



EFFECTIVE PARENTING FOR TEENS POST LOCKDOWN

Dr. Terri Said



FREE PARENTING ADVICE FROM WAYS PSYCHOLOGISTS: LUKE AND COURTNEY


- ▶ In the event that you require expert advice book in for 1-3 sessions with a WAYS psychologist to get strategies and advice to manage your unique family situation.
- ▶ Psychologists can refer internally or externally if more extensive work is required.
- ▶ Call 9365 2500 or email Luke@ways.org.au
Courtney@ways.org.au



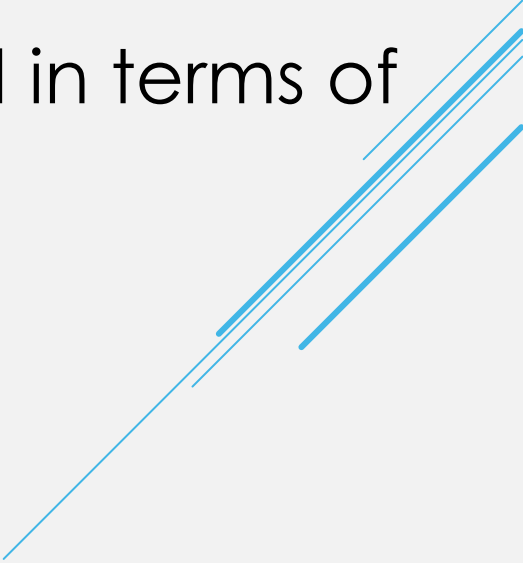
EFFECTIVE PARENTING COURSE

- ▶ This **free** four-week course is facilitated by experienced clinicians specialising in adolescent development and behaviour. The course will assist parents to build stronger parent-child relationships and better manage and understand their adolescent's behaviour. This is a skills-building and educational program only.
- ▶ **Topics include:** Understanding your child - adolescent development
Reflecting on your parenting - the impact of various parenting styles
Setting limits and boundaries that stick- Effective communication and conflict resolution strategies- Practical strategies for building resilience in your children. **Special topics:** Managing Social Media, alcohol and other drugs, sex, mental health,.
- ▶ **DATE:** Every Monday from the 15th of November to the 6th of December 2021
- ▶ **TIME:** 6pm - 8pm
- ▶ **WHERE:** WAYS Bondi Beach - 63A Wairoa Ave North Bondi
- ▶ **Book in:** Places are very limited due to distancing
- ▶ Please call and speak to Courtney or Luke for more information P. (02) 9365 2500
- ▶ E. courtney@ways.org.au or luke@ways.org.au

