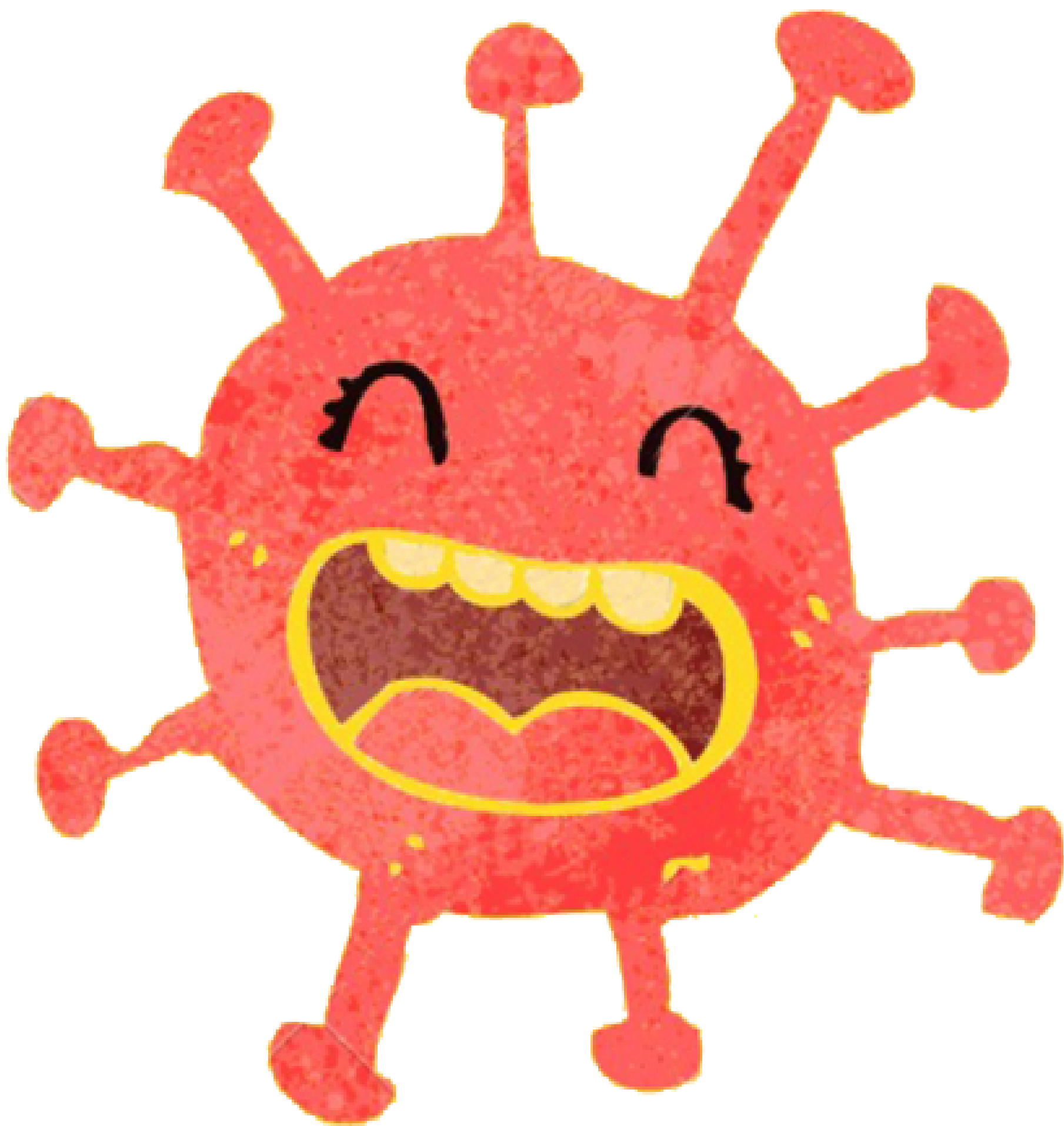


HELLO!

**I am a VIRUS,
cousins with the Flu and
the Common Cold**



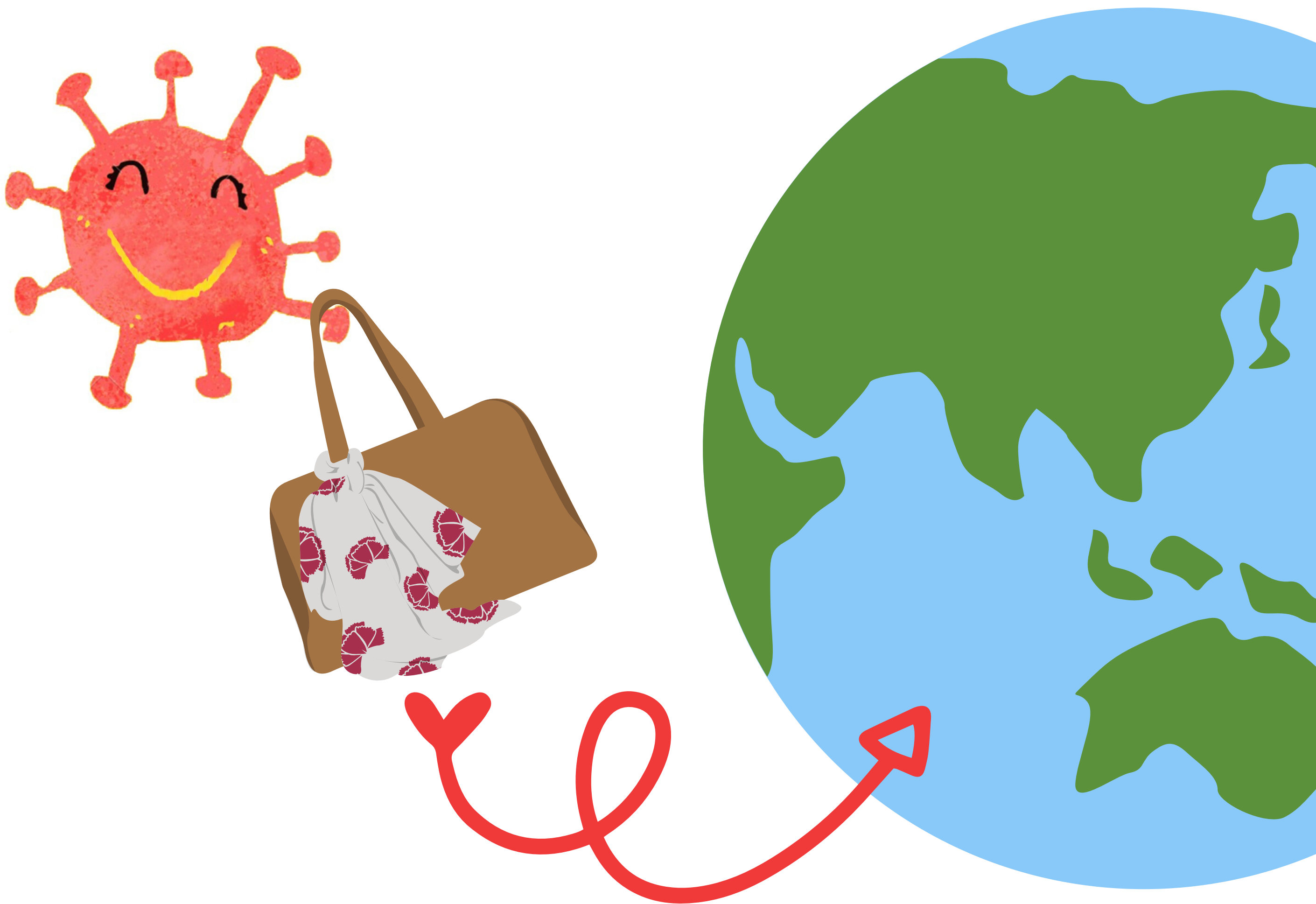
My name is Coronavirus

MANUELA MOLINA - @MINDHEART.KIDS

WWW.MINDHEART.CO

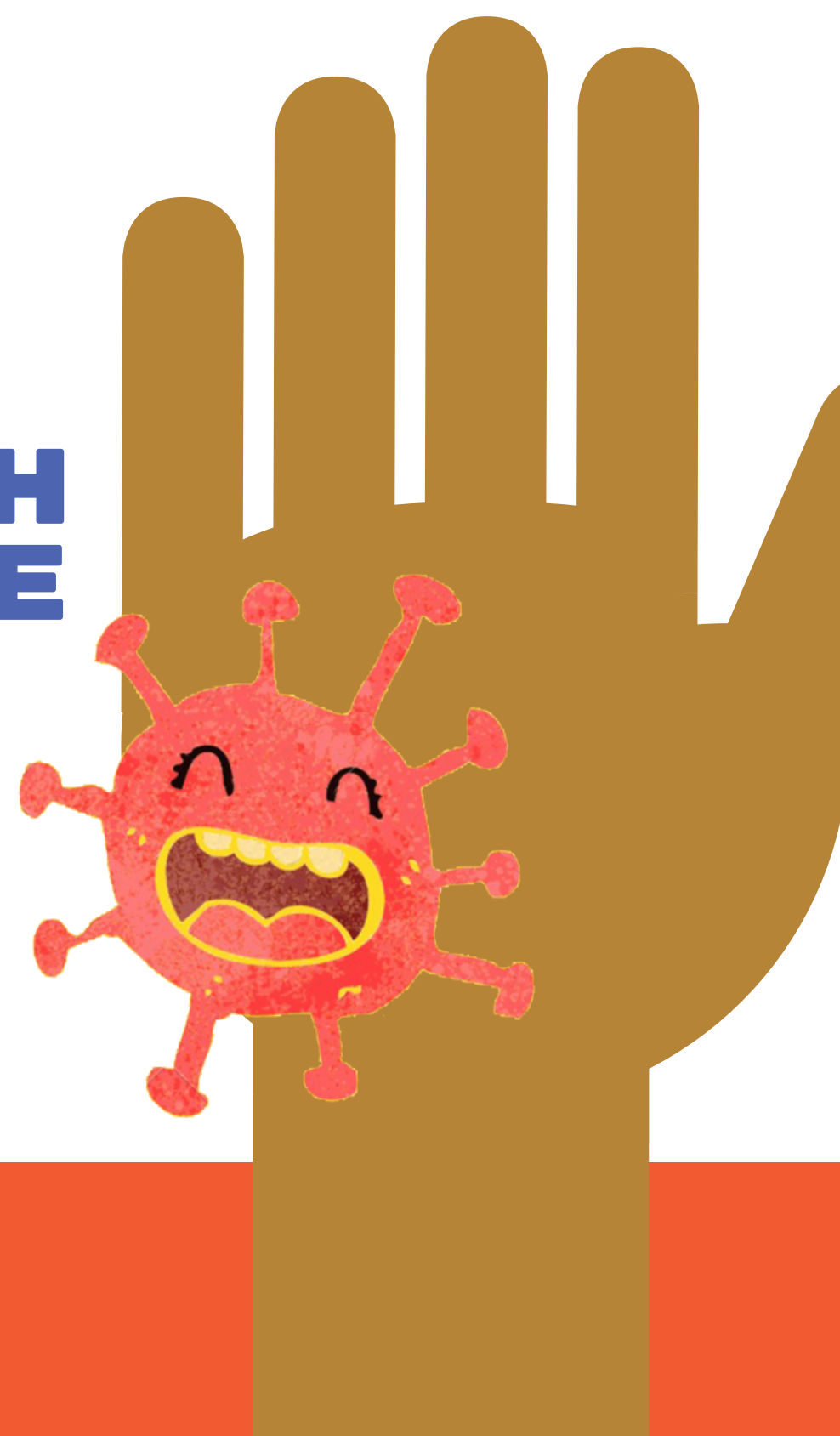
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I love to travel...



