

Hello Everyone,

Whew, what a whirlwind we are in. In some ways, it seems like everything has been turned on its head. Cancellations, grocery store hysteria and non-stop information about the growing impact of COVID-19 have changed everything. It is my hope that you are finding the good in this situation and gearing up to enjoy some downtime. That being said, I do want to speak to the fact that all of this change can bring about anxiety in even the most rational individuals. So, I want to share a few practices that are helping me stay calm, as well as mention few resources you might find helpful for yourself, your students, or maybe even your own kiddos.

Anxiety Fighting Strategy #1 - Unplug

- I understand the irony of this tip being delivered via e-mail, but hear me out. We live in an age of information - we can find information on any topic, from any part of the world, whenever we want it. While this can help us to stay informed, bombarding ourselves with unnecessary information can also lead to unnecessary anxiety. *For me, this has meant taking the Facebook app off my phone, and severely limiting my consumption of the news.*

Anxiety Fighting Strategy #2 - Gratitude

- While the current times are unsettling to say the least, there is also plenty to be thankful for. My family is healthy, we are enjoying our time together, and we currently have enough toilet paper. Whenever I sense anxiety coming in, I try to counter it with 3 things that I'm thankful for. Gratitude is important, folks.

Anxiety Fighting Strategy #3 - Focus On What I Can Control

- There have been times over the past week or so when I have felt like getting my circle of control lesson out and using it myself. It's so hard not to get lost in the rabbit hole of "what ifs," but worrying about things out of our control are not helpful. I cannot control how much food others buy at the grocery, but I can control what we purchase. I cannot control whether or not other people go out when they are sick, but I can control how often we go out. I'm really trying to turn that anxiety into action and as a byproduct, my house is cleaner than it has been in a long time.

Anxiety Fighting Strategy #4 - Keep Things As Routine As Possible

- This one has so far been the most challenging. There has been SO MUCH disruption to our normal lives that a new normal will have to be established. I have created a simple schedule for our day that includes actually changing out of our PJ's (starting tomorrow 😁) and will allow for the day to be broken up into a variety of activities to keep things fresh. Do this even if it's just for yourself. It helps to have things to look forward to and check off the list.

All of the things I mentioned above are little things that make a big difference. As we move forward into this time of uncertainty together, I want to let you know that I will continue to be here for all the students, parents, and staff at Viking. On my website- accessed through the staff directory of the district web page- you will find information on explaining COVID-19 to elementary aged students, strategies for dealing with anxiety/worries this pandemic has caused, and other activities that students could complete to support their emotional well-being. An e-blast will be sent to all families about this but I also wanted to share it with you as well. Please feel free to direct students/parents to my website or have them contact me with additional concerns.

That is all for now. We will get through all of this TOGETHER. May you all be happy and healthy!

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