

Worries...Fly Away!

HELPING CHILDREN MANAGE COVID-RELATED ANXIETIES

18th May, 2021

SAMVAD

Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children
in Vulnerable circumstances And Distress

(A National Initiative & Integrated Resource for Child Protection,
Mental Health, & Psychosocial Care)

Dept. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences

(NIMHANS), Bangalore

Supported by Ministry of Women & Child Development,
Government of India



Worries...Fly Away!

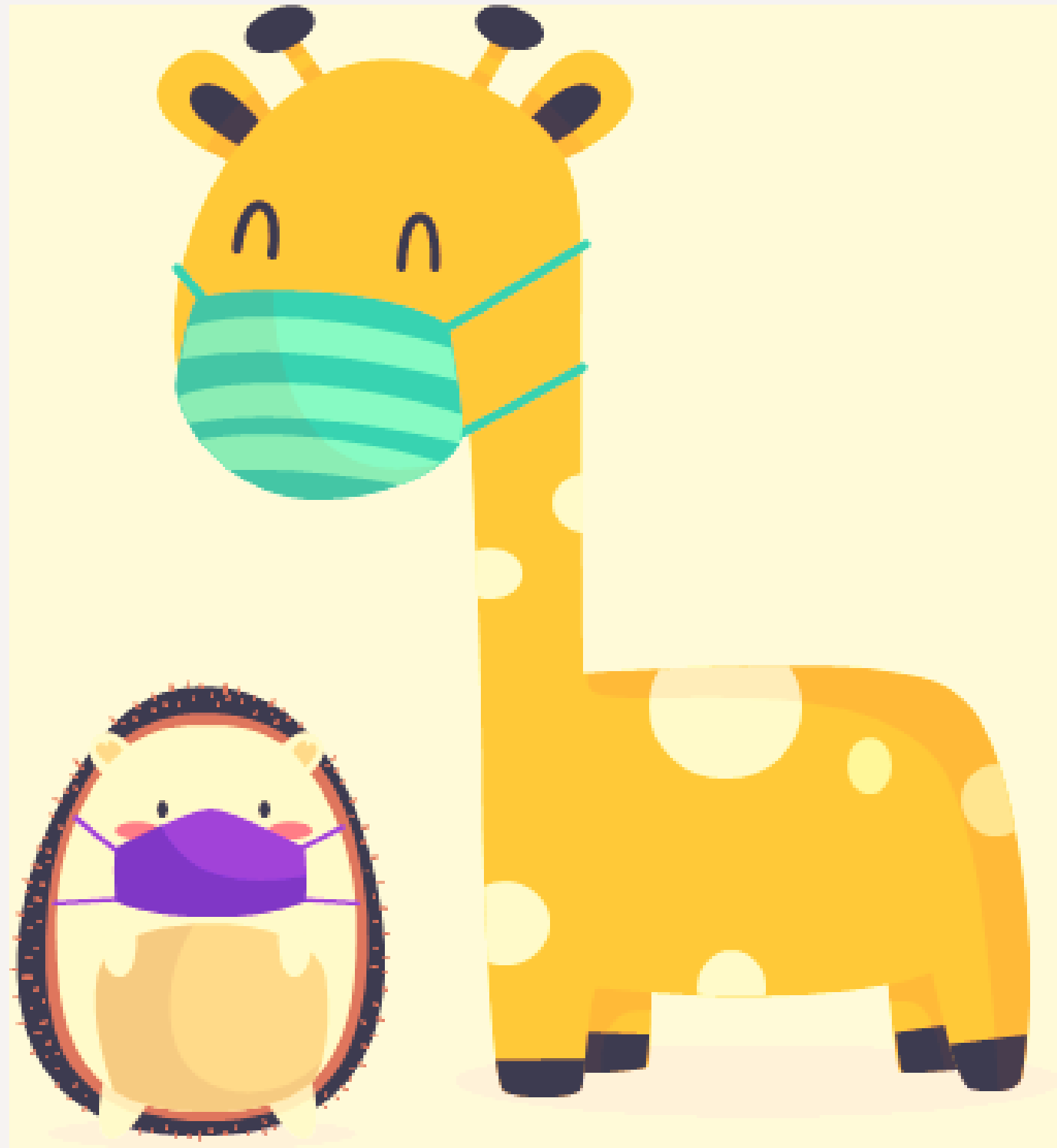
HELPING CHILDREN MANAGE COVID-RELATED ANXIETIES

Tuesday, 18th May 2021

5:30-8:00PM



Objectives



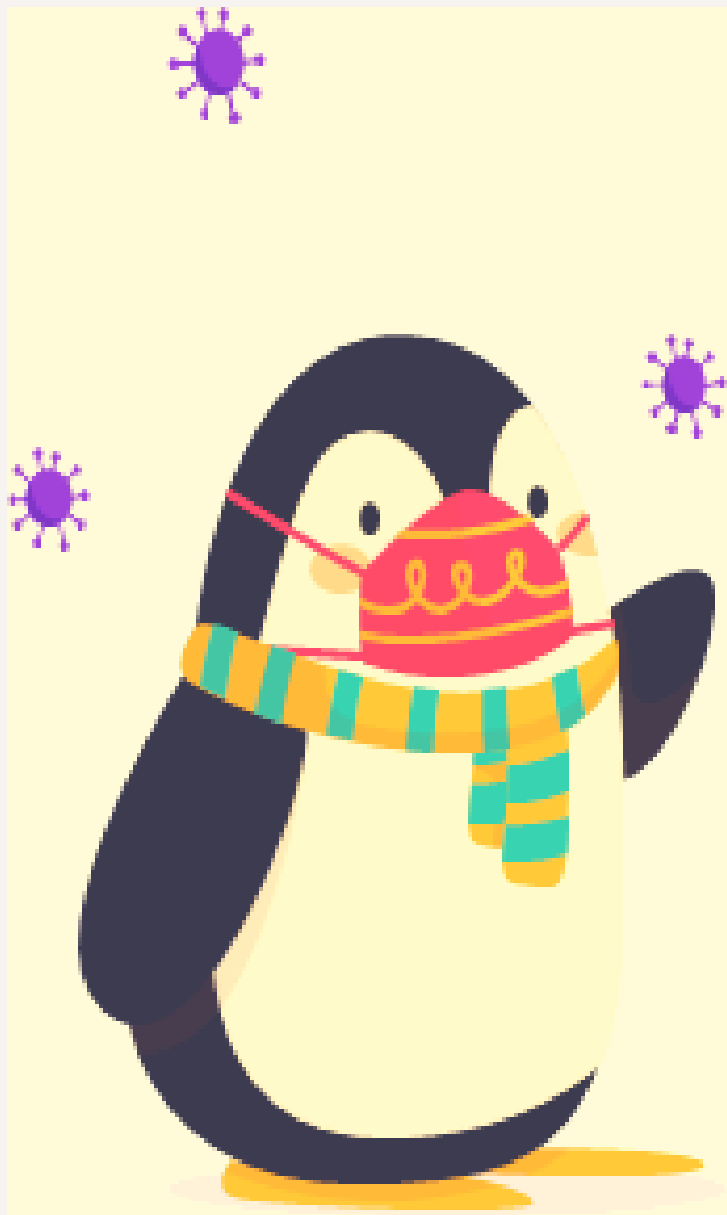
To enable various stakeholders to respond to children's anxieties and concerns in the context of COVID so as to:

