



WHITBECK
BENNETT

Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health and Families in Crisis

Presented By WhitbeckBennett &
Ashburn Psychological & Psychiatric Services



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HOUSEKEEPING

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 - Via text chat
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 - Participants can also raise their hands to ask questions



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How do you help your children (and yourself) get through the coronavirus pandemic?





Adjust Your Expectations

- Don't apply yesterday's expectations to today's normal.
- It's more important to focus on lovingly connecting with our children, teens and partners now than it is to focus on correcting them or getting things done or right.
- Things will get done, but your state of mind, and your loved one's state of mind is what matters most.
- It's human nature to seek out additional comfort and to escape during times of great upset, so forgive yourself and your loved ones when this happens and try to keep things in perspective.
- Strive for balance.

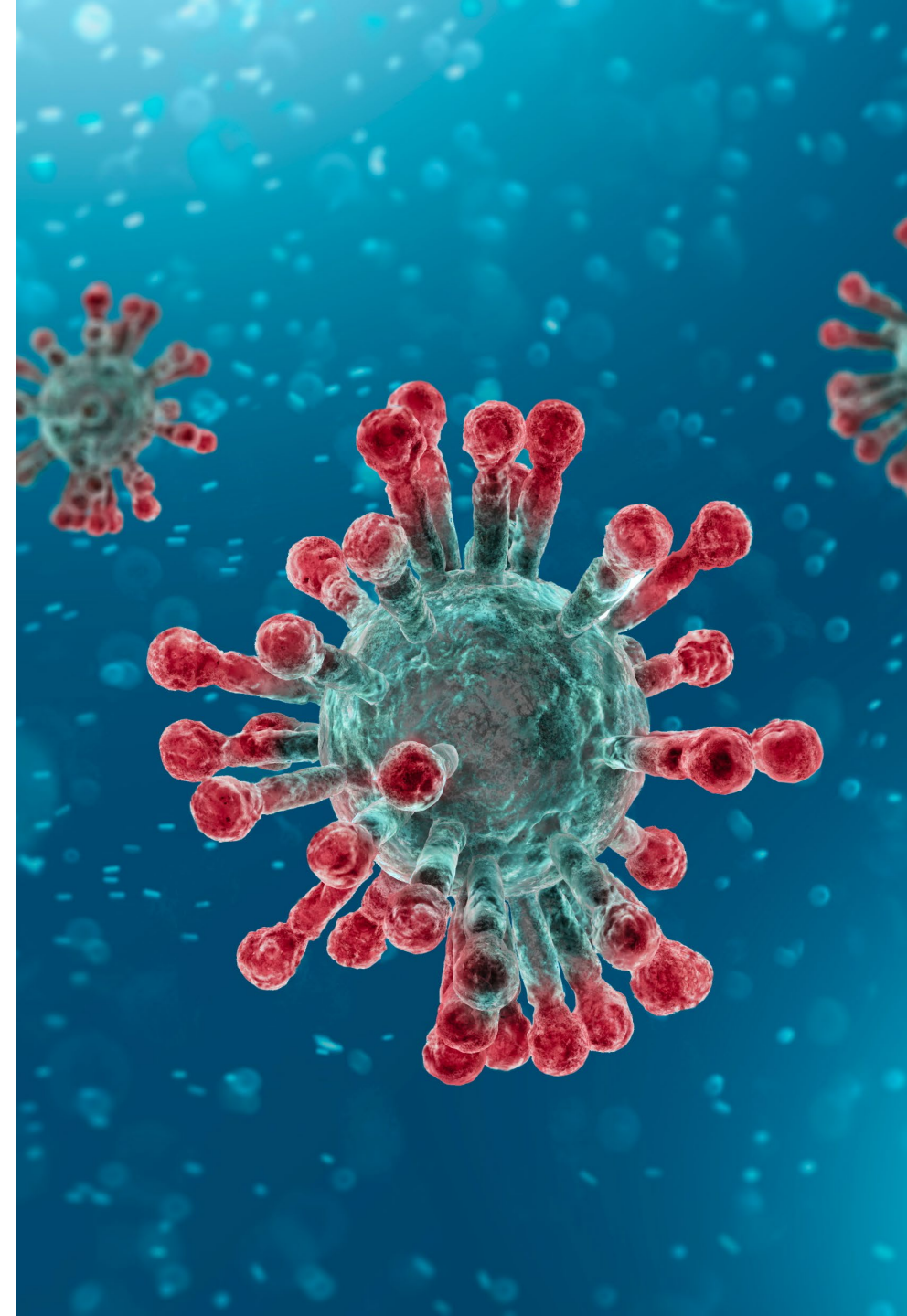


**How important is it to have a
schedule?**



Have a Reasonable Schedule

- Proactively structure your time and your children and teens' time but be flexible.
