

With pandemic-related stress, abuse against kids can surge

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(HealthDay)—Stress from social distancing and isolation to stop the

spread of COVID-19 can lead to increased family violence at home, Tulane University experts say.

These changes in routine can upset kids, who may lash out and test limits. Stress from [bad behavior](#), along with financial and other concerns can result in angry outbursts—even verbal and [physical abuse](#), said Dr. Charles Zeanah Jr., chair of psychiatry, and Dr. Myo Thwin Myint, an assistant professor of psychiatry.

They offered their insights in a perspective piece published in the July issue of the journal *Pediatrics*.

Here's their advice for parents who feel overwhelmed:

- Recognize that [stress](#), anger, worry and irritability are to be expected under the uncertainty the pandemic has caused.
- Provide structure with consistent wake, bed and mealtimes.
- Structure the day with times for reading, exercise, screen time and the like.
- If both parents are home, use a tag team approach to childcare.
- Remember that kids' bad behaviors probably stem from distress and disruption of their usual routines.
- When stressed, use a coping strategy like deep breathing and identifying things you're grateful for. If these don't work, get some rest.
- Calling friends or [family members](#) can help head off avoid violent behaviors.

"The economic stresses of the pandemic and disruptions of families' usual sources of support will likely extend well beyond the period of stay-at-home orders," Myint said in a Tulane news release. "Recognizing that risk for [family violence](#) is high right now may help people be more aware of the signs."

More information: For more about coronavirus and stress, visit the [World Health Organization](#).

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