

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

Preparing for and Responding to COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19):¹ KEY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

Resilience Quick Links for School Personnel, Families, and Students:
Ensuring the Well-Being of the Whole School Community During School at Home

RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING – AN OVERVIEW

The school community — administrators, educators/faculty, and staff at the K-12 and higher ed setting, as well as families, students, and partners — and the communities they serve have admirably risen to the challenge of continuing essential services, such as teaching and learning, feeding and food distribution, mental/behavioral health, and more during the COVID-19 pandemic. School communities have led the way by ensuring the continued provision of social and emotional learning supports and a supportive learning environment for students as they engage in “school at home.” As school communities and the communities they serve continue their important role in school safety at home through the summer months — when cultural ties and ongoing communication is critical — stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue may occur.

While we are grateful for school safety leadership and continued engagement efforts, it is important to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting your well-being and the well-being of other members of the whole school community. Resilience is “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress”² and can be learned and developed in anyone. By building and maintaining resilience strategies, such as creating a self-care plan and taking actionable coping steps, we can improve the effectiveness of our work and prevent burnout and compassion fatigue in all settings and all times, including school safety at home. Everyone has the capacity to not just bounce back to where we were but to grow and improve — through post-traumatic growth — by enhancing our relationships and our outlook on life.

This handout gives school safety teams and school personnel, families, and students key practical steps and quick links to learning opportunities and resources on resilience and well-being in the context of a pandemic and other emergency events. School personnel can use it to support themselves, their colleagues, their students, and their families; parents can use it to support themselves and their children; and students, with their families, can use it to support themselves and their peers.

Contact the Disaster Distress Hotline for free counseling and support. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

¹ According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this novel coronavirus is named “SARS-CoV-2,” while the disease it causes is named “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19). (Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>, last accessed May 27, 2020.)

²American Psychological Association (2020, February 1). *Building Your Resilience*.
<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

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INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Educators/faculty are at risk for compassion fatigue because they have compassion, caring, and empathy for the students they work and engage with every day. You can not only build your own resilience but also drive the implementation of resilience strategies across your entire school community and into the communities they serve. For example, you can integrate the topic into staff meetings and other professional development opportunities, and school personnel can then take that information to their families, students, and community partners. Additionally, you can integrate important messages and resources into ongoing communications, including mail, email, social media, and other innovative methods. The REMS TA Center offers trainings — archived Webinars and downloadable training packages — and publications for you to learn more about resilience strategies for educators, which can be used in all settings and all times, including the “school at home” setting.

Take action to prevent burnout and maintain resilience before, during, and after an emergency.

- ✓ Learn how to identify signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue, both professionally and personally.
- ✓ Create a professional self-care plan that includes physical, emotional, cognitive, social, financial, and spiritual components.
- ✓ Incorporate self-care into your daily routine.
- ✓ Provide resilience and well-being resources and training to colleagues and other school personnel.
- ✓ Integrate resilience and well-being into your emergency operations plan’s Recovery Annex.
- ✓ Encourage school personnel and families to contact the Disaster Distress Helpline, if needed.
- ✓ Implement Psychological First Aid (PFA) at your school and train school personnel on the model.

Engage in online training opportunities on educator resilience.

[Understanding Educator Resilience and Developing a Self-Care Plan](#) | REMS TA Center.

Download this specialized training package to train your colleagues.

[Understanding Educator Resilience & Developing a Self-Care Plan](#) | REMS TA Center. Watch this Webinar on resilience, compassion fatigue, professional self-care plan development, and strategies that can be employed to work more effectively with students impacted by stress, loss, and trauma. This is accompanied by the worksheet [Building a Self-Care Action Plan](#).

Learn about the PFA model.

[Implementing Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) in School and Postsecondary Settings](#) | REMS TA Center. Watch this Webinar about PFA, its role during and following an emergency, and implementation strategies for its use in the school setting.

[Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) for Students and Teachers: Listen, Protect, Connect—Model & Teach](#) | REMS TA Center. Read this publication on the use of PFA in schools and the strategy “Listen, Protect, Connect—Model & Teach,” including its goals, how schools can implement it, developmental concerns, and staff training considerations.

[10 Tips for Teaching the Psychological First Aid Model for K-12 Education Agencies](#) | REMS TA Center. Read about the PFA model, its core elements, and 10 tips to support its implementation before, during, and after emergency events.

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Read about coping and taking care of your behavioral health.

[Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for School Staff Teachers, Counselors, Administration, Support Staff](#) | **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network**. Learn about economic downturns, how they may affect emotional/behavioral health, and strategies for supporting students and helping them cope.

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) | **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**. Find tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak. This tip sheet is also available in [Somali](#) and [Hmong](#).

