

Supporting Student Mental Health from a Distance

SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE AND NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



MindWise
SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S®
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Upcoming Webinar

Best Practices for Supporting Students, Teachers, and Parents

April 29, 2020
12:00-1:00 PM ET

Register online on
our webinars page
at [MindWise.org](https://www.MindWise.org)

We'll be joined by
special guest Jodie
Segal, Director of
Education at
Elyssa's Mission

Housekeeping

- Time for questions at the end – use Zoom Q&A function
 - Option to ask questions anonymously
- Audience audio/video is disabled
- Webinar will be recorded and sent to all registrants

SOS Signs of Suicide

Suicide prevention education:
video and guided discussion



Mental health screening:
depression and signs of suicide

SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

Student Screening Form

• Age: _____ • Ethnicity: ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Not Hispanic/Latino

• Grade: _____ • Race: (Check all that apply)

• Gender: ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Black/African American ☐ White

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender ☐ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ☐ Other/Multicultural ☐ Asian

• Are you currently being treated for depression? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression (BSAD)*

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible by circling the "Yes" or "No" response.

In the last four weeks...

1. Have you felt like nothing is fun for you and you just aren't interested in anything?	Yes No
2. Have you had less energy than you usually do?	Yes No
3. Have you felt you couldn't do anything well or that you weren't as good-looking or as smart as most other people?	Yes No
4. Have you thought seriously about killing yourself?	Yes No
5. Have you EVER, in your WHOLE LIFE, tried to kill yourself or made a suicide attempt?	Yes No
6. Has doing even little things made you feel really tired?	Yes No
7. Has it seemed like you couldn't think as clearly or as fast as usual?	Yes No

Identifying Trusted Adults

List a trusted adult you could turn to if you need help for yourself or a friend (example: "My English teacher," "counselor," "my mother," "uncle," etc.)

In school _____

Out of school _____

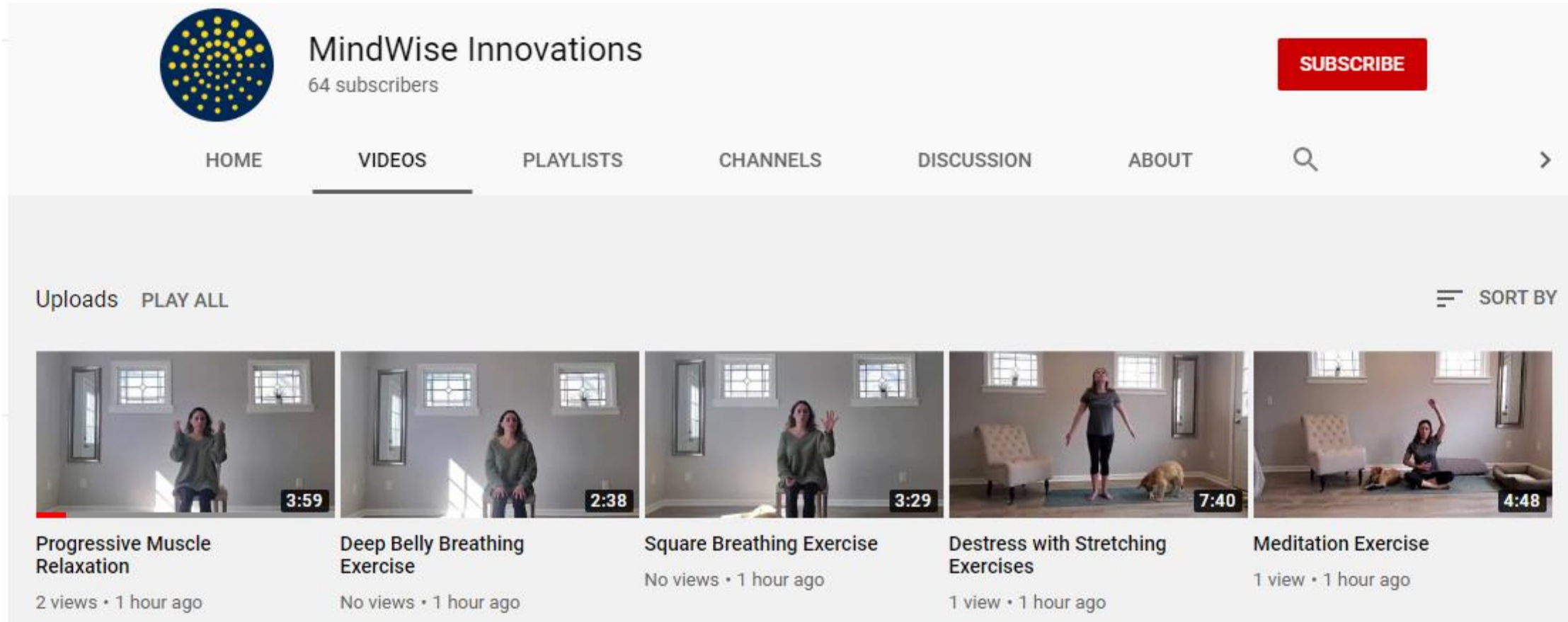
SOS During COVID-19

- SOS is not currently designed to be delivered virtually, especially during a crisis
- SOS team is offering resources for students and parents to build coping skills, reinforce the ACT message, and remind everyone of national resources to contact in times of crisis

ACT at Home

- Getting creative to find ways to connect with students
 - Enlisting **students** to look out for each other
 - Working through classroom **teachers** who have the closest link to the population at large
 - Supporting **parents** so that they can support their kids

Wellness Videos for Students



The screenshot shows the YouTube channel for MindWise Innovations, which has 64 subscribers. The channel's navigation bar includes links to HOME, VIDEOS, PLAYLISTS, CHANNELS, DISCUSSION, and ABOUT. A red SUBSCRIBE button is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, the 'Uploads' tab is selected, and a 'PLAY ALL' button is visible. A 'SORT BY' menu is also present. Five video thumbnails are displayed, each with a title, view count, and upload time:

Video Title	Duration	Views	Upload Time
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	3:59	2 views	1 hour ago
Deep Belly Breathing Exercise	2:38	No views	1 hour ago
Square Breathing Exercise	3:29	No views	1 hour ago
Destress with Stretching Exercises	7:40	1 view	1 hour ago
Meditation Exercise	4:48	1 view	1 hour ago

ACT Newsletters for Students, Teachers, and Parents

ACT at Home | High School

Adjusting to Life at a Distance

The sudden change in home and school life due to COVID-19 can be frustrating and stressful, especially for students. Some of the things we depend on to keep us feeling good are suddenly off limits. Whether you enjoyed hanging out with friends in the lunchroom, playing a favorite sport, or going to a movie on the weekend, a lot of life's simple pleasures have changed. Read below for tips on ways to cope from a distance.

Healthy Coping Strategies at a Distance



Journaling – while it's tough to be separated from friends, try using this time to learn more about yourself. Try spending a few minutes reflecting about your day in a journal. If you have trouble getting started, jot down a few lines of your feelings or three things you're grateful for that day.

Exercise – physical activity boosts your mood and is healthy for your body and mind. It can come in many forms such as running, biking, or even just walking your dog. Now with time at home, you can also take advantage of trying yoga or an exercise class online.

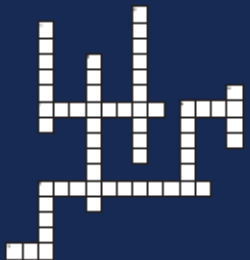


Hobbies – if your favorite hobbies involve gathering together (sports, drama, clubs), then this is the time to try something new. Try a virtual book club or learn a new skill through free online videos. Offer to fix something around the house or to cook a special dinner. The possibilities are endless!

Family Time – When is the last time you played a board game with your sibling? Or watched a movie with your parents? Now is the time to get reacquainted with the people under your roof.

Concerned About how a Friend is Coping?

Remember **ACT** is an easy way to help – **Acknowledge** what they're feeling, show you **Care**, and help them by **Telling** a trusted adult. Complete the below crossword puzzle with clues about ways to take care of yourself and your friends.



ACROSS

1. Walks or bike rides are examples of this way to stay healthy
2. When you see signs of trouble and realize it's serious
3. Three steps to help a friend in need
4. When you show your friend their feelings are important

DOWN

1. Activities you do for fun
2. A person who can help with problems is called a trusted
3. Writing down your thoughts and emotions
4. Healthy strategies to help you through hard times
5. A bond between two people
6. When you share worries with an adult so they can help

If you are concerned about yourself or a friend – reach out to The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-8255 to access free, 24/7, confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources. **Crisis Text Line:** Text ACT to 747411 for free, 24/7 crisis support.

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<https://learn.mindwise.org/act-at-home>

Supporting Student Mental Health from a Distance

Dr. John Ackerman

Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Center for Suicide Prevention and Research (CSPR)

- helps schools and community organizations in Ohio implement evidence-based prevention strategies
- team has provided training in 150 schools in 19 counties using an enhanced SOS Signs of Suicide programming model



Webinar Objectives

- Describe the emotional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on staff and families
- Identify effective strategies for managing anxiety and distress during isolation
- Ways staff can engage with families to foster engagement and resilience

COVID-19: Emotional Impact

COVID-19: A pandemic

- This is a novel experience and much is still uncertain
- Virus is not visible, so it can be hard to picture the risk
- People have become very sick, and some have died
- Changing the way each person's lives look
 - Daily activities, socialization, schedules
- Changing the way the world looks

Stress + grief are expected and normal

Let's talk about what stress, grief, and mood disorders look like to provide a framework for how you can support yourself and others.



Stress

Physical

Not enough food, water, sleep

Pain

Injury, Surgery

Sickness

Stress

Physical

Not enough food, water, sleep
Pain
Injury, Surgery
Sickness

Emotional

Anger/Frustration
Worry
Sadness
Changing moods

Stress

Physical

Not enough food, water, sleep
Pain
Injury, Surgery
Sickness

Emotional

Anger/Frustration
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Sadness
Changing moods

Life Events

Changes to friendships
Changes to daily activities
Learning at home
Someone you care about sick

Stress

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Not enough food, water, sleep
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Injury, Surgery
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Cognitive

Memory
Attention and Concentration
Comprehension
Negative thoughts

Grief

A natural reaction to loss. Losses can be

- A person
- A relationship
- An object
- An event
- A feeling

Can be experienced immediately or delayed

Grief can be even more difficult when one feels they are not supposed to express their grief

Stress and Grief Can Be Expressed In Many Ways

- Crying
- Anger
- Hostility
- Laughing
- Withdrawal
- Avoidance

Depression

- Sad or irritable mood
- Less interest or loss of pleasure in almost all activities
- Changes to appetite and/or eating
- Changes to sleep patterns
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling worthlessness or like a burden
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or understanding
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal plan

Anxiety

- Excessive worry about a variety of topics or activities
- The worry is experienced as very challenging to control
- Physical or cognitive symptoms
 - Edginess or restlessness
 - Fatigued and tired
 - Impaired concentration or feeling as though the mind goes blank
 - Irritability
 - Increased muscle aches or soreness
 - Difficulty sleeping

When to Reach Out for Additional Support

During a pandemic, many people report difficulty sleeping, more worries, being more irritable, and feeling less interested in doing things they used to like to do.

A decision to reach out for professional support is based on whether day to day functions are impaired and how much distress is caused to the person.

Additionally, if there is increased risk of self-directed harm, suicide, or serious aggression, it is important to reach out for further assessment.

Common question: Will Youth Suicide Rates Increase in Response?

April 10, 2020

Suicide Mortality and Coronavirus Disease 2019—A Perfect Storm?

Mark A. Reger, PhD^{1,2}; Ian H. Stanley, MS^{1,3}; Thomas E. Joiner, PhD³

[» Author Affiliations](#) | [Article Information](#)

JAMA Psychiatry. Published online April 10, 2020. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.1060

Reasons Youth Suicide Could Increase

- Social isolation and reduced community support
- Heightened anxiety and uncertainty
- Economic stress
- Trauma and loss
- Reduced access to (mental) healthcare
- Increases in firearm sales
- Loss of milestones, routines, opportunities

Reasons Youth Suicide Could Decrease

- Novel opportunities to increase social connection through technology
- Tele-mental health options have increased
- Options to create new routines that make routines and mental health a priority
- After prior natural disasters, there has been a temporary reduction in suicides
- Shared impact of a global health crisis

Warning Signs

A **warning sign** is an indication that an individual may be experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide.