- Structure does not need to feel like jail time for our kids and having their buy-in with rewards for output and accomplishments can also be helpful.
- Breaking the day down into sections with a morning routine a day time routine and an evening routine can be helpful.
- Younger children most often benefit from having a fixed time for tasks across the entire day with frequent parental check-ins and guidance.
- Older children and teens on the other hand prefer checklists, which give them a greater sense of agency and independence when knocking down tasks.



**What exactly is mindfulness and can it
be helpful during this time?**





Be Mindful

- Mindfulness is the concept of being 100% present in the moment while accepting all aspects of what that moment is or what it brings – without criticism, blame or judgement.
- As parents, Planet Earth has just delivered us the Herculean task of being mindfully present for our children morning, day and night 7 days a week – at least for the foreseeable future.
- While there is so much to worry about or be distracted by right now as adults, more than ever, our children need us to be present.
- Try to remember that your children and partner (and you) will benefit most from your focusing on the moment and them fully.



**How do we talk to our children about
what's happening?**



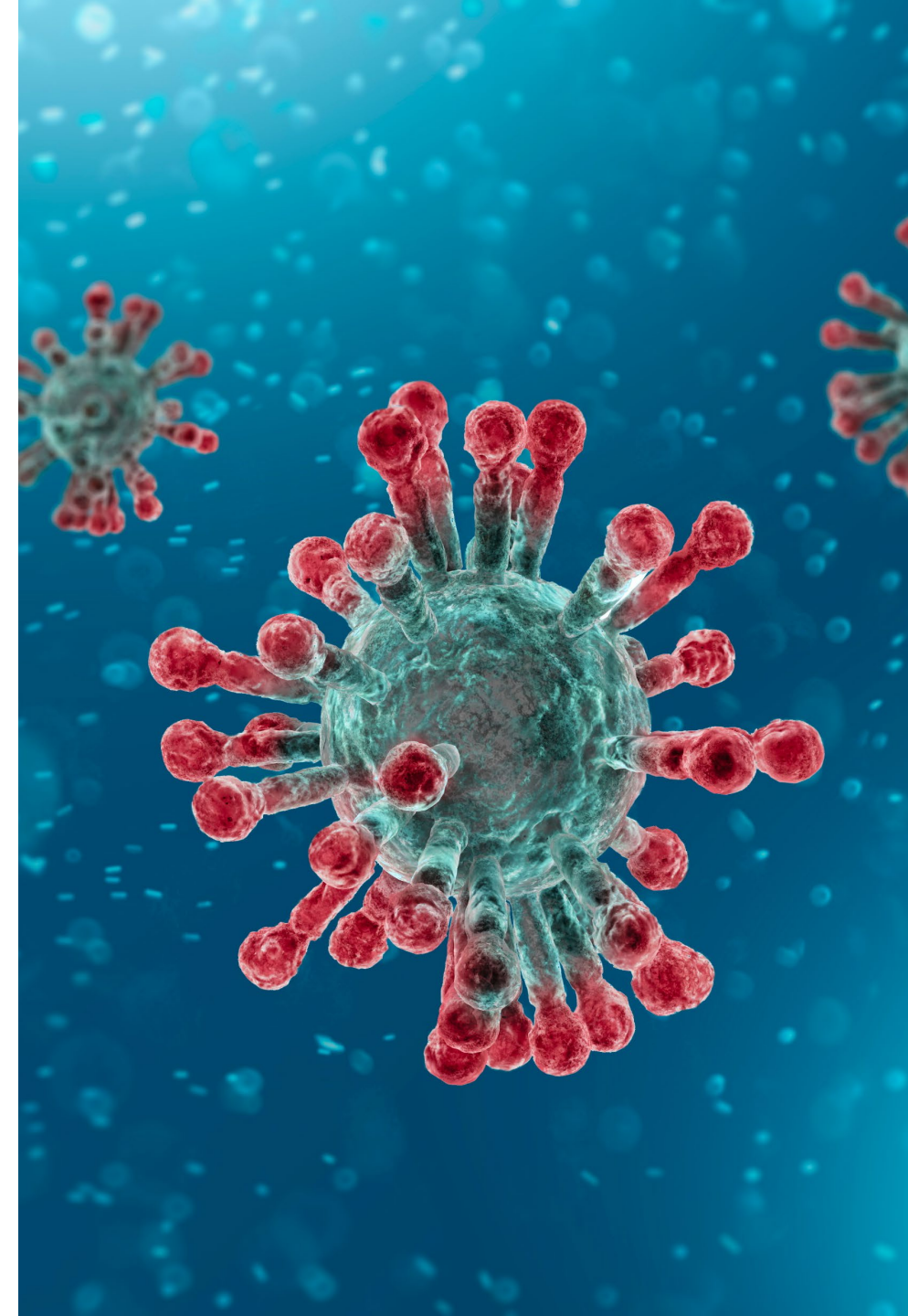
Make yourself available for conversations

