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Parenting Tips for the Covid-19 Pandemic

- When discussing pandemic-related uncertainties and stress with your child/teen, first explore what's going well and then what could be working better. This leads to more openness than starting with problems.
- A lessened sense of normalcy may lead you to be more controlling as a parent. Being aware of this understandable strong need for structure and control can help you keep these feelings more manageable.
- By seeing yourself as your child's emotion coach, you'll likely feel more effective as a parent. This is because switching into coach mode helps you not take things too personally. The less rattled you get from power struggles about how your kids SHOULD show you respect—the more likely they will do so.
- Focus your coaching mindset to help your child/teen gain two crucial skills: Calming Down and Problem Solving. Do this by first showing understanding and then gently offering ideas to overcome challenges.
- To help counter feelings of loss from this pandemic, model gratitude. You'll feel less stressed out by valuing the positives in your life. Start a gratitude jar and put little notes inside about things to be thankful for. Encouraging your child to create a gratitude journal or use a gratitude App are great options too.
- Remember that your kids are, well—kids. The human brain does not fully mature until the mid-twenties. We tend to sometimes forget this, especially in times of stress!
- For socially anxious children, realize they may avoid thinking about upcoming social challenges when distancing ends. Discuss positive social memories and future ways to gradually reconnect with others.
- If your child or teen is more extroverted, the sense of loss they feel may be hidden under frustration, sadness or anger. Empathize with their losing current freedoms and opportunities for social connections.
- When using discipline, don't confuse harsh consequences with accountability. Delivering consequences when your child is emotionally dysregulated, or when you are, creates an adversarial dynamic. This makes what you are trying to address (e.g., completing online schoolwork) associated with negative emotions.

Reference Books by Jeffrey Bernstein, Ph.D.

- [*The Stress Survival Guide for Teens*](#)
- [*10 Days to a Less Defiant Child 2nd Ed.*](#)
- [*The Anxiety, Depression, & Anger Toolbox for Teens*](#)
- [*The Letting Go of Anger Card Deck*](#)
- [*Mindfulness for Teen Worry*](#)