Most individuals who attempt suicide give warning signs or signals of their intentions

Seek Immediate Help

Threat to kill themselves, actively seeking lethal means, talking/writing about death in school or social media

Other Warning Signs to Take Seriously

- Increased isolation
 - Giving away possessions
 - Obtaining a weapon or means of self-harm
 - Risky behavior, recklessness, self-injury
- ↑ substance use
- ↓ interest in usual activities



ACT at Home

<https://learn.mindwise.org/act-at-home>

ACT at Home | Teachers



ACT from a Distance

As teachers and students adjust to distance learning, our top priority remains unchanged: the health and safety of the children we teach. While students are in school, teachers are uniquely positioned to notice warning signs and reach out to students in need. Now, perhaps more than ever, teachers can serve as a lifeline for students struggling with depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. As you connect with your students in virtual classes or individually, remember: **ACT**

Acknowledge signs of depression or suicide in a student

Care: Reach out to the student with a listening ear

Tell: school mental health staff, administrators and/or local authorities immediately

Enhance Protective Factors



Increase teacher and family support



Foster positive social and school activities



Advocate for a therapeutic relationship



Enhance coping and problem-solving skills



Focus on values and reasons for living



Reduce access to lethal means



Implement a clear safety plan if needed

Increase Awareness of Crisis Resources

- Have youth take a picture of it so it is always with them or download an app with these resources
- Consider practice calling local or national crisis line and/or texting Crisis Text Line
- Where will they put this at home? Accessible?



CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text **ACT** to 741741.

Taking Care of Ourselves During and After a Pandemic

Paying Attention To You First

To best support the children, we also need to pay attention to how we are coping.

1. If you are in a better mental headspace, you can better attend and be present for others
2. Children notice when we recommend they use coping strategies that they can tell we have not used

Are You Taking Your Own Advice?

Physical

Eating well balanced meals
Hydrating
Maintaining a sleep schedule
Exercising, Relaxation

Emotional

Talking about your worries
Paying attention to the good

Life Events

Scheduling virtual hangouts
Enjoyable home activities
Keeping to a Routine

Cognitive

Being purposeful
Being present
Being realistic

Caregiver Burden



Taking Care of Others During and After a Pandemic: Opening the Conversation



Get Them To Talk

- Many children may believe they shouldn't show their emotions to "be strong."
- Research has shown that addressing negative emotional states reduces the overall intensity and longevity.
- Be specific with check-ins. Ask questions that can't be answered with "yes/no" or "IDK"
 - "What worries you about COVID-19?"
 - "How has this experience changed your daily life? Changed you?"
 - "Tell me what has been the hardest part of this month..."

Sit In That Space



Coach Them In Self-Care

Help them decide what they could try to do that will help

What can I help
you with?

Be The Change

You mean the world to these children, and it helps to know someone is thinking about them.

“I’ve been thinking about you a lot lately. Tell me what it has been like...”

“I just wanted to send this funny picture, it made me think of you. Missing our time together.”

“I wondered if you have been worried about your grandma, I know how close you two are...”

Let Their Story Be The Most Important

Kids tend to focus on how large-scale events impact them

I'm missing the basketball game on Saturday

I was supposed to be in the school play

Kids are supposed to be focused on school, friends, and sports.

