



Reassure, engage and create- with children to ensure their mental well being amid lockdown

Published: Apr 28, 2020, 12:47 IST | mid-day online correspondent [Mumbai](#)

It is not just academics that are taken care of amid lockdown, things such as maintaining gratitude journals and 'doing a good deed everyday' are also being imbibed in the children

"At Akanksha, teachers, counsellors, social workers and parents are working together to support the children- whether it is checking in for the child's well being, spreading awareness of safety measures, encouraging learning through low-cost tech or doing parent-child activities- we are keeping the lines of communication and connection open and strong to navigate these difficult times together," says Anusha.

Social distancing and lockdown may have impacted each one of us mentally, emotionally and psychologically but it is the children and teenagers who have had to cope with sudden closure of schools, cancellation of exams and a prohibition of face-to-face interaction with their friends and teachers.

Anusha Manjani, Manager, Counseling Services at Akanksha Foundation, says, "Children are acutely aware of the sudden changes and panic in the environment around them. Younger children can feel confused, uneasy and scared; older children express feelings of anxiety, sadness and helplessness."

She added, "The uncertainty and chaos of the pandemic impacts all aspects of children's lives- it is not just a threat to their physical health- but to their learning, their home environment, their interaction with peers, their emotional well-being. Moreover, economic hardships, the overcrowding in homes, the lack of access to resources in low income communities can lead to higher incidence of neglect, violence and abuse- making staying at home itself a risk to some children's safety."

In such a time, it is crucial that children have support of their parents and teachers to help them in having a routine and structure to their day. Anusha says, "Parents and teachers can be key caregivers and anchors during this time to support the mental well-being of children- by reassuring them of their safety, creating a space to share feelings and using art, play, fun learning activities to engage with them."