

# Mental Health Connections for Health Care Workers and Their Family/ Friends

If you work in health care you may have already had conversations with your children, family or friends about the inherent possibility of danger associated with the daily requirements of your job. You may feel stressed about them watching you head out into a world they have repeatedly been told is scary and dangerous.

Here are some tips about having conversations to reduce worry and promote connection:

## Accurate Information

Answer questions truthfully about the dangers of COVID-19 but only answer the questions raised or posed.

Ask them to share what they've heard and correct any misunderstandings



## Safety & Control

Talk about how everyone can protect against the virus and the things you do to enhance your safety.



## Focus on Strength

Are there times that you or they have overcome a fear or anxiety in the past? Talk together about what lessons can be learned about successful coping.



## Connection

Create a safe space for loved ones to express their feelings, whether it's with you or another family member or caregiver. Acknowledge and try not to minimize their feelings in an effort to reassure them.



## Manage Your Own Fears & Anxieties

Be aware of your own emotions and what you are communicating to others through words, tone of voice and body language. Be aware of conversations you might be having with other adults and whether there are little ears listening.



## Planned Contact

Your loved ones benefit from having a concrete, emotional connection to you. Aim for regular contact and short periods of time so you are less likely to have to cancel (e.g. once a day for 5 – 10 minutes). When writing by e-mail, text, or shared google doc, plan how you can exchange information about your day.