I. Provide children with an understanding of COVID.

II. Use creative ways to help children cope with their lives during the pandemic.

III. Equip children with techniques to manage their COVID-related anxieties.

Children's experiences in the Pandemic



**General
Factors**

**Family
Factors**

**School
Factors**

**Social
Factors**

Impact of Pandemic

- Severe restrictions on mobility due to lockdown: within homes or institutions.
- Disruption in education due to school closure.
- Online classes – new methods.
- Physical reopening of schools – loss of routine.
- Consequent withdrawal of Social interactions and experiences.
- Exposure to parental stress and anxiety (resulting from job loss/financial insecurity).
- Consequent exposure to domestic violence.
- Risk of increased sexual abuse.
- Cyber-bullying.
- Separation & Loss experiences.
- Family members/loved ones becoming COVID positive.

Context Applicability



FAMILIES /
HOMES



CHILD CARE
INSTITUTIONS



ISOLATION
CENTRES

FEAR & ANXIETY

...A Primary emotion in the pandemic context

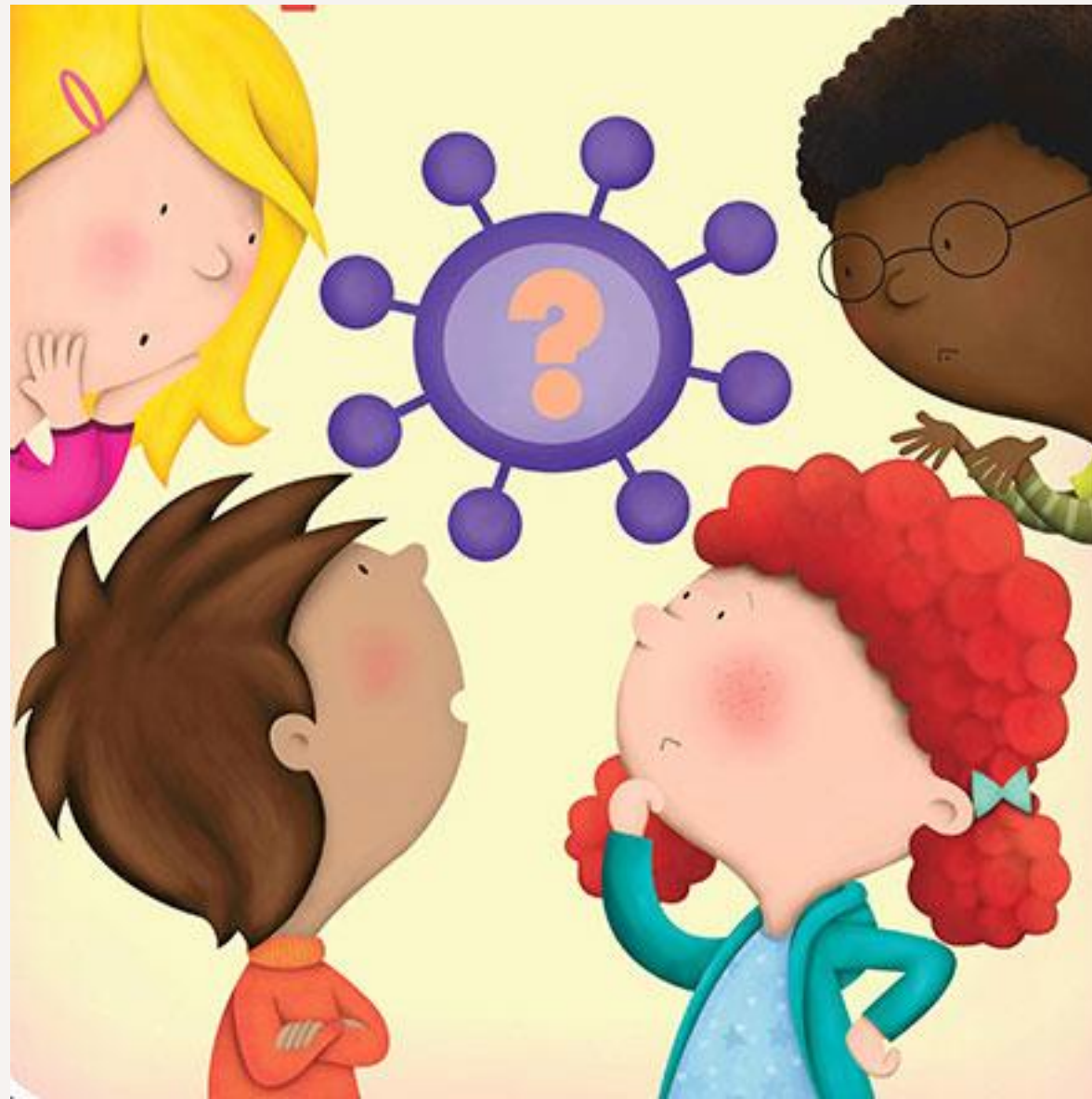


Why is dealing with anxiety important?

- If anxiety is not dealt with or is very severe, it becomes difficult for the child to carry out daily activities**
- Feelings of unpredictability and lack of control can be debilitating for a child**
- Children hear things all the time!**
- They piece together bits and pieces...and think and process...what they understand is not always accurate...and can create much anxiety**
- Lack of information can increase anxiety processing in children**