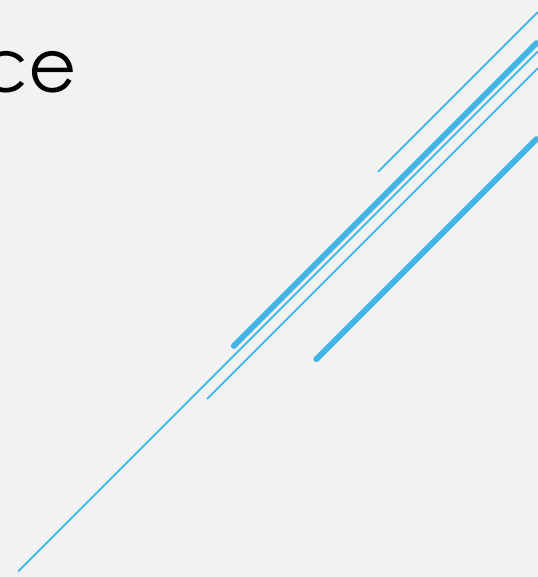
OVERVIEW OF SEMINAR

- ▶ Adolescent development
 - ▶ Adolescent brain development
 - ▶ Understanding lockdown: Impact of COVID lockdown on young people and families
 - ▶ Managing emerging from lockdown
 - ▶ Strategies for effective communication & conflict resolution
 - ▶ Support services
 - ▶ 15 minutes question time.
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PRINCIPLES OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Adolescence is a process of information collection and development of meaning.
 - ◆ Marked by ongoing process of experimentation.
 - ◆ Meaning of self best understood in terms of temporariness.
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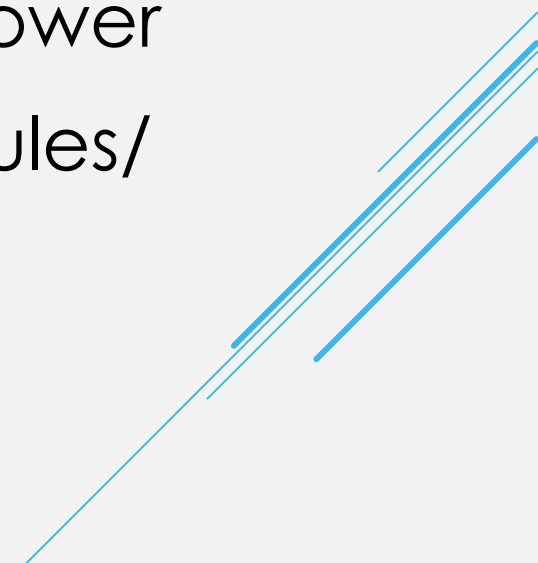
- ◆ Each event is a trial not something definitive.
- ◆ Behaviour doesn't always fit intention.
- ◆ Concept of imaginary audience
- ◆ Concept of infallibility



THE ADOLESCENT PERSPECTIVE

- ▶ Need for Empathy
 - ▶ Need for Validation
 - ▶ Not making assumptions regarding their thoughts or feelings
 - ▶ Making assumptions regarding friends
 - ▶ Feeling controlled
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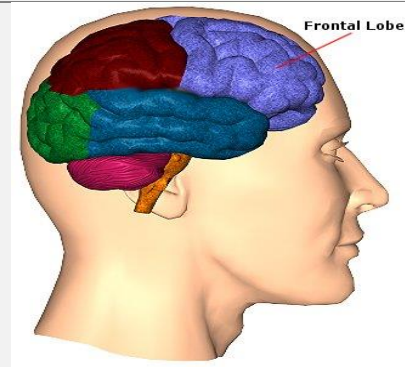
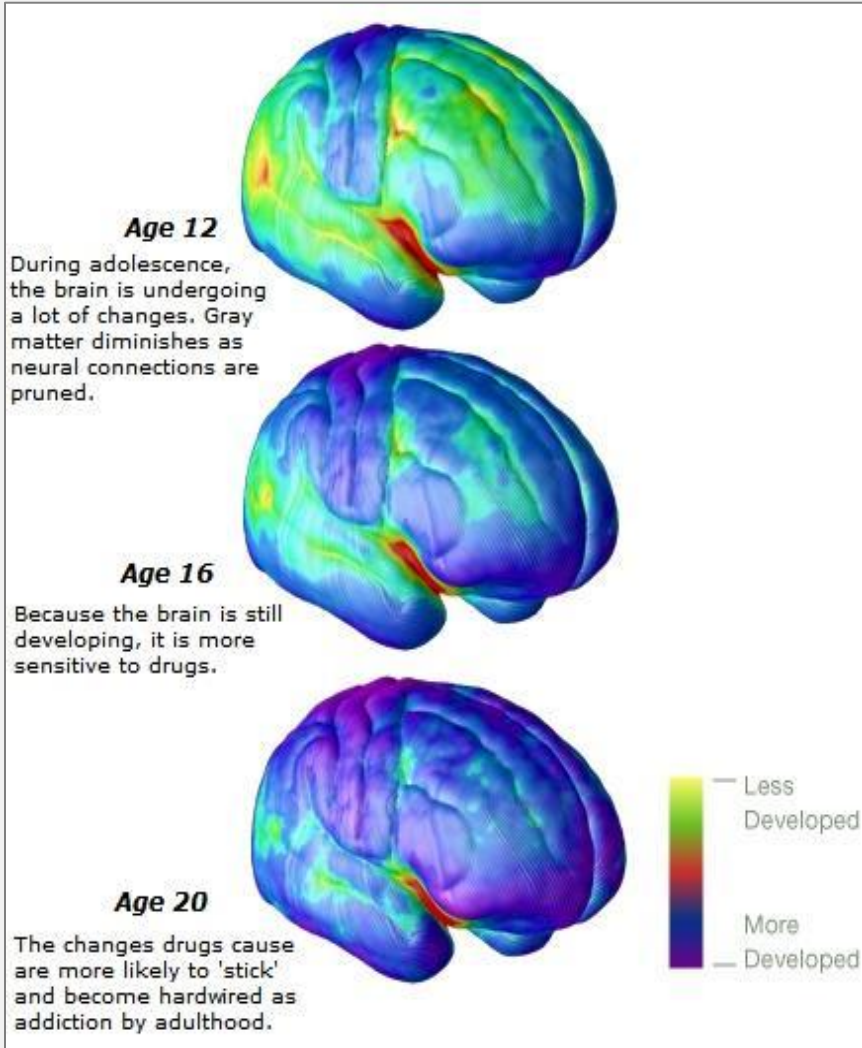
- ▶ Feeling judged
- ▶ Anger VS Disappointment
- ▶ Fairness
- ▶ Need to belong
- ▶ Fear of standing out
- ▶ Need to maintain personal power
- ▶ Overwhelmed by too many rules/ expectations



