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To: BOCES District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public School Districts  
Principals of Public Schools  
Charter School Leaders  
Principals of Private Schools

From: Kathleen R. DeCataldo

Subject: Resources for Mental Health and Talking to Young People About COVID-19

Feeling anxiety amid a global pandemic is normal and natural for everyone. As the adults, it's critical that we take care of our own mental and physical health, and that will help us to better support our young people. The following resources offer guidance for self-care as well as strategies for talking about COVID-19 honestly and effectively with young people.



The outbreak of COVID-19 around the world has led to the spread of fear and panic for individuals and communities. In addition to following physical precautions guidelines, individuals should be taking care of their psychological well-being.

This guide includes tips for the following populations:

- For Everyone
- For Individuals Receiving Mental Health Services
- For Parents, Including Parents of Children with Pre-

OMH has also created the New York State Emotional Support Line staffed by specially trained volunteers who can help you. Call 1-800-368-6777.



- The publication, [Staying Calm and Assured](#), from [the National Association of School Psychologists](#), offers suggestions for remaining calm and assuring, making yourself available to young people, keeping explanations age appropriate, avoiding excessive blaming, monitoring television and social media exposure, maintaining a normal routine to the extent possible, being honest and accurate, knowing the symptoms of COVID-19, reviewing and modeling basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection, and discussing new rules or practices for school.



- The [New York State Department of Health](#) also offers guidance for caregivers, called [Guidance for Parents](#). Parents, te2f1()10 (t)4 (p)-4symp1 ( s)2or pygivbasutelay

Executive. School Districts and families are encourage to check out the many mental health trainings and resources on its [website](#).



- At this time, information about COVID-19 is rapidly evolving as new details are confirmed and new questions emerge. In the event of an outbreak in your community, as a parent/caregiver, your first concern is about how to protect and take care of your children and family. Knowing important information about the outbreak and learning how to be prepared can reduce your stress and help calm likely anxieties.
- [Guide](#) [-P](#) will help you think about how an infectious disease outbreak might affect your family—both physically and emotionally—and what you can do to help your family cope.

[E](#)  
[W](#)

- [The W](#) offers a compilation of [E](#) [E](#) specific to school social workers, resources specific to New York, resources for children and parents, articles and websites.

[W](#) [E](#) [-E](#) [-E](#) [-Z](#) [D](#)  
[Z](#)

- Are you struggling in the midst of COVID-19? Crisis counselors are still just a phone call or text away.

[N](#) [E](#) [D](#) [E](#) [1-E](#) [-Z](#) [-K](#) [D](#)

- If you or someone you know is suicidal or in emotional distress, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Trained crisis workers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your confidential and toll free call goes to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals.

[W](#) [N](#) [H](#) [1-E](#) [-E](#) [HE](#) [D](#) [1-E](#) [-E](#) [-E](#) [D](#)

- Free and confidential information in English and Spanish for individuals and family members facing substance abuse and mental health issues. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Utilize the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator.