



## Epping School District Mental Health and Wellness Newsletter Coping with Unpredictability

October 15, 2020

Dear Epping School Community,

It seems that the school year is off to a pretty good start, all things considered. The students are generally happy to be back and have adapted very well to the new rules and routines. The staff are working hard and staying positive as they manage a whole new set of challenges. That being said, the recent events at the Elementary School have certainly been stressful for many in our community. Having to switch to remote learning at a moment's notice is difficult for everyone and we know it can be particularly difficult for working parents with young children. Our brains are wired for predictability and most of us find change hard. However, given the fact that it is more than likely that the unpredictability, especially with schooling, will continue for some time. We need to learn how to be flexible and manage the stress that inevitably arises when things are uncertain. This newsletter will focus on strategies for both you and your child to better manage the unpredictability we are currently facing. As always, feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Wagner and the Epping School Counseling Department



### MANAGING YOUR OWN DISCOMFORT WITH UNCERTAINTY

Before you can help your child, you need to help yourself. Ask yourself:

*How do I usually manage uncertainty?*

Think about ways that you have dealt with uncertainty in the past. What has worked? What has not? Draw on those experiences to help yourself now.

*What strengths do I have that I can draw on when faced with change?*

You are stronger than you think. Remind yourself of your personal strengths that can help you get through this.

*How can I find acceptance and compassion for myself and others?*



We have little control over what is going on right now. Finding ways to accept these changes is essential. Compassion for yourself is important too; whatever you are feeling is a normal response to difficult circumstances. Try to have compassion for others as well; we are all going through this together.

*What healthy habits and self-care routines have I created for myself that can support me in uncertain times?*

Make yourself a priority and be sure to maintain or establish healthy habits to manage your stress.

Who can I reach out to for support and help if I need it?

Social support is one of the most important ways to help us deal with difficulty. Make a list of who you can reach out to for emotional support and who might be available to help with child-care or other practical needs

HELPING YOUR CHILD COPE WITH UNPREDICTABILITY

❖ **TALK.** Check in with your child. Ask them how they are doing. Let them know the facts of the situation in age-appropriate ways. Find out what concerns they may have

- **Give them warning** – When you can, give your children a heads up of changes that may be coming to help them prepare.



❖ **LISTEN.** Be sure to take time to really hear what your children have to say and validate their feelings

❖ **CHOICES** – When children feel that their world is out of control, they will assert control in often inappropriate ways. Giving them choices whenever possible will help them feel a sense of control.

❖ **ROUTINES AND RITUALS.** Keep as many familiar routines in place as possible. Create new rituals to give everyone something to look forward to.



❖ **FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE** and **PRACTICE GRATITUDE.** Help your children find the good in the situation.

❖ **ACCEPT** that coping takes time. Both you and your child may need time to adjust. Try to be patient and give yourself and your child grace. We need both time and space to feel the difficult feelings that unpredictability may evoke.

| <b>Epping Counselors/Psychologists contact information:</b>  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>EES</b> 603-679-8018<br>Marianne McDonough:<br>mmcdonough@eppingsd.org<br>Kathy Stanley-Berting: KStanley-<br>berting@eppingsd.org<br>Julie Kratimenos (Psychologist):<br>Julie.kratimenos@eppingsd.org   | <b>EMS</b> 603-679-2544<br>Nick Degruttola:<br>ndegruttola@eppingsd.org<br>Sarah Wagner (Psychologist):<br>swagner@eppingsd.org | <b>EHS</b> 603-679-5472<br>Julie Morin:<br>jmorin@eppingsd.org<br>Melorah Bisallion:<br>mbisallion@eppingsd.org<br>Sarah Wagner (Psychologist):<br>swagner@eppingsd.org |
| <b>Community Resources:</b><br>Seacoast Mental Health Center: 431-6703 and 772-2710<br>Unemployment assistance: <a href="http://www.nhes.nh.gov">www.nhes.nh.gov</a><br>Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-237-TALK (8255)<br>Crisis Text Line: Text 741741<br>Community Partners: 516-9300<br>HAVEN: 994-SAFE (7233) |   |   |