Empathize & validate, then move to how they can DO something about the situation

Addressing Uncertainty

- Make informed decisions about what children need to know to feel safe (differs by age)
- Create an environment where children can ask questions that matter to them
- Let children know they are going to be safe and you will take steps to stay safe too
- Encourage compassion for vulnerable people
- Emphasize that getting sick is part of being human; we all need to help each other feel safe

Strategies for Managing Anxiety and Distress

~~Social Distancing~~

**Physical Distancing +
Social Solidarity** ✓

Strategies for Managing Anxiety and Distress

Youth need to address basic needs first which include:

- Food, shelter, physical safety
- Yet, emotional wellness is critical to health and requires:
 - Emotional support and connection
 - Routine, purpose
 - Control and predictability
 - Meaning and hope

Strategies for Managing Anxiety and Distress

- Building connections when isolated helps increase:
 - Sense of belonging and self-worth
 - Mood and energy
 - Ability to cope with adversity
- Youth should prioritize connection despite keeping distance
 - Plan regular times to connect with and without technology
 - Maintain rituals and shared activities if possible
 - Don't assume "out of sight" means "out of mind" – be proactive!
 - Create new traditions and shared meaning

Tackling Unpredictability through Routines

- Many routines have been disrupted by this pandemic.
- Help youth build a routine that works for them and includes:
 - Set wake/sleep time
 - Set meal/snack times
 - Time for school work (if applicable)
 - Time for connectivity
 - Time for activity

Use of Social Media/Technology

- Now, more than ever, remaining connected is important
- Social media and technology can be a helpful tool in staying connected
- Encourage youth to use social media and technology to connect with **people known to them**
- Additionally, social media use should be:
 - Moderated to make sure it is not excessive or inappropriate
 - Used for connection, not comparison to others
 - From safe and credible sources

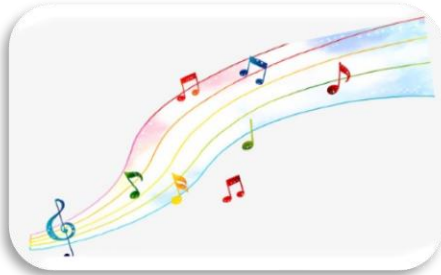
Getting/Staying Active

- Being physically active can prevent or reduce some MH symptoms
- Requires creativity with current limits
 - Riding a bike or going for a run
 - Taking the dog for a walk
 - Doing yardwork/gardening
 - Push-up's, sit-up's, working out
 - Lots of free classes, videos
- Experiment rather than prescribe!



Distraction

During a crisis or overwhelming period of distress, distraction may also be helpful



Conclusions

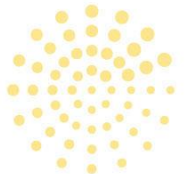
- We are experiencing a new and disruptive pandemic. Change and intense emotions are to be expected.
- Physical distance is a priority but so is social connection!
- Caregivers and staff should prioritize self-care and modify expectations.
- Many resources and strategies exist for youth and adults.
- Treatment may look different but is still effective.
- Staff engagement now helps youth in the future.
- Thank you for being one of the helpers!



FRED ROGERS CENTER
for early learning and children's media
at Saint Vincent College

"At many times throughout their lives, children will feel the world has turned topsy-turvy. It's not the ever-present smile that will help them feel secure. It's knowing that love can hold many feelings, including sadness, and that they can count on the people they love to be with them until the world turns right side up again."

- Fred Rogers



MindWise
SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Please Don't Hesitate To Reach Out with Questions

John Ackerman, PhD

<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/suicide-prevention>

SOS Team

sos@mindwise.org

Special thanks to the following for supporting this presentation:

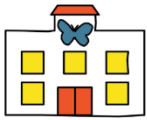
Kam Twymon, LPCC, MBA

Nicole Dempster, PhD

MindWise Innovations

Question and Answer


<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/giving/on-our-sleeves>



Behavioral Health Resources for Coronavirus

We have expert resources and guides to help you manage life during coronavirus.


[Learn More](#)



How to Talk to Your Kids About Mental Health

Here are tips for approaching difficult topics and initiating a healthy rapport with your child that will last a lifetime.

[Learn More](#)




Managing Indoor Boredom

Your guide to fighting indoor boredom.

[Learn More](#)


<https://www.mindwise.org/act>

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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

2 views • 1 hour ago




Deep Belly Breathing Exercise

No views • 1 hour ago

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ACT at Home | Teachers



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Thank You

Please contact the SOS team at sos@mindwise.org