

A HEART-WARMING STORY OF ONE BOY'S
EXPERIENCE OF LOCKDOWN.

MAX COUNTS

TO A

MILLION



SOMETIMES, JUST
KEEPING ON GOING
MAKES YOU
A HERO.

Adults'
Guide for
Conversations
at Home

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TIPS FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Stories can provide a helpful starting point for children to talk about things that have happened to them and how they felt about it. Although everyone's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic was different, many aspects of the events in this book, which describe the early part of the pandemic, will probably feel familiar for all of us. This guide is designed for parents, carers and other adults to support conversations about the story with your children at home.

Tips for starting conversations:

- Find the right moment, when your child is calm and you have some time to spend together
- Try to find a quiet spot without distractions
- Follow your child's lead – listen out for what it is they might like to talk about
- Keep the conversation casual – this will help your child know that it's OK to talk
- Be curious and keep an open mind. Your interest will help your child say more and what they say might surprise you
- Ask open questions and leave space for your child to talk
- Be open to discussing both good and bad parts of the pandemic
- Think about what you're happy with sharing about your own experiences and things that helped you to manage

Tips for talking about emotions with your child:

The key thing is that your child feels heard and understood, and that there is someone they can rely on to help them and keep them safe.

- Give your child your full attention and let them know you're listening carefully
- Try to notice the emotions in what your child is saying. If you validate your child's feelings by recognising and acknowledging them, this can help your child learn about the emotions they are experiencing and how to manage them
- For some children, you can help by having a guess at what they might have been feeling
- Try to avoid minimising feelings or saying things weren't so bad. When your child has felt heard, they will find it easier to move on from the upsetting moments
- You will know best how to comfort your child if they're upset and what you could do with them that will help them feel better

Tips for supporting coping and resilience:

- Talk about:
 - What helped them when they were feeling sad, anxious or angry etc.
 - How they managed to keep going when things were difficult
 - The people who helped them to feel better
 - What helped them to know that they were safe and that things were OK (or going to be OK)
 - What they learned and anything they're proud of
- Help explain anything your child doesn't understand and reassure them that what happened was not their fault
- When the conversation has ended, move on to something safe and happy
- Check your child is feeling OK and let them know you can talk about it again if they want to

DISCUSSION IDEAS FROM MAX COUNTS TO A MILLION



Max hears his parents talking about the virus:

- What do you remember happening first? What did people tell you?
- Did anyone we know seem worried?
- Did you ever feel worried about what was happening?

Max's school closes and he starts doing online lessons:

- What was it like when you couldn't go to school? OR what was it like when other children stopped going to school?
- What did you like about home-schooling? Is there anything you miss about it?
- What was hard about home-schooling?

Max's dad goes to stay in a hotel to keep his family safe:

- Who did you miss during the lockdowns? How did we stay in touch with them?
- Who do you think missed you during the lockdowns?

Max is disappointed about his birthday party getting cancelled:

- Did we have anything cancelled because of the pandemic?
- What did you find disappointing during the lockdowns? What did you miss doing?
- What helped when you felt disappointed? What did we do instead?
- What happened on your birthday(s) in the pandemic? What was good about it?

Max starts counting to help calm down when he was angry:

- Did you ever feel sad, worried or angry in the lockdowns?
- Who helped when you felt that way?
- What helped you feel brave or strong when you needed it? What helped you keep going?

Max's dad explains about the virus and why there is a 'shutdown' as Max calls it:

- Do you know what the coronavirus is and why people were worried about it?
- Do you know why things happened? (about national rules or family decisions)
- Do you have any questions you want to ask or things you don't understand?

Max's grandad catches the virus and spends some time in hospital:

- You could talk about people you know who got COVID-19, how they were, and how they are now.
- If you have lost people during the pandemic, you might want to talk about this or spend some time remembering them together.

The book ends with the celebration of Max's achievement:

- What were your happy times? What did you enjoy?
- Is there anything that you are proud of?
- Is there anything you miss about the lockdowns?

ACTIVITY IDEAS FROM MAX COUNTS TO A MILLION



Draw your memories

Max makes two drawings that are very important in the story; one for his dad and one for his grandad. You could draw or make a picture together that represents something important to you about the pandemic or the lockdowns. It might be something you enjoyed, something that inspired or helped you or something you were grateful for.

Appreciate nature

Max notices the swifts in the sky and feels inspired when he sees them. Lots of people started to notice the animals who lived around them more during the pandemic, even people who live in cities. If you started to watch or make friends with new animals, you could draw a picture and write about them together.

Think about your memories

Have a look back through photos of earlier in the pandemic. Can you choose one or two that represent happy memories, or times you felt proud?

Revisit somewhere from the pandemic

Everyone's routines changed in the pandemic, and there were places we visited more often. You could revisit somewhere you went a lot during the lockdowns. What is it like now? Has it changed? How does it feel to go back there now?

Write a thank you note

There might have been people who helped you, or showed you kindness during the pandemic. You could write a letter or note to thank them.

Make a memory box

If you have pictures, crafts you made or things you collected during the lockdowns, you could make a memory box of these things to store them safely.

**We hope these notes have helped you talk
about the pandemic and your memories together.
If you try out any of the activities, we would love to see them!
Share photos with us on Twitter @NosyCrow**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Looking after yourself

As a parent or carer, you will have had your own stresses during the pandemic. There might be parts of your experience that are difficult to think or talk about. It will be important to choose the right time for you to talk about the pandemic with your child, without feeling overwhelmed by your own feelings. It can be helpful for parents to model talking about how they felt and how they managed those feelings, but think about what you could say that is appropriate for your child's age and understanding.

You might want to think about who can support you and whether there is any help you might need if you are struggling emotionally. Your GP and local NHS services could help you with this, or the links below may be useful.

COVID-19 and parenting

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guide for parents | UNICEF Parenting](#)

[Coronavirus | Gingerbread](#)

[Coronavirus | National Autistic Society](#)

[Covid-19 and families with disabled children | Contact](#)

[Easy Read Accessible Information About Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) For People With A Learning Disability, Families, Carers and Support Workers | Mencap](#)

Mental Health Support

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

[Coronavirus - looking after your mental wellbeing | Mind, the mental health charity](#)

[Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#)

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