- Children and teens don't possess the emotional resources to understand and manage everything that is happening around them and to them as well as we do as adults.
- Age appropriately checking in with them periodically for support, guidance and understanding is important during this time.
- Not every conversation needs to be a Dr. Phil or Oprah hour with your child or teen but connecting with your kids here and there a little more will go a long way when it comes to their feeling more emotionally safe and secure.



Model Your Best Self

- Children learn how to think, feel and behave via their observations and experiences; as parents we are the most important people to our children, and thus they internalize or take in their main life lessons and developing identities from us.
- During this time, our children need us to be loving, calm, hopeful, engaging, patient, inspiring and positive more than ever.
- Our children and teens need to know that we're on top of things – how we keep the house, how we dress and groom and present ourselves
- Of course, as parents we are human and we'll make mistakes, but we should still strive to model our best selves right now for our children.





Consider Your Audience

- Be mindful of what your children are capable of handling before discussing things with them.
- Just as you would not discuss death in the same way with 4-, 8- or 16-year-old children because of developmental differences, you would not do the same for the topic of COVID-19 with your children of varying ages.
- Be mindful of where and when you openly discussing COVID-19 with your partner, friends or family since it's best to have those sorts of discussions out of earshot of your children.



**What are some additional
psychological tips to help you through
the Quarantine?**



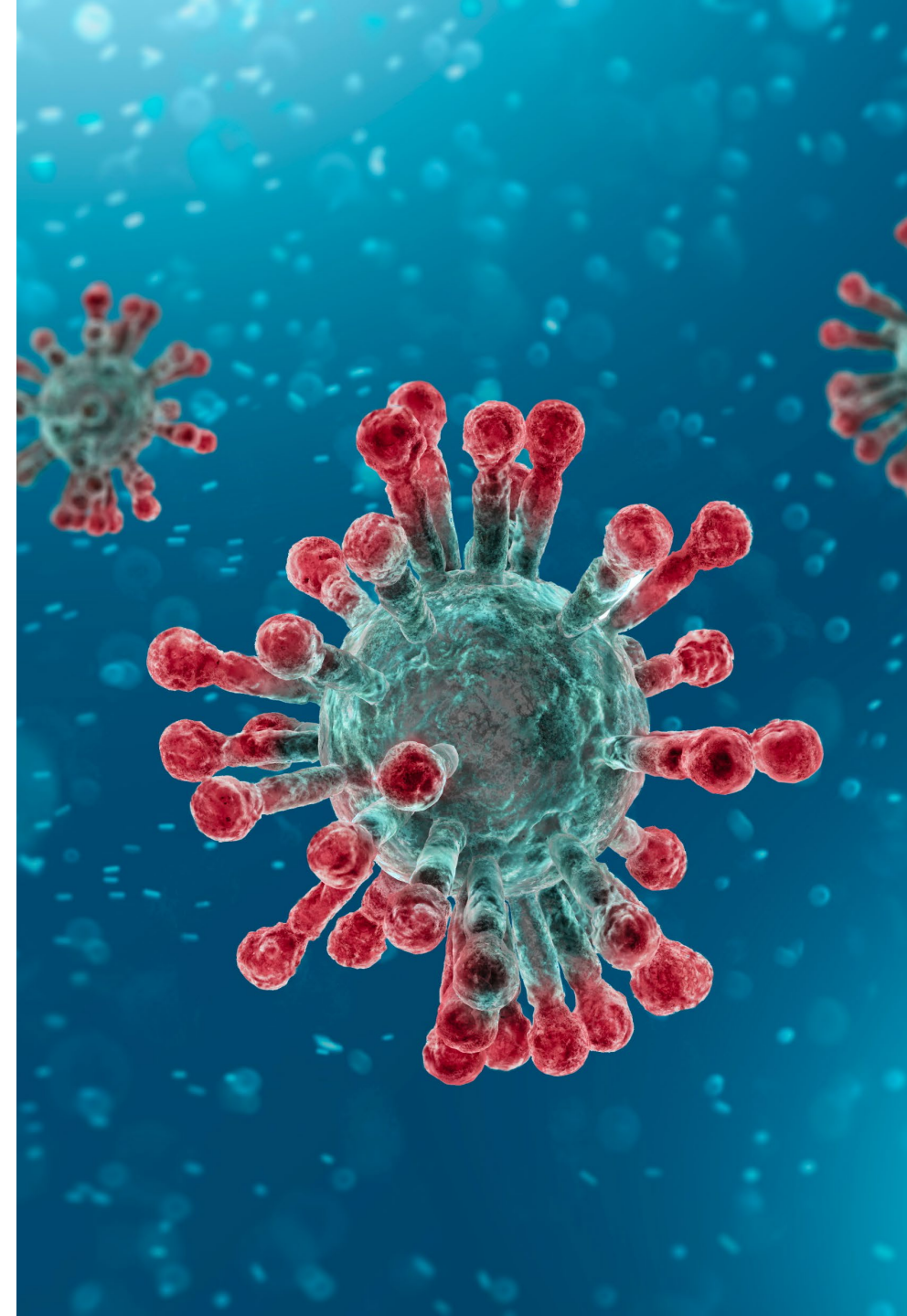
Focus on Your Locus of Control

- Individuals with a strong internal locus ('location') of control believe that they have great control over their actions and outcomes in life; not surprisingly, numerous research studies have found that these individuals are psychologically better adjusted.
- So, during the quarantine, you will likely feel better if you focus on controlling what you can control and don't allow yourself to catastrophize about things beyond your control.



Strengthen Your Self-Efficacy

- Focus on what you have the ability or capacity to overcome.
- The concept is related to locus control but not exactly; people with a strong internal locus of control believe they have control over a certain situation and people with strong self-efficacy believe they have the capacity or ability to succeed in a specific area of life.
- Individuals with strong self-efficacy are able to recover from setbacks and disappointments, are more committed to their interests and activities and interpret challenging problems as tasks to be mastered.
- Mastery, social modeling and social persuasion as the main factors for increasing self-efficacy.





