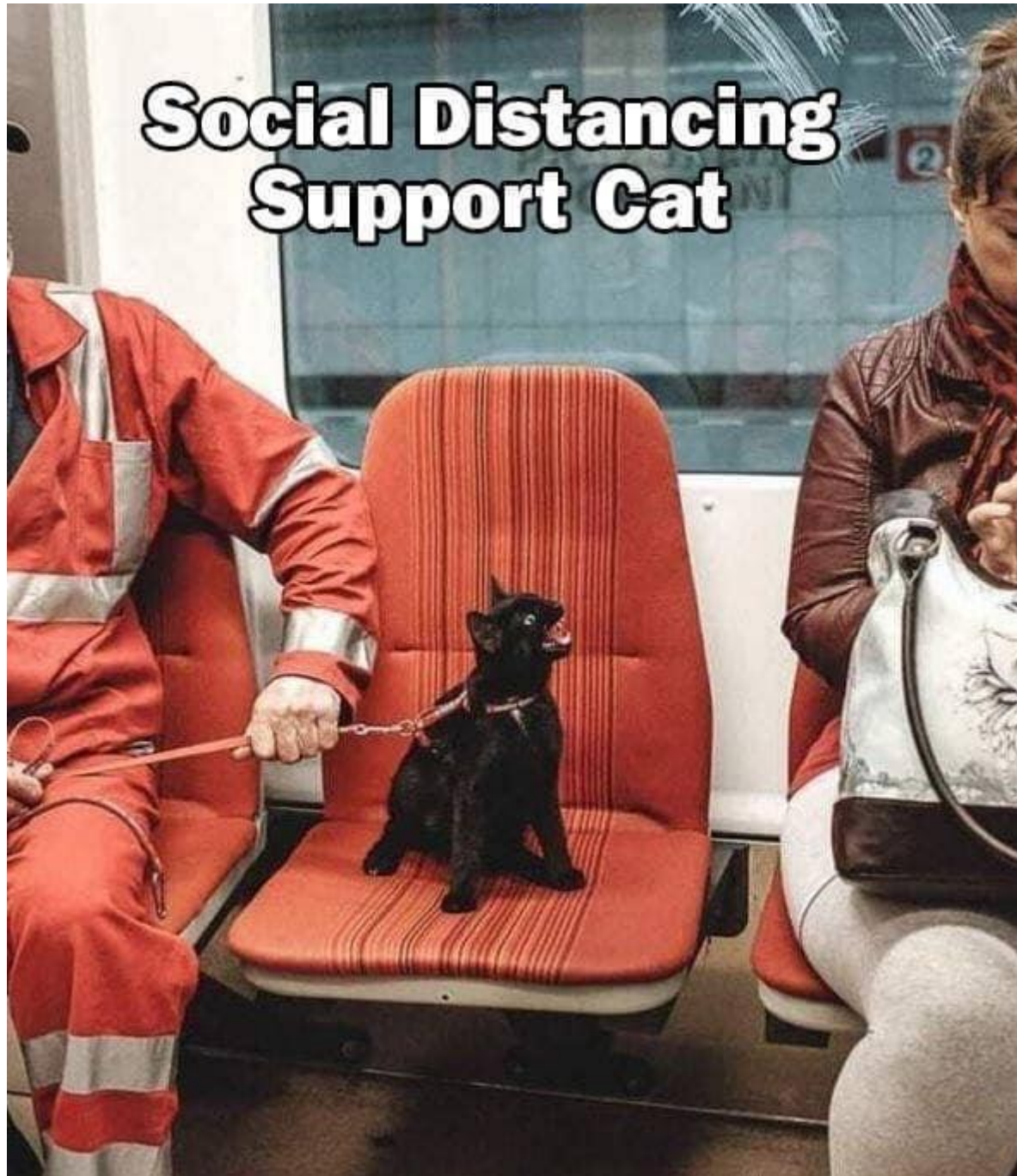
HOW TO HELP

- Validate feelings, empathize, comfort.
- Find meaning and positives to help your child see 1) they are competent, and/or 2) the world is a safe place.
 - "There are many things we can do to help with the virus and stay safe."
 - "Like going for walks to keep our bodies strong, and using deep breathing to get lots of oxygen."
- **"Avoid the avoidance"**
 - Support your child in facing their fears step by step.

RESOURCES

- eMentalHealth.ca:
[Upsetting News Events: Helping Your Children and Youth Cope](#)
- eMentalHealth.ca:
[Nightmares: Helping Children & Youth with Problem Nightmares](#)
- [Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame](#)
- [GoNoodle.com](#)
- [Stop, Breathe & Think](#)
- [Spaghetti Toes](#)
- [Sleeping Dragon](#)
- [Kids Help Phone Breathing Balloon](#)
- [Mighty Moe](#)

Social Distancing Support Cat



SADNESS



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE

- **Thoughts / Feelings**
 - Sad, guilt, mood swings.
 - Loss of pleasure or enjoyment.
- **Behaviours**
 - Sleep problems.
 - Appetite problems.
 - Withdrawal from activities.
 - Physical complaints such as sore stomach, headaches.