Objective 1

Helping Children Understand COVID

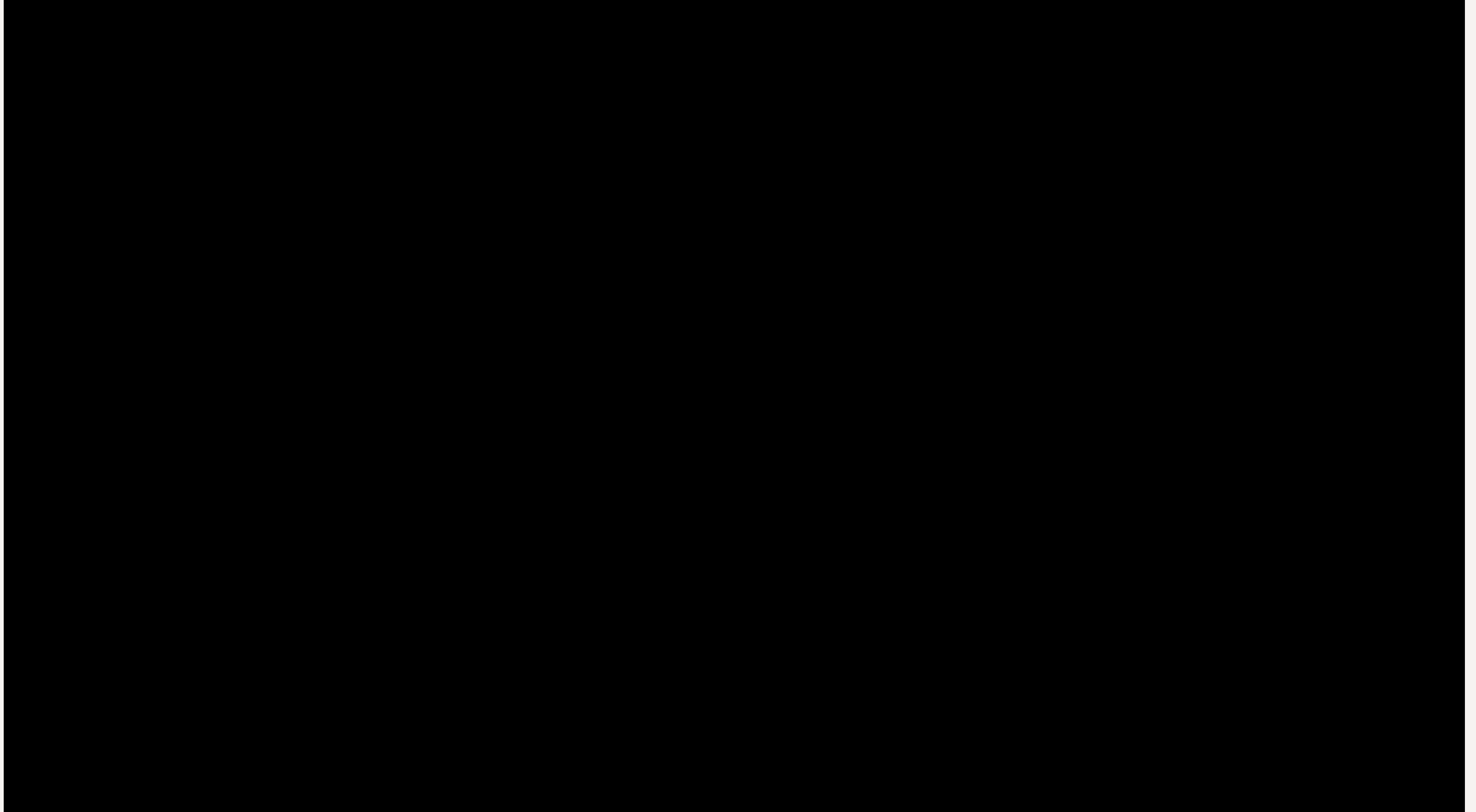


How do we explain COVID to children?

A Framework for Explaining the Concept of Illness

- **Truth and fact**
- **Age Appropriate information (and method) to addressing children questions and worries**
- **Hope and Reassurance**





Anni & Addu Chat about COVID

What are some of the questions we can ask children, based on the story?

story?

DISCUSSION

PART 01: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- a. Where did Addu live?
- b. Who all lived in Addu's house?
- c. Why was Addu sad?
- d. What did his sister say about COVID Virus?
- e. What did his sister say about why he can't play out and why the schools are shut?
- f. What did his sister said about SMS? What does it stand for?
- g. What did Addu get to know about when COVID will end?
- h. What did Addu learn about safety from the Covid?
- i. What can Addu do, if he gets Corona?

"So, that was about Addu, we learned somethings about how he felt, and he also learned about the corona. Just like how Addu was dealing with COVID all these months. Let's see how each of you felt about COVID in all these months."

PART 02: PROCESSING QUESTIONS

a. How did it feel to stay at home?

b. Who was there to help you?

c. What did Anni tell Addu?

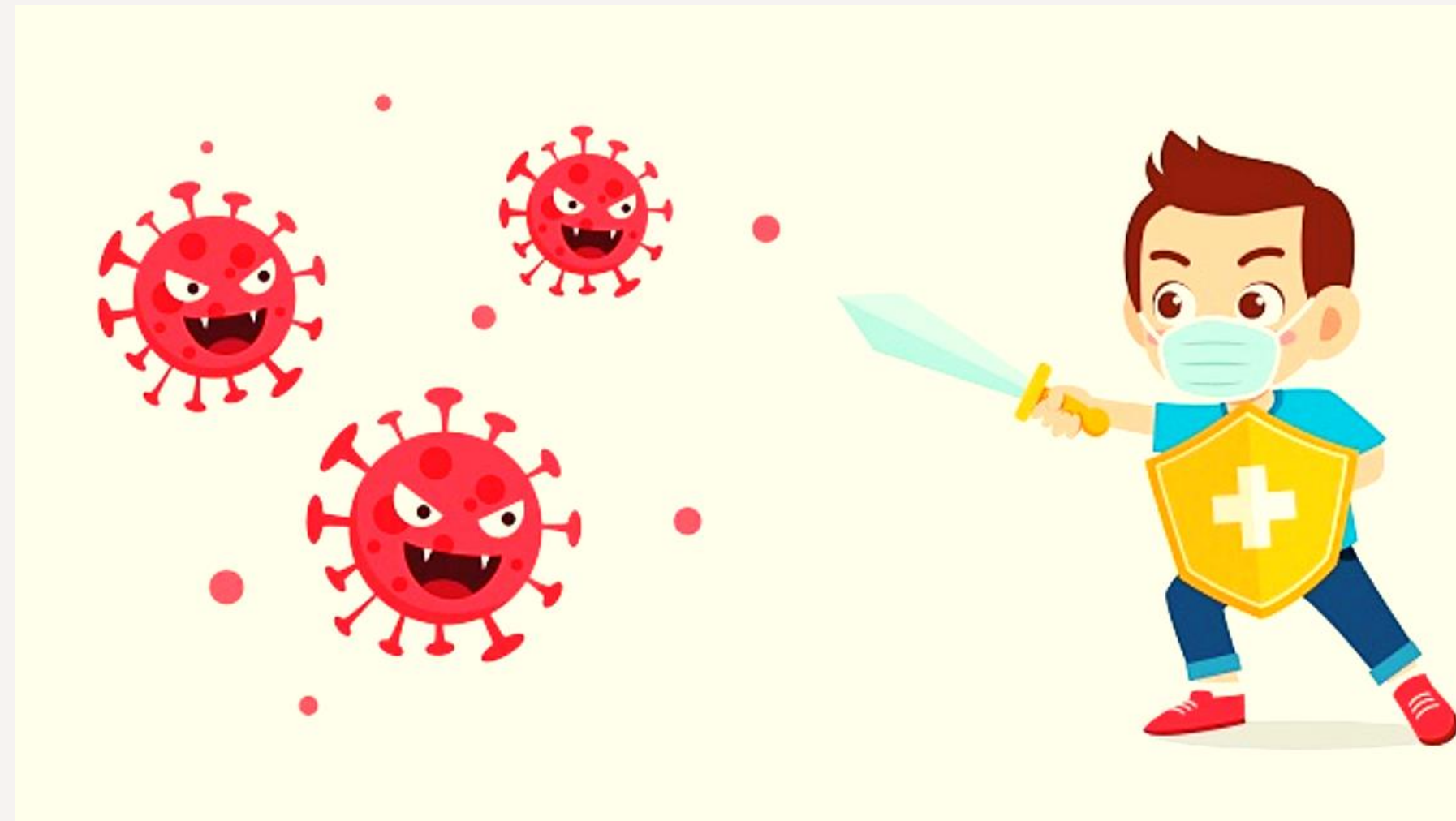
d. Did you know these things that Addu's sister told about corona?

e. What do you know about corona? What do you know now?