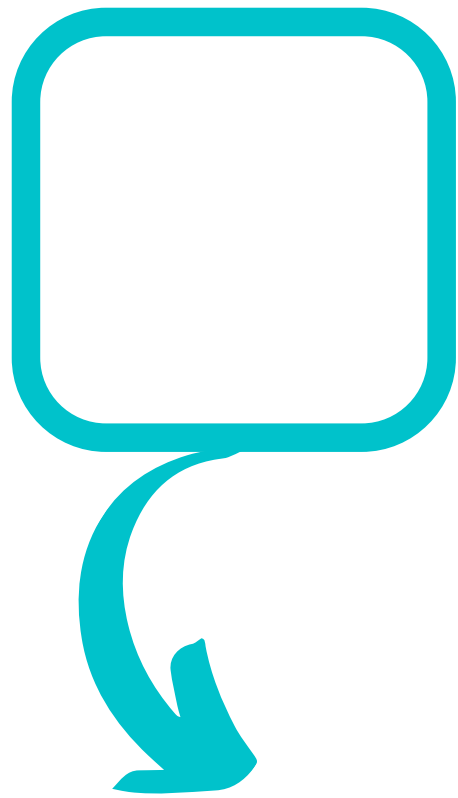
and to jump
from hand to
hand to say Hi

**HIGH
FIVE**

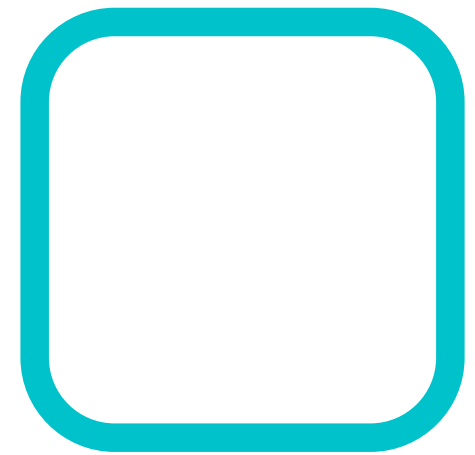


Have you heard about me?

YES



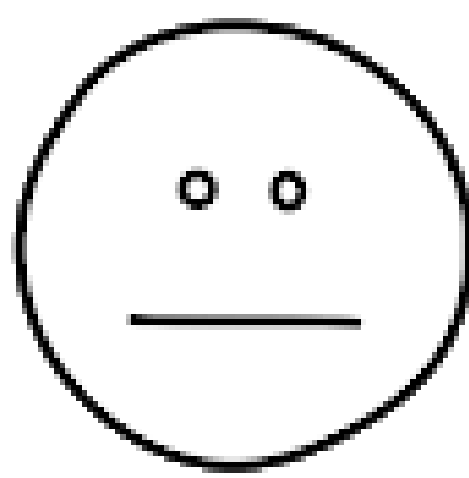
NO



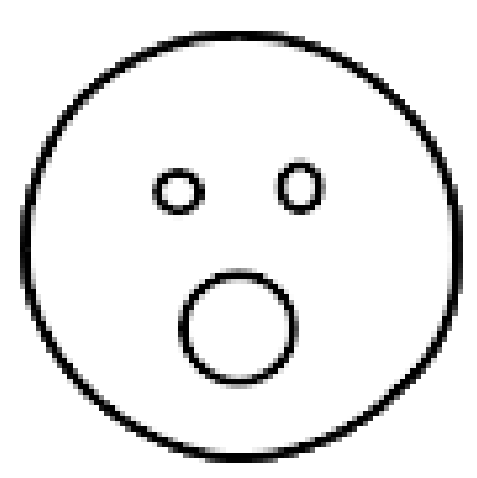
And how do you feel when you hear my name?



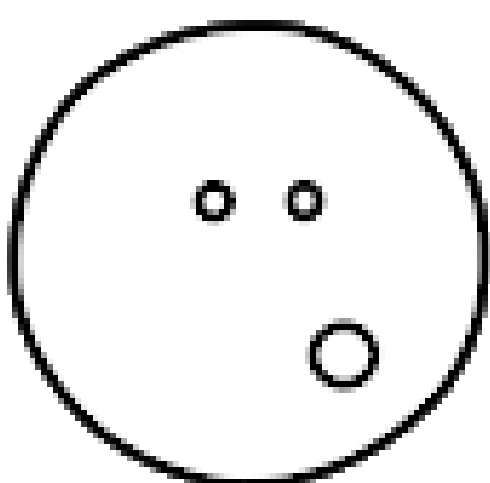
Relaxed



Confused



Worried



Curious

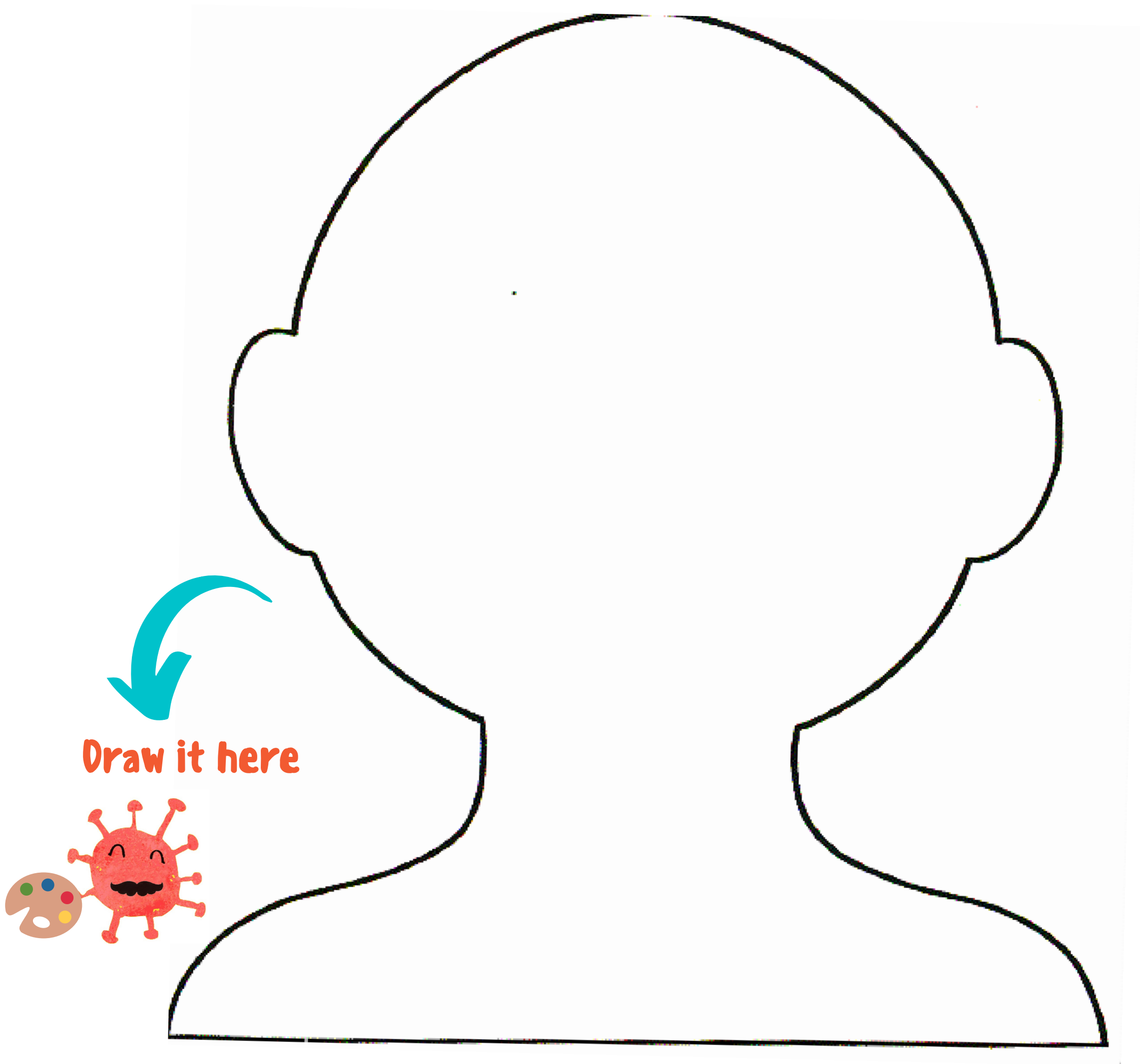


Nervous



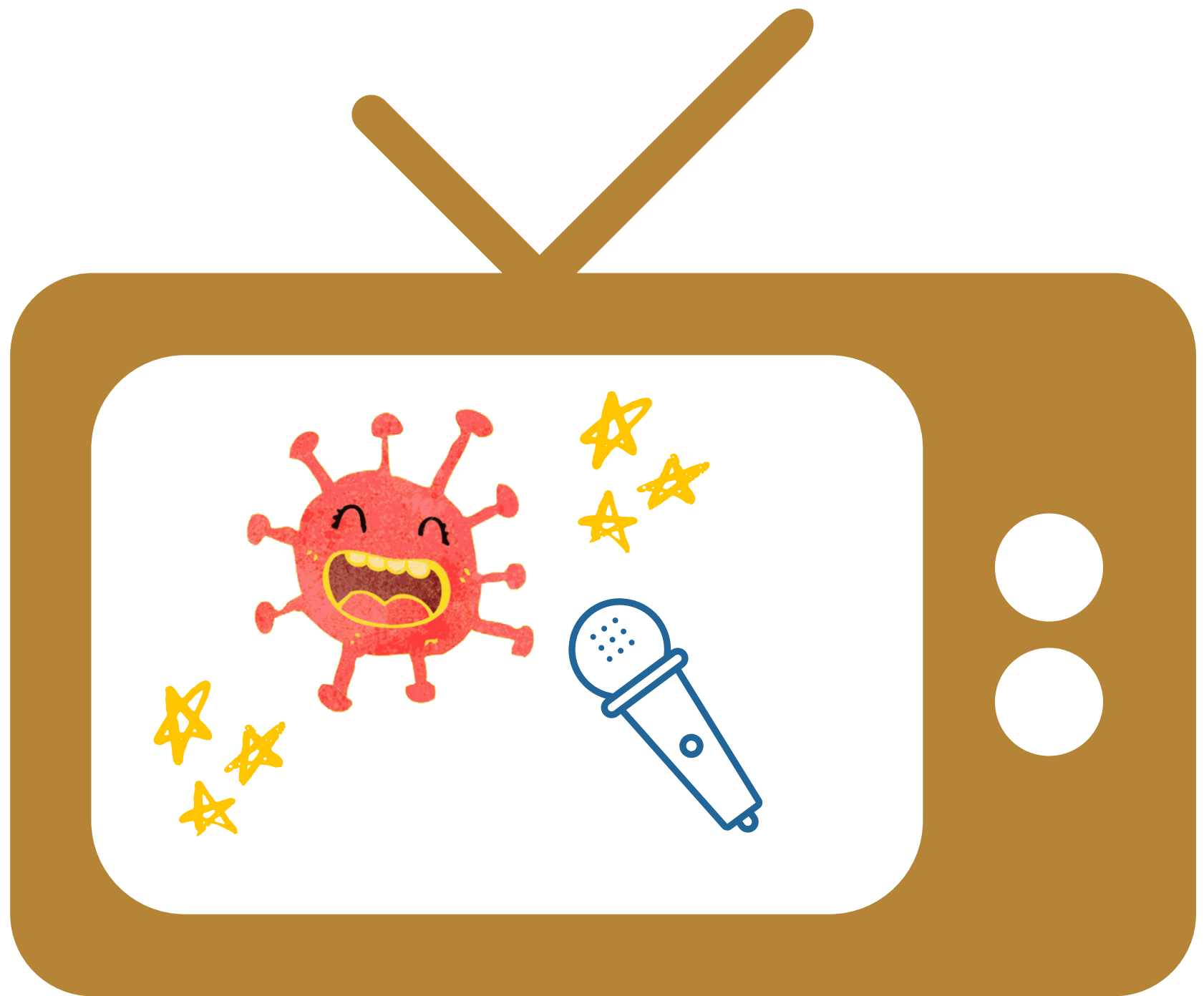
Sad

I can understand you feel...

