



Adapting to the New Normal

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Many of us were looking forward to the new year because it was to usher in a fresh start and new possibilities. We came up with fancy slogans and prepared for the best year of our lives to date. Little did we know that the coronavirus which ravaged Wuhan, China was slowly making its way to nearly every country in the world.

Here in the United States many of us have been sheltering in place to various degrees while balancing work, care for families, homeschooling and tending to ourselves with little resources from the places we traditionally relied upon. With schools across the country being closed for the remainder of this school year and many extracurricular activities being cancelled or having severe restrictions, children are spending more time at home than they have in recent years.

This can seem like a great concept and for many children it is. However, there has been an alarming statistical pattern that has emerged during our country's sheltering in place. There have been significant drops, often double-digit percentages, in the number of reported child abuse cases.

Teachers, coaches, pastors, and other adults are oftentimes the ones who notice signs of abuse and provide escape and support in addition to being the ones who report suspected child abuse. With these adults removed or interacting through social media and other virtual offerings at best, the signs of abuse will oftentimes go unnoticed.

Children rely upon adults for support, encouragement, and safety. I believe most adults can offer those things and so much more when they are whole and healthy. Covid-19 has taken so much from everyone of us and put us in a precarious position of feeling overwhelmed, overcommitted, and exhausted.

As the mother of a young son I now understand desperation. I have had to become creative in the ways I find outlets for myself and my son. I want to offer a few resources that have been shared with me that will help parents slow themselves down and give alternative ways to be present with children ranging from young children to teenagers.

- **In Praise of Walking: A New Scientific Exploration**, Shane O'Mara, uplifts the importance of exercise, and simply walking. While the book is not yet published, you can google all the benefits for those who are able to engage and why it is important during times like these.
- **First Aid for Feelings**: This is a wonderful resource for parents developed in part by Scholastic Books. Click [here](#) to visit.
- **Downdogapp.com**: A great app for doing a relaxing meditation suitable for beginners and those with more of a mindfulness background.

I am fully convinced that things will slowly get better and we will be returning to places outside of our homes, although cautiously. As we wait for “normal”, take care of yourself and those you love.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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