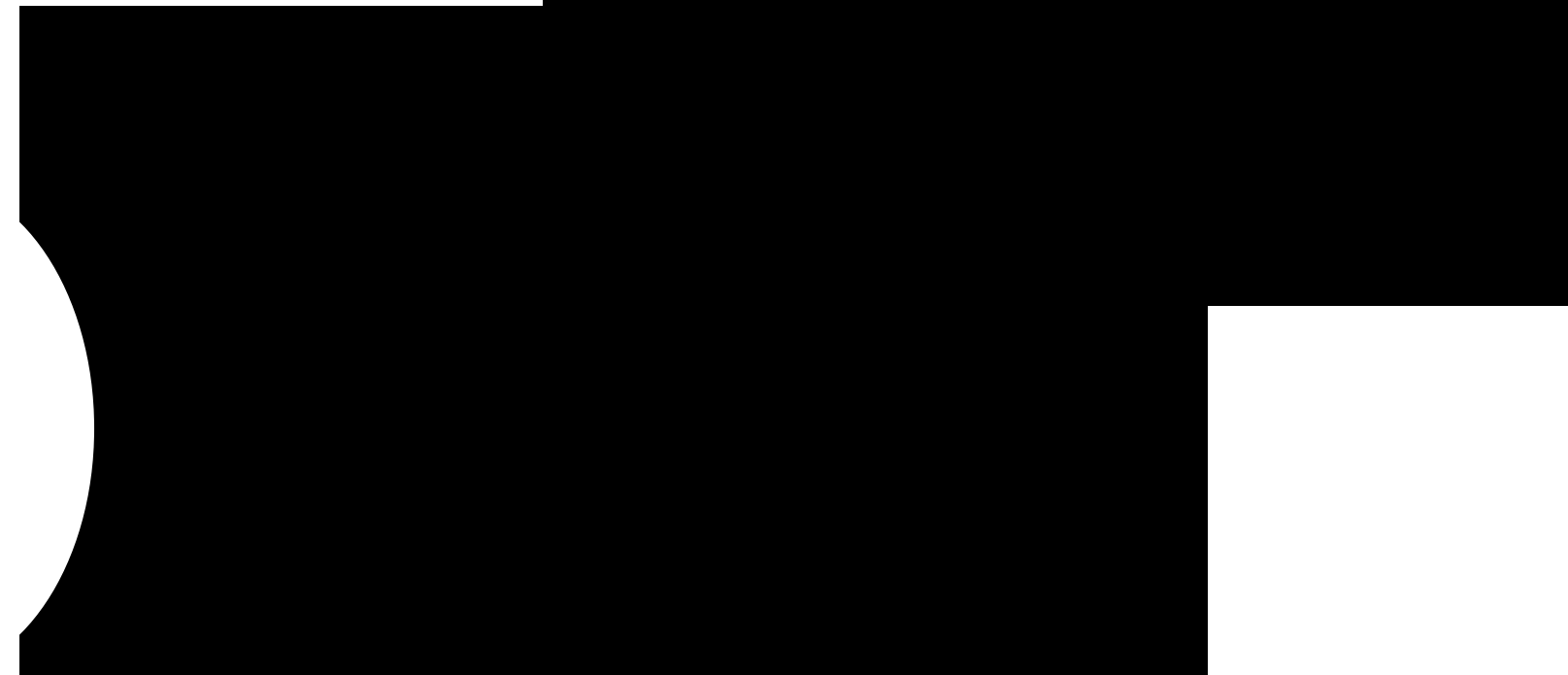
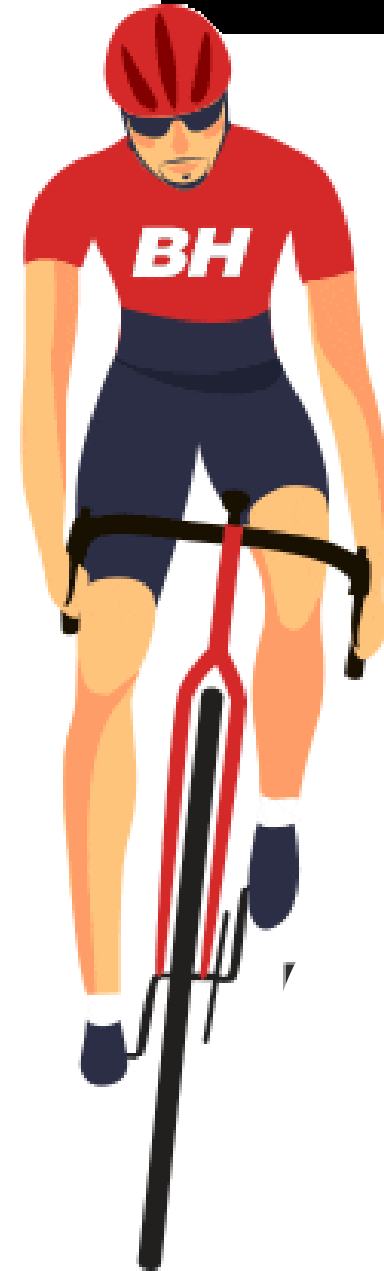
f. Remember his sister said there are good things about COVID? Tell us one good thing about corona

Objective 2

Coping with the Pandemic







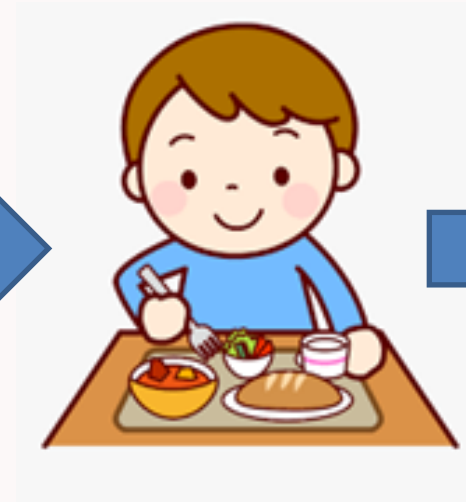
What does your day look like?