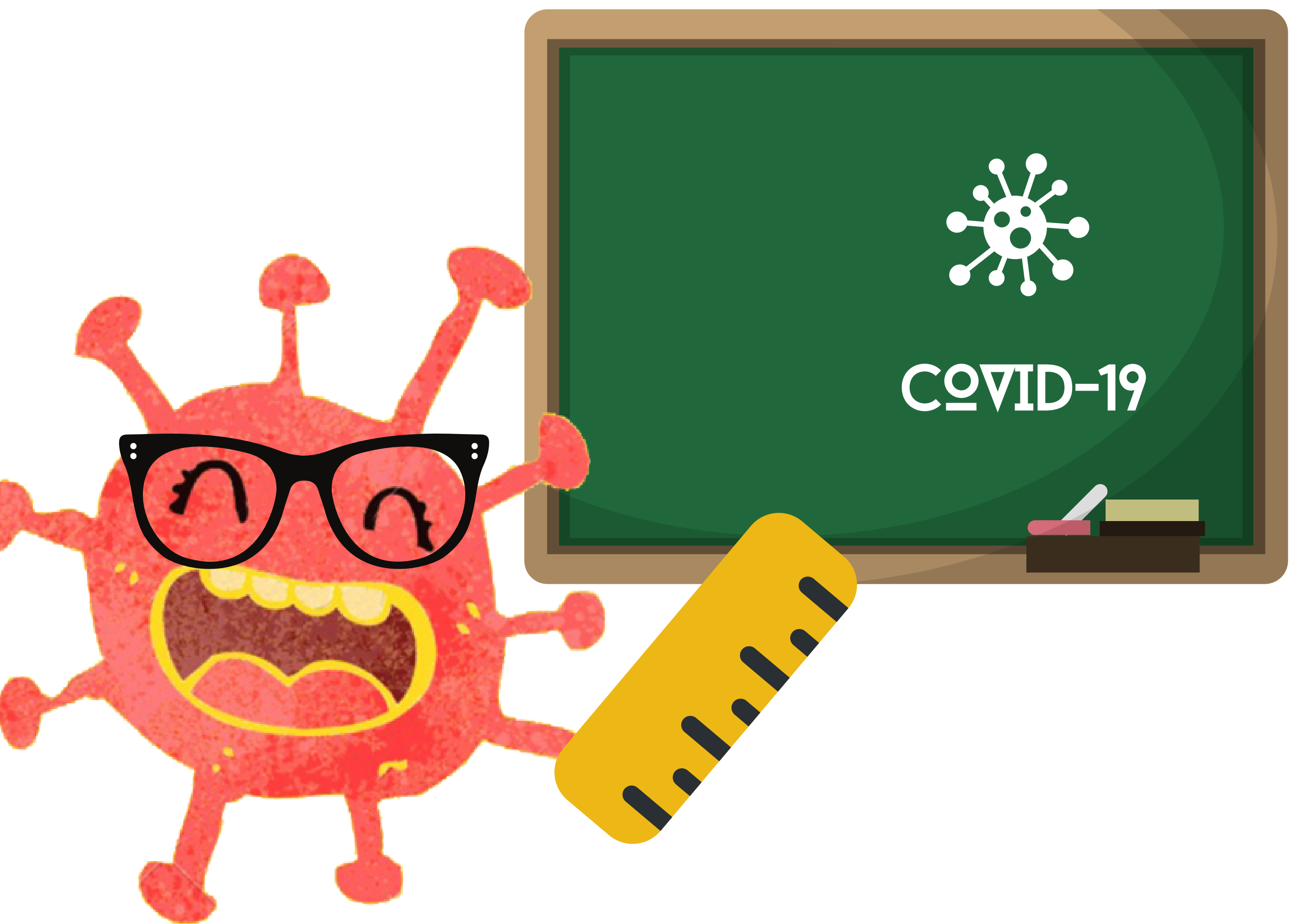


...I would feel the same way

Sometimes adults get
worried when they read
the news or see me on TV



**But I am going to explain
myself...**

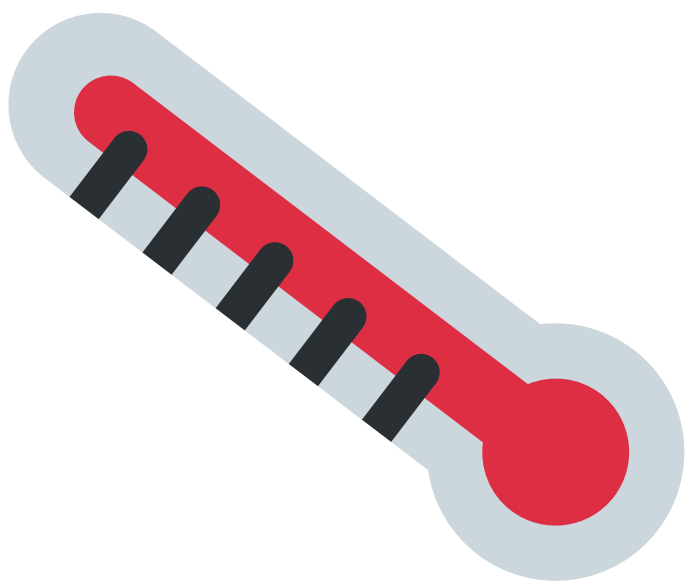


So you can understand...

When I come to visit, I bring...



Difficulty breathing



Fever



Cough

**But I don't stay with
people for long, and almost
everyone gets better**



**Just like when you get a
scrape on you
knee and it heals**

BYE BYE...



Dont you worry!

The adults who take care of you:

will keep you safe



And you can help...

1



**By washing your hands
with soap and water
while singing a song**



**You can sing your favorite song,
the happy birthday song, or the
alphabet song**

2



**By using hand sanitizer
and letting it dry on
your hands**



Without moving them count to 10

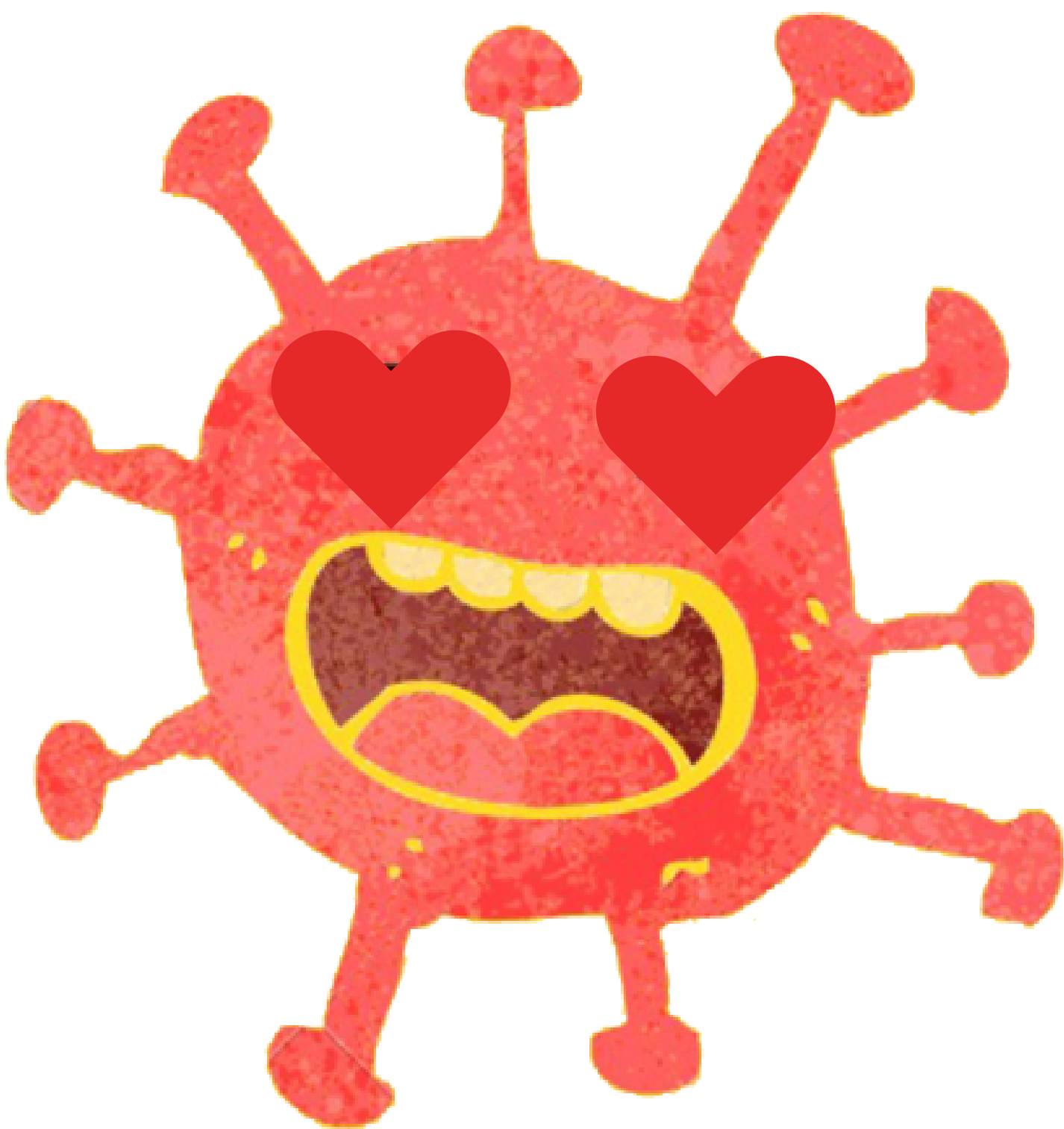
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

**Once your hands are dry you can get
back to playing!!**

**If you do all that
I will not come to visit**



**while the doctors work to find a vaccine
that will allow me to say hi
without getting you sick.**

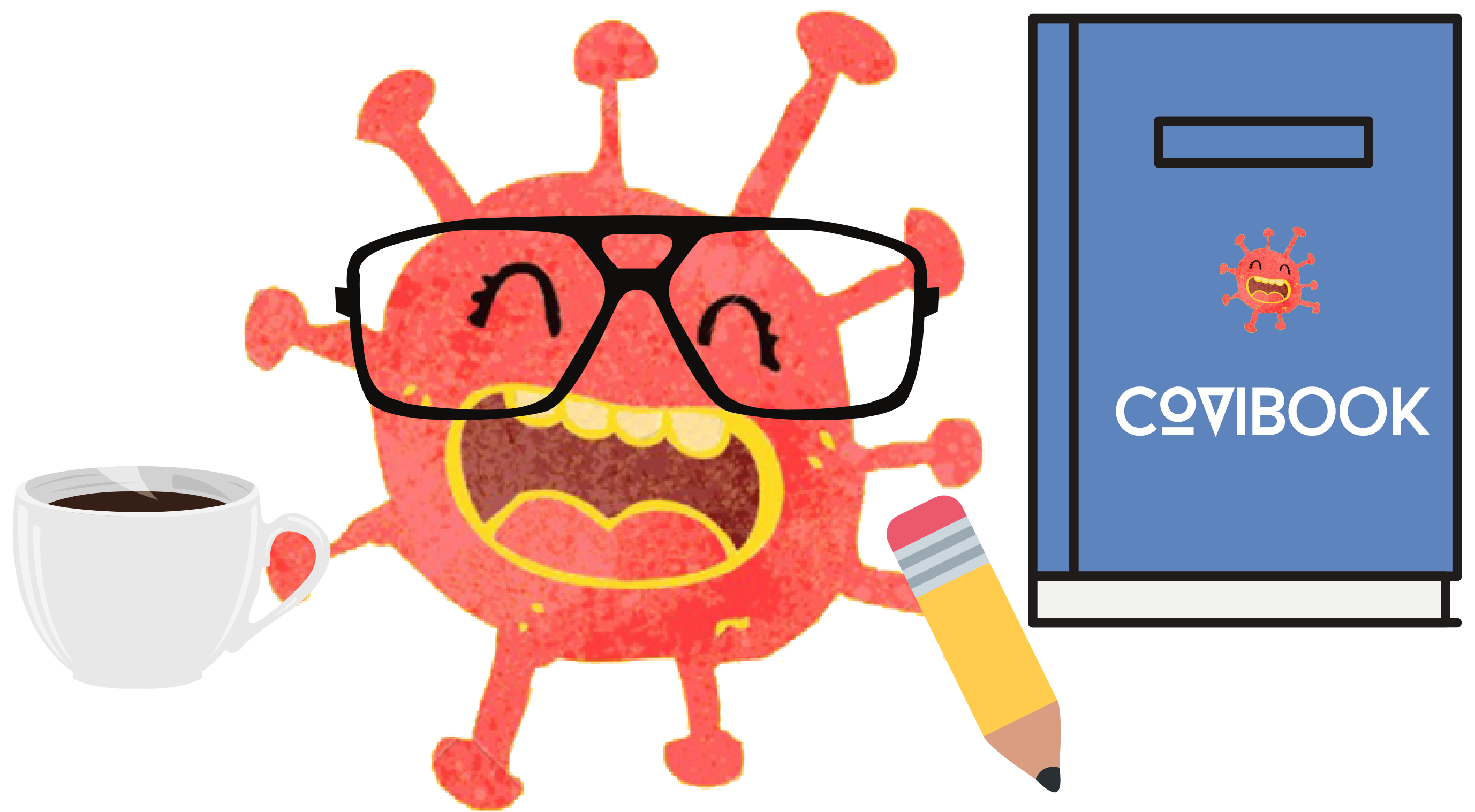


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THE END



Download this PDF here:

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Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope With the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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. This resource 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.

