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FEELING OVERWHELMED?

What to do now
that lockdown has
been extended...

For many of us, the thought of having 21 days of lockdown wasn't as exciting as we (or those around us) at first thought it would be. We may have felt excited that there would be a break from school, and homework. We may even have felt relieved that we would be able to chill at home, listen to music and binge watch movies or series. However, this feeling of excitement and relief was not long-lasting for everyone.

Some of us might not have felt this way at all...

For some of us, lockdown meant not having contact with our friends, not being able to escape our homes, and feel a little bit okay for at least some of the day. It meant no contact with teachers, who sometimes were the only people who interacted with us all day. It meant no lunch was given to me at school so that I could survive on the little bit of food we have at home. It meant no extra food being sent home with me to share with my family at home.

It meant no hugs, no touches, no feeling alive... for some us it felt like the end.

When lockdown got extended for a further 14 days, I know that there was a sense of panic and dread amongst many of us. For some it meant valuable school days were being lost. For some it was wondering whether this would cost them their matric year. For some it meant going hungry and not knowing where the next meal was going to come from. For others, it meant being trapped in a home where they may feel unloved, get hurt or listen and watch people fighting and hurting others around them. For some, being at home wasn't safe. It felt like a prison.

I'm writing this to you today, as the social worker at your school. I know this isn't an easy time for any of us, and for some of us, it might be feeling a bit harder than for others. My message to you is that whatever you are feeling, and however you are reacting, it's okay. There is no one specific way we are all meant to be feeling and reacting while the world around us, as we know it, is changing drastically every day. Moment by moment things can change, and we have very little control over it. This can leave us feeling like we need to fight against it, run (flee) away from it, or freeze in panic, not knowing what to do.

I want you to know that you are in my thoughts, as you are in the thoughts of your teachers, your principal and the other staff members as well. We miss you, and we are hoping that you are safe and cared for. We are here to provide as much support to you as we can.

Over the next few days I'm going to be putting some ideas together, that I hope is going to help you and those around you. I am going through my research and my books, and listening to the conversations going on around me from all around the world, to try and put together information that can hopefully help you and your family through this time.

For today, the most important thing I would like to share is that you aren't alone. As alone as you may feel right now, we are all connected through an invisible string, called love. Put your hand on your heart, and I will put mine on my heart. We are together, even though we feel miles apart. Take a slow breath in, and a slow one out. We will get through this. Together.

Love, Mrs Hennessy

Hennessy

P.S. There are some important phone numbers on the next page to help you during this time:

SOME EMERGENCY NUMBERS YOU MAY NEED:

Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

National Institute for Communicable Diseases	0800 029 999
Coronavirus WhatsApp	0600 123 456
Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme	012- 337 1997 Corona19ters@labour.gov.za
SASSA call centre	0800 60 10 11
Gift of the Givers	0800 786 911 info@giftofthegivers.org

To report a crime or call police

Flying Squad	10111
Crime Stop (Report crime anonymously)	08600 10111
Gender-based violence command centre	0800 428 428 or *120*7867# (free)
People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) Stop Gender Violence	Tel: 011 642 4345 After hours: 083 765 1235 0800 150 150
Childline	0800 05 55 55
Human trafficking	08000 37283 (0 8000-rescue)

For counselling and mental health

Lifeline	0861 322 322
Suicide Crisis Line	0800 567 567
SADAG Mental Health line	(011) 234 4837
FAMSA	011 975 7107

To get an ambulance or report a fire

Ambulance or fire department	10177
ER24	084 124
Netcare 911	082 911

