Trauma-Informed Parenting during our “Staycation”

Tips for keeping our families rooted in safety and growing in connection during the COVID-19 Quarantine
Regulate Yourself

“The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to man.” - Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

- Breathe deeply (set timers to remind).
- Take mini-breaks from things causing stress.
- Turn off the TV. Select a specific time of day to take in needed information.
- Use social media “for good” – go only to uplifting groups/sites that connect with friends/loved ones.
- Let go of thinking about things outside your control.
They’re anxious about the changes…and the anxiety they perceive in you.

Their “big” feelings that push you away or cause explosions are rooted in uncertainty.

Punishments don’t work with a dysregulated child.

Your calm can be contagious.

Behavior is Communication

“Behavior is simply the signal.” - Dr. Ross Greene
“Yes, things are different and there is a lot that is still the same.”

Idea: Have children help list all the things that aren’t changing in their lives.

Normalize the anxiety and model good emotional tools – “We all feel this way and here are things we can do to feel less worried.”

Calmly Assure Children

“When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it’s our job to share our calm, not to join their chaos.” – LR Knost
Create a schedule – a visual schedule is a great idea.

Stick to routines like bedtimes, morning rituals, etc.

Don’t make promises you can’t keep...you don’t know what else will be postponed.

Use technology for connecting with others, exploring other parts of the world virtually.
Purposefully Playful

“Playfulness teaches self regulation, breaks down barriers, distracts, cuts tension and more.” – Karen Doyle Buckwalter

- View this time as a “Staycation.” Make time for fun, everyday.
- Strategize ways to bring laughter into your family (games, jokes, funny movies…whatever works…let children have lots of input).
- Music, dancing, rhythmic movement help everyone’s brains.
- Go outside if you can…get some exercise.
Your children need YOU to remain healthy – physically and emotionally.

Be intentional about doing something for yourself EVERY day.

Ask for help, work together with spouse & extended family/friends.

If you “lose it” be gracious to give yourself a “do-over” the same way you’d extend a “do-over” to your child.

Self-Care isn’t Selfish!
• Avoid social isolation during social distancing – stay connected via phone, social media, etc.
• Use technology to connect with others and help your children do the same (supervised, of course).
• Helping neighbors or others in need can really help shift our own attitudes...find ways for your family to be a positive force.

Reach Out to Others

“Your presence is the most precious gift you can give.” – Marshall B Rosenberg