What You Should Know

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus; this means it is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.
- COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is mainly spread person-to-person. Currently, there is no available vaccine or curative treatment, so the best preventative strategy is to avoid exposure.
- So far, children appear to be much less affected by COVID-19, which was also seen after other coronavirus outbreaks.
- Children with pre-existing illnesses may have different risk, so you should discuss this with your child's medical team.
- To reduce the spread of the virus, a variety of approaches will be used, including keeping those who are sick away from others and promoting healthy hygiene strategies. Additional recommendations for ways to contain the virus's spread could include canceling of events that attract large numbers of people; closing schools, public transit or businesses; and required quarantine, which is the separation and restriction of movement of people who might have been exposed to the virus.

READINESS

Preparing your Family for a Potential Infectious Disease Outbreak

Being prepared is one of the best ways to lessen the impact of an infectious disease outbreak like COVID-19 on your family. Here are some steps that you can take to be better prepared:

Information & Communication

- Identify how you will keep up with the rapidly changing information on COVID-19.
In rapidly changing health events and outbreaks such as COVID-19, there can be large amounts of incorrect or partially correct information that can add to your stress and confusion as a parent/caregiver. Identify a few trusted sources of health information.

The NCTSN relied on the CDC resources to create this document.

Get the most up-to-date and accurate information at:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC: information on children and COVID 2019:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

<https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Plan how you want to discuss COVID-19 with your family. Be sure to include:

What the current disease outbreak is

How it is contracted

What are the possible dangers

Protective steps being taken in the community/nation/global community

Protective steps everyone in the family can take

- Hold your family discussion in a comfortable place and encourage family members to ask questions. Consider having a separate discussion with young children in order to use language they can understand and to address specific fears or misconceptions they may have.
- Create a list of community resources that will be helpful during an outbreak. Make sure you know their emergency telephone numbers, websites, and official social media accounts. These may include: your family's schools, doctors, public health authorities, social services, community mental health center, and crisis hotlines.
- Develop a plan for maintaining contact with friends and family members via telephone and internet in the event that isolation or quarantine is recommended.
- Check in with your children's school about potential homeschool and distance learning opportunities that may be offered during a school closure. Also, if your child receives additional services at school, ask how these will be handled during a closure (e.g., meals, therapeutic services).

Reducing Your Family's Risk: Hygiene, Medical Care & Supplies

Have all family members practice preventive behaviors including:

- Regularly washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water (length of the A-B-C song) or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when sick.
- Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or with the bend/crook of the arm when coughing or sneezing.

Keep basic health supplies on hand (e.g., soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and a thermometer).

Make sure you have a supply of medications taken regularly.

If your child takes medication for a chronic condition, talk with your child's medical provider about plans to get a supply at home that will last through any period of home isolation for your family.

Have your family work together to gather items that might be needed during an outbreak. These include drinking water, nonperishable food, and cash. Be sure to include activities, books, and games for children in case a lengthy time at home is recommended. Remember to include batteries in your item list if those are needed for certain activities and games.

**HAVE ALL YOUR
FAMILY MEMBERS
PRACTICE GOOD
HYGIENE AND
PREVENTIVE
BEHAVIORS.**

Coping with the Stress of an Infectious Disease Outbreak like COVID-19

Even if your family is prepared, an outbreak can be very stressful. To help your family cope with this stress, following these recommendations can help:

Information & Communication

- Keep updated about what is happening with the outbreak and additional recommendations by getting information from credible media outlets, local public health authorities, and updates from public health websites (e.g., CDC).
- Seek support and continued connections from friends and family by talking to them on the telephone, texting, or communicating through email or social media. Schools may have additional ways to stay in contact with educators and classmates.
- Although you need to stay informed, minimize exposure to media outlets or social media that might promote fear or panic. Be particularly aware of (and limit) how much media coverage or social media time your children are exposed to about the outbreak.
- E-mail and texting may be the best ways to stay in contact with others during an outbreak, as the Internet may have the most sensational media coverage and may be spreading rumors. Check in regularly with your children about what they have viewed on the Internet and clarify any misinformation.
- Focus on supporting children by encouraging questions and helping them understand the current situation.
 - Talk about their feelings and validate these
 - Help them express their feelings through drawing or other activities
 - Clarify misinformation or misunderstandings about how the virus is spread and that not every respiratory disease is COVID-19
 - Provide comfort and a bit of extra patience
 - Check back in with your children on a regular basis or when the situation changes

NOTE: During an outbreak, stigma and rejection can occur against individuals who live in affected communities, against health-care workers, and individuals with other illnesses.

Scheduling & Activities

- Even if your family is isolated or quarantined, realize this will be temporary.
- Keep your family's schedule consistent when it comes to bedtimes, meals, and exercise.
- Make time to do things at home that have made you and your family feel better in other stressful situations, such as reading, watching movies, listening to music, playing games, exercising, or engaging in religious activities (prayer, participating in services on the Internet).
- Have children participate in distance learning opportunities that may be offered by their schools or other institutions/organizations.
- Recognize that feelings such as loneliness, boredom, fear of contracting disease, anxiety, stress, and panic are normal reactions to a stressful situation such as a disease outbreak.
- Help your family engage in fun and meaningful activities consistent with your family and cultural values.

Hygiene & Medical Care

- Find ways to encourage proper hygiene and health promoting behavior with your children (create drawings to remember family routines; sing a song for length needed to wash hands like the A-B-C or Happy Birthday song, twice). Include them in household jobs or activities so they feel a sense of accomplishment. Provide praise and encouragement for engaging in household jobs and good hygiene.
- Reassure your children that you will take them to the pediatrician and get medical care if needed. Explain, however, that not every cough or sneeze means that they or others have COVID-19.

Self Care & Coping

- Modify your daily activities to meet the current reality of the situation and focus on what you can accomplish.
 - Shift expectations and priorities to focus more on what gives you meaning, purpose, or fulfillment.
- Give yourself small breaks from the stress of the situation.
- Attempt to control self-defeating statements and replace them with more helpful thoughts. Here's a helpful checklist for identifying unhealthy thoughts and coping with them:
<https://arfamiliesfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Cognitive-Distortions.pdf>.
 - Remember, you are a role model for your children. How you handle this stressful situation can affect how your children manage their worries.
 - If your family has experienced a serious illness or the death of a loved one, find ways to support each other, including:

Reach out to your friends and family, talking to them about the death of your loved one. Use telephone, email, or social media to communicate if necessary.

Find ways to honor the death of your loved one. Some activities may be done as a family, while additional activities may be done individually.

Seek religious/spiritual help or professional counseling for support. This may be available online or by telephone during an outbreak.

HELPING CHILDREN COPE

Your children may respond differently to an outbreak depending on their age. Below are some reactions according to age group and the best ways you can respond:

AGE GROUP	REACTIONS	HOW TO HELP
PRESCHOOL	Fear of being alone, bad dreams Speech difficulties Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting Change in appetite Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors	Patience and tolerance Provide reassurance (verbal and physical) Encourage expression through play, reenactment, story-telling Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime Maintain regular family routines Avoid media exposure

SCHOOL-AGE (ages 6-12)	Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior Clinging, nightmares Sleep/appetite disturbance Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches) Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest Competition for parents' attention Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Play sessions and staying in touch with friends through telephone and Internet Regular exercise and stretching Engage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games) Participate in structured household chores Set gentle but firm limits Discuss the current outbreak and encourage questions. Include what is being done in the family and community Encourage expression through play and conversation Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Address any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation
ADOLESCENT (ages 13-18)	Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.) Sleep/appetite disturbance Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy Ignoring health promotion behaviors Isolating from peers and loved ones Concerns about stigma and injustices Avoiding/cutting school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Encourage continuation of routines Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force) Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviors Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak

SEEKING ADDITIONAL HELP

If you or a loved one is having a difficult time coping with the outbreak and want to seek outside help, there are ways to get that help. For example:

- Get support regarding your anxiety or stress by speaking to a trained counselor at SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or by texting TalkWithUS 66746.
- Contact your physician or your insurance company (if they have a consultation line) to ask health-related questions or to seek mental health support.
- Learn more ways to help your family. Additional resources can be accessed at:
 - www.NCTSN.org
 - www.healthychildren.org
 - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html

Last updated: March 1, 2020



Coronavirus

Clear Answers for All Kids

Arlen Grad Gaines and
Meredith Englander Polsky

For our world

Preface

The Coronavirus Pandemic is a difficult topic for parents to explain to any child, perhaps even more so when the child has Autism Spectrum Disorder or other special needs. Many of these children process information in a concrete manner, prefer established routines, and need support to understand and interpret emotions. We wrote this digital version of *I Have a Question about Coronavirus* to provide a straightforward resource that takes these considerations into account and seeks to cover the wide range of questions that emerge as children (and adults) grapple with this global emergency.

We believe that special education is just *really* good education, and hope that this book, and the strategies contained within, serves as a resource for all children.

I Have a Question about Coronavirus consists of three components:

1. **The Complete Story**

Created with straightforward text and clear illustrations for children who process information best through words and pictures.

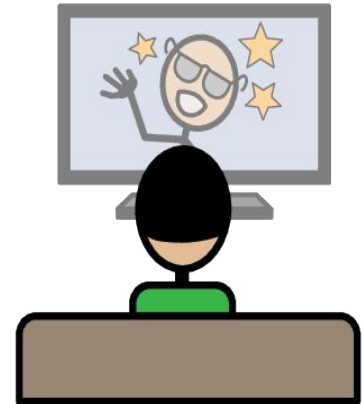
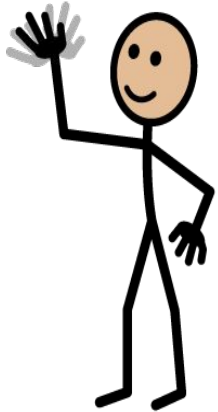
2. **Short Picture Story**

Designed for children who learn best through visual cues, and for those who may want to re-read the story and think about it independently.

3. **Suggestions for Parents and Caregivers**

Written for the adults in a child's life, helping them continue the conversation about the Coronavirus Pandemic.

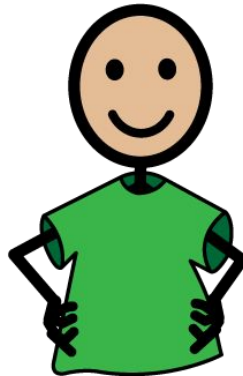
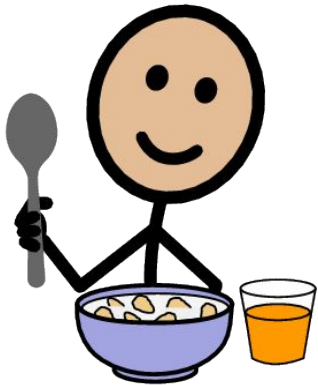
Hi! I'm a kid who likes a lot of things. I like playing games, going swimming and watching my favorite show.



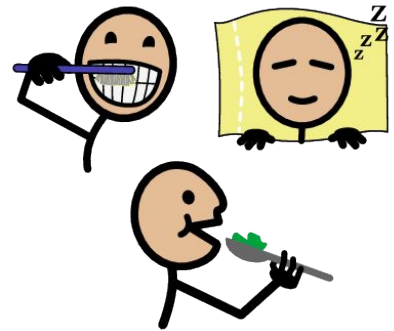
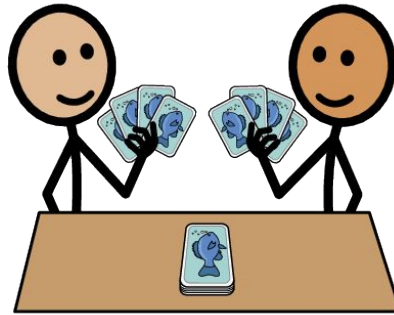
I'm also a kid who likes to know what to expect each day. Most of the time that works out fine.