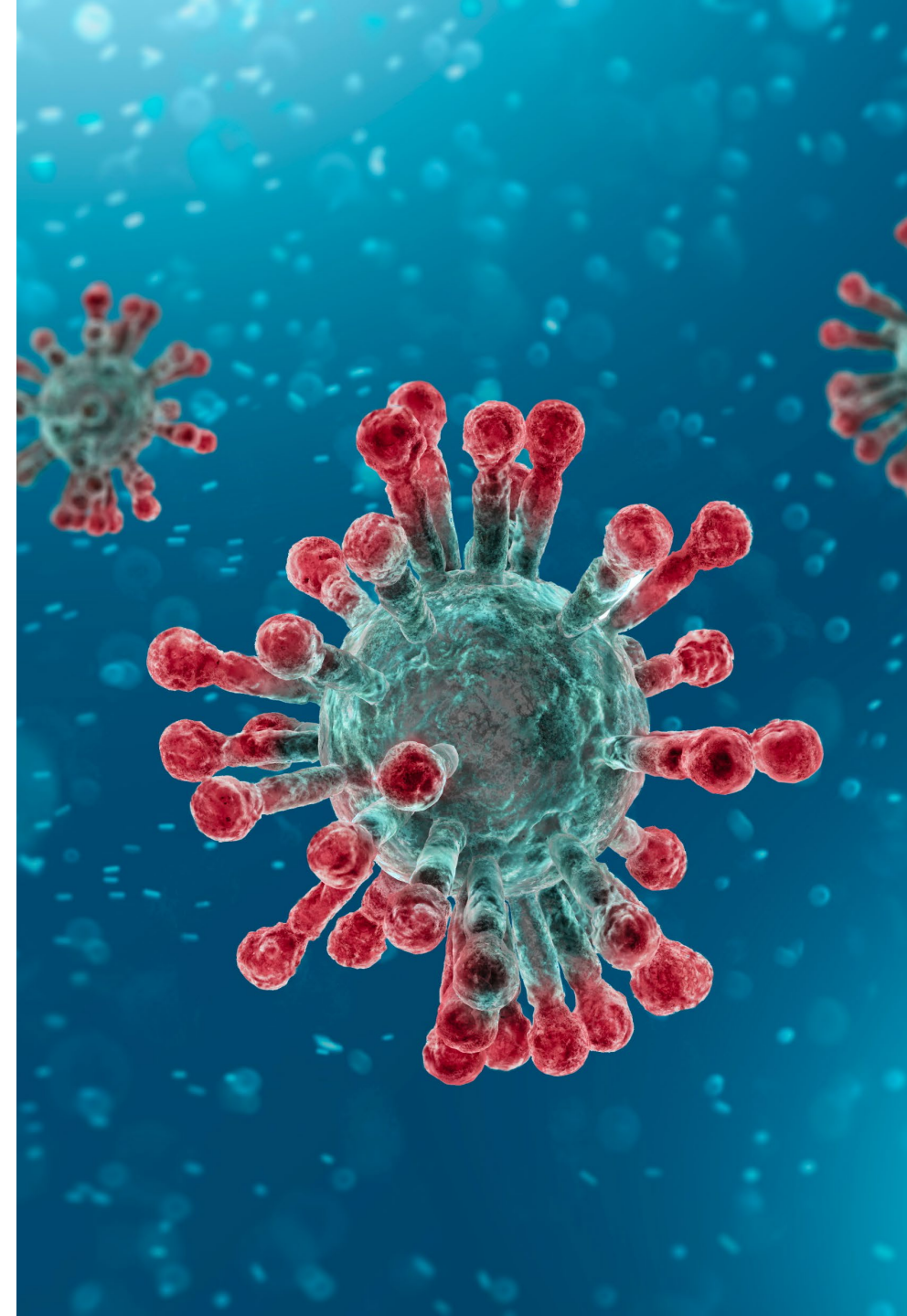
Maintain Positive Thinking

- Is your glass half full or half empty during the quarantine?
- Research has repeatedly shown that people who view their life experiences, even their challenging ones, positively have fewer emotional and relational problems, are happier and tend to engage in less unhealthy behaviors.
- Many people find reading affirmations, praying, meditating or simply self-reflecting in the morning to be great ways to get into a positive state of mind for the day to come.



Practice Patience

- There's an old saying, "Good things come to those who wait," and research on patience has shown that patient people do benefit in a number of ways.
- Research studies have shown a link between patience and good emotional and physical health, and patient people tend to be happier and better liked socially.
- The coronavirus has certainly forced us all to be patient as we await a vaccine, a cure and a return to life as we once knew it. During the quarantine, practicing thinking before you speak, slowing down, delaying gratification and considering alternative needs and perspectives are just a few ways to foster a more patient you.





Have Compassion

- Research studies have repeatedly shown that those with higher levels of compassion do better physically and emotionally, and they also tend to enjoy a longer lifespan.
- The next time you find yourself getting defensive in proving your point, try to remember that the person you're disagreeing with believes their point of view is just as correct, if not more correct, than yours.
- In the end, whether the topic is the coronavirus, the quarantine, social distancing or something else important, is it more important to be right or to get along with others?

“Compassion is a muscle that gets stronger with use.”

