



DBH Celebrating Children's Mental Health Awareness Day and Month



**BRINGING CHILDREN'S
MENTAL HEALTH
INTO FOCUS**

Perfect Vision in 20/20

**Children's Mental Health Awareness
Week: May 3 - 9, 2020 | Day: May 7, 2020**



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DC** GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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District of Columbia Department of Behavioral Health

How does COVID-19 impact children?

"Our Kids are **SAD** and not bad"

Excerpt from Dr. Denese Shervington, CEO of Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies:

<https://www.essence.com/feature/new-orleans-hurricane-katrina-covid-19/>

Voices of children:

- "I can't see my friends"
- "I won't have a prom or graduation"
- "I can't visit my grandparents and family members"
- "My family isn't getting along and I no place to go"
- "I can't hug"
- "I can't go to school to learn and eat"
- "Distant learning is not helping me to learn"
- "So many people are getting sick and dying"
- "What will happen to me if my parent/parents gets sick and die?"

- **Behaviors of children:**
- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and "acting out" behaviors in teens
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Unexplained headaches or body pain

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Ways to support children and youth

- **Talk to children and youth** about the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Answer questions** and [share facts about COVID-19](#) in a way that children and youth can understand.
- **Reassure child and youth** that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- **Talk with parent or guardian about limiting exposure to news coverage** of the event, including social media. Children and youth may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- **Work with parent or guardian to develop and keep up with regular routines.** If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.

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Helpful Resources for Families

- DC Department of Behavioral Health Access Helpline/Warm Line- Connects individuals to a variety of behavioral health services 1(888)7WE-HELP or 1-888-793-4357
- Drug Free Youth DC website: <https://drugfreeyouthdc.com/>
- DC COVID website: <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>
- DC Department of Health: www.dchealth.dc.gov
- CDC : www.cdc.gov
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1800-799-7233

Family Networking and Supports:

- Be Strong Families Webinar Series <https://www.bestrongfamilies.org/covid-19-support>
- Weekly Virtual Parent Support conversations for parents and other caregivers
 - To get more information contact Imani Walker myra.walker@dc.gov

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Life with little ones can be stressful!

Here's a new tool to help DC parents be our best selves in tough situations with our kids ages 0-6.

Use your phone or laptop to access The DC Positive Parenting Program

- 1 Go to Kognitocampus.com from any device with Internet (mobile phone, laptop, tablet)
2. Create your account. When prompted, enter the enrollment key: `dcparents`
3. Launch the program – it takes about 40 minutes and you can complete it in chunks.

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Thank YOU for all the WORK that you DO!



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