



Persona Doll Training

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

To all our parents/grandparents/caregivers, siblings, teachers, teacher assistants and those caring for children.

You may be in the position where your 5-6 year olds are asking questions and our younger children may have the same questions but are not asking them yet such as;

- *“Why can’t we play outside in the road with our friends or why can’t our friends come and play with us?”*
- *“Why are none of us leaving the house?”*
- *“What is the Corona Virus or Convid-19?”*
- *“We miss school and our friends and when are we going back?”*
- *“Why do we have to wash our hands so often and for so long?” and many more questions...*

Children are hearing adults talking, they might be seeing TV coverage of the Virus and they talk amongst themselves, they might have fears, and many questions.

A good idea is to ask the children about what they understand, listen to them carefully without interrupting. We need to acknowledge these questions and provide simple and factual answers that are age appropriate to fill in the gaps and clarify incorrect information.

Here is a Persona Doll Story that might help you. If you have a Persona Doll at home please use it, if not you are still able to tell the story with questions , just adapt it by starting the story with ... *A little boy called Leroy who is 5 and a half and lives in Retreat with his Mom and older sisteretc.*

The story has two sections;

1. **Introduction of the Persona Doll;** Leroy, 5 years old
2. **Topic;** Understanding Corona-virus

Please adapt the story to be relevant for your context.

1. **Introduction of a Persona Doll: Leroy Petersen**

Leroy is 5 and a half, almost 6 he says, when asked how old he is. He lives with his mother, and older sister who is 12 years old, her name is Sasha. They live in Retreat in Cape Town.

Leroy's dad lives in Springbok which is in another province. He sees his Dad every school holiday. This is exciting because Leroy and his sister travel to Springbok on a big bus and Leroy loves to learn the names of all the towns they pass as they travel, names like Piketberg, Klawer, Garies and Bitterfontein. At home they speak English and when Leroy visits his dad he speaks Afrikaans.

- Please tell Leroy how old you are and when your birthday is
- What language/s do you speak?
- Who do you live with?
- Have you ever been on a road trip before?
- What can you remember? (Names of place/s you went to, mode of transport you took to get there, what you saw etc.)

Leroy shares a room with his sister and they have a bunk bed. His sister sleeps on top because she is older. He is happy to share a room with his sister because he feels safe and finds it easier to fall asleep with someone else in the room. One day he would like to sleep on the top bunk, but not yet.

- Where do you sleep? Would you like to sleep on a bunk bed?
- What do you think it would be like to sleep on the top of a bunk bed?
- Please tell Leroy all about your bed and the room you sleep in

Leroy likes to eat Fish and Chips and sometimes his mom takes him and Sasha to Kalky's, a fishery in Kalk Bay. Leroy says sometimes there are huge seals in the harbor and Leroy loves to watch them. It looks like they are waving when they turn around in the water. Leroy knows that it is good to eat Fish, he knows that it is to help him stay healthy and build his immune system.

- What is your favourite food?
- Do you know any ideas of food that is good for our immune system?

Leroy says thank you for listening to him. He has enjoyed getting to know you and hopes that you feel the same way. He has to leave now and would like to visit again.

1. Topic – Understanding the Corona Virus

Leroy is 5 and a half years old and the thing he loves most about school are his friends, he has many friends, boys and girls and they play exciting games outside after they have done their morning activities – like the time they tied strings to the handles of the plastic shopping bags and ran with them in the wind, it was like flying a kite. Their teacher watched them carefully and made sure that they packed the bags away after playing.

- What games do you play with your friends?
- Which one of those games is your favourite?

Leroy has told me that he is finding really difficult at the moment. Schools have closed because everyone is talking about staying home to be safe from the Corona Virus and most difficult of all, Leroy says, he can't play outside with his friends anymore and he is scared and worried that he might die or one of his family members might die too. Leroy says his older sister Sasha told him that it is fine and totally normal to feel this way because when we feel scared, it's our body's way of telling us we need to take extra care to protect ourselves. Sasha also told him that it is important to talk about our feelings and that we shouldn't bottle them up.

- Have you ever felt worried or scared about something? Please explain
- Who do you talk to about your feelings? E.g. things that bother you?
- Do you have any idea as to why the schools closed and Leroy is not able to play with his friends?
- What do you know about the Corona Virus?

Some facts to share with Child/ren:

1. A **virus** is a tiny infectious particle, a type of germ, so small that it cannot be seen with your eyes, however even though they are so small when they enter your body they can make you sick. These germs often hide in places that are not clean and believe it or not, these germs like to hide on our hands as well.

2. The **Coronavirus** is a new virus that affects people's breathing and lungs. It can be spread from person to person by coughing or by touching surfaces or areas of skin that have been contaminated by the virus. This is why you may see people wearing masks over their face. This is to keep them and other people safe from the virus.

