

FAMILYWORKS NI

Parents, Carers & Teachers

Hello, my name is Edith Bell and I'm the Clinical Director here at Familyworks. I'm a parent and a grandparent, and I've been counselling young people since the 1990s.

While young people are tougher than we think, they can be frightened by something new and unpredictable like COVID-19. If we're honest, we're all a little stressed by it. It's a big change for everyone. School's out, exams are cancelled and there's loads of uncertainty around.

Young people will have lots of unspoken worries like, what will happen to my grades, my future, the people that I love – will I get sick, what about my grandparents, how will I manage being stuck indoors for ages. Be honest with them because they're only asking questions that you're thinking about too.

We should be honest about their questions and explain that sometimes we just don't know the answers but we do know that we have people who love us and will help us through. Don't lie to them but give them only as much information as they can handle and use simple language.

Take time to listen to what your children are saying about Coronavirus. Notice if they're anxious or very quiet. Don't bombard them with questions but sit down when they're ready, maybe over a snack, or sitting on the settee and just chat. My best family conversations often start like that. Answer what you can and be honest if you don't know the answer.

We'll be providing some more practical help over the next period of time with videos and tips on: How To Stay Calm, How To Feel Grounded And Relaxed, Mindful Breathing, Calming Techniques, How To Answer Tough Questions and a lot more. Check out our videos and more on our social media. You can find us at the following places:

Facebook – facebook.com/familyworksni
Instagram – instagram.com/familyworkscounselling
Twitter – twitter.com/familyworksni
Vimeo – vimeo.com/familyworksni

Watch out on Snapchat for our videos as well, which will all point young people in Northern Ireland to the ICSS Schools Counselling Service.

And remember, you can do this because nobody cares for these kids more than you do.

Edith