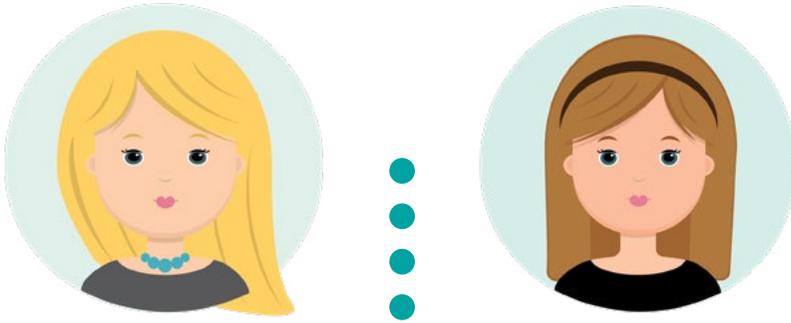


PARENT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE  
EBOOK SERIES  
APRIL EDITION

# HOPE



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# Welcome!

The purpose of this ebook is to help support parents in this current, global crisis. The COVID19 pandemic has completely changed the world and has impacted most areas of life which has left most people feeling overwhelmed, especially families.

As two friends for almost 30 years struggle with their own lives in this crisis, we thought it would be beneficial to reach out to others, pool resources and apply our skills & talents to 'give back' to the community at large. Offering support to those in need come naturally to us both and is what has sustained our own friendship over the decades.

Julie is a well-known Parenting Coach & Consultant that specializes in children's behaviour & discipline. Serving families globally through private coaching, online workshops and large group lectures, she has become one of Canada's leading Parenting Educators and Experts. As a single Mother of one school-age son, she knows firsthand the difficulties that come with crisis in the areas of mental health, emotional well-being and financial challenges.

Alex is an extremely talented graphics artist whose eye for design and precision in artistic flare is one of the best in North America. From the exciting life of fashion design to professional, corporate projects, she is on a fierce path of creative arts and a super-cool trend-setter. As a dedicated wife and Mother to two school-age children, Alex is aware of the challenges of schooling from home, maintaining a work/life balance and trying to stay positive and calm in every change and situation that arises.

The theme of this first phase in the ebook series is **HOPE!** We are providing some insight, strategies, tips and info that is useful to parents in the areas of home life, boundaries, challenging behaviour, anxiety/stress, sleeping and mealtimes as well as communication and connection with their children. At the end of each month, we will be starting off a new theme in the next phase.

**Stay safe & healthy! Stay home!  
Stay connected!**

*Julie Romanowski & Alex Radomski-Chau*



hope

**(noun)**

the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best; to believe, desire; to place trust; rely



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# We've Got Your Back

When crisis of any kind hits, it throws our lives into unknown territory. This can increase stress and anxiety because of the fear of the unknown. When our brains perceive threat, our stress response instincts kick in and are meant to help us survive. To help decrease the threat we are perceiving, it is important to shift the mindset to the most positive outcomes and learn to calm ourselves down. One of the best ways to do this is through **CONNECTION**. When a person connects on an emotional level with someone else who is feeling threatened like a parent to a child, this can help ignite the regulation process and through co-regulation can help support the stressed person into calming down successfully. This can be done adult to adult or adult to child. Sending a strong and confident message to others that implies “I’ve got your back”, can really become the guiding light through the dark storm of crisis.

“

You don't have  
to control your  
thoughts. You  
just have to stop  
letting them  
control you.

—— Dan Millman ——





## DEALING WITH Your Child's Anxiety

During these unprecedented times, fear of the unknown is at its peak during times of quarantine, self-isolation or social distancing, causing for our inner alarm bells to go off. This signal is to tell us that something isn't right and there is a threat present. As challenging as anxiety can be, it is a positive sign that our brains are in survival mode helping us to stay safe and alive. To clarify, the feeling of anxiety doesn't necessarily mean a diagnosis of anxiety or a personality trait, but rather an 'experience' that we are feeling. In order to calm these alarm bells or tell the brain that everything is okay, we must shift our perception of the threat into something less threatening. This can be done through information about a situation as well as our role through this situation that can give us a sense of empowerment and control. One of the greatest ways to do this is through clear expectations and strong boundaries that we can work within and start the process of feeling more self-secure.

