

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) - How to cope with COVID Anxiety?

This tip sheet contains some information from the MFIS Counselling Team for families around supporting their children. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a great deal of anxiety and fear across the globe. We know the more we stress, the more vulnerable we can become to viruses, because stress can dampen our immune response. Reports regarding the virus continue to be prevalent in the media and it is natural for children and young people to have questions or concerns.

**Many families are concerned about how they can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 to their children. You can:**

- ✓ **Maintain cleanliness – it’s Sunnah.** Wash before and after eating, after attending the toilet and as necessary. Use hand sanitizers when water and soap are not available. Remind children that that cleanliness is part of our Iman. **Teach children to cough and sneeze into their elbow.** As Muslims, we have shared responsibility for the prevention of harm to others. Keep children at home if they are unwell.
- ✓ **Maintain social Distancing.** Avoid contact when possible. While it may not be possible to avoid all physical contact with your children, families may want to make use of some "low-touch" salutations such as the elbow bump.

### Strategies to minimize the anxiety relating to the COVID-19

**Be aware of your own behaviour:** It is normal for parents to have their own anxiety. However, it is important to be aware that children learn from and replicate anxious cues. Remain calm in your conversations with children. Allow children to voice their concerns without judgement.

**Pay extra attention to your child’s needs:** It is normal for children to have questions about the pandemic. Not having information is frightening for many of us and children may fill in the gaps with their own imagination. Children may surf the internet for answers, which can sometimes be overwhelming and misleading. Allowing your child to talk about their anxiety will help normalise and validate their concerns and decrease the strength of their anxiety.

**Focus on what you can control:** Remind your children that they are able to practice self-care, social distancing, proper hygiene, healthy routines and ask Allah SWT for protection by reciting the 3 Quols (**the Ma’awizat**). This may help children feel a sense of control and reduce their anxiety. The Prophet SAW taught us to **“tie our camel and then put our trust in Allah SWT”** (al-Tirmidhī 2517).

**Unplug for a bit, limit social media and read news from trusted sources:** When speaking to your children it is important to use accurate, trusted sources for information such as the *World Health Organization* or the *Australian Department of Health* website. Limiting children’s exposure to media can help decrease anxiety.

**Prioritize good routines for your family:** Proper rest and healthy eating can help children stay healthy and better manage strong emotions. Social distancing allows families to develop new routines around exercise, study and healthy living. Exercise can help promote feelings of well-being, boost your immunity and protect against anxiety. Eating sugar and processed food increases inflammation, suppresses immune function and affects mood.

**Implement mindfulness into family routines:** Mindfulness can help reduce anxiety by accepting the present. We use mindfulness skills when we are mindful of Allah SWT, His Qadr, ourselves and the world around us. Useful mindfulness Apps you can look up are Smiling Minds, HEADSPACE and Calm.

**Seek Protection in Allah SWT:** Developing routines for spiritual wellbeing with your children can help minimise anxiety. Practicing the recommended Dua for Protection from illness or harm can help alleviate stress. See attached Dua below.

**Use available supports:** MFIS Counsellors are available to provide extra support to students who may be anxious and can provide information and advice to families. If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, you can contact the school or email the Counsellors to find out what additional support might be available.

Should you require further information or counselling support you can also contact the services below:

**Free parent support is available through some Muslim organisations and community organisations including:**

- **24/7 Patient COVID-19 Triage Hotline:** 1800 020 080 (to triage people with respiratory symptoms and those who are concerned about contact with the virus).
- **Call 13Health (13 43 25 84).** (Any time for practical medical advice and assistance).
- **Parent Line NSW: 1300 130 052.** (9 am-9 pm Monday to Friday, 4 pm-9 pm weekends)
- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14

**Useful Online Links:**

- **School TV** (useful info on a range of wellbeing issues) <https://schooltv.me/>
- **headspace** (info on mental health and COVID-19) <https://headspace.org.au>
- **Raising Children Network** (Range of information on parenting, mental health and COVID-19 info) <https://raisingchildren.net.au>

**Free Muslim counselling services include:**

- **UMA Counselling & Psychology Services** (Free 12yrs+ Males: 0430 329 224 Females:0415 747 837.
- **LMA AMAN PSYCH Support Clinic** 0416 937 425 or [lma.org.au](http://lma.org.au) (Free 16+ No referral required. Closes 5pm.

Please get in touch with your MFIS Campus Counsellor should you require further information or counselling support.

## Morning and evening Dua and Dua before leaving home for Protection from Illness or Harm:

It is reported that Abu Hurayrah (r.a.) heard the Prophet (s.a.w.) say,

“Whoever recites in the evening three times; I seek protection in the perfect words of Allah from every evil that He has created, then not so much as a stinger will harm him that evening.”

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

**A'oodhu bi kalimaat Allaah al-tammaati min sharri maa khalaq**

**I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from the evil of that which He has created.**

(At-Tirmidhee, 3898; Muslim, 2709)

The Prophet Saw also said:

Whoever recites it three times in the morning will not be afflicted by any sudden calamity before evening, and whoever recites it three times in the evening will not be overtaken by any sudden calamity before morning.

(Recite three times in Arabic).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

**Bismillaahil-lathee laa yadhurru ma'as-mihi shay'un fil-'ardhi wa laa fis-samaa'i wa Huwas-Samee 'ul- 'Aleem.**

**“In the Name of Allah, Who with His Name nothing can cause harm in the earth nor in the heavens, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.”**

(Abu Dawud 4/323, At-Tirmidhi 5/465, Ibn Majah 2/332)

The Prophet SAW said:

“Whoever says (when he leaves his house)..

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ، تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

Bismillaah, tawakkaltu 'ala Allaah, wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah

“In the name of Allah, I put my trust in Allah and there is no power and no strength except with Allah”

...it will be said to him: You are TAKEN CARE of and you are PROTECTED and guided... ”

[Abu Dawood (5095) and al-Tirmidhi (3462); saheeh by al-Albaani]