



Tips to Support Students Coping with Change

Adjusting to Mask Mandate Changes



Recent changes to mask mandates have invoked a range of emotions for students, parents, and educators. While some are experiencing relief, others are experiencing stress and worry about the implications these changes may have on their wellbeing. Here are some tips on how to support students in navigating changes to mask mandates.

Provide Facts

- Provide students with updated and accurate information regarding changes to reduce misinformation shared between students.
- Access this [link](#) for latest CA guidelines on mask mandates.

Process the Change

- Reassure students feelings of apprehension due to change are normal.
- Redirect students to focus on choices that have remained within their control in the midst of change
 - Example: remind students they still have the choice to wear or not wear a mask.

Promote Empathy & Respect

- Encourage students to be compassionate and respectful of others' decision to wear or not wear masks.
- Example: If a student questions another student's decision
 - Consider saying "The decision to wear a mask is each individual's choice and we should be respectful of the various choices."

Talk About Feelings

- Invite students to share their feelings.
- Validate and normalize what students are feeling.
- Example
 - Consider saying "Changes may lead to experiencing different emotions. What are some feelings you are having?"

Model Problem-Solving Skills

- Support students in identifying settings/situations where masks are required or optional. Additionally, guide students in exploring their comfort level when masks are optional.
- Example
 - Consider saying: "Let's explore situations in which we feel comfortable wearing masks? Now, let's explore situations in which we feel more comfortable not wearing our masks?"

Identify Coping Skills

- Introduce students to coping skills they can utilize when feeling stressed/nervous/anxious.
- Lead students in utilizing exercises to promote relaxation.
- Access this [link](#) for deep breathing exercises to utilize in the classroom.

Access Mental Health Support Staff

- Remind students of mental health support staff on campus.
- Reach out to your mental health team members if you notice students with prolonged or extreme emotions to the change.

Provide Students Opportunities to Ask Questions

- Students may have worrisome thoughts about specific situations they may feel uncomfortable asking questions in front of peers. Provide opportunities for students to ask questions in private.

Hotline Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255
- The Trevor Project (866) 488-7386 Text "START" to 678-678
- Crisis Text Line Text "HELLO" TO 741-741
- Teen Line (310) 855-4673 (6-10pm daily) Text "TEEN" to 839-863 (6-9pm daily)