Teen Brain



BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN HAS:

- ◆ Greater capacity to learn and create
- ◆ However is vulnerable and has increased risk of:
 - ◆ -brain damage
 - ◆ -developing addiction
 - ◆ -developing mental illness
- ◆ Increased desire for risk taking
- ◆ Parts of the brain that control impulses and emotions not yet mature

INSIDE THE TEENAGE BRAIN

Adolescents are prone to high-risk behaviour



Parietal Lobe

Responsible for touch, sight, language; grows till early 20s

Adults Fully developed

Teens Do not process information effectively

Ventral Striatum

Reward centre, not fully developed in teens

Adults Fully developed

Teens Are more excited by reward than consequence

Hippocampus

Hub of memory and learning; grows in teens

Adults Fully functional; loses neurons with age

Teens Tremendous learning curve

Prefrontal Cortex

Its functions include planning and reasoning; grows till 25 years

Adults Fully developed

Teens Immature, prone to high-risk behaviour

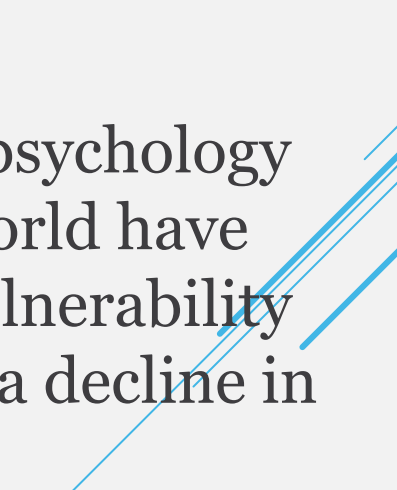
Amygdala

Emotional core for passion, impulse, fear, aggression.

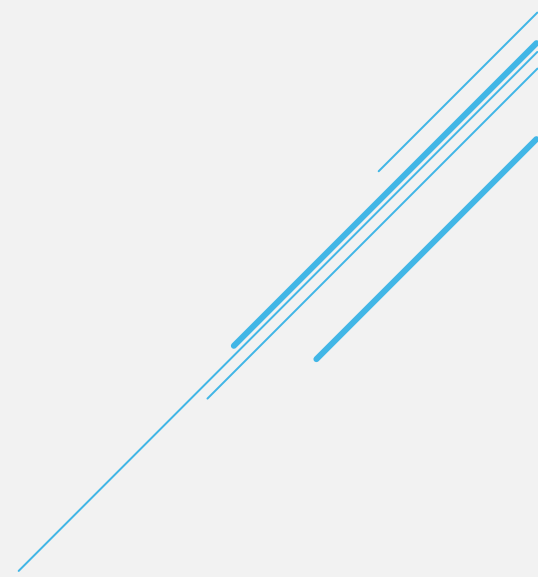
Adults Rely less on this, use prefrontal cortex more


Teens More impulsive

IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN


- ▶ The effects of COVID-19 on young people are continually emerging
 - ▶ It is important to note that the full impact is complex and not yet fully understood.
 - ▶ The effect of COVID-19 can also be dynamic—outcomes change quickly (for instance, mental wellbeing and social connectedness) when conditions change (such as introducing or easing restrictions).
 - ▶ Studies in child and adolescent psychiatry, psychology and public health in different parts of the world have shown that the pandemic increased child vulnerability and endangered mental health, resulting in a decline in subjective well-being
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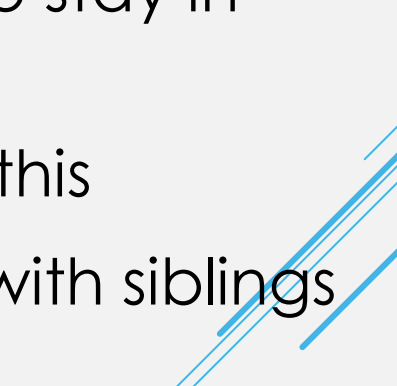
- ▶ The lockdowns impacted young people in the following domains:
 - Social
 - Emotional
 - School
 - Family




