



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 | Issue 5 | August/September 2020

## Riding the waves of change...gracefully

Does it feel like we are all caught in a rip current in the ocean right now?

As we wrap up our unusual summer, we enter an academic year that is going to look and feel a lot different than the last. Gradually we are finding out what the school year will look like; what will be added, removed, or postponed. We are faced with making decisions for our children that we have never had to before. Remote learning or in school? Sports or no sports? It is a challenge to adjust to all of the changes no matter what

our own opinions are. It is equally difficult to handle these changes gracefully. Administration and policy makers have been thrown into action to come up with the best possible plan for many different people and circumstances. They are doing their best and are likely struggling to do what is right in this difficult and confusing time.

What seems to be some of the best advice now, actually comes from a publication in [www.oceantoday.noaa.gov](http://www.oceantoday.noaa.gov): "If you do get caught in a rip current, the best thing you can do is stay calm. It's not going to pull

you underwater, it's just going to pull you away from shore. Call and wave for help. You want to float, and you don't want to swim back to shore against the rip current because it will just tire you out."

In this issue, you will find many tips for how to survive this rip current of life. Like dolphins, we would benefit from keeping a positive and almost playful mindset. It is key in times like these and will help your kids through this time as well. Remember that your children's resilience is going to help them stay afloat!



WISDOM

**What They See  
Is What They Learn**

*The secret to instilling a good attitude in our kids about chores or school work is that we must have fun while doing them.*

*Wise parents say things like:*

• "I sure like getting my jobs done around the house. It's fun for me!"

• "Wow, do I ever enjoy doing things with you!"

• "We sure have fun together!"

*From Parenting with Love and Logic  
©2006 Page 136-137*

## The importance of embracing change

By **Caroline Mullins** | NRVCS Behavioral Health Wellness Specialist

Our community, country, and world have undergone an unfathomable amount of change in the past few months. As we anticipate inevitable change in the near future, we brace ourselves for even more unknown.

As I type this article, I'm completely aware that several plans that have been laid out in my family, work, and school will end up being canceled, revised, or postponed. I am sure everyone reading this is also going through an overwhelming amount of change.

### So, why is change so hard?

Change is difficult to accept because we tend to focus on the negative aspects of it. People fear they will lose something or will have trouble adapting to the new structure.

The worry and anticipation of what it will be like going into public, our children going back to school, and going back to our previously scheduled lives is enough to make anyone as scared as a rabbit in a wolf's den!

Every time you find yourself going down the path of negativity and fear, you must find something positive or something you can have control over. Positive thinking can lower rates of anxiety and depression, lower levels of distress, and actually creates a greater resistance to the common cold and creates a better psychological and physical well-being.

While at times it can be very difficult

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# Guiding children and youth through uncertainty

Who would have ever thought “back-to-school” would look like this?

What once was generally a time of excitement and anticipation is now a time filled with a very different set of emotions.

As they enter the 2020-2021 school year, our children are feeling uncertain, confused, sad, anxious, or even angry about the plans and rules that have been put in place by our hard working school administrators and officials.

Transitioning into the unknown is hard. But we know from our June and July newsletters that there is one thing we need: Resilience! With that in mind, here are some tips for helping your child adjust to the new school year:

**1) Model:** If you want your child to be calm and able to problem solve, then you must be calm too. If you struggle with anxiety, there are many resources online to help you. Check out <https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques>.

**2) Talk calmly and openly with them:** This is a great time for a family meeting! Prepare them for the school year by reading to them the details about schedules and options. Try your best to muster up a positive attitude of embracing change.

**3) Write down plans and possibilities:** Use family meeting time to write down what the new routine will look like. Go through each part of the day and notate any steps to take or a time table that

will help everyone stay on track and less stressed. Feel free to copy and use the chart on Page 3 or create one that works for you!

**4) Listen to their questions and concerns:** Often, kids just need to talk and get things off their chest just like adults do! It is important to let them express their feelings without placing judgement or criticism on them.