7:00 am to 9:00 am



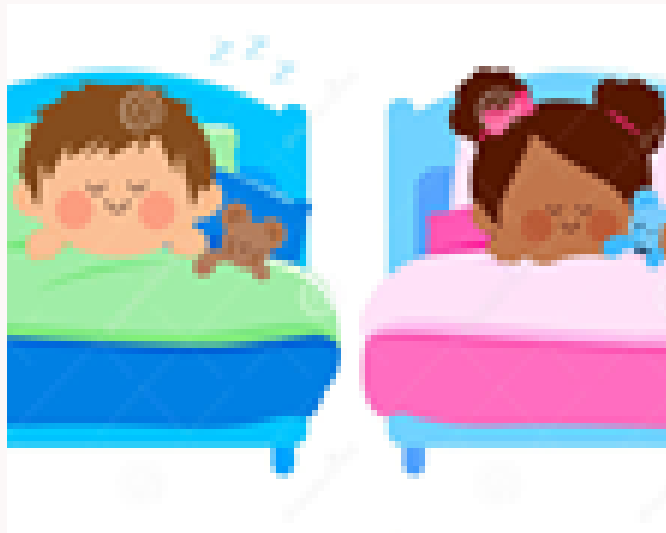
9:00 am to 1:00 pm



1:00 pm to 2:00 pm



2:00 pm to 4:00 pm



9:00 pm



8:00 pm to 9:00 pm

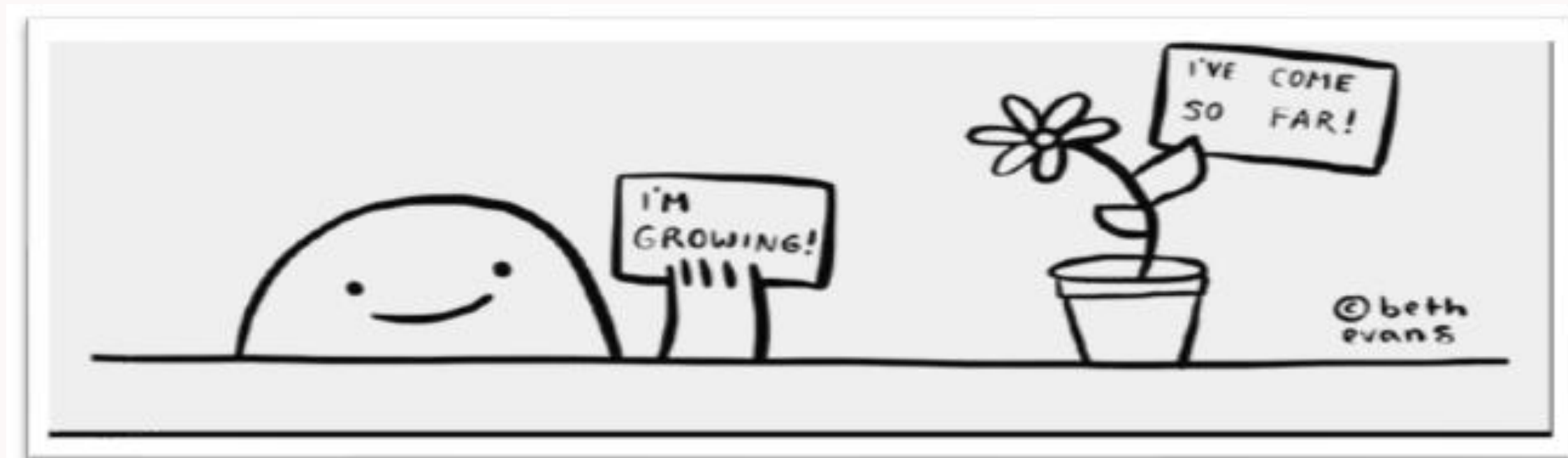


6:00 pm to 8:00 pm



4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Three things you have done well in recent months.



Writing a letter to Coronavirus

Objective: To recognize positive & negative aspects of COVID-19 pandemic times

Methods: Paper, Pen/ Pencil

Process:

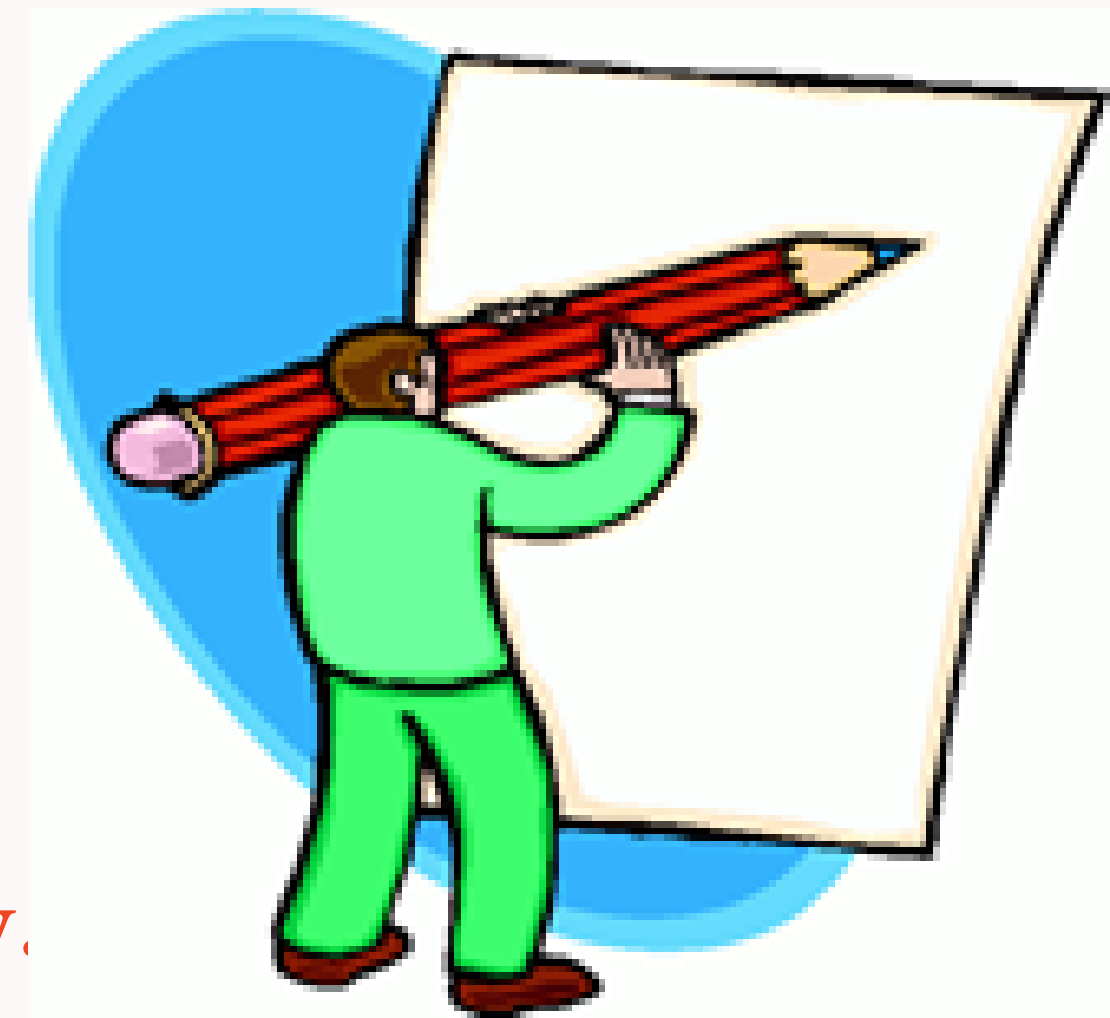
Ask the participants to ponder & pen down their thoughts and feelings.

