

# HANDY 'TOP TIPS'

THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK!

## DOING WHAT WE CAN – STRUCTURE AND ROUTINE

When things are uncertain, this can lead to anxiety. This can affect us all in different ways. We can see this in ourselves and we can see this in our children too. Life is uncertain at the moment and it has been for some time. Jobs are in the balance, health worries are very real, schools are not normal and our security of friendships are not there in the same way. Building in some level of structure and routine in our lives, even at the moment, can be one way to help reduce some of these levels of anxiety. Some children (and adults) struggle more particularly with change and require a more concrete and predictable world to feel secure. To help support our children (or ourselves) in these times we need to decrease the uncertainty and increase the feeling of security by creating structure and routine. Have a look at these 4 simple ways to build structure and routine:

### Build Structure into Daily Routine

You want your daily routine to be as structured and predictable as possible. This reduces anxiety. Regular routines that are already in place such as bed times should be continued - this goes for us adults too!



### Use a Visual Schedule

Try to use visual schedules so everyone can see what is coming up next. There is, therefore, a plot through the day, creating predictability. Children can help create this, also helping them to have ownership over this - don't forget to plot family fun!

### Keep Routines and Habits the Same

Keep your familiar routines consistent between days. For example, going for a walk at the same time each day or following the same routine for the walk, or having tea at the same time etc... Familiarity builds security for us all.



### Manage Transitions

Switching from one activity to the next can be challenging (even for us adults juggling more than usual) Make transitions easier by giving reminders that things are coming to an end and other things are beginning. Now/Next boards or a timer can help prepare children for the change (like lists and alerts for us).

### THIS WEEK'S FAMILY CHALLENGE

This week, sit down together as a family and think about your routines and structure. Work together to create a visual schedule that can be put up for everyone to see. You could use different colours or pictures to represent different people - and don't forget to schedule family fun and daily exercise too!