Our Panelists:

Dr. Katie C. Hart, Psy.D. is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Licensed Psychologist at Florida International University (FIU) and the Center for Children and Families. She is the Director of the Reading Explorers Program, recently recognized as a national pacesetter from the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, as well as The Children’s Trust Parent Club in partnership with FIU, a free community-wide positive parenting program for parents of children 0-16 years.

Dr. Julia Harper, Ph.D., MS, OTR/L For over 25 years, Julia has worked as a pediatric occupational therapist focusing on creating brain-based therapeutic programs that tap into neural-plasticity, the brain’s ability to adapt and change. Her world-renowned therapy center offers a WAY to HOPE which merges her two models: H.O.P.E.

Dr. Marva Lewis, Ph.D School of Social Work- Tulane University- research focuses on the development of culturally valid research methods, child abuse and neglect, and racism-based stress.

Dr. Lewis’s Books & Publications

- Therapeutic Cultural Routines to Build Family Relationships: Talk, Touch & Listen While Combing Hair©
- Call to action: Centering Blackness and disrupting systemic racism in academic publishing

Dr. Marina Villani Capo, Psy.D. is employed by Nicklaus Children’s Pediatric Specialists. She is a child and adolescent psychologist within the Department of Psychology at Nicklaus Children's Hospital with a specialty in pediatric psychology.
Website Resources

ZERO TO THREE works to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the early connections that are critical to their well-being and development.

THE CHILD MIND INSTITUTE is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders by giving them the help they need.

HEALTHYCHILDREN.ORG is the only parenting website backed by 67,000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

THE CHILDREN’S TRUST mission is to partner with the community to plan, advocate for and fund strategic investments that improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County.

EARLY STEPS is Florida’s early intervention system that offers services to eligible infants and toddlers, age birth to 36 months, who have or are at-risk for developmental disabilities or delays.

Media Resources

SESAME WORKSHOP Sesame Street’s unforgettable characters bring joyful learning into children’s lives—and help Sesame Workshop change the world, one smile at a time. Their workshops cover how to talk to children about Racial Justice, Autism, Traumatic Experiences, Refugee Response, Military Families, Gender Equity, and Health & Hygiene.

INSIDE OUT Disney + Pixar- Growing up can be a bumpy road, and it’s no exception for Riley.

**Find the social media accounts of your local hospital, community clinic, or medical facility. They may share information for parents, including programs, tips, and resources.

**Look into your local colleges, universities for their Psychology and/or Human Development departments, medical centers, and schools of social work.
Guidance from our Panelists

Life is uncertain, but now even more so. The COVID pandemic has put a magnifying glass up to the crisis of access to health care and resources for families, but for many families this crisis has existed for generations.

During COVID our connection to our “Village” (school, counselors, teachers, other parents) was disconnected. Parents saw their kids in new ways, saw new behaviors or saw issues that were already present exacerbated. Parents and children can do so much together.

Parents/Caregivers

- **Get back to utilizing “The Village.”** Don’t be afraid to ask the aunt, the teacher, the counselor, the mom or dad or grandparents how the child is doing. Have you noticed changes in sleep, eating, mood? Are they isolating themselves?

- **Don’t be afraid** to ask your child “How are you feeling?”

- **Community of Parents:** Other parents can be such a huge resource for families, especially in targeted and under-resourced communities.

- **Media:** Control the amount and type of media they’re taking in. You be the one to explain things to them because if it’s not you it will be someone else who may not deliver the message you want. Overconsumption of media can also worsen fears and stress.

- **Talk with your pediatrician.** If access to health insurance and providers is not an option visit your community health clinic.

- **Insourcing:** Utilize yourself as a resource. Your child learns how to handle stress from how you handle stress. What are you modeling when you are feeling frustrate? If you are not connected to yourself, to your own mental health, then your model is not working.

- **Routines:** Maintaining predictable, constant, calming routines like family dinners, listening/dancing to music, biking.

- **Cultural practices:** These practices and family routines are perfect times to teach problem solving. Listen to their problem and help them walk through solving it. Conversations of problem solving will look different in each family. These practices bring families together and are a part of survival, create resilience, and bring joy.
• **Believe them. Validate them.** Believe that what your child is saying about their feelings is true, and don’t belittle their feelings. Even if their problems don’t seem as big as ours are as adults, they are valid problems.

• **Have your child evaluated.** Though we don’t always need to pathologize the problem, parents also need to understand their child’s functioning and how they respond to certain environmental factors before there’s a crisis. This helps parents understand how to best help their child process stress and anxiety.

What can Educators/Youth Workers do?

• **Create a safe space** where children feel comfortable coming to you with their worries. Visit **WELCOMING SCHOOLS** for resources, books, and lesson plans that help educators and youth workers create safe spaces.

• **Bring it to the Parent/Caregiver:** There may be topics that the parents aren’t comfortable with teachers explaining. Ex. “Today Tim told me he was really worried about the war in Ukraine,” or “Today Tim made a comment that concerned me.”

What can Children’s Museums do?

• **The Power of PLAY:** During times of crisis children’s museums are uniquely positioned to give children necessary opportunities to play, to feel like everything will be ok, and to feel like children again.

• **Have pragmatic resources** available in English, Spanish, and any predominant languages your community speaks. Have a resource page/hand out available. Tell families about it. Keep it updated.

• **Bring the play to them.** If there is a crisis, bridge the gap and meet children where they live, learn, play and pray.

• **Children’s Museums are safe spaces** for children and families. They are primed to put themselves in the position of resource provider. Children’s museums often have the funding for resources without the red tape that families and providers often experience regarding insurance. They can be the resource before the crisis hits!