

ON OUR SLEEVES®

NEWS RELEASE

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Experts Offer Free Guide to Empower Kids and Teens in Handling Emotions During Uncertainty

The On Our Sleeves® Emotional Development guide offers practical steps for parents, caregivers and educators based on evidence-informed strategies

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A notable side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is the mental and emotional impact it has had on children and teens. In a year of disruption and loss, children of all ages have felt the ramifications of an unconventional time.

As parents and caregivers continue to navigate the changing realities of life during a global pandemic, it is important for families to address the emotional and mental health needs of children. [How to Foster a Child's Emotional Development](#), a new resource on [OnOurSleeves.org](https://www.onoursleeves.org), and created by behavioral health experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital, was developed to offer guidance on healthy emotional practices. The guide focuses on empowering children to better understand and manage their emotional experiences at all stages of development.

“The idea of emotional empowerment is that we all experience strong emotions. There isn't anyone who avoids experiencing stress and challenges in their life,” said [Parker Huston, PhD, clinical director of On Our Sleeves](#) and pediatric psychologist, Nationwide Children's Hospital. “Emotional empowerment helps children and teens effectively understand, express and regulate those emotions.”

Particularly this year, children of all ages may be experiencing strong negative emotions, such as anger, fear and anxiety. Though it is important for parents to validate their child's feelings, it is equally beneficial for parents to ensure their child develops language to help identify emotions they are experiencing. That way when a child is going through a specific emotion, they are better equipped to recognize what they are feeling in the moment and can appropriately express how they feel.

According to Dr. Huston, every child should be equipped with these skills, which is a cornerstone for social-emotional health and resiliency. It is not just parents and caregivers who are able to intentionally help children learn these skills, especially early in childhood. Educators are in a position to prepare children with these important skills as well.

“I think it is so important to have resources for our students, especially right now as we continue to navigate COVID,” said Nancy Secrest, MSE, LSC, licensed clinical pastoral counselor and school

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counselor at Worthington Christian Schools. “*On Our Sleeves* and its resources have honestly given me a path on how to meet their needs and how to give them tools.”

With younger children, teachers can ask students questions during reading sessions, such as “How do you think they felt on this page?” and for older students, educators can encourage them to focus on the emotions, behaviors and strategies a character is going through and using. These activities help children and teens learn to label their emotions and that leads to the ability of self-recognition.

Noticing the emotions of others and learning how to regulate emotions also are tools for children and families to tap into as they begin to consciously work on their emotional empowerment. Having the skills to understand and practice empathy leads to healthier social interactions. Learning ways to reduce overpowering feelings through emotion regulation is essential when a child may become overwhelmed by strong negative emotions and their ability to function is affected. Children who learn these skills at earlier ages are better able to manage their daily emotional experiences.

In addition to the Emotional Development guide, [On Our Sleeves](#), the movement for children’s mental health, provides a collection of free evidence-informed resources for communities around the country, such as how to practice gratitude and happiness, as well as information about how parents, teachers and advocates can better understand mental health and wellness in children.

Click [here](#) to watch how a pair of seventh graders used emotional empowerment tools to process a challenging year.

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What are the five steps of Emotional Empowerment?

1. Identifying emotions
2. Recognizing emotions
3. Noticing and understanding emotions
4. Expressing emotions
5. Regulating strong emotions

The five steps of Emotional Empowerment are evidence-informed strategies parents, caregivers, educators and advocates can use to help children engage in healthy emotional practices.

About *On Our Sleeves*®

Children don’t wear their thoughts on their sleeves. With 1 in 5 children living with a significant mental health concern and half of all lifetime mental health concerns starting by age 14, we need to give them a voice. *On Our Sleeves*®, powered by behavioral health experts at Nationwide Children’s

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Hospital, aims to provide every community in America with free resources necessary for breaking child mental health stigmas and educating families and advocates, because no child or family should struggle alone.

Since the inception of *On Our Sleeves* in 2018, more than 2 million people have interacted with our free pediatric mental health educational resources at OnOurSleeves.org and our educator curriculums have reached more than 1.1 million students across the United States. We depend on philanthropy to underwrite our mission of providing free educational resources across America and are seeking funding partners to create a meaningful collaboration. Please contact Amanda Dove, director of Corporate Partnerships at 1-866-317-5437 or Amanda.Dove@NationwideChildrens.org to learn how millions of families can learn about your brand.