Dear Coronavirus...

- Things you have made difficult for us....
- Some good things/ times that happened...
- Things I have learnt...

Discussion:

Participants will be asked to share their responses in plenary.



Objective 3

"I am more than my worries"

To help the child define their identity and to discuss how their individual problems and concerns are much more than their identity



Materials: Paper & Pencil

Process:

- Draw a body outline (as shown in the next slide) and explain that “this is you”
- Divide the figure into four parts, telling that this represents different parts of you
- Write in the following (on different parts of the body drawing, for example, roles & relationships on the head, qualities & talents on stomach, fears & worries on feet.

Roles & Relationships: (as a student, family member, friend...)

Qualities & Strengths: (things you are good at, characteristics, special gifts you have)

Fears & Worries: (things that make you sad, disheartened...)

Roles and Responsibilities



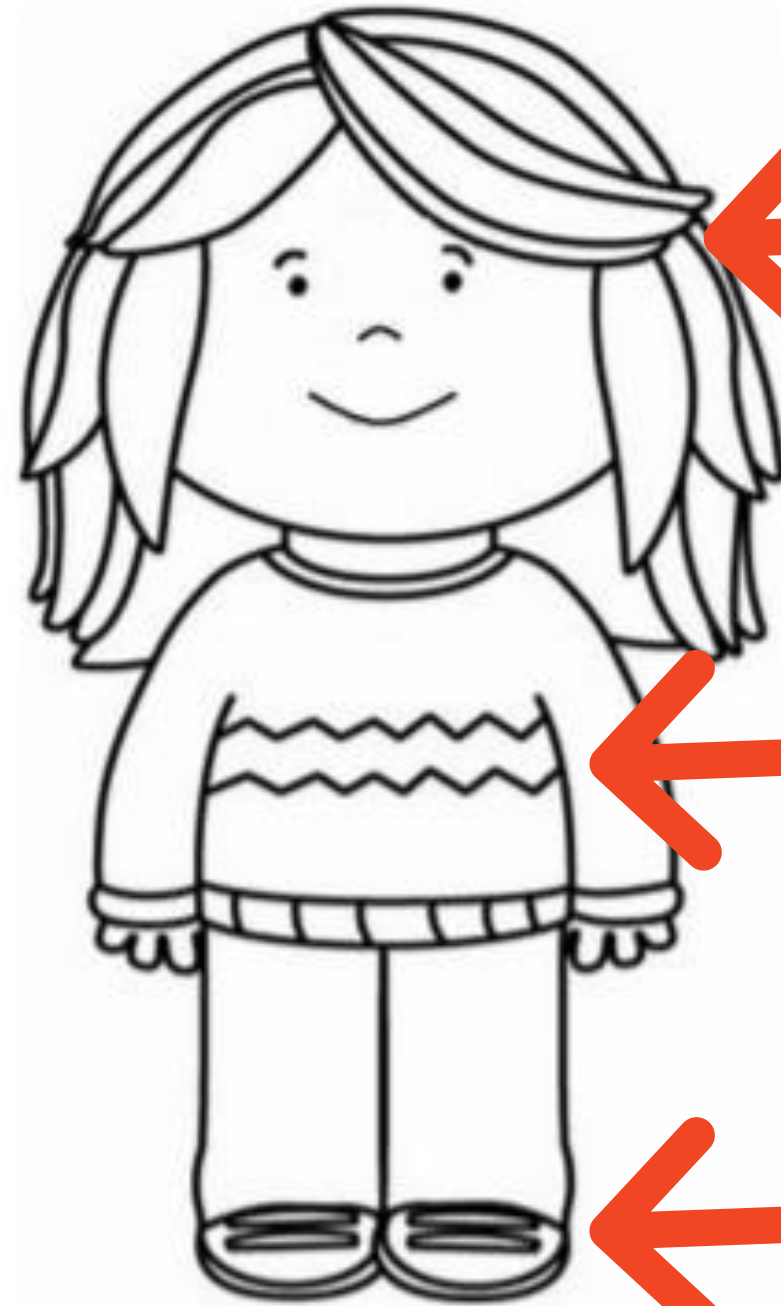
Qualities & Talents



Fears & Worries



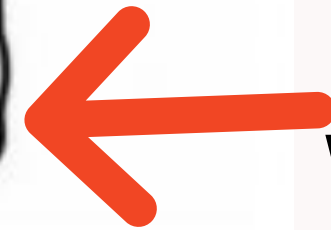
Roles and Responsibilities



Qualities & Talents



Fears & Worries



Discussion

- Identity is how you perceive yourself
- It is also defined by other things (looking at strengths & relationships) and in times of stress, you can use for your advantage
- Dreams & aspirations are important to live for
- What is that one thing you immediately think of (in one month, 6 months and in one year)
- It gives meaning, hope, joy and a state of relaxation
- And how your own identity is much more than your issues and problems.

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE...

