



Managing COVID-19: Parenting Tips

The COVID-19 outbreak has brought on additional stress and anxiety to the family, and made parenting challenging for some. Below are 3 concrete strategies from **Dr. Tina Montreuil**, Assistant Professor at McGill University, Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, to help parents in maintaining their own emotional health, while improving the management of anxiety-related difficulties in their children.

1. Take time to identify and label your own emotions.

- Affect labeling or "putting feelings into words" can help decrease emotion dysregulation.

2. During times of stress parents and children can actively engage in emotion regulation strategies. For example:

- **Try the 4-7-8 deep breathing strategy:** Breathe in through the nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, breathe out through the mouth for 8 seconds.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** - Starting at your feet, tense groups of muscles as you breathe in and relax your muscles as you breathe out. Tense and relax muscle groups from your feet to your head.

3. Take time to discuss emotions and problem solve difficult emotions with your children.

- **Name it.** Identify the emotion. Tools like an emotion wheel can help children identify complex emotions.
- **Experience the emotion.** Feel the emotion in the body and watch it pass, without judging or engaging in it.

