

EASE at Home (Grades 4-7)

Strategies to help children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

Creating a Helpful Mindset

What is it?

It's natural to have more worries than usual during times of uncertainty, but some can be unhelpful and persistent, fueling greater anxiety and stress. Parents and caregivers can help children express and cope with worries and shift unrealistic or overly pessimistic thoughts into more helpful and balanced thoughts. To learn more about helpful thinking, visit [Anxiety Canada](https://www.anxietycanada.com/).

How?

Talking to your child about their worries lets them know that they're not alone - we all have frightening thoughts or images that pop into our heads from time to time. Many worries are about the future or things that *could* happen, so prompting your child by asking "What if?" may help them talk about what's on their mind. Some children may prefer to write about or draw their worries than talk about them.

Write down worries and put them in a "worry box" for safe-keeping - re-visit worries later if desired



Focus on what they CAN do - they can't control when school will open, but they can visit with friends online



Together, think of three things you are grateful for each day and picture holding these things in your open hands



When unrealistic or unhelpful worries crop up, help your child come up with more helpful ways of thinking:

Unhelpful Thought

I'm stuck at home
I'm going to get sick
I'm missing out on everything!

More Helpful Thought

I'm safe at home
I'm doing everything I can to stay healthy
I'm grateful for all the things I CAN do