- Young people and families will experience different a range of impacts
 - Impact of lockdown on young people will vary based on:
 - Pre-lockdown functioning i.e. at school, mental health
 - Capacity to cope with change
 - Parent / family coping with lockdown
 - Temperament
 - Capacity for internal self regulation
 - Level of maturity
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▶ **The social impact:**

- Disruptions to school and social life have been highlighted as the main factors determining child vulnerability.
 - Reduced social interactions had varied impacts on young people.
 - 42% of young people aged 13–17 said the had negatively affected their social connectedness
 - Leading to increased feelings of social isolation
 - Increased social anxiety around interacting over social media/phone
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- Feelings of being left out of social interactions that occurred over social media, phone during lockdown
 - Anxiety around social interaction when returning to school environment
 - Changes in friendships and social groups
 - Increased reliance on and use of ICT (computer/phone) and social media to stay in touch with friends
 - Increased conflict with parents due to this
 - Frustrations due to increased conflicts with siblings while in lockdown
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▶ **Emotional impact:**


- Increased levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms
 - Increased levels of hopelessness about their futures
 - Increased sleep problems caused by anxiety and disrupted routines
 - Increase in oppositional behaviors
 - Decrease self esteem in terms of education
 - Lockdown challenged children's self-regulation skills
 - Some increased their self-regulation skills
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- ▶ In terms of anxiety, a study of young people in NSW aged 13–17 revealed that :
 - 46% were worried about being isolated from friends and school friends
 - 23% were concerned about being separated from family members
 - 46% were worried about being isolated from friends and school friends
 - 45% were worried about their education being disrupted or held back as a result of the changes to schooling
 - 42% were worried about a friend or family member's contracting the virus.
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▶ **On the positive side the study demonstrated:**

- 2 in 3 young people (64%) felt they had a good understanding of what was happening (by reading and watching the news and other announcements)
 - 2 in 3 (69%) discussed developments regarding COVID-19 with their family and carers, increasing family connectedness
 - Data released from the Australian government found that on the positive side that 62% of 12-18 years old's felt confident they could turn to their family or carers for any support they needed
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▶ **In relation to trusting sources of information the study showed:**

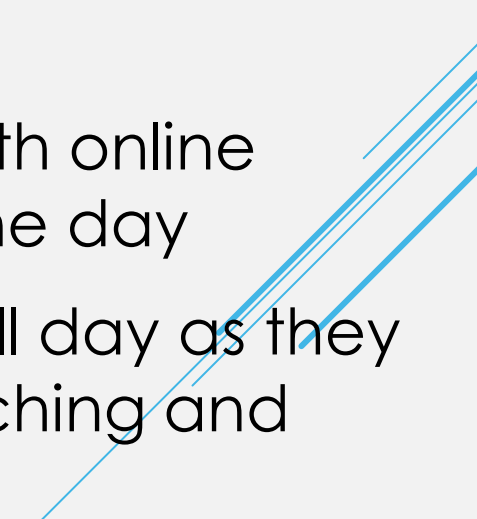
- the vast majority (96%) trusted their parents or guardians to provide them with accurate information about the pandemic and the response measures
 - 90% trusted the Chief Medical Officers and Health officials at the federal and state levels
 - 88% trusted teachers and schools
 - 78% trusted state and territory leaders to provide accurate information
 - 42% trusted social media for accurate information about the virus, pandemic and responses
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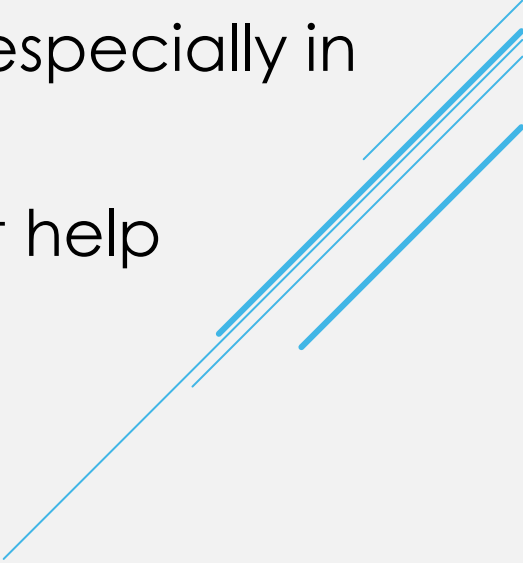
► **Impact on education:**


- Students were vulnerable to negative impacts from learning at home.
 - This varied based on age, social disadvantage, specific needs (including physical or psychological needs or language support) or family employment context
 - Home-based learning increased student and parent anxiety and stress due to the increased isolation and the loss of social connections
 - Many families lacked the space, experience, time, technology and/or resources to support learning at home.
 - Access to adequate technology was a particular barrier for students from remote and rural areas and from low-income households
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- Home-based learning also restricted the access of students to school-based support for health and wellbeing and decreased the usual opportunities available to schools to identify and respond to issues.