**5) Reassure them and support them:** Let them know that they can do difficult things and you are by their side along the way.

**6) Encourage self-care:** Not only is the school day going to look entirely different, but after school activities will too. Be sure to help your child find alternatives to their afterschool activities if they have been canceled or postponed. Take walks with your child. Get outside and toss a ball around. Make sure they are active for at least an hour a day.

**7) Expect questions (at the most inconvenient times):** Be prepared for them to spring a random question about the situation at zero moment’s notice. Pause and take a deep breath before responding. If you aren’t in the right mindset at that moment, try saying “That’s a good question, let me get back to you on that.”

**8) Talk to the school:** If your child has given you any reason to believe that they will struggle more than normal, don’t hesitate to look to the school for support. Let them know about your conversations you’ve had and ask them for any advice they could offer. Not only will your child feel supported, but your child’s teacher will have more insight to your child’s behavior.

## Change

*From Page 1*

to see, there is always a silver lining in every situation. So practice changing your mindset.

I CAN'T	BUT I CAN
Control what is on the news.	Turn off the TV/social media and meditate, read devotions, or exercise instead.
Control the virus.	Wear a mask in public buildings, wash my hands and sanitize my home regularly.
Control decisions set forth by school or government leaders.	Voice my concerns and ask questions respectfully and thoughtfully, remembering that everyone is doing the best they can.
See my parents/grandparents (in an effort to keep them healthy).	Set up facetime calls, visit them through a window, and mail cards or flowers.
Get away from heavy work responsibilities.	Ask a coworker or supervisor for help or support. Practice self-care through exercise or meditation during off time.
Focus in my home 'office' while my kids are home.	Find a sitter who is also practicing virus prevention strategies.
Eat out or enjoy dining in restaurants.	Learn to cook and try new recipes (starting with BSF recipes) at home with family.
Go on a distance vacation.	Have-a-stay at “staycation”—plan day trips in your area and enjoy the beautiful NRV!

Change and adjusting to new rules and a new routine is difficult. But, in the process of finding the silver lining in every situation, you will become less stressed and more equipped to deal with future obstacles. When you become less stressed, your kids and those you care for will reap the rewards as well.

## BSF Feedback

Do you have feedback or parenting questions? Email Leslie at [lbeasley@nrvc.org](mailto:lbeasley@nrvc.org) or Caroline at [csnullins@nrvc.org](mailto:csnullins@nrvc.org).



The Building Strong Families newsletter is published by NRVCS Community Wellness & Outreach

# \_\_\_\_\_’s Daily Routine

Make Today a Great DAY!

		M	T	W	T	F
Wake up						
Morning						
Mid-day						
Afternoon						
Evening						



## Okay, let's get real.

Join us live on Facebook each week for our "Real Parent Talk" sessions.

Get straightforward suggestions and answers to your parenting questions - all from the comfort of your own home.

**Get connected. We're here to help!**

Learn more and stay connected with us at [nrvc.org/bsf](http://nrvc.org/bsf) or [facebook.com/NRVBSF](https://facebook.com/NRVBSF)

# In the Kitchen

## Leslie's Comfort Food Corner: Pecan Berry Cheesecake Bars

### **Crust**

1 cup pecans  
1 tsp. sweetener (sugar or truvia)  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg  
2 tbs. melted butter

### **Filling**

1 egg  
12 oz. cream cheese  
½ cup sweetener (sugar or truvia)  
¼ cup sour cream  
½ tsp. vanilla extract  
¼ cup unsweetened almond milk  
1 tb. melted butter

### **Topping** (optional)

1 cup mixed berries  
1 tb. sweetener (sugar or truvia)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Chop pecans into small pieces. Add sweetener, cinnamon and nutmeg. Mix together. Pour mixture into bowl and add melted butter, mix thoroughly. Spread crust mixture into an 8x8 brownie pan. Set aside.