Objective: Emotional Expression & Coping

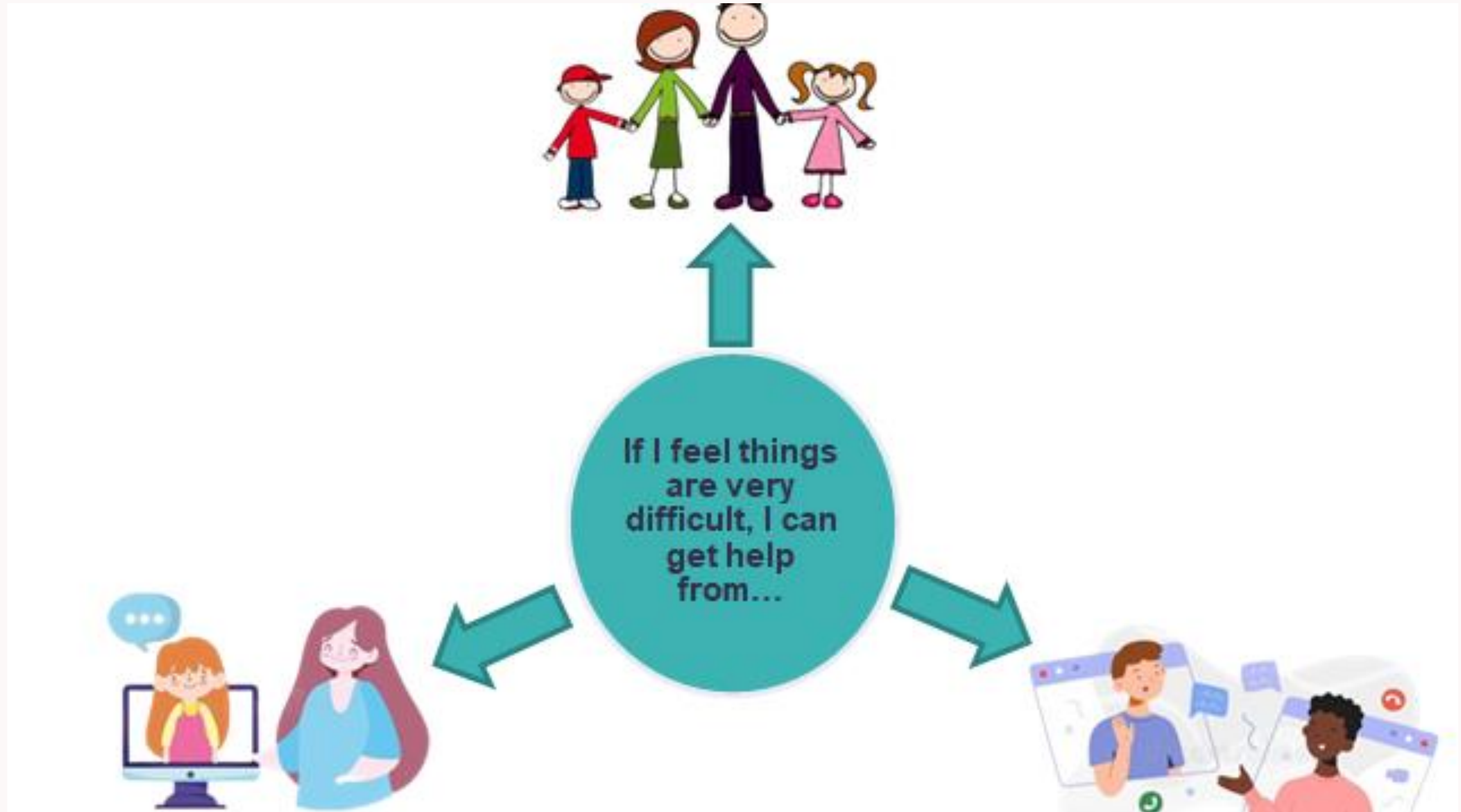
Method: Sentence Completion

In these COVID times.....Makes me feel.....But I can.....

Not being able to go outMakes me feel.....But I can

Online classes make me Makes me feel But I can

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE...



What Else Can We Do?

- **Limit exposure to news about the pandemic as it increases anxiety**
- **Avoid conversation about the pandemic around children all the time.**



Increased coping of children:

- **Maintaining communication with loved ones**
- **Watching a movie together on zoom/online or together in a CCI**
- **Writing letters or sending postcards via WhatsApp and other virtual modes to your friends or loved ones**



Let's do something you never thought you would do

The lockdown and limited mobility is a great chance for children to truly connect with their families. Some games to engage children are:

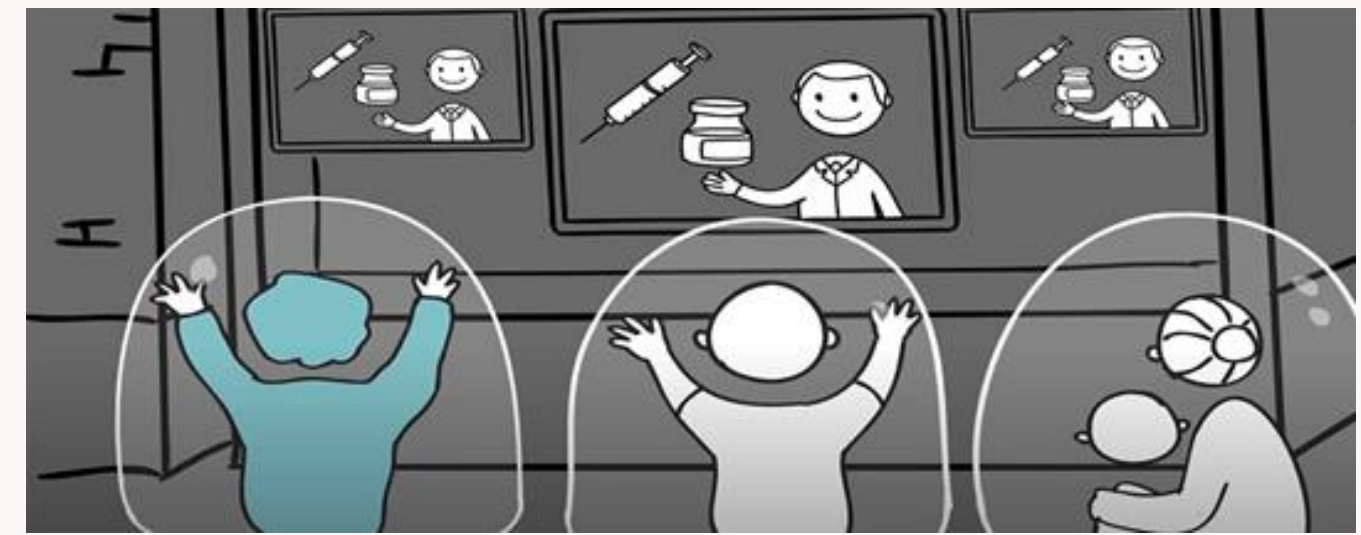
- **Fun Facts about your parents/family members or friends within CCIs**
- **Playing cards, board games or doing an activity together as a part of their daily/weekly schedule.**
- **Encouraging children to nurture a plant or discover the joys of gardening.**
- **DIY videos where children can create artwork or other objects to help build different skills.**



Isolation Centres

Children in isolation, either at home or within institutions or hospitals are the most in need for engagement

CCI staff or nurses/hospital staff or parents can use these activities to engage isolated children as well.



