

# Mental Health Q & A

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**Jennifer Brody, Psy.D. of Astor Services for Children & Families discusses kids' mental health**

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Jennifer Brody, Psy.D. of Astor Services for Children & Families answers key questions that parents ask

**Q. We are living through a pandemic, which has its clear health challenges. But what have you seen in terms of mental health, especially as it pertains to children and families?**



A. We are all dealing with added stress right now. We are seeing, more than ever, the importance and critical role of parents to teach and practice self-care. Encourage your children to exercise, stay connected with friends, and get outside in the fresh air. Use self-soothing techniques such as deep breathing and meditation. If you feel that you need more help, either for one of your children or for your entire family unit, please seek it out. There are mental health resources, including Astor's, here in the community, that can provide you with a lifeline during this challenging time.

**Q. Are many of the mental health challenges you're seeing related to the return to school?**

A. Yes, absolutely. While school is one piece of a complicated puzzle this year, it is right at the forefront right now. Depending on your district, your risk level as a family and your own personal decision about schooling, your children could be attending school full-time, in a hybrid model or participating in remote learning or independent homeschooling. It is very likely that however your child is learning this year looks quite a bit different than it did just pre-pandemic. Change and transition – particularly when it is crisis-related - are tough on kids and families. This can create a rise in parental stress, behavioral health and the overall well-being of family units.

**Q. What advice can you share to help kids and families manage the transition back to school and some of the changes that may come as the year progresses?**

A. Your child might be feeling anxious and you may not know. Give them an opportunity to talk about it by asking how they're feeling. Listen attentively and answer their questions honestly but without an abundance of detail that can overwhelm. Take walks, make art, reassure them that they are safe and loved. Reduce screen time and too much news in the home – too much information is overwhelming to ALL of us and can fuel stress. Finally, where you can, implement routine and structure. If you don't have a routine in place already (or your prior routine was upended due to new or changing school schedules) sit down with your kids and work together on creating a daily plan. These relatively small changes can have a big impact on infusing calm in a chaotic time for us all.

**For more information:**

Additional help is available to you via mental health resources in our community. For those living in New York State's Hudson Valley and the Bronx, Astor Services for Children & Families is available to help children and families. If your child is struggling with their

mental health, call Astor's toll-free hotline: [1-866-ASTOR01](tel:1-866-ASTOR01). You will be prompted to leave a message, and a member of Astor's support staff will contact you to help. You can also visit [https://www.astorservices.org/covid\\_19/](https://www.astorservices.org/covid_19/).

See the list below for additional mental health centers you can reach out to.

### **Call Centers for Mental Health Crises:**

Dutchess - 845-486-2700 / 845-485-9700

Orange - 888-750-2266

Ulster - 845-340-9000

### **National Alliance on Mental Illness**

Dutchess County helpline talk or text

845-485-9700 or toll free 877-485-9700

### **Orange County Crisis Call Center**

311 in Orange County

(845) 346-HELP outside Orange County

### **Orange County Crisis Call Center**

Confidential text line for teens for info, referrals or just to chat

Text4Teens is now available 24 hours a day by texting 845-391-1000

### **Mental and Emotional Wellness Resources: Orange County**

Helpline/Rapeline (800) 832-1200

**Mobile Mental Health Hotline is the only one of its kind in Sullivan County**

The Arc Sullivan-Orange Counties, NY hosts “Children’s Mobile Crisis Intervention” service in the Sullivan County area. The program, which is for children under 18, is designed to assist a parent or guardian in need of an intervention during a time of crisis. The program operates after traditional business hours, when most children are at home.

845-701-3777

NYS has set up a **COVID Mental Health Hotline**, staffed by over 6,000 MH professionals, that people can access to get online or by phone therapy to cope with the stress, anxiety, isolation, etc. 1-844-863-9314 (this came from Ulster County website)

**Ulster County COVID-19 Hotline:** 845-443-8888

**Ulster County Mobile Mental Health** - Mobile Mental Health is operated by ACCESS: Supports for Living, between the hours of 10 AM - 10 PM. Call 1-844-277-4820.

**Family of Woodstock, Inc.**

(845) 679-2485 or 338-2370

(845) 647-2443

(845) 255-8801

*Jennifer Brody, Psy.D., is the Director of APA-Accredited Doctoral Internship and Supervising Psychologist at Astor Services for Children & Families.*

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