

# Spiritual & Mental Health for Children & Teens During COVID-19

#COVID19church | #SpiritualFirstAid



Ryan Frank  
KidzMatter



Dr. Beth Cunningham  
Florissa Center



Dr. Pam King  
Thrive Center for  
Human Development



NAE | National Association of  
**Evangelicals**



# Opening Prayer/Scripture



Rev. Dr. Nicole Martin  
Executive Director of Trauma Healing,  
American Bible Society

# Meet your hosts.



Jamie Aten, Ph.D.  
@drjamieaten



Kent Annan, M.Div.  
@kentannan

Faithfully respond, don't fearfully  
panic.

[#COVID19church](#) | [#SpiritualFirstAid](#)



# Spiritual First Aid Manual & Resources Now Available

[spiritualfirstaidhub.com](http://spiritualfirstaidhub.com)



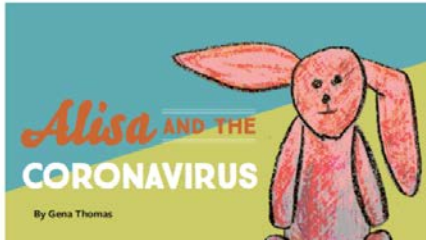
## Family COVID-19 Toolkit

At the [Humanitarian Disaster Institute \(HDI\)](#), our mission has always been to help the church prepare and care for a disaster-filled world. During this time, we've set our focus on helping churches and families respond and weather this pandemic.

Below are a **compilation of resources** curated by our team and students in the [M.A. Humanitarian & Disaster Leadership program](#) especially to help you care for your children and family in these unprecedented times.

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### Kid's Book



#### [Alisa and the Coronavirus](#)

Spur conversation with your children about COVID-19's impact on our daily lives with this children's book, written by Gena L. Thomas with her four-year-old daughter Juniper. Each page includes a

# Family COVID-19 Toolkit

[wheaton.edu/hdi-covid19](https://wheaton.edu/hdi-covid19)



# About today.

## Questions

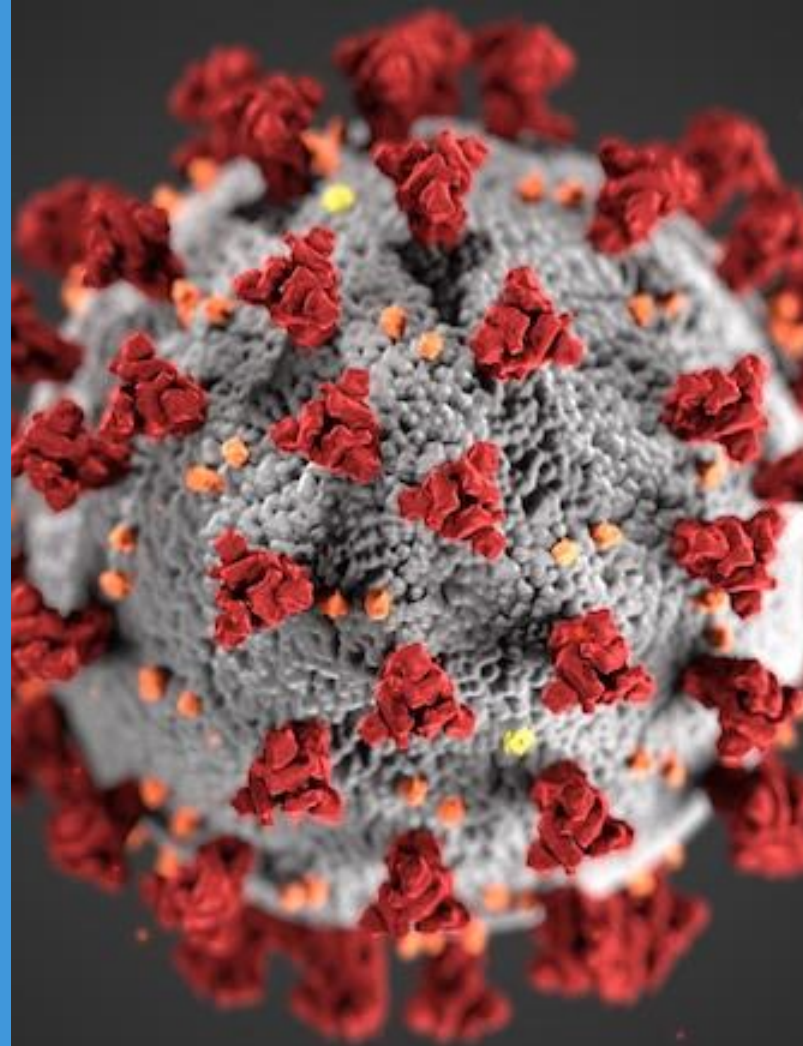
To ask questions during the webinar, use the Q&A or chat function at the bottom of your screen. We will save all questions for the end. If we don't get to your question but you need an urgent response, please email [hdi@wheaton.edu](mailto:hdi@wheaton.edu).

