

When Babies Cry...We C.O.P.E.

Let's face it, caring for an infant or a young child (heck, even a teenager or adult) is hard work. None of us came with an instruction manual and even if we had, with the current "Social Distancing" and "Safer at Home" guidelines, those manuals wouldn't be helpful for us anyway.

Many of us are feeling more stressed than ever before and the isolation is increasing stress for all of us.

If you are caring for a baby or young child and are feeling stressed, know that you are not alone. The Shaken Baby Alliance is here for you and we have resources to help you get through these tough times.

Crying

Think about the stress you are feeling. The people around you, children included, can "feel" your stress too. How do you deal with your stress?

Many of us have certain activities we do when we are stressed. Maybe you clean your house, go for a walk, listen to music, eat a specific food, even cry. We can talk about our stress with our family, friends, or professionals. The point is, we do something to relieve our stress.

Babies and small children do not have these options. Crying is often the only way they can communicate.

Dr. Ronald Barr (2014) did research showing babies cry most between two and four months and crying is a normal part of infant development. In a sense, if your baby is crying, that's a great indication they are normal!

What Can I Do About Crying?

There are things you can do to assure yourself that you are being a great parent or caregiver and meeting the needs of your infant or small child, but really, it is not your job to STOP the crying. Some of the things we can check include:

CHECK THE BABY'S BASIC NEEDS

- Check the baby's diaper. Is it clean and dry?
- Has the baby been fed?
- Does the baby need to be burped?
- Is the baby too cold or too hot?
- Is the baby running a fever, vomiting, or appearing ill?

TRY SOOTHING THE BABY

- Does the baby need soothing objects like a pacifier, toy, or small blanket to hold?
- Does the baby want to swing or sit in a bouncy seat?
- Does the baby like music or a "white noise" such as a vacuum cleaner or fan?
- Does walking outside or around the house help?

NOTHING IS WORKING!

If you have tried these things and the baby or child is still crying, **it is OK to walk away**. Babies do not die or get hurt from crying. Put them in a safe place (a crib, play pen, a room that you have "child-proofed") and **WALK AWAY**. They will be fine while you get control and COPE.

Then, take a break and take care of YOU:

- Do some deep breathing.
- Take a walk to the mailbox and back.
- Call or text a friend.
- Set a timer and check your social media channels or watch a few minutes of your favorite Netflix show.
- Find something that makes you laugh.

Remember, babies cry...your job is to COPE.

RESOURCES:

Local: Tarrant County

The Shaken Baby Alliance – 817-882-8686 www.shakenbaby.org

Alliance for Children – Children’s Advocacy Center- Child and Family Services support for families in crisis: Call 817-335-HOPE (4673).

One Safe Place (for victims of family violence) – **OPEN DURING COVID-19 for counseling and support services** – 817-916-4323

National Parent Helpline: 1-855-427-2736 (Leave a message including your name and number and an advocate will call you back.)

[Crying Baby: How to Keep Your Cool from the Mayo Clinic](#)

[How to Stay Calm When a Baby Won’t Stop Crying from Zero to Three](#)

[10 Tips for Keeping the Calm and Positive Parenting from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[Corona Virus Tips and Resources from Prevent Child Abuse America](#)