Most days are regular days. They go like this:

I wake up. I have breakfast. I brush my teeth and my hair. I get dressed for school and I walk to the bus.

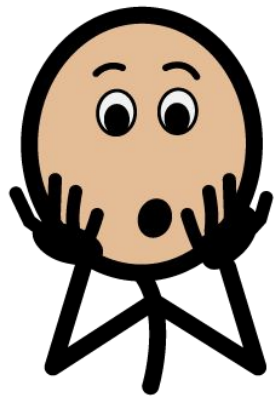


I see my teachers and friends and work hard. In the afternoon, I come home, do my homework, and play at my house. I eat dinner, take a shower (most nights!), and go to sleep.



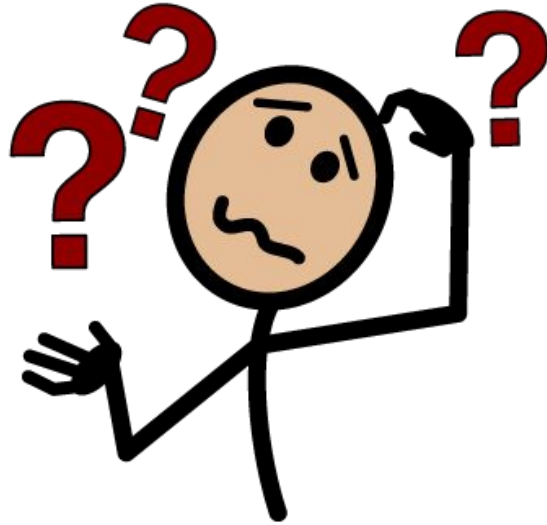
Once in a while, though, something different happens and the day doesn't go the way I expect.

Today was one of those days. I learned something new. I learned that there is a Coronavirus Pandemic.



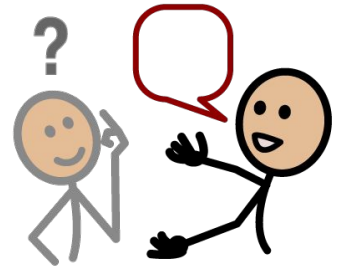
I really wasn't expecting that. I've never heard those words before!

Now I have a lot of questions. I'm a kid who likes when there are answers to my questions. Today, I'm asking my questions and some of them have answers. But some of them don't.

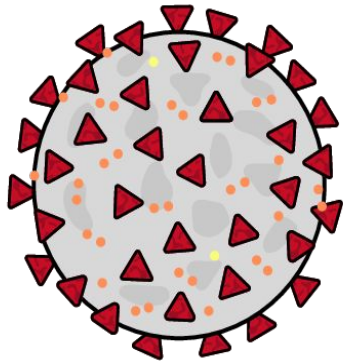


“What is Coronavirus?”

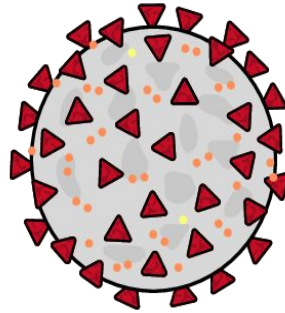
That is my first question. It has an answer.



Coronavirus is a kind of illness. It's also called COVID-19. Some other illnesses are colds, flu and ear infections. I've heard of those! Coronavirus has actually been around for a long time, but the *kind* of coronavirus that people are talking about now is new.

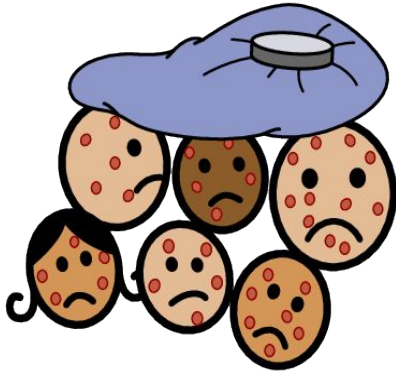
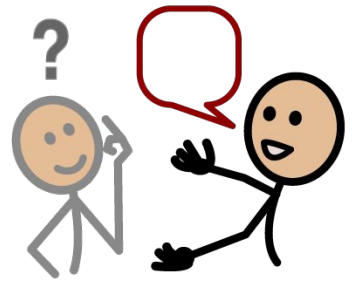


COVID-19



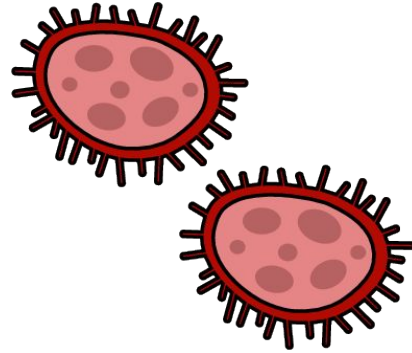
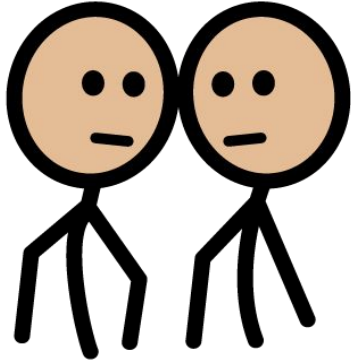
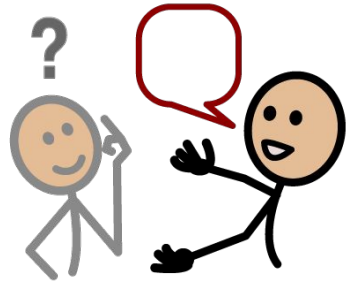
“What is a pandemic?”

I thought Coronavirus and pandemic were all one thing, but it turns out they are two different things! Pandemic means that lots of people in lots of different parts of the world are getting the same kind of illness. Right now, lots of people are getting Coronavirus, so it's called a Coronavirus Pandemic. But it's still just one kind of illness.



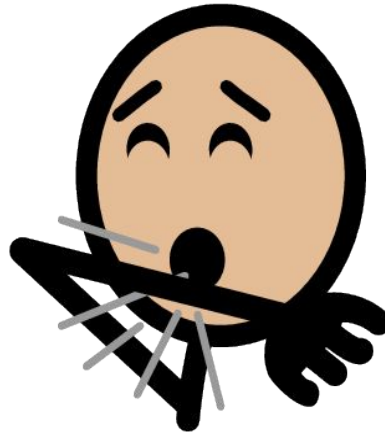
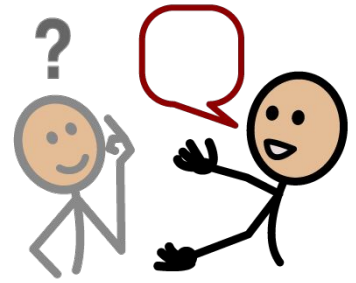
Next I want to know, **“How do people get Coronavirus?”**

Usually, people who have Coronavirus caught the germs from someone else who already had Coronavirus. They didn't do it on purpose. That's just how germs are spread.



“Can I catch Coronavirus?” I ask. I am getting worried.

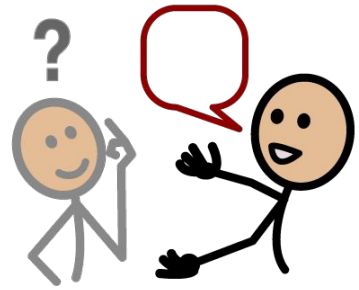
Yes. If someone already has Coronavirus, and I spend a lot of time with them, or if that person sneezes on me, I could catch Coronavirus.



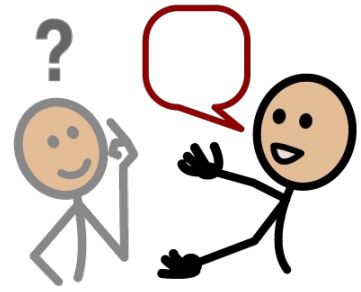
Uh-Oh. **“What happens if I get Coronavirus?”** I wonder.

I learn that when kids my age get Coronavirus, it is a lot like getting a cold or the flu. I might not feel well for a few days - my throat and my stomach might hurt, or I might have a cough.

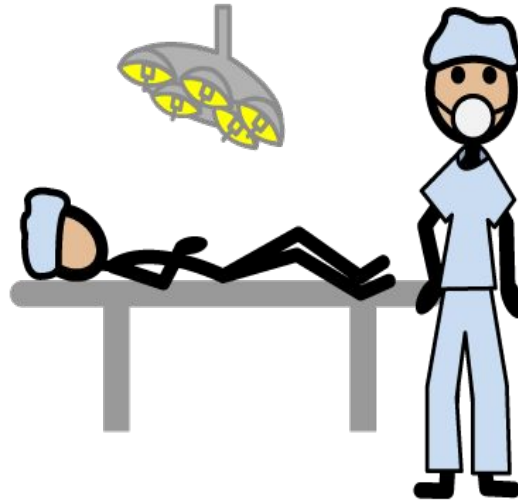
I don't like when I get sick, but at least I know what it feels like. And every time I've gotten sick, I've also gotten better!



It doesn't sound so bad. **Why is everyone talking about it?**



Even though Coronavirus doesn't make kids too sick, it can make adults very sick. Some adults - especially older ones - might even have to go to the hospital if they get Coronavirus. Sometimes they might even die.



Since it's easy to catch Coronavirus by getting too close to people, we need to try to make sure that we can help more people stay healthy.

But there's another reason too, and this is something I've *never* heard of before!

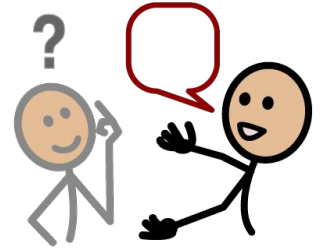
It's called "flattening the curve".

Curves are not flat! Curves are... well, curvy!

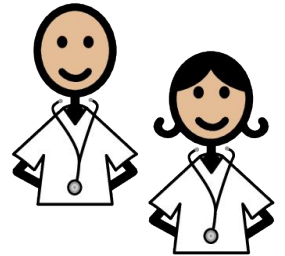


What do people mean when they say we are trying to “flatten the curve”?

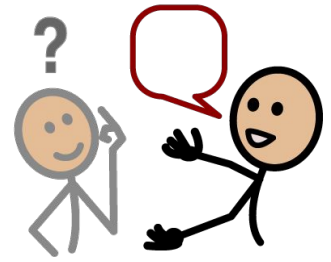
It turns out that lots of grown-ups have never heard of this either. Sounds like we're all learning new things! During a pandemic, when so many people are getting sick with the same thing, lots of people need to go to the doctor or the hospital. Even though there are *a lot* of doctors and hospitals in the world, there are not enough of them if too many people get sick at the same time.



“Flattening the curve” doesn’t mean that people won’t get Coronavirus, it just means that they won’t all get it at the same time. That will help make sure that there are enough doctors and hospitals to help the people who are sick.



How do we “flatten the curve”? I didn’t know about this before, but maybe I can help!



I learn that I am already helping! My school is closed and my activities are canceled. I am mostly staying at home and not getting too close to people who don't live in my house. It's called “social distancing” and that is exactly what everyone can do to help “flatten the curve”!

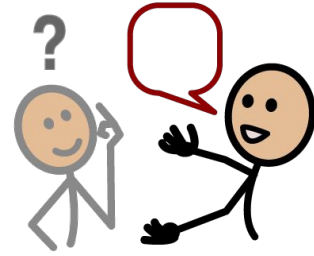


My parents might have to work from home, and the rest of my family is home, too. There are days when we are all together all day long. Sometimes that feels like too much for me. It's too noisy and I don't have enough space.

It's okay for me to take a break, or go to a quiet space and come back when I feel ready.



I liked things the way they were, when I could go to school and do all my activities. I knew what to expect every day. So I ask, **“Will my days ever go back to how they were?”**

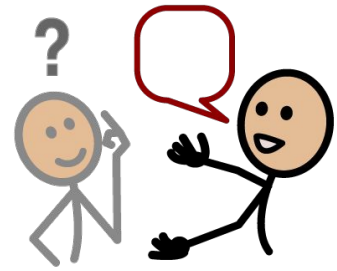


Yes! I'm so glad to hear that the answer to this question is yes!