## Tweet and Share

Please share the information using our hashtag. [#COVID19church](#) and/or [#SpiritualFirstAid](#)

## Webinar Recording

We will be recording today's webinar and posting it on our online hub: [wheaton.edu/hdi-covid19](http://wheaton.edu/hdi-covid19).



# Meet your panel.



Ryan Frank  
CEO, KidzMatter  
@ryanfrank75



Beth Cunningham, Psy.D.  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Florissa



Pam King, Ph.D.  
The Thrive Center for Human  
Development  
@drpamking @thrivecenter



Spiritual & Mental Health for  
Children & Teens During COVID-  
19

# Why mental health of children and adolescents?

- ▶ A wide range of emotions are normal in response to difficult experiences such as the current pandemic
- ▶ Children and adolescents may not yet have developed effective skills to identify, communicate about, and manage their emotions
- ▶ Many children and adolescents display their emotions in other ways such as:
  - ▶ Irritability/tantrums
  - ▶ Sleep problems/nightmares
  - ▶ Withdrawal from others
  - ▶ Clinging behaviors
  - ▶ Decreased interest in activities
  - ▶ Physical complaints
  - ▶ Seeking reassurances from adults
  - ▶ Reluctance to leave home
  - ▶ Increased risk-taking behaviors

# Create space for them to reflect and process


LISTEN WELL TO WHAT THEY SHARE



ASK	engaging, open-ended questions	"What made you smile today?" "What was difficult about today?"
REFLECT	what you hear	"It sounds like..." "I hear some [anger/sadness] in your voice as you talk about that."
NOTICE	facial expressions	"It looks like you were feeling a big emotion when you said that." "It seems like you're upset about something."
NORMALIZE	feelings	"A lot of people are feeling that way right now." "I'm feeling [insert emotion] too." "I think I would be feeling that way too."
RESPOND	without judgment	"It's okay to feel that way."

- 
- ▶ Give developmentally-appropriate information
    - ▶ Watching the news, sharing information from news articles and social media, and discussing information about the pandemic are not appropriate for all ages
    - ▶ Be careful what your child/adolescent hears and monitor your child's/adolescent's media consumption
    - ▶ Use social stories to talk to younger children about the pandemic
      - ▶ <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trinka-and-sam-fighting-the-big-virus>
      - ▶ <https://www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com/childrens-book-email>



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- ▶ Model openness to new information and to different perspectives as well as kindness to all regardless of their perspectives
    - ▶ Remember, people are making the best decisions they can based on the information they have and their personal circumstances
    - ▶ Children and adolescents pick up on the judgments you make about how others are handling the pandemic and on the way you treat others

Model and  
encourage  
engagement in  
coping strategies



## RELAXATION STRATEGIES

- ▶ Deep breathing
- ▶ Praying
- ▶ Coloring
- ▶ Rubbing something soothing
- ▶ Balancing a feather
- ▶ Tightening/relaxing muscles

## HIGH-ENERGY STRATEGIES

- ▶ Jumping jacks
- ▶ Going for a run
- ▶ Dancing to worship music
- ▶ Squeezing a stress ball
- ▶ Pushing against a wall
- ▶ Popping bubble wrap

## ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Watching a movie
- ▶ Reading a book
- ▶ Playing a game
- ▶ Participating in a hobby
- ▶ Engaging in Christian fellowship
- ▶ Spending time in nature

## THINKING STRATEGIES

- ▶ Grounding with 5-4-3-2-1 senses
- ▶ Identifying what can/can't control
- ▶ Journaling/drawing how I feel
- ▶ Talking to someone
- ▶ Practicing gratitude
- ▶ Applying Scripture to situation



# Surviving COVID or Thriving Through COVID

Pam King, Ph.D.  
Thrive Center  
Fuller Theological Seminary

☆

$$\sqrt{123}$$

☆

Youth as problems  
to be solved?

☆



☆

STUDY  
HARD!

☆

☆

+ x ÷



☆  
 $\sqrt{123}$

☆  
Or as resources  
to be developed?  
☆



☆  
STUDY  
HARD!  
☆

☆  
+ x ÷



SURVIVING

Just getting by. Just making it.



THRIVING

Optimal or vital growth.



SURVIVING

Just getting by. Just making it.  
Not just about how we cope.



THRIVING

Optimal or vital growth.  
Living with hope.



SURVIVING

THRIVING

Me and Mine.

We. Us. Ours. Yours. Theirs.





THRIVING is  
vigorous growth.






THRIVING is  
vigorous growth.

But not all growth is good growth.

THRIVING is adaptive growth  
towards telos (purpose).



**THRIVING:** Sounds great—but how in the face of constant disruption and disappointment?



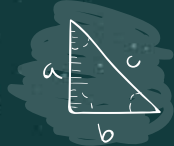


What is PURPOSE?