Beat egg until fluffy in a large bowl with electric mixer. Mix in cream cheese 1 ounce at a time. Beat mixture until cream cheese is smooth. Add sweetener, sour cream, vanilla extract + almond milk. Mix together until filling is smooth. Stir in melted butter.

Pour filling over the crust in the brownie pan. Bake in preheated oven for 35 minutes. Allow cheesecake bars to cool in pan about an hour or refrigerate before serving.

Topping: Heat a small pot over medium heat. Add mixed berries and bring to simmer about 5 minutes. Stir berries and crush some of the berries with a spoon so that a liquid starts to form. Cook 10 minutes more.

Enjoy!



Photo: Leslie Beasley / NRVCS

## *Brownie Pizza* (reprint/correction from our July newsletter)

1 14 in. Pizza Pan  
Non-stick spray w/ flour  
Pizza cutter

### **Pizza**

1 18.3 oz Chewy Fudge Brownie Mix (I use Duncan Hines Chewy Fudge)  
Optional: 1/3 cup almonds (thin sliced); 1 teaspoon almond extract

### **Topping**

1 8 oz. bar of cream cheese (room temperature)  
1 T. sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
2 cups whipped topping  
Assorted fresh berries; strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries.  
Mint leaves optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Prepare brownie mix according to directions on box. (Optional: add in almonds and almond extract.)

Spray pizza pan with nonstick baking spray. (I use Bakers Joy w/flour)

Pour brownie mixture onto pan and spread evenly. (Brownie mixture will spread to the edges of the pizza pan as it cooks so do not spread mixture to edges of pan.)

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 – 18 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

Cool brownie pizza completely.

Topping: Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla extract until smooth. Fold in whipped topping. Spread over 'brownie crust' within 1 in. of edges. Cover lightly and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Cut into 8 pieces (I use a pizza cutter) and garnish with fresh berries and mint leaves.



# Tips to help with sticking to your budget

*Submitted by Virginia Family Nutrition Program*

Budgets help us understand how much we can afford to spend on various necessities. Meal planning can help you put together a shopping list, which then helps you stick to your shopping budget whenever you visit the grocery store or farmers market.

There are a few other tips to consider in order to stay within your food budget, including:

- **Have a snack before shopping.** When you go to the store hungry, you're more likely to buy things that aren't on your shopping list.

- **Look for deals.** Read the price tags and calculate the discounts. This could be a good opportunity to stock up on certain items to save money in the long run.

- **Buy store brands rather than name brands.** The prices are usually cheaper and the quality is just as good.