Read about supporting and talking with your students.

[Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#) | **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**. Read this publication that describes possible reactions to an infectious disease outbreak by age group and how parents, caregivers, and teachers can help children recover. This tip sheet is also available in [Somali](#) and [Hmong](#).

[Helping Children With Traumatic Separation or Traumatic Grief Related to COVID-19](#) | **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network**. Read tips on supporting children who are experiencing traumatic separation or traumatic grief related to COVID-19.

[Supporting Children During Coronavirus \(COVID19\)](#) | **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network**. Learn about how you can help children cope with and talk about COVID-19.

[Talking With Children About Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for Parents, School Staff, and Others Working With Children](#) | **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**. Find tips for talking to children and facts about COVID-19 to discuss.

[Telemental Health 101](#) | **National Center for School Mental Health**. Watch this Webinar to help prepare school mental health practitioners provide online mental health services to students and families during school closures.

[Psychosocial Issues for Children and Adolescents in Disasters](#) | **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**. Read this publication that offers resources to those working with children after an emergency event and discusses theories of child development as applied to youth experiencing the fear, anxiety, and trauma of emergency events.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Families are critical school safety partners during the pandemic and you have an important role to play in your child's and family's resilience. This is especially important to continue to engage with children during "school at home" and the summer break. For example, you can answer your child's questions about COVID-19 and model healthy behaviors. Use the trainings and publications below to learn about coping and resilience strategies, including how to talk with your child about the pandemic.

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Take action to maintain resilience for your family before, during, and after an emergency.

- ✓ Learn how to identify signs and symptoms of stress.
- ✓ Incorporate ways to cope into your and your family's daily routine.
- ✓ Check in and connect with your loved ones via virtual communication.
- ✓ Encourage your family and friends to contact the Disaster Distress Helpline, if needed.
- ✓ Become trained on the PFA model.

Engage in online training opportunities on PFA.

[Psychological First Aid: Addressing Mental Health Distress During Disasters](#) | **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Watch this Webinar about PFA and PFA training resources that are available online and in person.

Read about coping and taking care of your behavioral health.

[Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) | **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.** Learn about how you can prepare your family for an infectious disease outbreak, reduce your family's risk, and cope with stress caused by COVID-19.

[Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for Parents](#) | **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.** Learn about economic downturns, how they may affect emotional/behavioral health, and strategies for supporting your family and helping your family cope.

[Daily Life and Coping](#) | **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Find information on how your family can prepare for, protect itself from, and cope with COVID-19.

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) | **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.** Find tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak. This tip sheet is also available in [Somali](#) and [Hmong](#).

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[Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#) | **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.** Read this publication that describes possible reactions to an infectious disease outbreak by age group and how parents, caregivers, and teachers can help children recover. This tip sheet is also available in [Somali](#) and [Hmong](#).

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[Talking With Children About Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for Parents, School Staff, and Others Working With Children](#) | U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Find tips for talking to children and facts about COVID-19 to discuss.

[Helping Children Cope During and After a Disaster: A Resource for Parents and Caregivers](#) | U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Read about what you can do before, during, and after an emergency event to help your child reduce stress and cope.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

It is normal to worry and feel scared or confused during or after an emergency event, like a pandemic. You can and should talk to someone when/if you need help. Use the booklets and fact sheets below to learn more about pandemics, how they may affect your emotional/behavioral health, and how to cope.

Elementary and Middle School Students

[Trinka and Sam Fighting the Big Virus: Trinka, Sam, and Littletown Work Together](#) | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Read this story designed for families with young children to talk about COVID-19 and feelings about the pandemic.

[Fighting the Big Virus: Trinka and Sam's Questions](#) | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Read this companion story designed for families and young children to help answer questions about COVID-19.

[Ready Wrigley: Coping After a Disaster](#) | U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Read this activity book that offers parents and educators an interactive way to talk to young children about how to cope after a disaster, helping children talk about their feelings, and learning positive ways to express their emotions in uncertain times.

High School and College-Age Students

[Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for Youth High School & College Age](#) | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Learn about economic downturns, how they may affect emotional/behavioral health, and strategies for supporting yourself and helping yourself cope.

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Find tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak. This tip sheet is also available in [Somali](#) and [Hmong](#).

THANK YOU

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Supportive Schools and its REMS TA Center sincerely thank you — school communities, the education agencies that support them, families, and community partners — for your continued service and dedication to children and your community during this challenging time. Please remember that the REMS TA Center is here to support you in all of your school safety efforts, including school safety at home.



If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact the REMS TA Center at (855) 781-REMS (7367) or info@remstacenter.org.

[@remstacenter](https://remstacenter.org) <https://remstacenter.org>