# PURPOSE is



ENDURING + ACTIONABLE  
GOAL

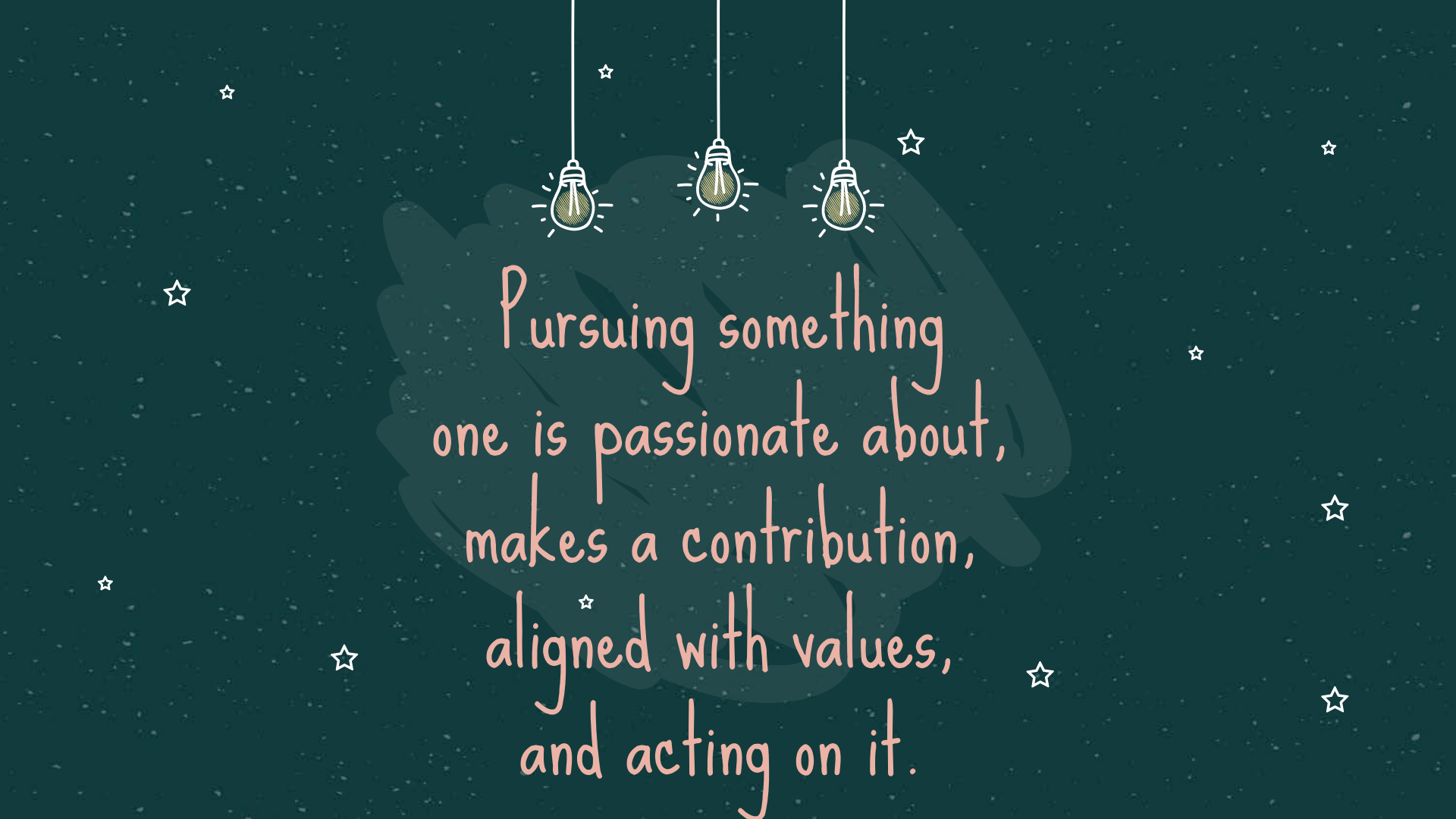


MEANINGFUL TO SELF



MAKES A CONTRIBUTION  
BEYOND THE SELF





Pursuing something  
one is passionate about,  
makes a contribution,  
aligned with values,  
and acting on it.

PURPOSE found at the intersection of:

SELF

BECOMING MORE  
CHRIST LIKE  
(VALUES + IDEALS)

OTHER



# PURSuing PURPOSE IN COVID!



## PURSuing PURPOSE IN COVID!



### STAY GROUNDED:

- Word of God—our beliefs, faith, and values (what gives hope, what grounds you?)
- To your physical body (what hurts, what works)?
- Feelings and emotions (good, bad, and the ugly)
- Pray, meditate, breath, reflect, journal
- Linger—don't loiter!

## PURSUIING PURPOSE IN COVID!

2

CONNECTED

### STAY CONNECTED:

- God-kids have different responses
- People matter: Known and loved
- Social tidiness
- Be intentional. More is not always more. Go for depth and significance. Youth pastors.
- Reflect, but laugh and play

## PURSuing PURPOSE IN COVID!



### STAY DIRECTED

- Towards purpose: actionable goal, self, other, ideals
- Where's the joy?
- Mirror, affirm, support

# PURSuing PURPOSE IN COVID!



"THIS BEING SO...  
WHAT?"





REALITY...

ALL BETS ARE OFF!...

01

03

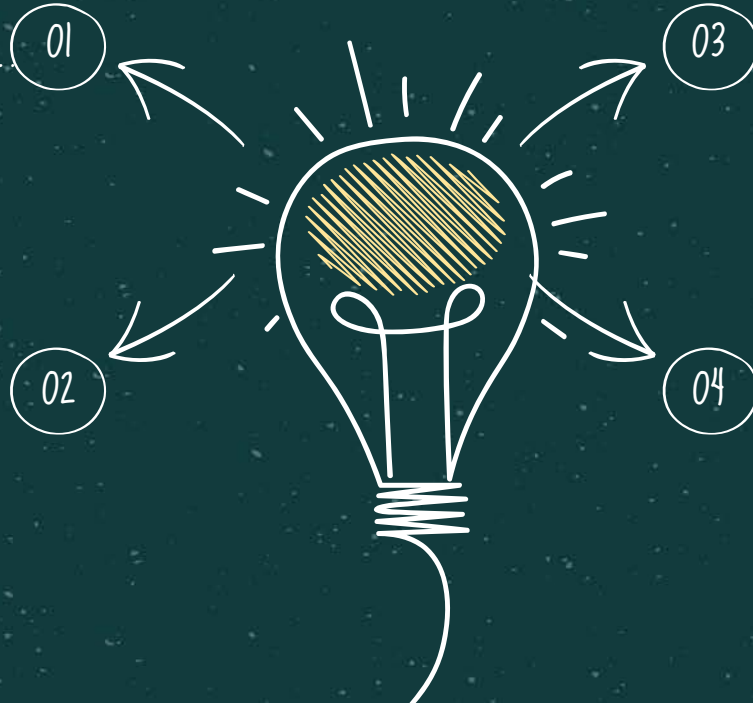
BE PATIENT.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX...