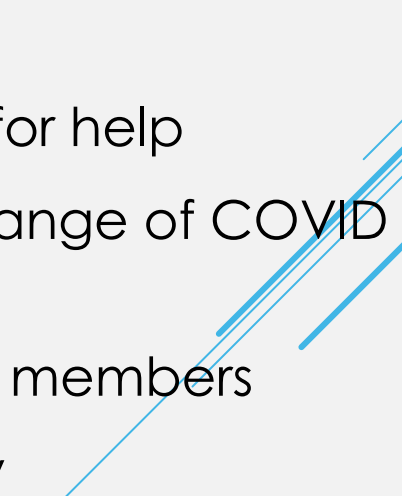
▶ **As a result:**


- Students felt frustrated having to learn over the computer for long periods impacting capacity for self regulation.
 - Students found it difficult to engage with online learning for extended periods during the day
 - Students found it boring being online all day as they missed the pre-pandemic ways of teaching and learning
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- ▶ Students were not able to adapt to new forms of schooling without the atmosphere in the classroom and opportunities for open and direct discussions, questions and answers.
 - ▶ Students felt the lack of variation of online learning challenging
 - ▶ Students fell behind in school subjects especially in subjects they always had trouble with
 - ▶ Students found it harder to ask and get help
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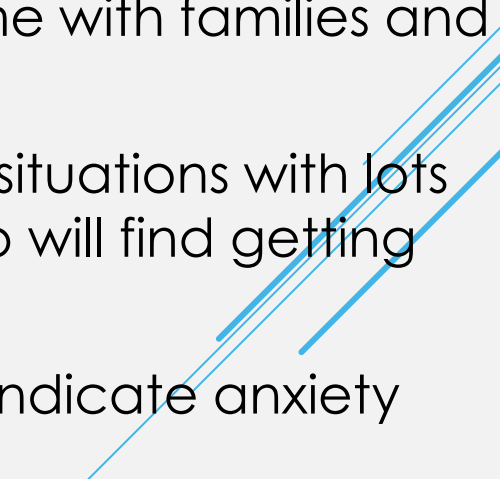
- ▶ School online attendance dropped overall
 - ▶ Increase in parent frustrations with children not doing schoolwork and falling behind,
 - ▶ Increase in parent difficulty in motivating their child to do work or catch up on missed work
 - ▶ This resulted in increased conflict in the home over schoolwork
 - ▶ Parents/ caregivers experienced frustrations working with schools and getting in touch with teachers
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▶ **Impact on family life:**

- ▶ COVID-19 caused disruption to household routines as educational institutions switched to remote learning and lack of social outings with friends
 - ▶ Arrangements for parents/caregivers changed due to working from home, reduced working hours or job loss.
 - ▶ The pandemic erased the distinction between school time and free time, cancelling extracurricular hobbies
 - ▶ More people in the home at the same time
 - ▶ Parents/caregivers having to multitask at home
 - ▶ Increased reliance on extended family members for help
 - ▶ Children having to witness parent stress due to a range of COVID related issues/changes
 - ▶ Increased conflict in the home between all family members
 - ▶ Parents also reported becoming closer as a family
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- ▶ Some students reported losing motivation doing online learning
 - ▶ Some students found the lack of structure disorientating and found it easier to get away with not doing work
 - ▶ Some students report being able to plan their school days more productively
 - ▶ Some students enjoyed being able to “think more independently” learning from home
 - ▶ Some students reported being able to sleep in more
 - ▶ Some preferred learning in a familiar environment like their rooms
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SUPPORTING CHILDREN AFTER LOCKDOWN

- ▶ **Children will have different experiences and will need different approaches**
 - It's important to remember that children have had hugely different experiences during lockdown. Each child may require a different approach
 - Some children who experience anxiety normally, may have found a break from going to school, a break from triggers for their anxiety. For them going back to school is going to be very anxiety provoking.
 - There are other children who have had a great time with families and don't want to return to school.
 - There are many children who have been in family situations with lots of arguing, and possibly violence and neglect who will find getting back to school a refuge.
 - Challenging and oppositional behaviors can also indicate anxiety and fear
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▶ **Modelling calmness**

