

"היה לך למשיב נפש" (רות ד' 15)

Parenting and family in an emergency



משאבים
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Let's start with you, parents.

Organizing the Family and daily matters in the current state of uncertainty:

Preparations: If you have a protected space or shelter, prepare it with everything you think you will need for a short or long stay. If you went down to the shelter at night with the kids, it is preferable to stay there.

Try to sleep - even resting and closing your eyes is a relaxation for the body. Better than running to and from the apartment.

If you are in a shared shelter, make sure to organize a neighbors' team to arrange the space: cleaning, preparing drinks, food and make sure you take turns. Takedown a fan or two and prepare a place for toddlers, and a designated place for children to play.

Avoid conflict at this intense time, let them watch screens if it helps to distract from the outside. As far as it sounds "immoral" share sweets and snacks - fruit is better, but fruit left in the bins in the shelter will bring flies. So now is the time to "indulge".

If there are teenagers, try to include them in the needed tasks, but do not tease them that they are on WhatsApp / Tiktok with their friends.



Make sure you do not go out to see the Iron Dome interceptions and explain that it is dangerous due to the shards falling.

If you went out for necessary shopping or work, whenever you arrived at the destination inform the family members that you are in a safe place.

Make sure everyone in the family who goes out sends a text message when they get to a safe place.

If you are outside and encounter an alarm - as soon as you entered a safe place - report to worried family members.

You have reached the protected space, you ran fast and now you are excited - there is nothing to panic about, this is the body's way of dealing with a threat. First, look around: everyone who is supposed to be with you - is here! Say it out loud.

Now say to yourself **out loud** "I'm in a safe place" or " I am safe!!" at least five times.

Encourage the children to say it with you out loud.

WE ARE HERE WE ARE IN A SAFE SPACE.

Are you still shaking? Jump 10-20 times as high as possible.

When you are done, pay attention to the pace of your breathing and heart bit and notice that slowly it will calm down.

If you are with family or friends, Hug each other tight and pat the back of whomever you are hugging. Do it for a few minutes. This will also reduce arousal.

If you have already created a list of actions - USE IT: where do you sit,

What to do now: Drink, Eat something, Call dear ones to let them know you're fine.

Manage your sanity - this is an essential point. You have the feeling that the "ceiling crumbling on your head" !? you have already played, activated, entertained, cooked, cleaned, been zoom sessions with the kids for hours like during Corona including home-based working and You are worried.

Let's start with the simplest task: Breaths. Our body responds to stress and cumulative difficulty so give it some oxygen.

It can be by going out to the balcony with a cup of coffee for a few minutes or listening to soothing music.

Just breathe!!

Especially when you feel anxious, exhausted, or nervous.

Breath Consciously! exhale - pay attention!! Exhale!! Only when we exhale we Make our lungs automatically breathe in

Try to exhale slowly (say count to 7 silently) wait two seconds and then take a breath.

Continue for at least 10 times and you will notice how the pressure drops. And right before you end this exercise, say something positive to yourself About yourself.

Remember the motto: "Put on your oxygen mask first".

When you are tensed, instead of "falling" on the members of the household, tell them: "I am anxious right now (or any other emotion or feeling)" It will over if I can have a few minutes to "(Say it clearly: go to the balcony, drink a cup of cold coffee or water, take a quick shower, end the phone call, or anything).

Get out of the hectic moment: try not to "blow up", If you feel overwhelmed, disengage for few minutes organize your thoughts and reassure yourself about your abilities.

Make sure someone is with the kids and take a break from anything that bothers you.

If it means to allow your child a bit more screen time to allow time for "recharging" time for yourself, let it be!!

Call a friend or family member - talk to someone who calms you down. It will help you to describe what is bothering you and take it off your chest. This support system is so important during these challenging times.

Whenever you feel the need there are many helplines ready available that are happy to assist you.

Take a moment to look at the past. focus on past events that you managed stress and challenge take courage from your past resilience. You have probably been through difficulties that you managed.

You Did it! And you are stronger because of it. Remind yourself that you will make it again!

Remind yourself of your abilities.

Ask yourself:

Who else can give me a hand? A neighbor? Relative, extended family/friends.

What do I like to do, and can the children share this activity with me?

There is a famous song in Hebrew by Rami Kleinstein's "Little Gifts"? It goes like this:

"Small gifts, someone sent me small gifts,"

Shards of intention circles of faith.

Let's practice small acts of kindness.

Are there neighbors in my building or near me who need help, look in your phone list for someone you have not spoken to in a long time and you know they will be happy with a short phone call or personal message ...

A gift to me: Something positive that I feel good about.



Daily inventory: At the end of each day, pay attention and write down for yourself something that you have achieved, learned or that you are grateful for.

This will help dilute some of the negativity you have experienced and remind you that not everything that is happening right now is bad or depressing.

Finally, night came.

Look for a quiet place just for your parents, prepare a drink for you. If it is important for you to relax in front of one screen - turn it on "Head cleaning mode".

No more information about the missiles and shelling, no more commentators no politics.

If a movie is right for you, look for something soothing and entertaining, reassure yourself that when the alarm will sound, you will act immediately.

Beyond that take 3 minutes for each of you, Moan and groan for three minutes - no one interfere with the others sharing, no need to apologize,

Don't comment, just listen to the other and then take turns and your spouse also has time to grumble. Without interruption, or need to apologize. NO criticism.

You're both done - take a deep breath.

And now each one, in turn, says what he thinks/feels he deserves all the respect for today?

It goes like this: "I feel good about myself today for doing/making so" and after that "I am proud of you for doing/making ..."

Now take turns and the spouse says: "I feel good about myself today for" and after that "I am proud of you for doing/making ..."