~Mahatma Ghandi



**How do we get back to life after the
quarantine?**



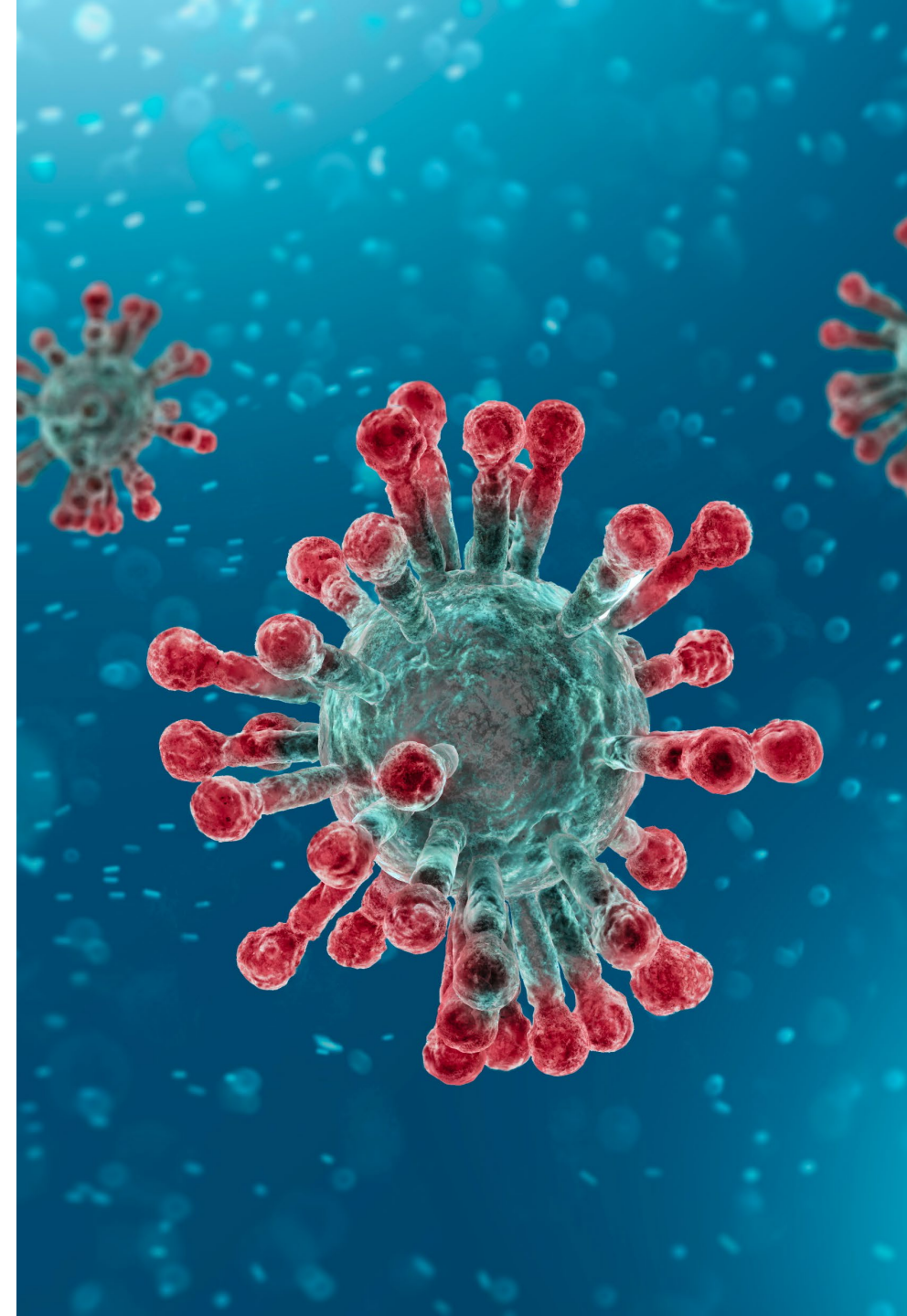
Coming Out of Quarantine

- We will likely experience a variety of emotions – positive and negative -- as we ease into post quarantine times.
- Mixed emotions about returning to normal daily routines -- frustration, anxiety/fear, sadness.
- Stress about continuing with different/added routines will need to be individualized assessed and adjusted as life slowly gets back to normal.
- Children may feel worried or upset about getting back to normal.
- Children may also be worried about the virus returning.



What we Know about Mental Health from Other Post Quarantine Data

- Early research has already shown higher rates of depression, anxiety and substance use due to the virus.
- People need to know that it is normal to experience emotional reactions and varying degrees of upset in response to being in quarantine.
- Providing platforms (available educational resources) reduces stress.
- We need to be mindful that vulnerable populations (i.e. the elderly and the immune-compromised) will likely continue to experience emotional burden after quarantine is lifted.



What To Do

- Continue to be patient as our community returns to normal.
- Educate yourself and your loved ones about the unfounded fears regarding the virus.
- Create a top 10 list of things you and your family would like to do as our community begins to come out of the pandemic.
- Help your children navigate the new rules for safety and continue to answer any questions they may have.