“

When we have  
the **KNOWN**,  
we are no  
longer fearful  
of the  
**UNKNOWN.**

—— Julie Romanowski ——





# ADJUSTING To Our New Norm

One of the greatest strategies in providing reassurance through crisis, is to promote the concept of normalizing within all the change. A key part of normalizing is by providing clear expectations to create boundaries that help a child understand the ‘known’ of an ‘unknown’ situation. When a child is consistently given expectations in a situation, routine or activity, they can begin to start ‘predicting’ how it will all take place. It is through this ‘predicting’ that the child feels more confident and self-secure. When a person feels ‘self-secure’, this eliminates the feeling of threat and allows the brain to relax and be at peace. This is an ideal space for the whole family, community and world to be in.

An illustration at the top of the page shows a large calendar grid. A person in a blue shirt is on a ladder, reaching for a pink sticky note on the calendar. Another person in a yellow shirt is pointing at the calendar. To the right is a large black pencil and a pink cup of coffee with steam. The background is a teal circle with pink leaves and clouds.

# SCHEDULES

## CLEAR EXPECTATIONS + BOUNDARIES

As we adjust to our new norm, we are directed to our daily schedules and routines that led our lives thus far. Now that most of those activities and events no longer exist and won't for an extended period of time if we are lucky. A schedule is a great visual tool to help everyone in the family know what is going on and it also helps to promote that 'predictability' that helps encourage the feeling of self-security.

Go through the daily routines whether it's the same weekly or may change on the weekends. Make a rough draft on a calendar (paper, whiteboard, chalkboard or online) and include the most important parts first and then carry on in priority order. Once completed, branch off into each routine making points of all the expectations you have in each routine. With in each expectation, there should be four clear parts to include to create that expectation.

- The first is letting the child know the concern and goal.
- Secondly, let them know what they **CAN DO** and what they **CAN'T DO**.
- The third step is to let them know their role, your role in each expectation (and include anyone else who lives with them).
- The fourth and last part is to let them know what possible feelings they may experience during that expectation.

Ensure you have a thorough discussion with those family members involved and that they fully understand each expectation. These discussions should only take place outside of the routine, challenge or heated moments. It's most beneficial to be discussed while calm and connected.

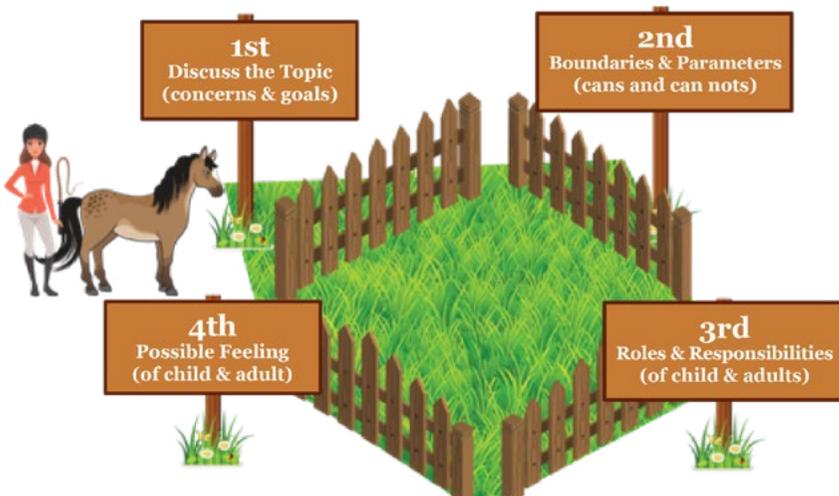
**When expectations are created or cleared up, they form the boundary to which the child now knows where to navigate from. They become aware of the appropriate surroundings to which they can make choices, be flexible, learn and play.**



# STRATEGIES

In order to clarify the specifics around our new norm, creating expectations to make for clear and strong boundaries is a must. Below is a diagram that demonstrates the four key steps on how to actually create expectations. Once completed, the four expectations produce the boundary to which the child knows and will be able to navigate inside of this creating a sense of self-security but also a sense of freedom. Expectations can be created around any area of the day, event, routine or situation that is challenging. This is the sign that tells us that expectations and boundaries need to be cleaned up.

## CONNECT & ENGAGE CHILD (before discussion)





# Let's stay Connected



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