

**Commack Public Schools**  
Office of Special Education

During the time that Commack Schools are closed, students who typically receive mental health services in school may be limited in their access to the professionals who provide these services. Therefore, district mental health staff would like to make families aware of the following supports and programs, as well as community-based mental health resources:

Be mindful that children and teens will take their lead from you on how worried they should be. Modeling calm and good practices can go a long way in ensuring children feel safe. For younger children who may not be able to critically analyze the information presented, it is important to monitor how much they are overhearing (including news reports). Maintaining an open dialogue on things going on in the world and in their life is a good practice for all ages. Periodic “check-ins” with your children on how they are feeling and coping is important- don't assume they will always know how to come to you to discuss concerns or fears.

**General Resources for Parents**

- How to Talk with Your Child About Social and Emotional Issues (<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/understanding-childs-challenges/talking-with-your-child/talking-to-your-child-about-social-and-emotional-issues>) - When kids have trouble with social-emotional skills, it may be uncomfortable talk about the challenges they face. But it's important to talk openly and show them there's nothing to be embarrassed about.
- Responding to Children's Emotional Needs During Times of Crisis (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Responding-to-Childrens-Emotional-Needs-During-Times-of-Crisis.aspx>) - Important tips for parents and other caregivers.
- Caring for Kid ([https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental\\_health](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health)) - Mental health affects the way people think, feel and act. Taking care of our mental health is just as important as having a healthy body. As a parent, you play an important role in your child's mental health.
- How to support children with worries (<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/>) - pointers for helping children escape the cycle of anxiety.

- Resilience in Children: Strategies to Strengthen Your Kids (<https://www.psycom.net/build-resilience-children>) - Help your child build resilience in the face of obstacles
- 12 best Mindfulness Apps to Help You Keep Calm During a Crisis (<https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/gadgets-tech/phones-accessories/best-mindfulness-apps-a8217931.html>)
- Developing Your Self-Care Plan (<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html>) - To develop your self-care plan, you will identify what you value and need as part of your day-to-day life (maintenance self-care) and the strategies you can employ when or if you face a crisis along the way (emergency self-care)
- NYS School Social Workers Association (<https://nyssswa.org/crisis-response/resources-for-parents/>) - Parent tips for dealing with crisis situations
- Mindfulness and Calming Resources - (<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:mindfulness>)
- Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource ([https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource))

### **Programs for All Students**

- GoZen ([www.GoZen.com](http://www.GoZen.com)) - GoZen! creates online social and emotional learning programs loved by kids ages 5-15, parents, professionals, and schools. Our mission is to reach 1 million kids with skills to transform stress, anxiety, worry, anger, perfectionism, negativity, and social worry into POWER in the year 2020!
- Big Life Growth Mindset Journal (<https://biglifejournal.com/>)- At Big Life Journal, we create engaging resources that help kids develop a growth and resilient mindset so they can face life's challenges with confidence.

- Positive Psychology (<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-activities-worksheets/>) -this link includes 27 different activities related to building resilience for children and adults. It focuses on activities to help individuals bounce back from struggles and setbacks.
- For children who need/benefit from visual schedules (<https://adayinourshoes.com/free-printable-visual-schedules-for-home-and-daily-routines/>) - These free printable visual schedules for home and daily routines might help make things easier.

### **Programs for Younger Students**

- Stop, Breathe, and Think Kids app (<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/kids/>) - For children 5 – 10, guided mindfulness exercises that keep kids engaged and addresses emotional regulation and attention.
- Go Noodle App (<https://www.gonoodle.com/blog/gonoodle-games-movement-app-for-kids/>) - Get ready for a brand new way to experience GoNoodle with GoNoodle Games, a free app created to get kids moving at home and on the go!
- Books that are helpful for the K-2 children are:
  - “Wilma Jean the Worry Machine” Julia Cook (also available on YouTube for viewing, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpAjjfP99Ng>)
  - “Dont Be Afraid to Drop” Julia Cook.
  - In regard to keeping a safe distance from peers, “Personal Space Camp” by Julia Cook
- Families should play board games, or card games, and have children lose and assist in learning how to cope. In addition, winning gracefully is another important lesson. Social skills that can be practiced while playing a board game: turn taking, good sportsmanship, following directions and waiting. ([https://www.superduperinc.com/handouts/pdf/105\\_parentsanhelptsocial.pdf](https://www.superduperinc.com/handouts/pdf/105_parentsanhelptsocial.pdf))
- Sesame Street Resilience: (<https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/challenges>) – Sesame Street characters help to build resilience for younger children through multiple activities, songs, and videos. This provides specific lessons and videos that can be used to foster resilience skills and emotional intelligence for younger children.