- Be aware of how you model your own anxiety when speaking to your child about returning to school. Speak to your child when you feel calm yourself. Take a strengths based approach

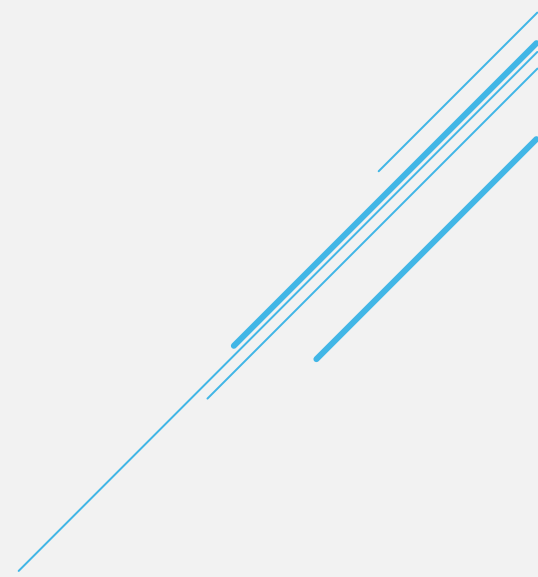
▶ **Listening and validating**

- Listen to your child. Hear what their concerns are. Acknowledge their feelings and let them know that you know it's tough for them and that they should be open about what they need.
- Opt for neutral questions that encourage children to express their feelings rather than statements that assume negative or positive feelings. "How do you feel about..?" is more likely to prompt an honest conversation than assuming you know how they feel.

▶ **Normalising the uncertainty and anxiety**

- Emphasize that it's normal to feel very anxious about the changes.
 - Change makes most people feel a bit strange and worried. Some people find this harder than others though. Stress that most children will be in the same boat
 - Honesty is key. Children and young people are quick to detect spin and it is better to explain uncertainty when it exists than to pretend that it does not. Anxiety arising from uncertainty can be supported by reminding children about what we know and what we can do
 - Tell them that "It's OK to be anxious" AND "I believe that you can and will cope"
 - If you convey your belief that your child will cope, they internalize this, and vice versa.
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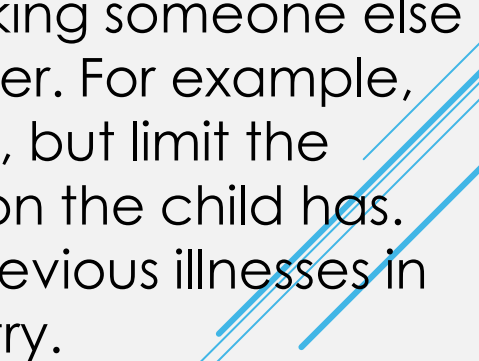
- Explain that some things are out of one's control. Try and focus on the things you can control, like trying your best with schoolwork, and see change as an opportunity to learn and grow.
- Identify any avoidance in your child i.e. returning to school due to social or work - related reasons
- Raise it and discuss it with them early on
- Seek psychological help early on as child will have different reasons for their avoidance



▶ **Parents don't have all the answers**

- It's ok to not have the answers. In fact, it's better not to pretend that you know. It's possible we may move back to school, then to lockdown, and back. This could go on for a while. Be realistic.

▶ **Limit news and address misinformation**

- If they are worried about getting unwell or making someone else unwell, agree to investigate some facts together. For example, you may look together at the facts in the news, but limit the amount viewed and address any misinformation the child has. You may want to look at what happened in previous illnesses in the past and how we got through it as a country.
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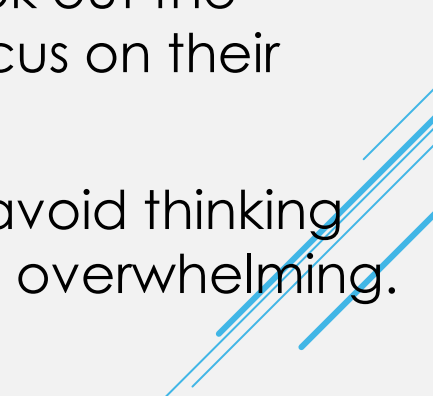
▶ **Uncertainty**