He also finds it hard to have to wash his hands all the time. He says it feels like whenever an adult sees him they say “Leroy wash your hands” or “Leroy please sanitize your hands” and now he has so many questions that he wants to ask and he thinks you will be able to help him.

- Why does he have to wash his hands so often?
- Why do we use hand sanitizer after touching things?

Some information to share with Child/ren:

1. Why do we have to **wash our hands** so often? The good news is that this new virus called the Corona Virus does not like Soap! We are able to fight the virus if we wash our hands as often as is possible or we use a hand sanitizer.

You have to wash those hands of yours really carefully with soap and water, the front, the back, in between the fingers, rubbing them all the time and making sure that you create a lather, which is the foamy, bubbly soap you create when rubbing your hands together.

Tip: Wash your hands for as long as you can sing the song Happy Birthday twice

Leroy says this coronavirus really sounds like a mean and bad virus and he is scared that maybe he might have gotten it when he didn't listen to his mom like when he was asked to go wash his hands and he didn't. He is wondering if there are any signs or ways of knowing if one has it because he has been having a really sore tooth in the past two days and wonders if that's not coronavirus.

- Do you have any idea of what happens when you have the virus?
- Do you think that his toothache might be a sign of having coronavirus?

Some information to share with Child/ren:

1. If you get coronavirus you may feel unwell and your body will have some or all of these symptoms;

- High Temperature / feeling very hot
- Coughing
- Breathing difficulties /Breathing problems

If you have these symptoms you will need to see a doctor or go to the hospital immediately so that they can run some tests.

Leroy is feeling a little better because of his conversation with you. He says he had a number of feelings that ranged from feeling sad, scared, angry and a feeling he does not often have which is frustration. He thinks it is because he cannot play with his friends?

- Why do you think the President of the country Mr Ramaphosa said we must stay at home and not go to school, work, visit our friends and families, parties, malls, restaurants etc.?
- Do you think that maybe this could be a way of stopping coronavirus from spreading?

Some information to share with Child/ren:

*1. How do we **stop coronavirus from spreading**? At the moment the government is telling us to stay at home. We are not allowed to hang out in groups and we can only leave the house for “essential” things like groceries and getting medicine – so that our immune-systems can be strong.*

We have to stay at home to stop the disease from spreading. This means you can't go to school, work, visit your friends and family, attend friend's parties', go eat out as a family etc.

*You may have heard the adults around you or on the television people talking about **social distancing** – this means that we need to put space between ourselves and other people and one of the best ways of doing this is staying at home.*

Leroy is worried and anxious that they might never talk to their father because he lives far. He says they might never see him or travel to Springbok to visit him with Sasha because of Coronavirus.

- Can you advise Leroy on creative ways to talk to his father or even his friends during this time?
- Do you think Leroy and his sister will never visit their dad? **Please explain**
 - Do you think that they are going to be at home forever because of the coronavirus? **Please explain**
 - Do you have any tips for Leroy for when he is feeling worried or anxious?

Some information with Child/ren:

1.A **lockdown** is an emergency protocol and can usually only be initiated by someone in a position of authority like the President. Lockdowns can also be used as measures to protect people like now from getting the Coronavirus or spreading it.

The coronavirus lockdown in South Africa is only for 21 days (meaning 3 weeks). It is not clear at the moment if the lockdown will be extended beyond the 21 days.

Some tips for the parents/ caregiver during this time:

Allow children to talk about their feelings, ask them what they know? And how they feel about the Virus.

Listen to what children say without interrupting them, acknowledge the feelings they share and discuss what can be done – talk about the difference between feeling sad and scared, angry or frustrated, and identify what each one looks and feels like for children. Providing children with the facts in an age appropriate way helps them to feel secure and allay some of the fear and anxiety they may be feeling.

Provide activity ideas for children:

- drawing using a range of different materials, crayons, pencils, koki pens
- encourage drawing in the sand with sticks, create an area for drawing outside if you have the space and a sandy or loose gravel area – use stones or leaves, sticks to create a 'circle or square large enough for children to draw in, encourage them to draw their different feelings and talk about each one.
- Physical activity helps with feelings of anxiety /anger/ frustration
- Kicking / bouncing and throwing a ball – if you have an old orange or onion bag , even a plastic bag , fill it tightly with newspaper, make a knot and you will have an improvised ball/ punch bag

Leroy says thank you so much for listening to him and all the questions he had, he has lots to think about and might visit you again quite soon with more questions and an idea or two to help you during this time of not having friends to play with.

Please remember to check out our e-learning course by following the following link.

https://www.obami.com/Persona_Doll_Training/login.aspx

Once you have logged in to the above address follow these 3 instructions

1. Press sign up.
2. When prompted to use an email or a token select the token option and use our 4 digit code 39G9.

3. Enter your province and personal details when prompted and preferably use an email address over your cellphone number.

Alternatively, you can also login using your email address.

Once you are set up, all of the instructions that you need to proceed will be on your screen! Enjoy!

For more information about our e-learning course please email info@pdt.org.za.