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## ASKABLE ADULT CAMPAIGN



### Be Someone They Can Talk To

Our world has changed drastically since our last Askable Adult Campaign blog. Kids and parents are together at home trying to work and learn. Teachers and youth workers (who are also at home with their kids) are exploring new meaningful ways to virtually connect and teach. Families are video chatting across time zones and even across town to feel connected.

This week, we'll explore communication and bringing balance into our lives and the lives of young people during this chaotic and worrisome time. **Please share this blog with your adult community and commit to building your askable adult skills by checking out the [askable adult website](#).**

#### Askable Adult Skill #3: Commit to Caring Communication

It is hard to know exactly the right thing to tell children and youth. Our global community has responded with a lot of online wisdom available about [how to talk to children and youth about Covid-19](#) and [coping with fear during the pandemic](#).

**Maybe it's also about listening.**

“Do you want to vent or do you want advice?” Just learning now, after 40 years on earth, that this might be the most important question to ask whenever a friend or loved one is upset.”

~ twitter quote by Jada Yuan – reporter for the Washington Post

Jada shares an important skill that is particularly meaningful in our communications with youth – to ask if they want opinions and feedback or if they just want to be listened to. Right now, many children and youth are worried and need a place to talk and be heard as well as ask questions and get digestible information.

### **Find Balance with the 4 R's:**

#### **Reassurance, Routines, Regulation, and Relationships**

What can we do to support balance for ourselves and the young people in our lives during stressful times? **Reassurance, routines, regulation, and relationships!**

Adults can **reassure** children and youth about their safety and the safety of their loved ones by answering their questions with age appropriate information while not overloading them with scary information through over exposure to news and social media. For younger kids, check out [Sesame Street's Caring For Each Other](#) page and the [Wiggles Handwashing Song](#) video (but wash for 20 seconds not 15!). For older kids, check out this [3-minute NPR Podcast and Comic](#).

Maintaining and transitioning to new **routines** provides a sense of predictability and safety for everyone. At home, try sticking to your regular bedtimes, mealtimes and daily schedules for learning and play as well as create some 'new normal' consistent routines (like walks or games or music).

Everyone can use some extra tools to help **regulate** emotions right now. When we are stressed out, our bodies respond by activating our stress response systems. Normal reactions to stress can be challenging and include sleeplessness, anxiety, irritability, rigidity, clinginess, regression, and defensiveness. Sound familiar?

Adults can take the lead by validating young people's feelings (e.g., "I know that this might feel scary or overwhelming") and encourage activities that help with emotional regulation (e.g., exercise, deep breathing, mindfulness or meditation

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activities, regular routines for sleeping and eating). For children and youth, check out [21 day mindfulness bootcamp for kids](#) (ages 3-10), [Self Care for Middle School](#) and [Yoga for Teens](#).

And finally, **relationships!** During times of stress, maintaining connections with each other takes priority over school and work. The Askable Adult Campaign has created [tools to support strong connections](#) with children and youth!

### **Communication Tip: W.A.I.T**

**WAIT! Why Am I Talking?** Ask yourself this a lot. Sometimes adults dominate conversations because we feel we need to always be teaching. Youth often want useful advice, but not always--sometimes they just want to be listened to. Balance talking with listening. Try a 1:3 ratio where children and youth drive the conversation. **For every 15 minutes, are you talking more than 5?**

Learn some tips for communicating with youth by [clicking on 'toolkit'](#) and looking over our Communication tool.

If you are interested in following along, join our email list [here](#). Learn more about the campaign at <http://www.vtnetwork.org/askableadult>. And, give us a follow on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to join the conversation happening there.

Thank you for being an askable adult for the children and youth in your life,



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