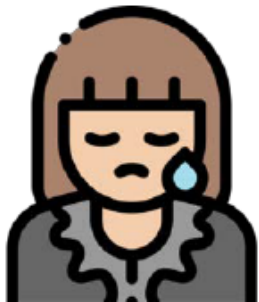
HOW TO HELP

- **Validate** feelings, empathize
 - “This is sad...”
- **Co-regulate**
 - “Let me give you a hug... It’s good to have a cry...”
- Find purpose, belonging, meaning and hope
 - “These times show us how important family is, and that we care for each other.”



RESOURCES

- [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#)
- [Kids Help Phone - Let it out: How to cope with feeling sad](#)
- [eMental Health - Depression in Children and Youth: Information for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Sesame Street: Kermit And Elmo Discuss Happy And Sad](#)
- [Emotionary by Funny Feelings ®](#)
- [GoNoodle.com](#)





A reminder
that this
won't be
forever...but
it is right
now.

ANGER AND AGGRESSION



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE

- **Thoughts / Feelings**
 - Anger.
 - Underneath anger, may be sadness, anxiety, frustration.
- **Behaviours**
 - Aggression. (verbal, physical)
 - Oppositionality.



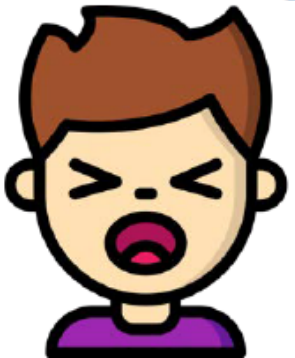
HOW TO HELP

- Validate surface emotions:
 - “You’re upset / frustrated...”
 - “You want ____ (e.g. to see your friends, to keep watching TV), and it’s frustrating / upsetting when ____”
- Validate underlying emotions (if possible):
 - “How sad / scary that must be...”
- Co-regulate / comfort.
- Not working?
 - “I’ll give you some space – I’ll check on you in a few minutes.”
- Completely out of control, and you need help?
 - Call a mental health crisis line



RESOURCES

- eMentalHealth.ca:
 - [Helping Young Children Cope with Emotions](#)
 - [Sensory Strategies for Self-Regulation, Stress and Calming](#)
 - [Safety Plan](#)



IMPULSIVITY AND INATTENTION



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE

- **Thoughts / feelings**
 - Frustration with being stuck inside.
- **Behaviours**
 - Seeking out dopamine / adrenaline
 - Recreational screen time.
 - Junk foods.
 - Impulsivity
 - Forgetting about physical distancing.



HOW TO HELP

- Find ways to provide stimulation such as physical activity, nature time; sensory stimulation such as music.
- Balance with mindful, quiet times to teach acceptance of low stimulation times.
- Limits on recreational screen time.



RESOURCES

- eMentalHealth.ca: [Helping Your Children and Youth Be More Active!](#)
- eMentalHealth.ca: [Nature and Why It's Essential For Kids' Brains: Information for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Child Mind Institute: Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature](#)



A Note About Online Safety

- With social isolation comes increased time on line with peers
- The online space tends to be unsupervised by adults- we often only know after the fact that someone has been harmed
- Consider getting to know the online platforms and social media sites your children and youth use, and how you can monitor, participate in or restrict their access
- Adult predators take advantage of the online platform as a way to lure youth e.g., through gaming sites and social media sites
- www.protectchildren.ca
- <https://smho-smso.ca/>

When To Seek Help...

- Seeking help for ourselves and our children and youth outside of our circle of support is based on a number of factors:
 - If there are safety issues in your home
 - If there are thoughts of self-harm or harming others
 - When children and youth ask for help
 - If you as a parent are overwhelmed to the point of not being able to cope
 - If your child or youth is presenting with symptoms of distress, beyond what you would expect for your child within the current context



School-Based Supports

- Your school Principal or Learning Resource Teacher can assist with connecting you with supports within the school and system
- There are systems and protocols in place for responding to crisis and mental health needs of students as well as assessing risk
- School Social Workers are available to do “well-being” checks on students through a referral process
- School re-entry planning will focus on the mental health and well-being of students as a priority



Community Mental Health Supports

- Many of our community agencies are not offering face-to-face meetings, but continue to offer crisis or virtual care support
- Counselling by telephone or teleconference
- **St. Leonard's Crisis Response:** 519-759-7188 or 1-866-811-7188
- **Haldimand-Norfolk REACH Crisis:** 1-866-327-3224
- **Haldimand-Norfolk C.A.S.T (16 years and older):** 1-866-487-2278
- **Six Nations Crisis:** 1-866-445-2204 or 519-445-2207
- **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-688-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868



What I expected my apocalyptic outfit to look like vs what it is.



Questions?

- Christine Bibby, Social Worker- Lead, Safe and Inclusive Schools- email at christine.bibby@granderie.ca
- Tanya Haist- Child and Youth Worker, Safe and Inclusive Schools-email at tanya.haist@granderie.ca
- Julie Seldon-Social Worker, Safe and Inclusive Schools-email at julie.seldon@granderie.ca



SUCCESS for Every Student

Questions and Answers-

- We will be posting the questions we received from parents during the webinar, and compiling a list of questions and answers for you
- Unfortunately due to technical difficulties, we did not see all of the questions during the presentation.
- Thank you! Stay tuned.