02

04

LAUGH. PRAY. BREATHE. REPEAT.



A hand is shown in a dark, textured green color, holding three lit lightbulbs. The lightbulbs are white with yellow filaments and radiating lines indicating they are on. The background is a dark teal color with a pattern of small white stars and a larger, faint starburst pattern. The text "YOU ARE NOT ALONE." is written in a light orange, hand-drawn font across the center of the hand.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



## RESOURCES:

[www.thethrivecenter.org](http://www.thethrivecenter.org)

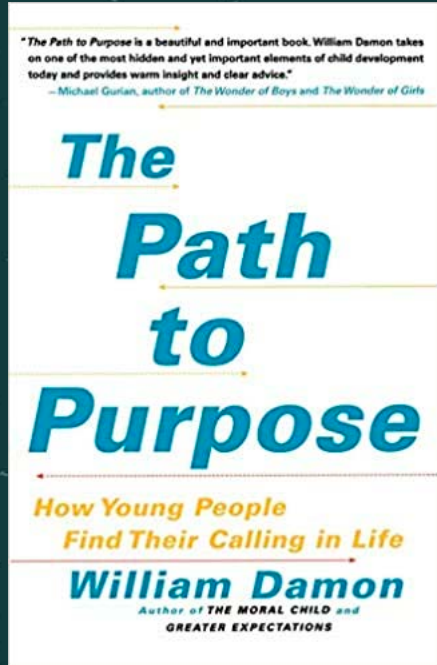
@ThriveCenter and @DrPamKing

Resources for thriving through COVID in English and Spanish

<https://thethrivecenter.org/>

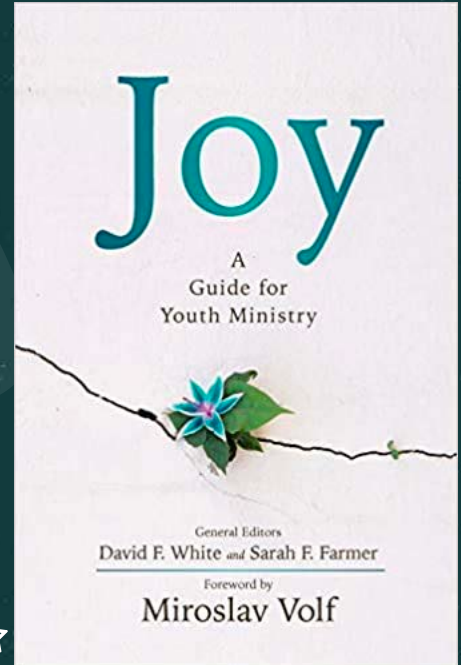
<https://thethrivecenter.org/staying-grounded-connected-directed/>

<https://thethrivecenter.org/contemplation-and-covid-19/>



## 2 great books:

*The Path to Purpose* by William Damon (2009)  
Just out: *Joy: A Guide for Youth Ministry*  
(check out chapter on joy and purpose by Pam King & Steve Argue)





THRIVE ON!

[www.thrivecenter.org](http://www.thrivecenter.org)  
@ThriveCenter  
@drpamking

# Questions?

#COVID19church

#SpiritualFirstAid

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# Thank you!

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