



YOUTH, CHILDREN & FAMILIES CORNER

Hello parents, caregivers and carers,

Whether you are in Attachment Art and Play Program, Young People’s Program, or Child Parent Relationship Training, we would like to keep you updated about services at Holyoake via these newsletters.

After much consideration, Holyoake has made the decision to close the office, for the time being. Preparations are now complete for counsellors to work remotely.

At this confusing time of uncertainty, we want to reassure you that we intend to continue to provide support. The way we support you may look different. It may take the form of phone calls to help you to support your children, activities that you can do with your children at home, information, parenting support, advice on other available services if Holyoake can’t provide the support you need, and we are exploring the possibility of using other platforms as well.

We are also aware that the reason you came to counselling may have changed. Counselling may no longer be a priority, or what you need from us may have changed, as well as what we can offer may have also changed. Please bear with us as we transition to adapt to the rapid changes in our community,

Rest reassured that we intend to continue to make ourselves available to you and your families throughout this current crisis.

Sending all our best,
Trin, Claudia and Emma

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Talking to children about what is going on will help them cope.

Tips for Talking to Kids about Covid-19

Links that may be helpful when talking about Covid-19 with your children

<https://www.unicef.org.au/blog/news-and-insights/march-2020/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-coronavirus>

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/app/uploads/2020/03/Covid.pdf>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia#talking-to-children-about-coronavirus-covid-19-nav-title>

We are in difficult and worrying times, but if we can support our children, each other and ourselves we can come back stronger as a community when the crisis has passed. Here are some points to consider when discussing the virus with your children:

- **Do your research before talking to your children.** This will enable you to provide them with accurate up-to-date information. There is so much misinformation out there that we don't want to add to the confusion for our children. Go to appropriate websites such as: <https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus> <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/what-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Keep in mind your own stress levels and responses.** Our children look to us to know how to respond to situations. If we are really anxious, it might not be the right time to talk with them. Dip into your tool box (such as deep breathing, mindfulness, grounding exercises) to find ways to be present and calmer with your children. Please let us know if you would like some more information related to this.
- **Stay present with your children when they are experiencing “big” feelings.** It's important to let them express how they are feeling. Let them know that these feelings are all “normal.” Be mindful of trying to fix, rescue or dismiss their feelings. Responses like “You have heard so much about this virus and you are worried” may be more helpful than “You don't need to be worried.” Or “Why are you worried?” Remember physical distancing doesn't apply to your family (unless someone is sick or has been in contact with someone with coronavirus or has been overseas). Your children will need you to be close, and hugs if wanted can be reassuring.
- **Respond to your children's questions in a simple but honest way.** Try and put yourself in their shoes when answering their questions. If you were them, what response would be most helpful? Reassure them that you will be doing everything you can to keep them safe. Let them know that this isn't a permanent situation... that things will get back to normal. Try and look at the positives with them, for example people singing together on balconies during the lock down in Europe and people putting teddy bears in windows of houses so people can connect with each other.
- **Keep in mind that children are often aware of so much more than we often give them credit for.** It is unlikely that children haven't heard something in relation to the coronavirus, even if they aren't talking about it. Try and restrict their exposure to news about the pandemic. This also means trying not to have “adult” conversations about the pandemic around or within hearing range of children. It can be overwhelming and frightening for children to see and hear too much about the current situation.

Creative Activity Inspiration: Scavenger Hunt



<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-events/news/how-to-talk-young-kids-children-mental-health-wellbeing-illness>

Making time to get outside can be helpful for us all.

With social distancing, homeschooling, more time spent indoors, less access to childcare and our usual social supports, we know that families are under a lot of pressure at home at the moment.

Getting outside can be difficult, but it is a great stress relief for parents and children alike. Here is an activity that can help families get outdoors – and does not involve any materials. In fact, everything you need is in your own neighborhood - even just in your own back garden.

What is a Scavenger Hunt?

A scavenger hunt is basically a list of things for kids to find outside. Things to find could be:

- colours
- a smooth rock
- a seed
- a pine cone
- a feather
- something that flies
- a Y-shaped stick
- something pink

There are plenty of ideas and templates you can find online like these below. If you don't have a printer or mobile device you can write a simple list yourself.

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/g32050844/scavenger-hunt-ideas-for-kids/>

<https://iheartcraftythings.com/simple-color-scavenger-hunt-kids.html>

A little message from Holyoake's Youth and Children's team...



For further support, please contact

Alcohol and Drug Helpline 24hrs:
(08) 9442 5000

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800