What To Do

- Help your children understand that families may have different rules of engagement and to respect/understand these rules even if they are different than those of your family.
- Continue to help your children develop grit and resilience skills for post pandemic life and the future.
- If you or your loved one's experience significant emotional upset due to the virus, and the many adjustments we've had to make, seeking out the help of a mental health professional is advised.

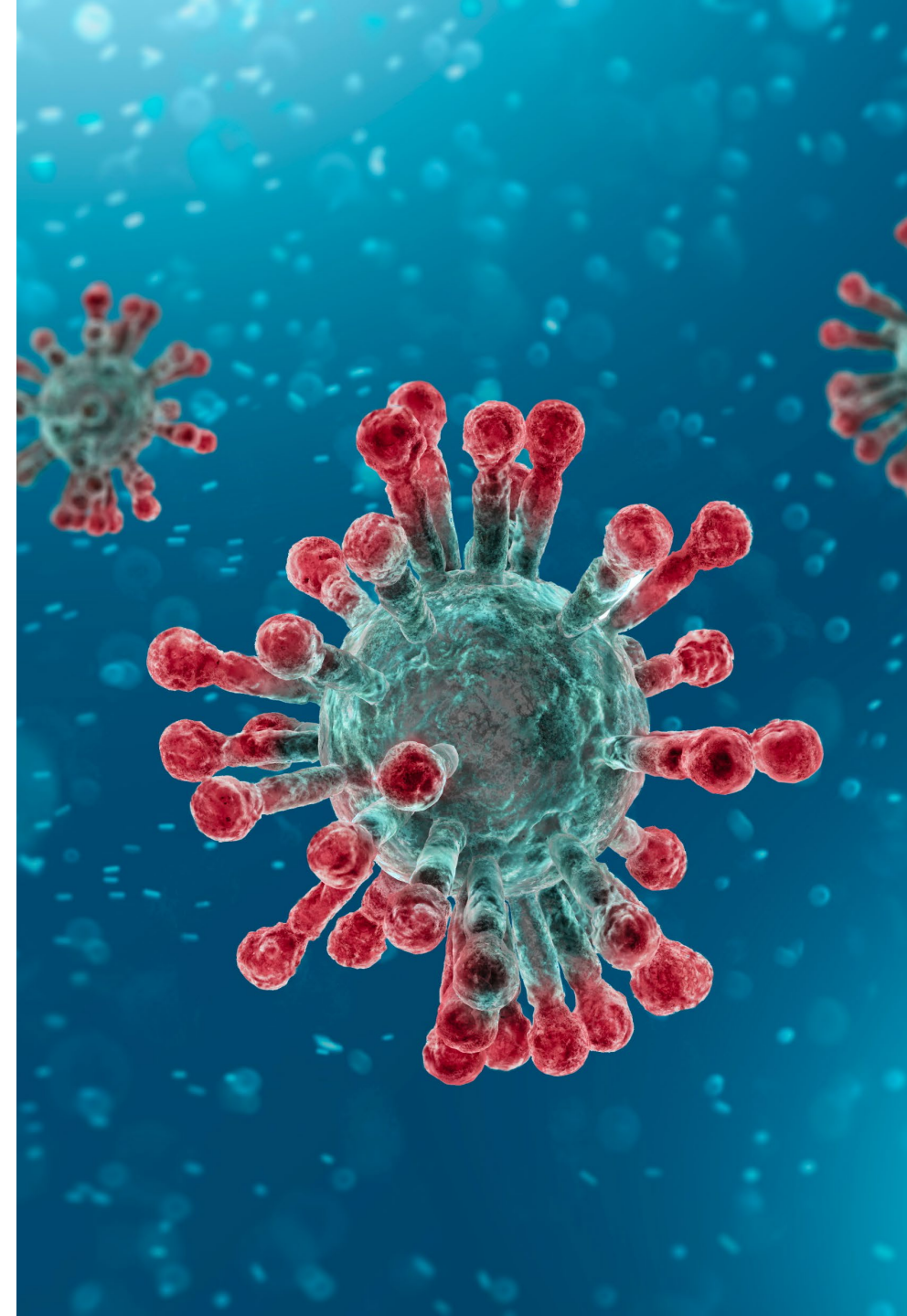


How do you stay protected?



How to Stay Protected During These Stressful Times

- Custody Orders
- Divorce
- Guardianship Issues
- Domestic Violence Issues



QUESTIONS



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