You're done - try to find time to plan for the next day ... and try to think of something fun to add to the daily plan.

If it suits you to keep reading tips for everyday life, it starts right here.

If this the time you finally found peacepostpone it, you can read it another day.

Early childhood Parenting



For young children, a parent in a state of anxiety is very frightening. To interpret vague situations Young children lean on their parents to interpret vague situations; If a parent seems anxious and consistently scared, the child thinks everything is unsafe and that includes home and everything else.

Try to maintain a calm and neutral behavior towards your child, even when you are struggling to control your anxieties and worries. Pay attention to your facial expressions, the words you choose, and the intensity of the emotion you express, because your children read you, they are like little sponges and they absorb everything.

While you do not want your child to be aware of your anxiety, it is clear that you do not have to suppress your emotions.

It's okay - and even healthy - for children to see their parents face stress from time to time, but it's important to explain to the child why you reacted the way you did.

Children will not always be able to express their feelings. Younger children will it help if you use a dictionary or "map" of emotions [like emoji]. Instead of saying "Tell me how scared you are." With the help of the emotion map, that you may find online, you can ask the children to point out the emotion or feeling they are experiencing right now. You can also use a traffic-light chart to help children indicate how strong their feeling is: red light means they feel scared, a yellow light – I feel Ok and green light feels fine. Note that it may start at Red but if in time the child will indicate yellow or green you too will calm down.

A question that bothers young children is "When will we return to kindergarten?" How to explain the situation to children of young age (3-6) who have just started adjusting to kindergarten after a disrupted year, a teacher they only knew and again they are with a new routine and stay home?

The good news is that they already know "Corona" so being at home is not something new. But they still lack contact with children. Try to connect them with friends. It can be in a shelter; it can be in a friends' house that has a large, protected room. For children as well as adults, social connection is extremely important.

Routine: Yes I know you have already heard about it, but there is no choice if you want to maintain your child's mental and emotional health. Create routine. The younger the children it should be a clear and consistent routine. You may include time for screens but not only.

Let's start with a regular get-together in the morning, some activity until the zoom, if any. And also after the zoom. Remember zoom is exhausting so the child needs a break, exercise [avoid screen immediately] make time for a meal, plan fun activities [e.g. paint on the bath tub tiles using hand-paints] Usually the bath is a relatively safe place, prepare activities suitable for the child's age. And if possible create a daily plan until bedtime that should preferably be followed as much as possible.

Make a wish list with the child of what he would like to do tomorrow. If appropriate, prepare a prayer for the peace of the family with the children. Print and let them draw or decorate it and before bedtimes encourage them to read "our prayer".

Try to initiate a "zoom session" [up to three children] with the kindergarten teacher for even 15 minutes. Remember when the emergency is over the children are likely to meet her again. And if possible with the kindergarten's assistant.



Adolescents

Partnership respecting individualism: Some adolescents experience home-stay as a "time-out" from commitments such as studies, classes, etc. as a time of complete rest and autonomy. And turning day into night.

It's time to do a 'tenants' meeting' of parents and children and certainly with the teenagers and share with them the situation as it is and ask them to be partners in the house. A dialogue that invites partnership.

This Partnership means tasks for which you seek or give them some responsibility. It is known that the responsibility increases motivation and

can be "a responsibility for cooking a meal for the family" or "prepare something good to eat in case we need to enter the protected space. Give them a free hand to plan and prepare the meal and only if you are asked to assist them. [Yes, the kitchen will sometimes look messy] but remember we want to take them out of passivity and include them. If possible ask them to take part in looking after younger siblings not as parental replacements, but as assistants. Of course, every family will find its balance.

Adolescents may be preoccupied with themselves but they are also very sensitive to you and your worries. Try not to paint a black future with a worse scenario, but with sharing your support needs.



An upside-down or turning day into night and night into day

While schools are closed adolescents tend to change routine. It is important to remember "now is not the time to start struggling". Yes, make a status quo. Let's make some agreements. Noontime - this is the time you want to see them and this is the time when you expect them to give a helping hand. If we do not set rules that take the situation into account, we will constantly struggle or get frustrated, or end up in a confrontation.

Commitment - Everyone is committed to what we agreed upon.

Decisive - if we agreed do not to open negotiations - stay behind this is what was agreed.

Consistency - try not to get tired because as soon as we convey a message that "I got tired of the story" ... you are back to square one!.

Passivity and Screens

This is an area related to the previous topic so let's be clear, first, it did not start today, **it's a generation of screens!** Today, it is almost an exclusive channel for communication and adolescents have been there for a long time. Adolescents find it difficult to stay home, even though during Covid they experienced it, at the same time they are used to being on screens all day. The problem is of course the length of time and the fact that it causes passivity. Try to put in times of activity and this is true for all ages. Passivity leads on the physical level to obesity and the mental level to moodiness fatigue and depression. Agreement on wake-up time and taking part in home tasks indirectly refer to screen times. When we are engaged in a task the screen becomes secondary.



Social pressures in the face of state regulations

You come across them saying "but everyone meets outside" or "I only meet a friend" and of course it is difficult to have romantic relationships only by virtual means.

Listen openly. You do not have to agree but listening and being empathetic is the basis. Then, and unlike everyday situations, state regulations "stand by you" it is not your personal decision it is the law. If you think your children are at risk of being exposed to dangers, try talking to their hearts about their responsibility to your family. When "all your arguments are gone" you can always get help from law enforcement.

I will return to the essence: children are not made of fragile glass - most of them are durable and have resilience and resourcefulness. What is frightening is uncertainty and imagination about what will happen, what is soothing is a mature and respectful open conversation.

And remember our code:

"In an emergency, put on your oxygen mask first, then put the mask on your child."

Yours,

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