Objective 3

Activities for Anxiety Management

Deep Breathing

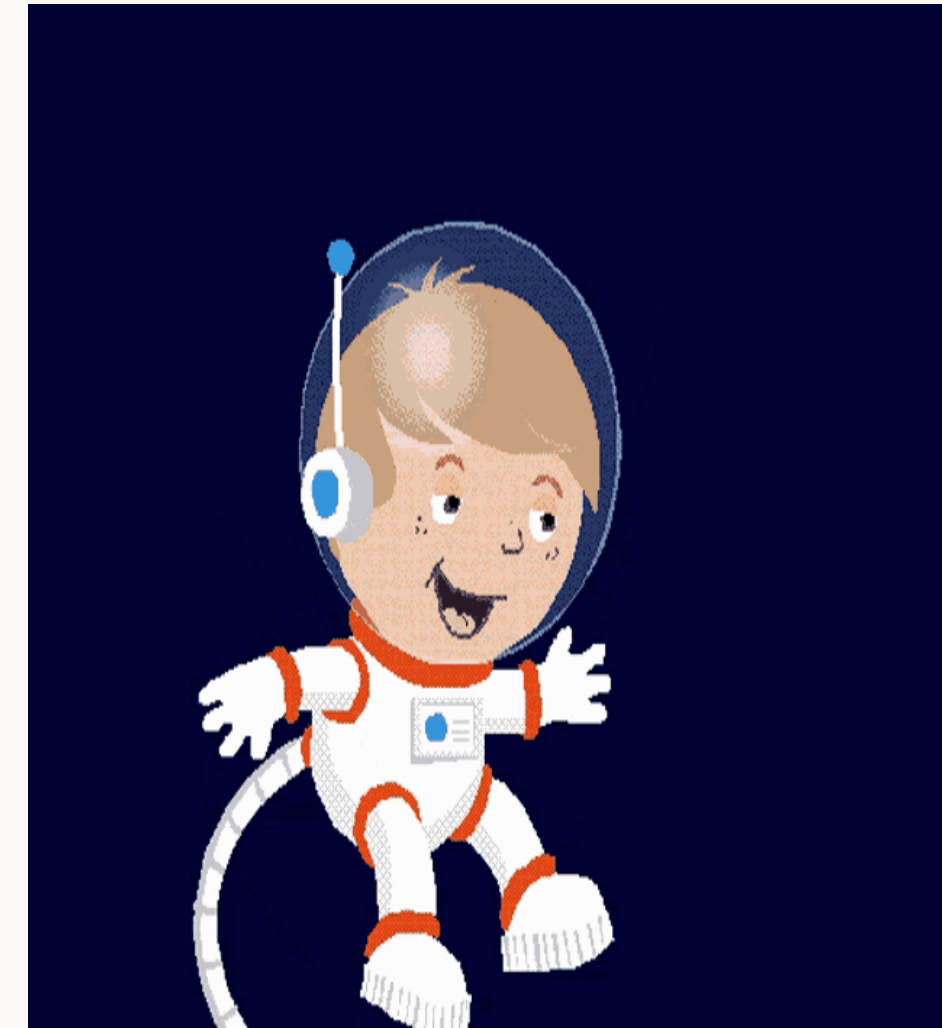


- **Close your eyes and sit up straight.**
- **Place your hand on your lower abdomen/stomach**
- **Close your mouth and breathe deeply through your nose—you should feel your hand moving outwards as your stomach/abdomen moves outwards (you are taking in lots of air...as much as you possibly can).**
- **Slowly breathe out through your mouth—open your mouth and expel all the air you took in.**
- **Do this several times...like 10 to 20 times or more until you feel begin to feel calmer.**

Guided Imagery

- Ask the children to either sit comfortably or even lie down if there is adequate space.
- Tell the children that they are going to daydream for the next 20 minutes or so.
- We dream when we sleep, but then we cannot decide what we will dream about.
- However, in a daydream that's exactly what we can do. So now, think about your favorite person.
- Also, think about a place that you like. It could be a place you have visited or a place that you've seen in a picture or a movie.
- It could even be a place that you imagine. It does not have to be real.
- For you, it's the best place in the world. Now start dreaming. In your dream make a plan of going to this place with your favorite person.

- **Dream about how you will go, what you will do there. Spend a long time there and do things that you love to do.**
- **Enjoy your dream.**
- **When the self-guided imagery of a daydream is complete, ask children how they felt/ if it felt relaxing.**
- **Explain to children that they can use imaginative journeys at times of great anxiety, to enable them to ‘leave’ the situation (that may be too overwhelming at times) to ‘go somewhere in their minds’ and calm down.**



**Please close your eyes. As we go into a
journey of imagination.**



Physical Exercises



Free movement:

- Play fast/lively music and ask children to dance or move in any way they choose.
- Continue the activity about 5-6 minutes, allowing them to vent their energies.



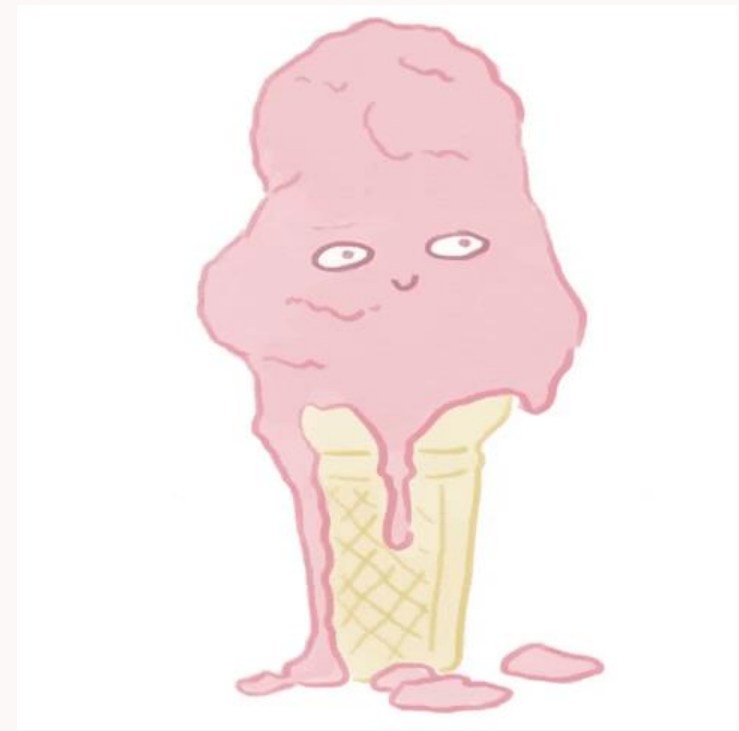
Art

Ani-mate:



- Choose a playground or open space.
- Ask children to name different kinds of animals and birds.
- Write on 2 different slips of paper the names of each animal, for example, a lion on two different slips... similarly, all the types of animals and birds on 2 slips each.
- Now shuffle the slips and ask children to pick one slip each.
- Tell children not to share which animal name they received.
- Children now move around performing activities that the animal (they have got on their slip does) -it can be in the form of sound... way of walking... running...eating...etc.

MELTING ICE- CREAM



Objective: Children learn a way of relaxation

Method: Body movement

Material: Music

Process:

- **Ask the children what happens to an ice-cream if it is left out in the sun.**
- **Tell them that they must now melt like an ice-cream.**
- **They may begin by standing upright and slowly, very slowly move their body parts so that to finally ‘melt’ and fall to the floor.**
- **Tell them that the ice-cream (child) that is the last to finish melting is the winner.**
- **Play soft, soothing music to accompany the melting. Avoid talking or communication.**
- **After the completion of the activity, ask all children to applaud for the winner.**

Discussion:

- **Ask children how they felt during the activity.**
- **Did they relax?**
- **Explain to children... we all have worries and feel very tensed and anxious at times... but if we can take some time out to relax... we will feel better and we can think clearly about ways to overcome our worries.**
- **Tell children they can do this activity when they wish to relax and calm down.**

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Supported by: Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India

Saving Children from the Brink.

ACTING UPON CHILD PROTECTION VULNERABILITIES IN THE COVID CRISIS.

**Saturday, 15th May 2021
5:30-8:00PM**



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Breaking Bad News

Disclosing Illness and Death to Children in the Covid Crisis

**Thursday, 20th May 2021
5:30-8:00PM**

SAMVAD
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Dept. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, IISMAHS, Bangalore
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In My Heart Forever

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH LOSS & GRIEF EXPERIENCES IN THE COVID CRISIS

**Saturday, 22nd May 2021
5:30-8:00PM**



SAMVAD's COVID Series...
**"Children in the Covid Crisis...Like We Never Expected It to Be:
 The What and How of Working with Child Protection and
 Psychosocial Issues"**