If you’re a parent, you understand chaos. You can ride the screaming tantrums of a 2-year-old like a professional surfer, walk over scattered Legos like it’s nothing, and somehow make supper while singing a baby to sleep and helping your 4th grader with math homework. Chaos is your day-to-day.

The Coronavirus brings a level of chaos which no one was anticipating. How could we have? How could anyone ever imagine the indefinite closing of schools? The inability to take kids to the park? The complete lack of toilet paper and eggs?

Being a parent has somehow, nearly overnight, been brought to a whole new level of chaos, frustration, and doubt. Colorado Springs Thriveworks gets it. Many of our clinicians have kids and are struggling to coach them through online school, keep them busy as boredom sits in, and scramble for arrangements when you have to run to a meeting. Despite what health advisors want to happen, life doesn’t stop because of a pandemic.

Thriveworks Colorado Springs wants to give parents everywhere a huge thank you and a night off. Since we probably can’t give you a night off, we want you to know:

This is tough.

You are doing amazing.

Also, don’t forget:

You are not alone.
And finally,

You are strong.

Thriveworks Colorado Springs is here to support parents in whatever way we can. There is no right way to parent during a pandemic. You are doing the best you can, and that is amazing. Take a deep breath with us and let all that guilt and shame go. You love your kids. You want to keep them safe and happy.

Coronavirus anxiety hits everyone in their own unique way. When you have children, it becomes hard to express that anxiety. Children can inherently sense when stress levels rise because of financial difficulties, work struggles, or worries about at-risk loved ones. While you can’t shield them from everything, there are ways to handle anxiety in healthy ways.
So, as a parent, what are you supposed to do? Your kids don’t have school. It’s not advised to put them in childcare, so where can you go?

It can feel like you’re in an impossible spot. Remember that Thriveworks Colorado Springs and community members everywhere see your sacrifice during this time and thank you for all you do. Please know you are not alone.

We are here with online counseling to support you wherever your day takes you. You can squeeze in a video call with a professional, licensed counselor during nap time or while the kiddos are working on homework.

Also know that Colorado Springs Thriveworks offers Adolescent and Teenager counseling for your teenager who may be hit especially hard by this pandemic. Teenagers are already at risk for higher levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal rates. With more time at home and less things to do, these feelings could be amplified. If you have any concerns for your child, reach out today.

We also offer certified play therapy, and yes, we can do it online! Online play therapy is a unique experience, but the core tenants of therapy are still there: empathy, nonjudgement, and unconditional positive regard.

Okay, but let’s bring it back to you. In addition to reaching out for an online counseling or telehealth session, you can healthily manage anxiety by:

- **Schedule times during the day you can check the news.** *Don’t look at the news outside of those times.* Three 10-minute sessions are more than enough to stay on top of coronavirus news while keeping healthy boundaries for your anxiety and mental health.
- **Keep in contact with loved ones.** We love it when families come together and bond during social distancing. However, don’t forget to reach out to your friends and family members outside of your little circle that you live with. Seeing a different face and having good conversation outside of home life can be a great mood boost!
- **Do fun things with your friends.** You can still hang out with people without being physically present! Netflix has a new extension where you can watch your favorite show while video calling a friend. Or, consider doing an art or baking swap. Create something and drop it off at the doorstep of a friend or neighbor, then have them continue the kindness with someone else! (Only do this if you’re coronavirus symptom free of course.)
- **Engage in all the self-care.** As a parent, you probably pushed self-care to the back burner. Now, there might be even a stronger urge to put yourself last. This is not sustainable however and will result in a less healthy environment for your family. Try cooking a fun new meal with vegetables or try an online dance class.
- **Mix it up.** Remember all those things you were going to do once things got less chaotic? Well, it might be more chaotic now, but it’s also time to do things! Start journaling, try meditation or yoga, do a woodworking project- the sky’s the limit.
- **Don’t forget to live!** Parents are some of the most selfless people on earth, a point proven every day the Coronavirus affects our lives. But while you’re making sure
your kid’s lives are healthy and happy, don’t forget to live yourself. Dye your hair, make the perfect espresso, finish that construction project, learn a new dance move, *don’t let anxiety and the coronavirus win, don’t forget to live.*

- A great website to check out is: [https://www.virusanxiety.com/](https://www.virusanxiety.com/)

In addition to managing your own anxiety, keeping a family schedule with children engaged in activities is helpful. Every family is unique. Feel free to give these ideas a try to help the long days with your kids at home:

- Work as a team to create daily schedule.

- The daily schedule could include: individual quiet time, outside time, chore time, quality family time, individual learning time, play time and screen time.

- Give children problem solving challenges or imagination challenges such as creating a game (they right the rules), figure out how to train the family pet to do a trick, encourage them to act out a play or sing a song.

- Projects in the kitchen. Have them help cook or find recipes and make something on their own. Cleaning the kitchen is part of this!

- Explore nature outside. Give them a box to collect special finds.

- Create exercise challenges such as create obstacle courses, or physical challenges.

- Take pictures and videos and send them to extended family members.

- Art projects – painting, collages, craft projects.

- Make forts and sleep in them at night.

- Give them a research project that they may be interested in.

- Clean the house! This could be fun. Assign tasks, play loud music and set a timer.

- Walk the pets. Wash the pets, make a bed for the pets.

Colorado Springs Thriveworks exists to uplift the community. You, as parents, are a crucial part of this community. While you’re giving to others, let us give to you. We have openings for insurance covered online counseling sessions today.

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