- ▶ This is a very uncertain time and although it would be great if we could make COVID disappear- we can't (not yet anyway). Children, like us adults, must learn to tolerate some uncertainty! This skill can help us to manage anxiety.
- ▶ Help children recognize that building tolerance of uncertainty can help them manage their anxiety and develop their growth mindset. Explain that its like building up 'mind muscles.
- ▶ Reestablish routines – structure can help alleviate uncertainty

▶ **Limit reassurance**

- Giving excessive reassurance is not advised. It's very tempting to give lots of reassurance to your child, as it may relieve anxiety in the short term. In the long term it keeps it going. Instead listen and ask them what they think, and what they think will help.
- Support skills in problem solving so they can consider their own solutions

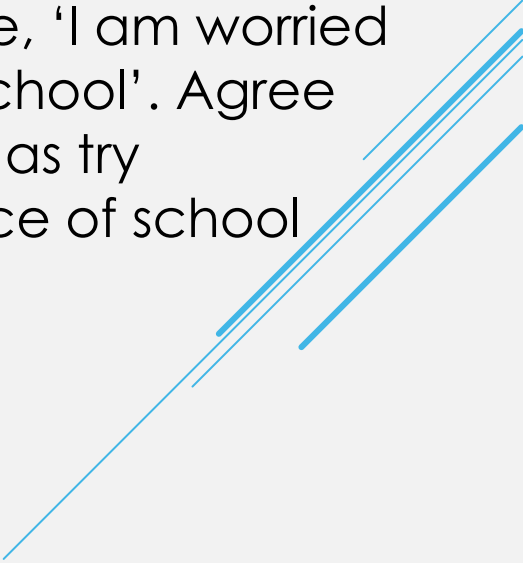
▶ **Focus on positive possibilities:**

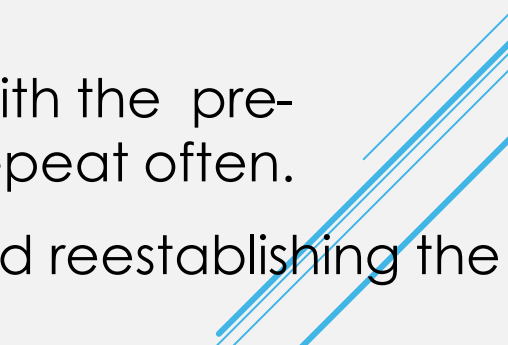
- Promote positive conversations by asking what they like about school and what they are looking forward to when they return. Let them know that school staff are looking forward to seeing them.
 - Encourage your child to recall a time in the past when they have faced challenges that made them feel nervous or worried. Think about the strategies that they used to manage these emotions and get through the situation/s.
 - Encourage your child to focus on the good things, no matter how small they may seem. It is important to seek out the positives to help build their confidence and focus on their strengths.
 - Encourage them to focus on the present and avoid thinking too far ahead. Thinking too far ahead can feel overwhelming.
 - Make a concrete list of their strengths
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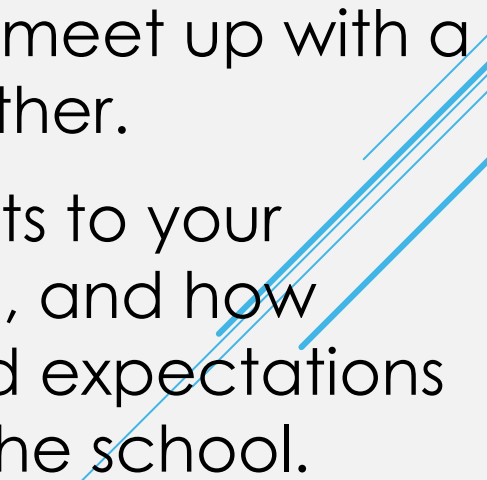
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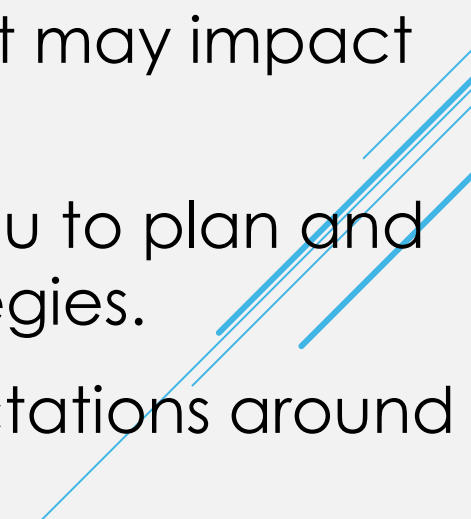
➤ **Focus on possible strategies**


