



هيئة أبوظبي للطفولة المبكرة
Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority

As a result of
COVID-19, we,
along with our
children, are all
**facing a new
reality.**

We thought we would share
some advice to help you protect
your children and practice
positive parenting in these
unprecedented times...



What can we
do as parents
to remain
positive
**during these
unsettling
times?**



The current situation may result in feelings of anger and frustration - **it is okay to have these feelings.**

What is **not okay** is to **punish children by abusing them** either physically (e.g. hitting or neglecting them) or emotionally.

To learn more about what is considered abuse or maltreatment **visit the Ministry of Interior's Child Protection Center website - <http://www.moi-cpc.ae/>**



If you feel yourself losing patience, **immediately distance yourself from others** (e.g. going to another room). Such actions can help you to relax and prevent you from doing something you might regret later.

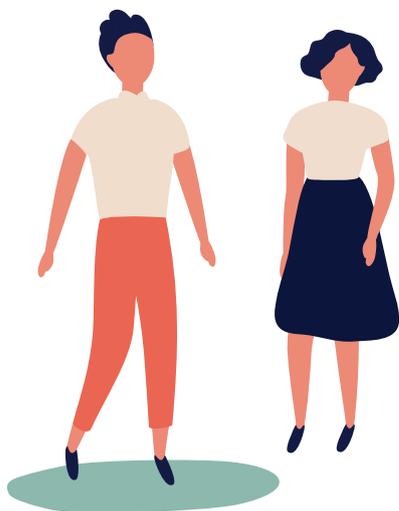
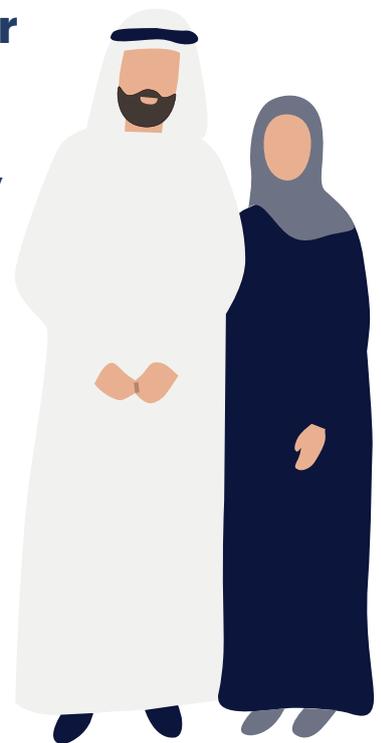
Everyone can become frustrated sometimes. If you feel that way, take immediate action so that you do not allow your body and brain to exaggerate the difficulty.

Take a few **deep breaths** with eyes closed.

Try to distance yourself from what is troubling you and find a quiet, **safe space to relax.**

Find someone you can talk to, or do a soothing activity that you enjoy. **Call a trusted friend or even meditate.**

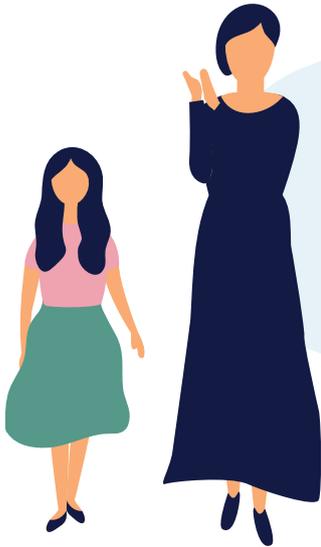
What is important is that you send your body and brain a message that you are in control.



If you need more help coping, consider calling the **Ministry of Community Development's "Taaluf" hotline at 800 623 or the Family Development Foundation at 02 409 0111** to access confidential counselling services.



How do we practice positive parenting strategies **when interacting with our children?**



Praise your children if they do something well.

While they may not show it, you will notice that they will repeat such actions due to positive reinforcement.

Use positive words to say what behavior you want to see (e.g. “please put your clothes away” instead of “don't make a mess”) and **avoid yelling** as this will only cause more stress.



Be realistic about your expectations from your children (e.g. it is not possible for them to be quiet all day but you can ask them to do that for 30 minutes when you are on a call with your office).



Use consequences to teach your children responsibility for what they do (e.g. if they break a toy, they will not be able to play with it anymore). It also allows discipline that is measured and more effective than hitting or shouting.

Avoid giving your child too much screen time to keep them calm.

Instead, get active with creative hobbies, chores and time together.



If you have extra support at home, make sure to **check in with them and their well-being.** They are probably feeling similar levels of stress. **Be conscious that they are not overworked or frustrated** as this may be transferred onto your children.



What is abuse & how does it affect **children**?

Abuse covers **all forms of physical and/or mental maltreatment**, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment of children.



It often starts with small actions - such as occasionally raising your voice - **but this can quickly escalate and be detrimental to your children's health** as they can be incredibly sensitive to increased tensions within the household.

Abuse has been linked to increased levels of stress & anxiety in children by international organizations.



Abuse **reduces a child's trust and confidence in themselves** and in their parents, and **harms emotional development.**





How can we recognize signs of abuse and **report them within the COVID-19 context?**

Be aware of any changes in your child's behavior, and any changes in behavior of those around them.

It is also important to **monitor their activity online** so that they are not exploited.

Many children exhibit behavioral changes if they are victims of abuse. It is **important to keep an eye out for these signs** (e.g. changes in mood, fear of being alone, poor academic performance).

If you have reason to believe that your children or someone you know is being abused in any form, you can **call the Ministry of Interior's Child Protection Center at 116111** or use their **'Hemayati' app** to report it.



How can we talk to our children **about protecting themselves from abuse?**

Talk to your children about their right to be safe and protected, as this will empower them to protect themselves. Teach them **about body parts** early, emphasizing that **their body is private** and that they **have a right to protect it**.

Teach your children “body boundaries”, telling them that no one should touch their private parts or ask them to touch anyone else’s private parts.

Tell your child that they should always come and talk to them if they feel unsafe or are not happy with how someone has touched them or talked to them.

Access **additional resources on the UNICEF website, Ministry of Interior's Child Protection Center website or Ministry of Community Development's e-library** to learn more on how to talk to your children about how to protect themselves.

References

Ministry of Interior

Child Protection Centre

www.moi-cpc.ae

ChildProtection@moi-cpc.gov.ae

02 333 3999

Hotline: 116111

Family Development Foundation

www.fdf.gov.ae

02 409 0111

Ministry of Community Development

Taaluf Hotline: 800 623

www.mocd.gov.ae/en/media-center/elibrary.aspx

UNICEF

www.unicef.org/protection

The End



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