



# SELF-CARE FOR PARENTS

## COVID-19

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. The emotional impact of an emergency on a person can depend on the person's characteristics and experiences, the social and economic circumstances of the person and their community, and the availability of local resources. People can become more distressed if they see repeated images or hear repeated reports about the outbreak in the media. (CDC 2020)



### Things you can do to support yourself:

- **Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.**
  - Take a break from social media and media.
  - Play board games, video games, watch movies.
  - Read a book
- **Take care of your body.**
  - Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate.
  - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
  - Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.**
  - Try to do some other activities you enjoy to return to your normal life.
- **Connect with others.**
  - Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member.
  - Maintain healthy relationships.
- **Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.**



**BREATHE.**

**THINK POSITIVE**



## **Practice belly breathing**

- Sit or lie down as described above.
- Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach somewhere above your belly button.
- Breathe in through your nose, noticing your stomach rise. Your chest should remain relatively still.
- Purse your lips and exhale through your mouth. Try engaging your stomach muscles to push air out at the end of the breath.

*For this type of breathing to become automatic, you'll need to practice it daily. Try doing the exercise three or four times a day for up to 10 minutes.*

*If you haven't been using your diaphragm to breathe, you may feel tired at first. It'll get easier with practice though.*

## **4-7-8 Breathing technique**

4-7-8 technique, focus on the following breathing pattern:

- empty the lungs of air (breathe out completely)
- breathe in quietly through the nose for 4 seconds (or how many seconds you are comfortable i.e. 2, 3)
- hold the breath for a count of 7 seconds (or how many seconds you are comfortable i.e. 2,3,4)
- exhale forcefully through the mouth, pursing the lips and making a "whoosh" sound, for 8 seconds
- repeat the cycle up to 4 times