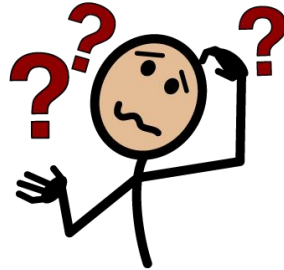
Of course, I know what to ask next!

“When will my days go back to how they were?”

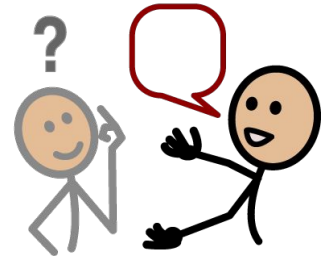


I'm ready for an easy answer! But that question is not so easy to answer. Nobody knows exactly when my days will go back to how they were before the Coronavirus Pandemic.

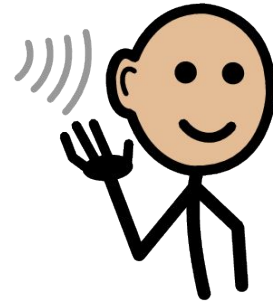
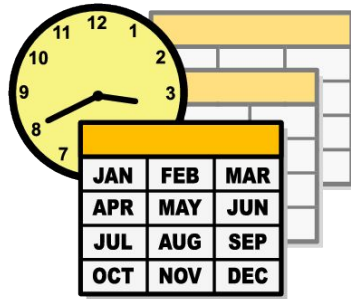
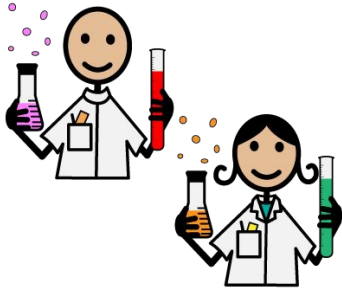
I don't like not having an answer to my question. It's hard not knowing exactly how long this is going to last. But I do feel better knowing it won't last forever.



“How will I know when it’s safe to go back to school and do all the things I usually do?” I want to know.



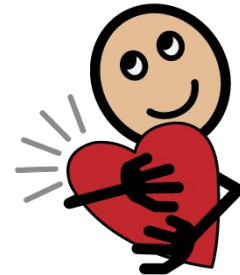
I learn that doctors and scientists all over the world are working together so they can tell us when it’s safe to go back to our regular days. When they tell us it is time, I know that I can listen to them and do all the things I used to do before all this began.



I find out that even though the Coronavirus Pandemic is a big deal, not *everything* has to change.

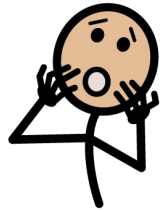
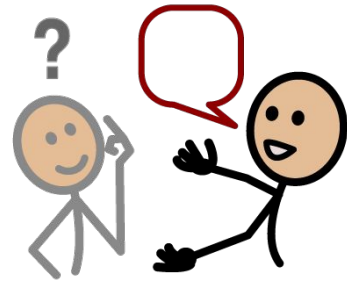
I can still play with all of my toys at home, I can go outside and I can give hugs and high-fives to the people who live in my house. I can read books and watch videos and even video chat with my friends and family.

I can't see everyone I want to see right now, like my teachers and friends. I can't go to the playground or go swimming. But I will see them again, and I will get to do my favorite things again.



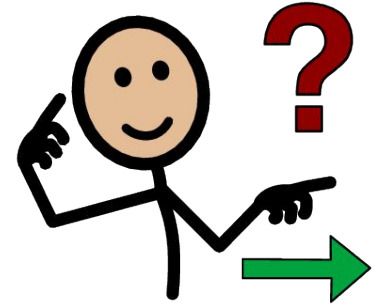
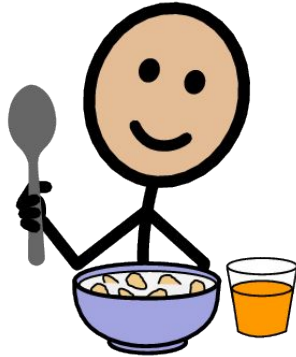
This is a lot of stuff to think about at one time. **“What does the Coronavirus Pandemic feel like to everyone else?”**

I learn it can feel scary for kids and for grown-ups. Kids might feel nervous. Grown-ups might feel nervous, too. They want to make sure everyone they love stays healthy. It can also feel really hard to grown-ups and to kids not to have a regular schedule every day.

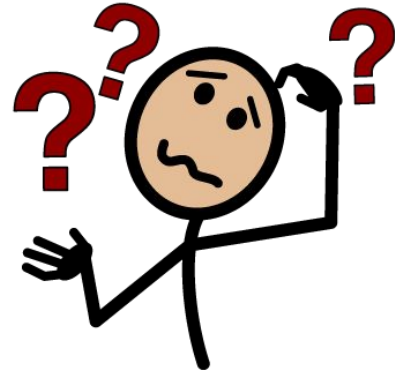
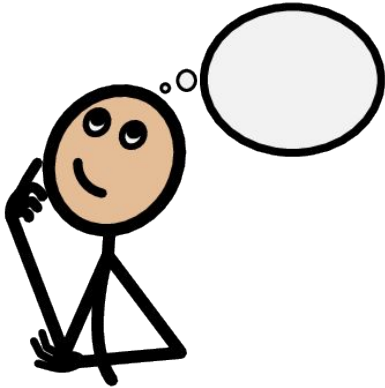


But it won't stay like this forever. The Coronavirus Pandemic will end and we will go back to school and back to our friends, teachers and activities.

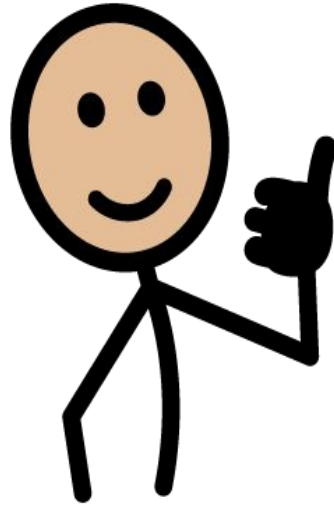
Even though lots of things are different right now, lots of things are the same. I will have regular days again. I will still wake up, eat my breakfast, do school work at home and play. I will try to be flexible when things don't go exactly as planned.



I might think of more questions to ask, or I might not want to ask any more questions about the Coronavirus Pandemic.



Most days are regular days. Most days I know just what to expect. Right now my days are different, but I am learning a lot. Mostly I'm learning that asking questions really helps!

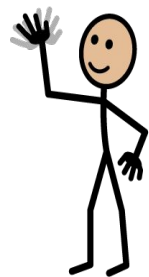


Short Picture Story:

I Have a Question about Coronavirus

On the pages that follow, you will see the same pictures used in the story along with shorter, more direct text. This is a tool for children who learn best through visual cues, and for children who might want to re-read and think about the story independently.

Hi!



I like games.



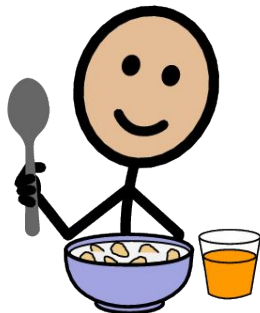
I like swimming.



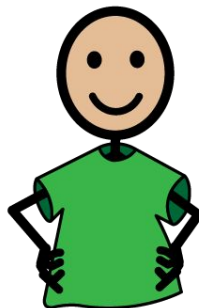
I like watching my favorite show.



Most days are the same.



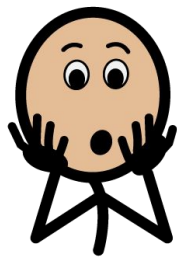
I get dressed.



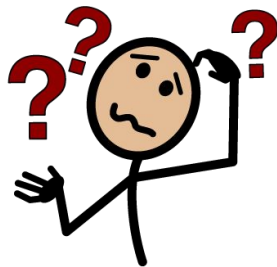
I go to school.



Today is different.
There's a
Coronavirus
Pandemic.

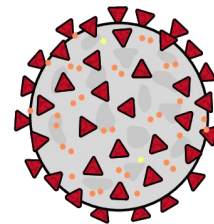
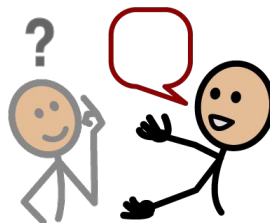


I have a lot
of questions.



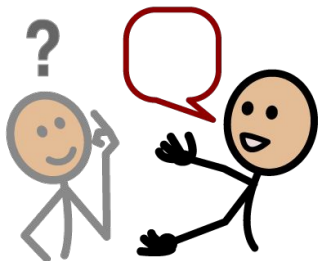
What is Coronavirus?

It's a kind of illness.



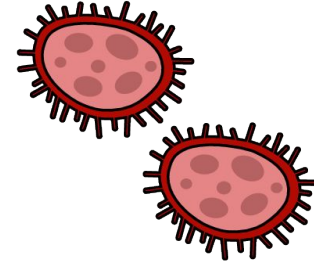
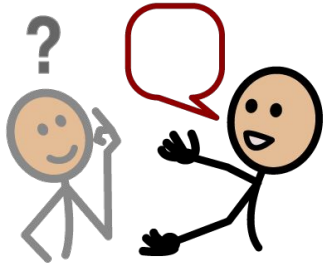
What is a pandemic?

Lots of people all over the world
get the same kind of illness.



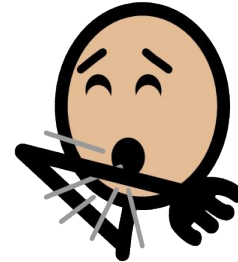
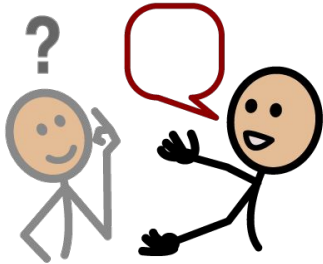
How do people get Coronavirus?

People catch germs from other people who have Coronavirus.



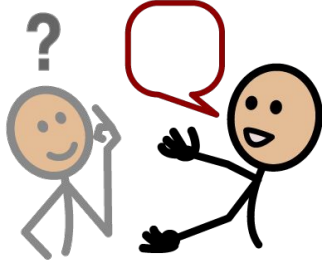
Can I catch Coronavirus?

Yes, if I catch the germs from someone who has it.



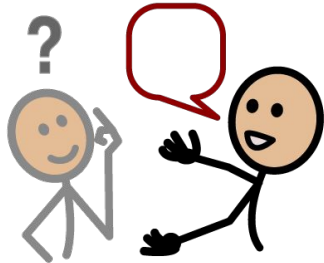
What happens if I get Coronavirus?

My throat or stomach might hurt and I might have a cough.



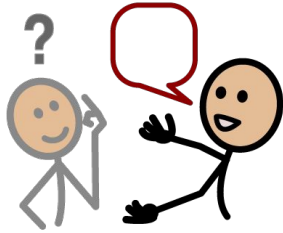
Why is everyone talking about Coronavirus?

It can make older adults very sick, so we want to help people stay healthy.



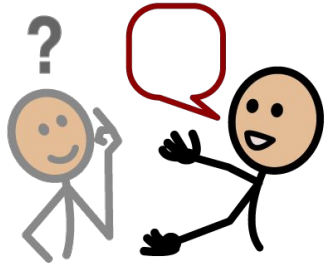
What is “flattening the curve”?

It means we are trying to make sure not everyone gets sick at the same time. Then there won't be enough doctors to help everyone.



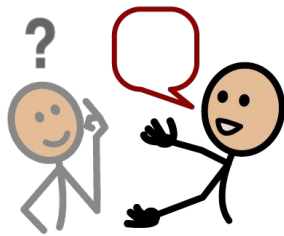
How do we “flatten the curve”?

We stay home as much as we can. I can take a break or go to a quiet space if my house is too loud or crowded.