- Help children to focus on possible strategies. Ask them how they adapted to the lockdown. What helped? What might help them now adapt to going back to school?
 - There may be some things that immediately can be done to problem solve the concerns raised. For example, 'I am worried that my friends won't want to speak to me at school'. Agree an experiment to try this out before hand, such as try contacting a friend to speak or meet in advance of school starting.
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- ▶ **Parents preparing children for the return- routines, reconnecting with friends etc.**
 - During the process of returning to school, try and prepare children by getting them back into a routine.
 - They will need to go to bed at a reasonable consistent time, learn to wake up early and learn to do the school walk/ cycle/ drive to school again.
 - These routines **will take time** to be reestablished. Be patient and realistic regarding this adjustment.
 - Ensure both parents have an agreed upon return to school schedule
 - Give children time to reacquaint themselves with the pre-lockdown schedule- explain ahead of time. Repeat often.
 - Parents need to be consistent in reinforcing and reestablishing the pre-lockdown schedule
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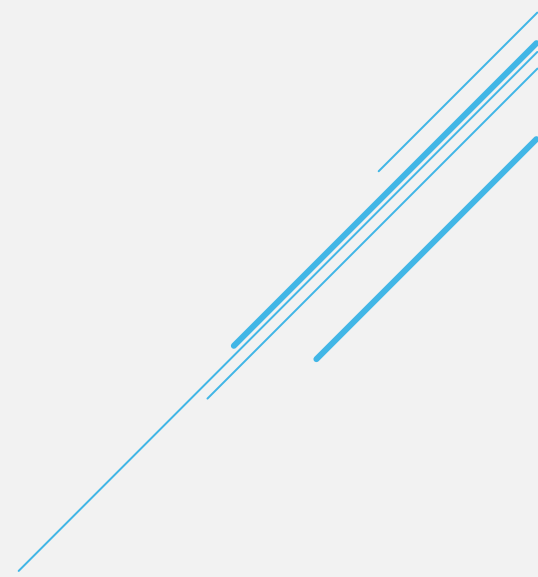
- The night before school encourage your child to double check their school timetable for the next day , pack their school bag, and get their lunch box, drink bottle and uniform ready.
 - Allow more time than usual on the first few mornings back to calmly get ready.
 - Take your child to school if that will help build a greater sense of security.
 - Alternatively, encourage your child to meet up with a friend before school and travel in together.
 - When possible make positive statements to your children about what they're doing well, and how they're coping with the challenges and expectations placed on them by the teachers and the school.
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▶ **Once your child has returned to school:**

- Don't panic ! With good communication all will be sorted out in time
 - Discuss your child's perceived challenges about returning to school on an ongoing basis- check in regularly.
 - Make an appointment with the school to address any concerns relating to your child that may impact their transition back to school.
 - This will assist the school to work with you to plan and put in place appropriate support strategies.
 - Both parents should discuss their expectations around return to school with your child
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- Encourage them to be realistic and flexible and to speak with their teachers about their work, both the strengths and the challenges.
 - Get a tutor, if possible, to help your children catch up
 - Explain and reassure them that term 4 will be a time for lots of students to catch up - they must use this time wisely. They are not alone.
 - Gently but assertively emphasize their responsibility in terms of making an effort to re-adjust and catch up on schoolwork
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- Try get your children involved in out of school activities to widen social circle
- Parents should get psychological advice and support if your child has not managed to adjust early on
- Assess online govt support i.e. the Stay healthy HSC website



▶ **Establish a healthy consistent sleep routine**

- Explain the benefits of regular sleep to your children especially in terms of helping getting back into routines
- you should try to remove distractions from you bedroom. It is better to watch TV, play computer games and eat in another room. This will allow you to relax with no distractions in your bedroom.
- Be mindful of the presence of gadgets and electronics, such as computers, phones, tablets and TVs. The backlit 'blue light' displays suppress melatonin production – the hormone that helps you sleep; the suppression of melatonin causes sleep disruption. You should stop using these devices two hours before you go to sleep to reduce their impact on your sleeping.
- Exercising on a regular basis is thought to help us sleep
- Speak to a G.P if your child has trouble with this early on

▶ Rewards

- Use rewards in and out of school to help children manage their anxiety about getting to school and managing at school.
- Appropriate rewards can reinforce desired behaviors.
- This should be age appropriate and not too expensive.

