

Coping with Stress

As a parent or caregiver, you will not be able to prevent all the stressors your child faces, but you can help them develop positive and healthy ways of coping with stressors. Try out these tips:

- If you think your kids are feeling stressed, ask them about it.
- If your child doesn't want to talk about their feelings, try to be patient and be there to listen for when they are ready.
- Show your child affection through hugs and kisses, as this may make them feel good.
- If your child seems angry or frustrated, help them identify their feelings by teaching them the names of different emotions. Putting feelings into words helps them communicate. Being angry and frustrated is important as it helps people know that there's something wrong. Instead of trying to change your child's emotion, encourage them to understand it and find helpful ways of dealing with it.
- Help your child problem solve ways of dealing with issues they find stressful.
- Role model healthy ways of dealing with stress yourself. This means actively taking time to take care of yourself!
- Try to limit situations kids find stressful by providing structure and routine for your child, as children often have difficulty providing this for themselves.
- Teach your children different ways of managing uncomfortable feelings, such as talking about it, yoga, quiet time, deep breathing, visualization, meditation, or physical activity.
- Notice changes in in your child, such as tummy aches, changes in appetite, or how they are interacting with others, and whether these happen during certain times of the day.
- Try to ensure that your child has other adult supporters (e.g., grandparents, cousins, aunts/uncles, family friends) who they can turn to in times of stress. This will give your child some options for trusted people to turn to, and can provide support to parents.

Stress is a normal part of everyday life, and as parents and caregivers we can help children address stress in a healthy way. Helping children manage their stress will not only help them now, but will also help them for the rest of their lives!

- For more information please visit:
 - Canadian Mental Health Association
 - Healthy Children
 - The Psychology Foundation of Canada

If you or a loved one is going through a difficult time and needs support, please speak to a health care provider. Through the Aga Khan Health Board for Canada, we also provide advice and support for those in need. For more information, please contact the [Aga Khan Health Board](#).

There are also opportunities to learn more about mental health and mental illnesses. Courses are offered to the Jamat, such as Mental Health First Aid. Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based certification course that is accredited by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. It teaches participants how to effectively support people who are experiencing emotional distress or thinking about suicide. Another course, called Living Life to the Full,

teaches participants skills for managing life's stresses and enjoying healthier relationships.
For more information about these courses, please contact the [**Aga Khan Health Board**](#).