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LSU HEALTH EXPERTISE HELPING CHINESE PARENTS SUPPORT CHILDREN
ISOLATED DUE TO COVID-19

New Orleans, LA – Joy Osofsky, PhD, Professor and Paul Ramsay Chair of Psychiatry, and Howard Osofsky, MD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, have developed a guide to *Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)* with a Chinese translation.

“We were asked by the Chinese American Psychoanalytic Association to develop information and materials for COVID-19 that would be helpful to children, parents, caregivers, and others to support the children and families who have been quarantined and isolated in China,” explains Dr. Joy Osofsky. “This material is directed more to younger children; however, we also have information available for older children as well.”

The materials are being distributed to clinicians being trained in China, students and others in communities.

“The children are isolated when quarantined,” notes Dr. Howard Osofsky. “They have to stay at home, schools are closed, and they cannot go out to play or visit friends. There is also much anxiety and stress about the Coronavirus and this material helps families and other caregivers with ways to communicate with the children.”

Things that parents and caregivers can do to help children include:

- Routines are very important for young children. Creating new routines or reestablishing usual routines can help children feel safe. Keeping regular mealtimes and bedtimes, setting a daily time to play games together, read to them, or sing songs together all help.
- Support from parents or caregivers is very important during periods of stress and during the time after the acute disaster is over. Parents may be physically present but not available emotionally because they are so stressed themselves. It is important to make time to reassure young children and spend time with them.

- Explain why things are different. Young children may not understand why things have changed (like why they cannot go outside or play with other children) but talking with them will help them feel supported by you. Help the children in a way that is appropriate for their age. Keep explanations simple.
- Take care of yourself. This is very important. Even if young children are not directly exposed to the trauma, they can recognize stress and worry in older children and adults in the house.
- If young children have been sent to stay with family members in another city talk to them using electronic means as often as possible during the day and at bedtime. If they are at home, try to arrange for them to see other children using a cellphone.

The full recommendations, in English and Mandarin, are available [here](#).

There is a large network connected to the Chinese American Psychoanalytic Association that has been doing training in China for more than a decade.

For decades, the Osofskys and colleagues in the [Department of Psychiatry](#) at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine have been consulted for their expertise in helping children and families cope with disasters such as school shootings, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the [Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill](#), as well as violence in the community.

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