



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS STRUGGLING

It is very normal for all of us to feel increased stress and isolation in the current situation, **so some change in your child's behaviour is anticipated.**

As well, many children may be experiencing some degree of fear and worry around COVID-19 itself. For most children, a brief conversation with trusted adults at home about their COVID-19 related emotions will suffice. In a few cases, students may require more support.

Here are some warning signs you might notice, that could indicate that the child is in need of additional support through counselling:

- Clinginess and separation fears
- Teary, getting upset more easily
- Irritability, more easily frustrated, shorter fuse
- Increased hyperactivity, restlessness, agitation, or aggression
- Somatic complaints of headaches, stomach aches, other body aches and pains, or other physical health complaints
- Sleep disturbances, bad dreams
- Inattentive, difficulties concentrating, drop in academic performance
- Intrusive and disturbing thoughts, recurring fears about illness and death
- Changes in eating habits
- Regression in learned behaviour (e.g. baby talk, bedwetting) and independence
- Isolation, withdrawal, and avoidance; not wanting to connect or make contact
- Asking lots of questions, or the same question over and over again
- For older students, this might be beginning to use, or increasing their use of substances

Again, remember that some changes in baseline behaviour are normal for all of us right now, students and adults included.

However, if you are noticing a **significant and sustained (frequency, duration, intensity)** change in the baseline behaviour of any of your children, have a conversation with your child's teacher, counsellor, or another adult at the school with whom they have a good relationship.

A reference to consider:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/mental-well-being-information-resources.pdf>