- Go Noodle - Rainbow Breathing Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMv4>) - Learn how to raise your energy and face your day with this exercise. Have fun with it!
- Cosmic Kids Yoga Videos - guided relaxation, teaching deep breathing techniques, simple yoga techniques <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBnPlqQFP>
- Keeping a journal WITH your students is a great way to help them express themselves - Drawing pictures, cutting and pasting pictures, have them write and/or have them dictate to you.

### **Programs for Older Students**

- Positive Psychology (<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-activities-exercises/>) – PositivePsychology.com provides 23 resilience training activities that can be used with teens and adults to foster resilience skills. This also provides powerpoints and resources to teach teens and adults the skills they need to be resilient and bounce back from setbacks. Additionally, it offers a “mental toughness” test and training used by the Army to build mental toughness.
- Just for Teens: A Personal Plan for Managing Stress ([https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/Reaching-Teens/Documents/Private/Personal\\_plan\\_handout.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/Reaching-Teens/Documents/Private/Personal_plan_handout.pdf))
- Managing Stress in Teens and Adolescents: A Guide for Parents (<https://www.bradleyhospital.org/managing-stress-teens-and-adolescents-guide-parents>)

### **Books to help with anxiety:**

In order to help access books: Smithtown Library – these can be accessed with a Smithtown Library card via their website ([www.smithlib.org](http://www.smithlib.org)): Services - Overdrive and Libby (eBooks and audio books), Hoopla (audiobooks). Databases: Tumblebooks. There are others resource available via their website but these are some ways to access books digitally.

<https://www.weareteachers.com/books-for-kids-with-anxiety/>

**What to do when you Worry Too Much: A Kid’s Guide to Overcoming Anxiety (What to Do Guides for Kids.** This book guides children and parents through the cognitive-behavioral

techniques most often used in the treatment of anxiety. Lively metaphors and humorous illustrations make the concepts and strategies easy to understand, while clear how-to steps and prompts to draw and write help children to master new skills related to reducing anxiety. This interactive self-help book is the complete resource for educating, motivating, and empowering kids to overcoming their overgrown worries. **Ages 6 – 12**

**What to Do When Mistakes Make You Quake: A Kid's Guide to Accepting Imperfection (What-to-Do Guides for Kids)** guides children and their parents through the emotions underlying a fear of making mistakes using strategies and techniques based on cognitive-behavioral principles. This interactive self-help book is the complete resource for educating, motivating, and empowering children to cope with mistakes. **Ages 6 – 12**

**Books to help with anger and negative thinking:**

**What to Do When Your Temper Flares: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems with Anger (What-to-Do Guides for Kids).** This workbook guides children and their parents through the cognitive-behavioral techniques used to treat problems with anger. Engaging examples, lively illustrations, and step-by-step instructions teach children a set of "anger dousing" methods aimed at cooling angry thoughts and controlling angry actions, resulting in calmer, more effective kids. This interactive self-help book is the complete resource for educating, motivating, and empowering children to work toward change. **Ages 6 – 12**

**What to Do When You Grumble Too Much (What-to-Do Guides for Kids)** guides children and their parents through the cognitive-behavioral techniques used to treat negative thinking. Lively metaphors and illustrations help kids see life's hurdles in a new way, while drawing and writing activities help them master skills to get over those hurdles. And step-by-step instructions point the way toward becoming happier, more positive kids. This interactive self-help book is the complete resource for educating, motivating, and empowering children to work toward change. **Ages 6 – 12**