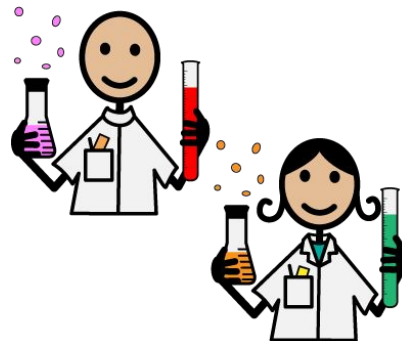
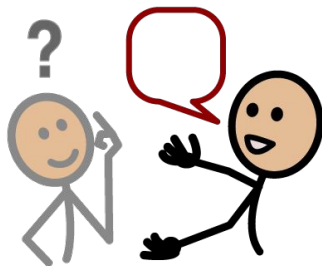
Will my days ever go back to how they were?

Yes. We just don't know when.



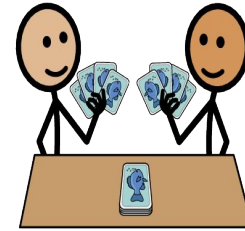
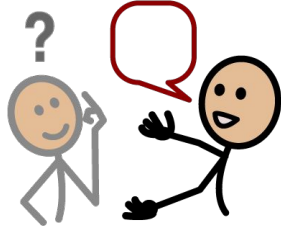
How will I know when it's safe to go back to school?

The doctors and scientists will tell us.



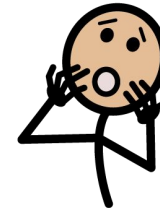
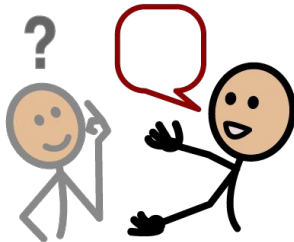
Are my days going to be different?

Yes, but I can still play with my toys at home, go outside, read books, watch videos and hug the people in my house.

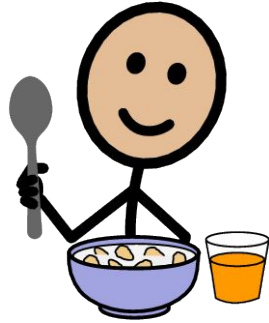


What does the Coronavirus Pandemic feel like to everyone else?

Kids and grown-ups might feel nervous.



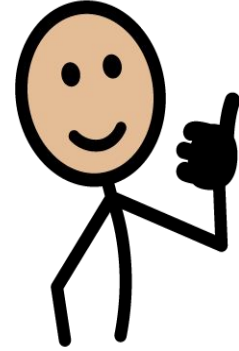
Lots of things are different, but
lots of things will stay the same.



I will have regular days
again.



Asking questions really
helps!



Suggestions for Parents and Caregivers

Communicate with the child

Talking with children, including kids with special needs, about a pandemic may feel daunting, especially as this is uncharted territory for adults as well. However, it can often be scarier and more anxiety-provoking for a child to sense the changes, but not be told explicitly. Use honest, clear language, parceling out information as children are able to process it. Because many young children and children with special needs are concrete thinkers, the use of simple, clear phrases can be helpful.

Address concerns about Coronavirus

Even if they don't ask, children are likely to worry about getting sick themselves, or that someone they love will get sick and die. Parents and caregivers can address that fear. They can share that most people, especially children, will be able to feel better if they get sick, but it is possible for some people to die from this virus. Help address ways parents, caregivers, and children can help themselves and others stay healthy, such as by washing hands and staying home most of the time so that germs aren't shared. Be mindful of what children are seeing on the news or online, as that can contribute to increased anxiety.

Suggestions for Parents and Caregivers

Provide emotional guidance

Some children, including those with special needs, may regress or turn to self-soothing behaviors as they cope with many changes in routine and feelings of anxiety because of this pandemic. Children may become more withdrawn, irritable, anxious or aggressive. Help them recognize their feelings, provide a calming presence, and convey messages of reassurance and unconditional love. Partner with other adults in their lives, if possible, including therapists, to help support them during this time.

Pay attention to structure and routine

Many children have difficulty with changes in routine, and may struggle with the significant disruption caused by this pandemic. Many schools are closed, and activities and social activities have been suspended. Help create a sense of structure in the child's day, even if that routine greatly differs from before. A picture schedule or calendar can be a helpful tool.

Suggestions for Parents and Caregivers

Provide sensory-based supports

Utilize sensory-based supports and strategies that have been comforting in the past, and have those available to the child. Consider having a pile of pillows a child could jump into, or a box of fidget toys accessible.

Considerations for parents or caregivers

Recognize the impact and anxiety this pandemic has on parents and caregivers, and continue to try to focus on self-care in the midst of caring for others. Try to exercise, get enough sleep, and stay connected with friends and family by phone or social media to combat social isolation. Reduce exposure to the news, if feeling overwhelmed, and find ways to take breaks.

in the same series

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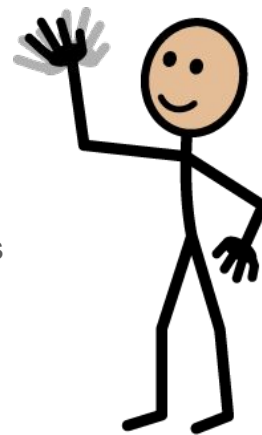
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Meredith Englander Polsky is a social worker and special educator in Maryland, USA.

They are the co-authors of the award-winning “I Have a Question” book series, which addresses complicated topics for all children, inclusive of kids with special needs.



Pautas a las familias de niños y adolescentes



Pautas a las familias de niños y adolescentes

La cuarentena forzosa sobrevenida por la pandemia del Covid-19 ha configurado nuevas formas y rutinas en las familias y en las casas, quizás las relaciones familiares que antes eran fluidas en algunos momentos se vuelven más difíciles y al estar en todo momento juntos, aumentan los roces y los conflictos.

CONVERSACIONES EN FAMILIA

Pero puede ser una ocasión para **hablar y razonar con ellos y en el caso de los adolescentes de forma diferente a cuando eran niños**. Se tiene más tiempo para atender a los hijos y ese tiempo puede generar conversaciones y tertulias que en momentos de tiempos comprimidos no se pueden tener y se aplazan. Ahora se les tiene que hacerse ver que estamos disponibles. Es tiempo de:

- **Compartir.** Buscaremos momentos en los que podamos hablar con ellos, compartir aficiones o cualquier otra actividad, para lo cual es importante que conozcamos sus gustos e intereses.
- **Escucharles:** Que nos cuenten sus dudas, como se sienten, lo que los preocupa. Establecer diálogo respetando su forma de expresarse con sus palabras y tiempos. No mostrarles oposición o crítica
- **Negociar:** Cuando de entrada no haya acuerdo no intentemos imponer nuestro criterio.



Pautas a las familias de niños y adolescentes

LÍMITES, NORMAS Y EXPRESIÓN DE EMOCIONES

Los niños y adolescentes **necesitan** de su familia, **sentirse queridos, identificarse con el adulto y tener unas normas claras que ayuden a crear un buen ambiente familiar.** Establecer normas y límites, consensuarlos con ellos y pactar las consecuencias de su no cumplimiento.



Haz de tu conducta un modelo de actuación. Viendo como resuelves situaciones, das ejemplo de cómo él puede actuar. Modelo de gestión emocional y de cómo se afronta el encierro. Siendo y canalizando mediador de los sentimientos de los niños. **Verbalizar no solo órdenes y demandas, sino también sentimientos, sensaciones, experiencias, etc.**



Ayudarle a desarrollar su autoconfianza. Reconocer sus progresos por pocos o lentos que sean. No comparar más que consigo mismo. **Valorar positivamente sus comportamientos positivos** por pocos o lentos que sean.



Es **importante ser flexibles y tener paciencia a posibles rabietas y enfados** desproporcionados, a veces son producto del miedo, cansancio, aburrimiento y frustración si ocurren, **los adultos tienen que contener las emociones y ofrecer alternativas de respuesta.** Aunque es importante que también puedan expresar las emociones negativas y que se pueda mostrar que nosotros nos estamos sintiendo igual y que esta situación nos produce también estos mismos sentimientos, así se normalizarán estas situaciones.



Pautas a las familias de niños y adolescentes

TAREAS Y RESPONSABILIDADES. HÁBITOS Y RUTINAS

Pedirle **colaboración en las tareas domésticas y responsabilidades familiares.**

Es importante recordar que un niño al que siempre le hemos hecho todo (recoger sus juguetes, hacerle la cama, etc.) no puede asumir estas tareas de un día para otro, por lo tanto le explicaremos de forma clara y precisa lo que queremos que haga, **graduando y proponiendo pequeñas tareas o metas y reforzaremos todos los pequeños avances que consiga en la resolución de las mismas.**

En ocasiones es necesario repetir muchas veces lo que queremos que haga y la forma en que debe realizarlo.

Fomentar hábitos de estudio y de trabajo en casa; establecer horarios cerrados para la ejecución de este tipo de tareas; proporcionarle la ayuda que solicite.

Trabajar los hábitos de autonomía propios de su edad en cuanto a **aseo, vestido y alimentación,** estableciendo rutinas y evitando conductas de sobreprotección.

Fomentar hábitos saludables.

Hacer **ejercicio, divertirse, dormir el tiempo preciso, limitar el uso del ordenador, teléfono móvil y videojuegos.** Identificar y fomentar todo lo que le hace sentirse mejor y relajarse. Enseñarles juegos nuevos y jugar con ellos.



Pautas a las familias de niños y adolescentes

REDES SOCIALES Y FAMILIARES

El confinamiento conlleva que se mantengan alejados de la familia y amigos y en la adolescencia es un período en el que los y las iguales son su principal fuente de satisfacción con lo que es importante, **hacer y permitirles hacer video llamadas con sus esas personas especiales**, que tanto echan de menos y que es importante comunicarse con ellos. **Sobre todo para las personas mayores, resulta importante hablar con sus nietos.** Es importante hacer cosas por los demás y se puede hacer dibujos para los enfermos o para enviarlos a los hospitales. Con ello, la espera se hará más llevadera y estarán sintiéndose útiles para los demás.



SITUACIONES ESPECIALES

Si algún padre tiene que estar aislado explicarles la situación para que lo entienda, a su momento evolutivo y se les puede pedir que hagan juegos desde distintas habitaciones. **Se pueden hacer juegos como el “veo veo”** o se puede hablar si son más mayores desde la puerta. Se les puede pedir que llamen o envíen videos con mensajes positivos. Si algún familiar resulta enfermo o hay alguna pérdida de un ser querido, de un abuelo u otro familiar en estas situaciones de confinamiento, se debe **explicar a los niños y adolescentes, lo que ha ocurrido o está ocurriendo**, dentro del momento evolutivo en el que se encuentren y aunque sea una situación angustiosa hay que tratar de mantener la calma para que los niños no se contagien de estas emociones descontroladas. **No hay que engañar a los niños**, es preferible no mencionarles esta situación a engañarlos. Y aunque los niños no pregunten, si se vive en casa una situación difícil es mejor aclararles y explicarles lo que ocurra, porque los niños tienden a fantasear y crearse historias más terribles, **los niños necesitan que sus padres les expliquen de la mejor manera posible lo que ocurra**, serán sus figuras de referencia las que contengan y alivien sus emociones.



BRIEFING

Psychological impact of the response to the coronavirus/ Covid-19 on older people

Faculty of the Psychology of Older People (FPOP)
British Psychological Society (BPS)

For service providers, policy makers and decision makers.

SUMMARY

Any decisions about the care and support provided for older people in response to the current situation with Covid-19 require careful consideration of many factors, not just chronological age. The older population is a heterogeneous group with varying levels of vulnerability and resources. We welcome that the government has recommended people stay at home based on existing medical conditions rather than just chronological age. The self-isolation of members of the older population is likely to result in higher levels of mental distress and loneliness in this population, which requires attention alongside slowing the spread of the virus.

1. Older people through their 60s to their 100s are a diverse population with broad levels of vulnerability to the effects of the virus. Whilst we recognise that emerging data highlights the increased mortality in older people worldwide and we welcome concern for this population, we urge caution in making decisions about isolation, care and health on chronological age alone.
2. We wish to emphasise that the communities of older people nationwide can be among the most resourceful across situations of hardship and challenge. Please ask for their advice on how to manage at home alone. Please ask for their advice about how to maintain resilience in difficult situations. Do think about the abundance of advice, experience, mindset and knowledge that these individuals have. This is a time to benefit from the wisdom of older people.
3. Whilst the self-isolation of older people is being implemented with the explicit aim of protecting this population, it is likely that there will be significant physical and mental health implications as a result. These are likely to include loneliness, decline in mood, increased risk, muscle weakness potentially leading to increased falls and greater physical health risks.
4. There is clear evidence that loneliness has a negative impact on health:
 - a. Loneliness increases the likelihood of mortality by 26 per cent and is as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. (Holt-Lunstad, 2015; 2010)

- b. Research shows that people with adequate social relationships have a 50 per cent greater likelihood of survival compared to those with poor or insufficient social relationships. (Buffel et al., 2015)
5. Many older people also have caring responsibilities either for the older old (parents, family and friends) or for their partner, which needs to be taken into account throughout the duration of the crisis.
 6. As the crisis continues into weeks and months, it is vital to consider the interconnected systems of care within which all people live and that isolating a group by age will impact people of all ages.
 7. We highlight the need for continued support for these groups throughout the crisis, including in social care services as well as health services and further contingencies to care for carers.
 8. Local plans for supporting those who are self-isolating or who have been asked by the government to stay at home should pay particular attention to those living with Dementia and their carers.
 9. Care strategies which are implemented for the general population to manage the current circumstances, e.g. telephone consultations with GPs, therapy via Skype and self management may not be suitable for some older people. It is important that the communication needs of those who cannot access online information are considered.
 10. It is known that many older people face isolation and loneliness day to day and the impact on health is substantial. This is especially a concern for those living in care homes. It is essential that communities are encouraged and supported to maintain links remotely, make use of digital technologies and be creative in meeting this essential psychological need for connection. Care workers are essential staff and we welcome any additional support to ensure their workloads are maintained and managed.
 11. Those constructing public health and media messages should consider how those messages would be received by the elderly, vulnerable or those with underlying health conditions and consider framing them in a way that does not increase anxiety amongst vulnerable groups.
 12. We welcome the moves by community groups, shops, supermarkets and local services to prioritise the needs of the older population and to address practical needs for those in isolation and in need.

REFERENCES

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ADVICE

Talking to children about Coronavirus

- 1. It is good to talk:** Children will have heard about Coronavirus and likely noticed changes around them (such as people wearing face masks). It is important they feel comfortable talking to you about Coronavirus as you will be the best source of information and reassurance for them. It's also likely they will talk to their friends or other children, which can involve imagination and misinformation. So having the chance to check-in with you is even more helpful.
- 2. Be truthful but remember your child's age:** It is better for children to take an honest and accurate approach – give them factual information, but adjust the amount and detail to fit their age. For example, you might say 'we don't yet have a vaccination for Coronavirus, but doctors are working very hard on it' or 'a lot of people might get sick, but normally it is like a cold or flu and they get better'. Younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better. We also recommend that adults watch news programmes and then filter this information to their child in a developmentally appropriate way.
- 3. Allow children to ask questions:** It is natural that children will have questions, and likely worries, about Coronavirus. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is ok to say you don't know. At the moment, there are questions we don't have answers to about Coronavirus – you can explain this to your child and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions. Maybe your child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them.
- 4. Try to manage your own worries:** Uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious or worried. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny), and time with family members or pets can all help. Talk to your children when you feel calm – it will reassure them.
- 5. Give practical guidance:** Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes. Help your child practise and increase their motivation for keeping going (maybe thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands).

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Resources

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) www.nasponline.org

Child Mind Institute Inc. <https://childmind.org>

ADVICE

Talking to children about illness

Adults have a key role in helping children understand what is going on, providing information and reassurance, limiting media overload for children, and being aware of how their own reactions might impact on children.

We've written this short leaflet to give health professionals, educational professionals, parents and early years providers an informed understanding of children's understanding at different developmental stages.

We all have basic needs that we need to meet before we can move onto higher level needs. Psychologists think of these as the bottom of a pyramid of things we all need. We need to meet these most basic needs, like food, water, sleep and safety before we can move onto anything else. Safety is one of these most basic needs and essential for good psychological development. Covid-19 is making many children (and adults) feel unsafe.

Much of the information that children hear about Covid-19 is intended for adults. Because children don't understand risk in the same way that adults do many children are unsure of how worried they should be but many are very worried indeed – about themselves, their parents, grandparents, their pets, and their friends.

Children are not little adults and their understanding depends on their developmental stage. This means that we need to talk to children about what is happening at a level that is developmentally right for them. Not all children will need the same things in order to help them feel safe – for example some children have a higher need for sameness and predictability, others have health conditions that make them more vulnerable to illness than others, and some children were already experiencing feelings of anxiety or low mood before Covid-19 came along and made everyone else anxious.

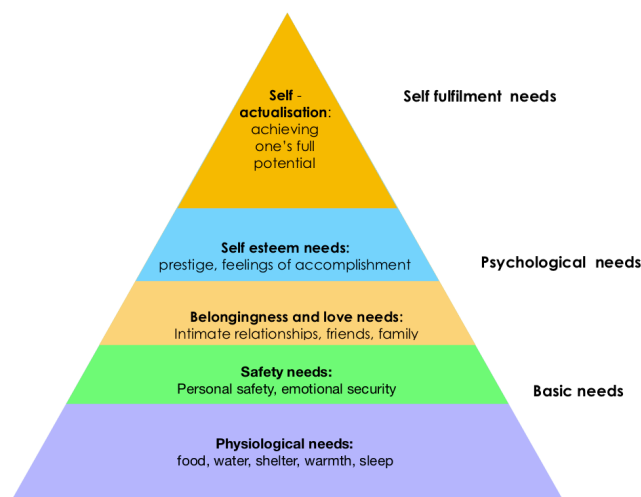


Diagram based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (Maslow, A.H. (1943) A theory of human motivation, *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–96.)

TALKING TO CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY AGED 0–3

When talking to children aged 0–3 it is important to understand:

- They will struggle to understand things that they can't see and touch, so understanding what illness means will be difficult unless they can see it (such as someone sneezing).
- Schools are still responsible for the education of their children and young people. Reassure parents that during the time that children are away, they will have access to learning materials as appropriate. Many schools use online learning platforms already and it may be necessary to provide more detailed information to parents about how to access and use these services.
- They will not understand what causes illness, especially things that go on inside our body.
- They are focused on what is going on right now and have little understanding of the future and of time.
- Their basic needs will be around food, sleep, play, and closeness. Interruptions to these things will have the biggest impact on their emotions and behaviour.
- They will base their understanding on what has happened to them before, and think it will happen again.

WHAT THEY MAY DO OR SAY

Children aged 0–3 will:

- Get easily confused or misunderstand things they hear people say.
- Show their distress at change in routine through: being more clingy, changes to their toileting, eating or sleeping habits.
- Say things that seem to not make sense to us as adults.
- Not understand why adults are scared, worried or sad.
- Carry on with playing even when things around them may be difficult (e.g. if a loved one is unwell).

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Don't use complicated explanations. Stick to short sentences and focus on the here and now – what you are doing today and tomorrow.
- Be honest but don't add lots of detail.
- Focus on structure and routine – keeping things as normal as possible.
- Spend time playing with your child – try to make sure you limit your time on devices.
- Use play with dolls and stories to explain situations or concepts that it is important for the child to understand.
- Where you have to make a change to a routine, keep explanations honest but brief (e.g. Mummy is working from home. This means she will be in the house with you lots instead of going into the office).

- Limit background conversations and news that the child can hear.

TALKING TO CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY AGED 4–7

When talking to children aged 4–7 it is important to understand:

- Children are focused on their immediate environment – what is going on around them, what is happening next and soon, and how they feel right now.
- They will struggle to understand concepts that they cannot picture in their mind.
- Complicated things like illnesses they can't see may be difficult to understand.
- They will understand illness in terms of simple symptoms, like a cough or runny nose.
- They will struggle to separate out that symptoms of illness may be different – such as the idea that some coughs are OK, and others are more serious.
- They will be starting to understand that you can catch some illnesses but they may get confused about this and think you can catch all illnesses.
- They will know that some behaviours can help keep you healthy, like washing your hands, however they might get confused and think it will definitely stop you getting ill.

WHAT THEY MAY DO OR SAY

- Children may increase behaviours they think will keep them healthy that they have heard adults talking about before e.g. saying they want to eat healthily or exercise to be healthy and fit.
- Children are exposed to stories and fairy tales at this age and you might hear them playing out illness-related stories with their toys – some of the things they do may be confusing or not accurate.
- Children may 'fill in the blanks' with their imagination or seemingly illogical or inaccurate explanations – you may wonder, 'where did they get that from?'
- Children may blame themselves or think something was their fault (e.g. grandma is ill because I did not wash my hands).
- Carry on with playing even when things around them may be difficult (e.g. if a loved one is unwell).
- They may ask a lot of questions repeatedly as they try to make sense of information they have heard with their limited understanding of illness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Use play and stories to shape a child's understanding, where necessary and appropriate. Characters in the story can be used to correct misunderstandings.
- Make sure that the child understands cause and effect (e.g. washing hands will **help stop** germs spreading rather than **will stop**).
- Answers do not need to be increasingly complex – if you have said enough to your child, repeat the information you have given consistently. If you are not sure or don't know, say so instead of making something up!
- Help your child label and name their emotions by labelling and naming yours.

TALKING TO CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY AGED 7–12

When talking to children aged 7–12 it is important to understand:

- Children can now see themselves as different to others and understand that other people have different needs and perspectives.
- Children still think about things from their own perspective so will be influenced mainly by that.
- They have an understanding that illness can be lots of different symptoms, and that lots of things go on inside their body which they can't see.
- They understand that medicines and following doctor's advice can help them get better but still need a lot of help and prompting to follow advice.
- They are more able to understand concepts of time and permanence, and will understand that death happens to everyone and is permanent.

WHAT THEY MAY DO OR SAY

- Not wanting to voice concerns for fear of upsetting parents, friends or others.
- Difficulty verbalising distress – they may not know why they feel worried or stressed.
- They are more likely to experience stress as physical symptoms, like a headache, a stomach ache or wanting more physical contact.
- They will ask more questions about the impact on other people or on wider changes to life than younger children.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Encourage emotional expression through drawing, stories, questions – a feelings box where children can write down their questions and thoughts and discuss them with an adult can be helpful.
- Normalise different feelings appropriately and talk about what you are doing to help with your worries or feelings.
- Make sure your child is active (provided they are well) – this gets rid of some of the chemicals in the body which are released when we are anxious and will help with physical symptoms of stress.
- Make sure children don't take on adult roles in a desire to help others.
- Ensure explanations are accurate and explain differences between conditions – e.g. children may have heard that having a cough might be worrying, and they will need to understand that not all coughs are worrying.

TALKING TO CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY AGED 13+

When talking to children aged 13+ it is important to understand:

- At this age, children have a good understanding of time, they can imagine the future and lots of possibilities. As a result, their imagination may mean they are able to worry more about things that haven't happened or might not happen.
- Teenagers can understand the different causes of illness, that illnesses can be very different and can understand the role of stress and worry on the body.
- Teenagers are still mainly influenced by their friends – so even though they can understand a lot of information about illness, what their friends are doing and saying may impact on how they behave.
- Teenagers are developing their own identity and a sense of who they are in the world. They are likely to look at their own sources of information and parents become less defining in how they think about information and how they behave.

WHAT THEY MAY DO OR SAY

- They might ask less questions of parents, and turn to other sources of information such as social media, their friends and news outlets.
- They might take advice from friends or other social influences on how to behave and act and be conscious of not wanting to act differently.
- There might be increased awareness of how illness and health behaviour fits with what is important to them.
- They might be more concerned with social, moral and emotional aspects of illness and how illness is having a broader impact. This might lead to more distress and sadness than in younger children.
- They might want to find ways of helping others.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Continue to offer space for support, affection and discussion.
- Ask open questions such as, 'What did you think of the news that...?'
- Provide them with information from reputable sources 'I came across this today, what do you think of it?'
- Support social opportunities and discussion with peers.
- Offer choice and promote independence within the context of what is possible and appropriate – if a teenager can't go out, giving more choice about activity within the home can be helpful.
- Suggest ways of helping others that are safe and appropriate.
- Offer reframes about worries – how can the young person think differently about the situation which helps them find a positive in the situation?