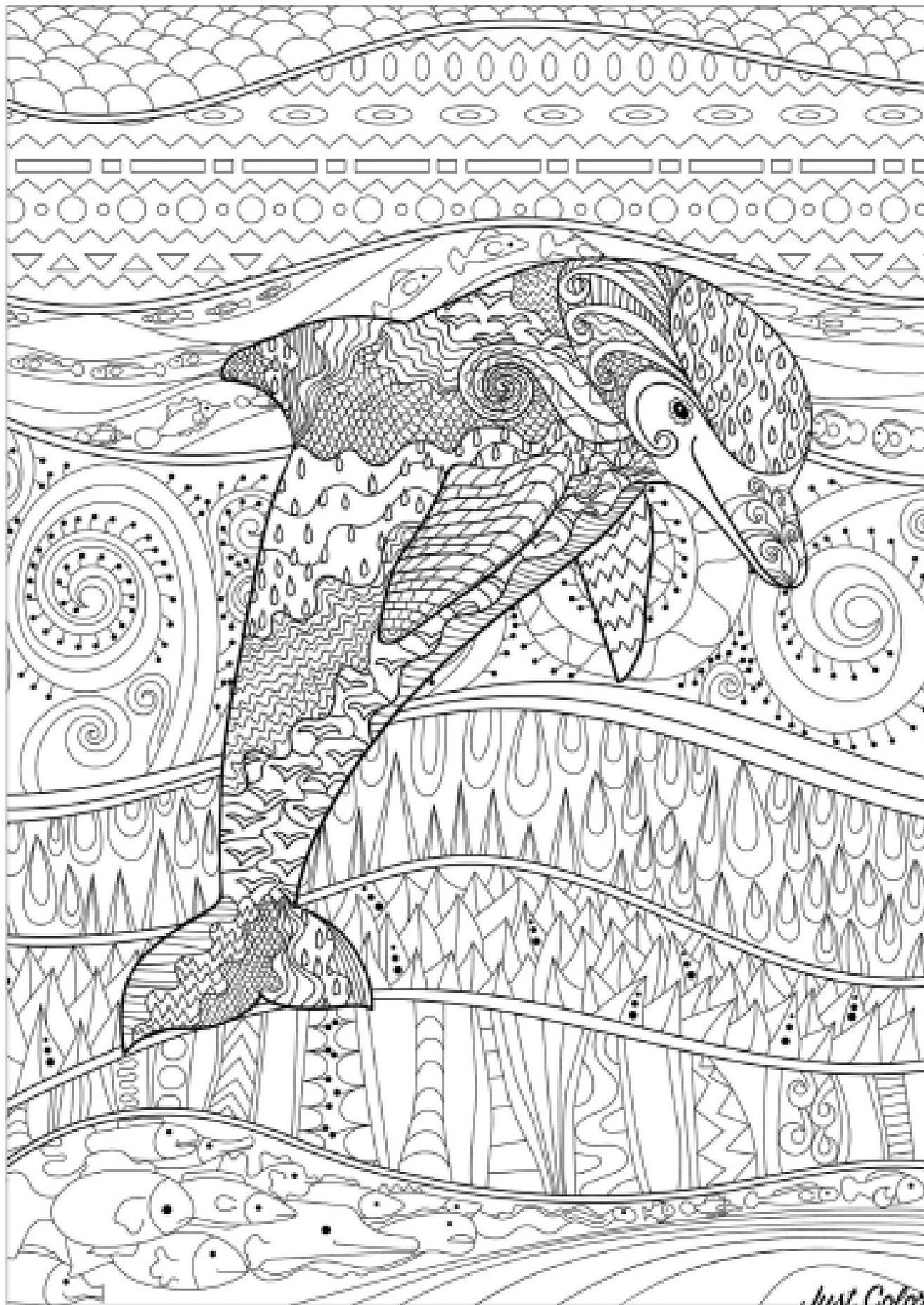
- **Pay attention to unit price.** Unit price is the cost per ounce, quart, gallon, pound, or any unit of measure. Compare the unit prices of different products rather than the total cost to figure out what produce is the best value.

- **Shop the sales and use coupons.** If you read the newspaper, check out the grocery store sales flyers and coupon inserts. Use these sales and discounts to help plan your meals for the week. Watch out for the temptation of less healthy options just because they're on sale.

- **Join the store's loyalty program.** Many grocery stores offer shoppers the opportunity to sign up for their loyalty programs for free. As a loyalty member, the store may send you coupons based on your previous purchases, and discounts when you shop and scan your loyalty card. Some stores will even allow you to earn gas points.

*Thanks to the Virginia Family Nutrition Program for also submitting the article on shopping that was published in our July newsletter.*

Color the picture however you'd like, then cut the picture into puzzle pieces and try to put it back together!



# MAKE IT FUN! with Caroline

Parents! This one is for you if you are scratching your head at how to get your kids to eat healthy foods.

Creativity doesn't just have to be with traditional craft supplies. Allow the kids to help and guide them through the process. Having children help prepare healthy meals will encourage healthy eating habits in the long run. What a great snack for your virtual learners to enjoy or a delicious after school treat!

### Banana Dolphins

All you need to do is cut a banana in half, then cut a slit on the stem to make a "mouth." Stick a Goldfish or berry in its mouth and put it inside a cup filled with berries, grapes, etc.



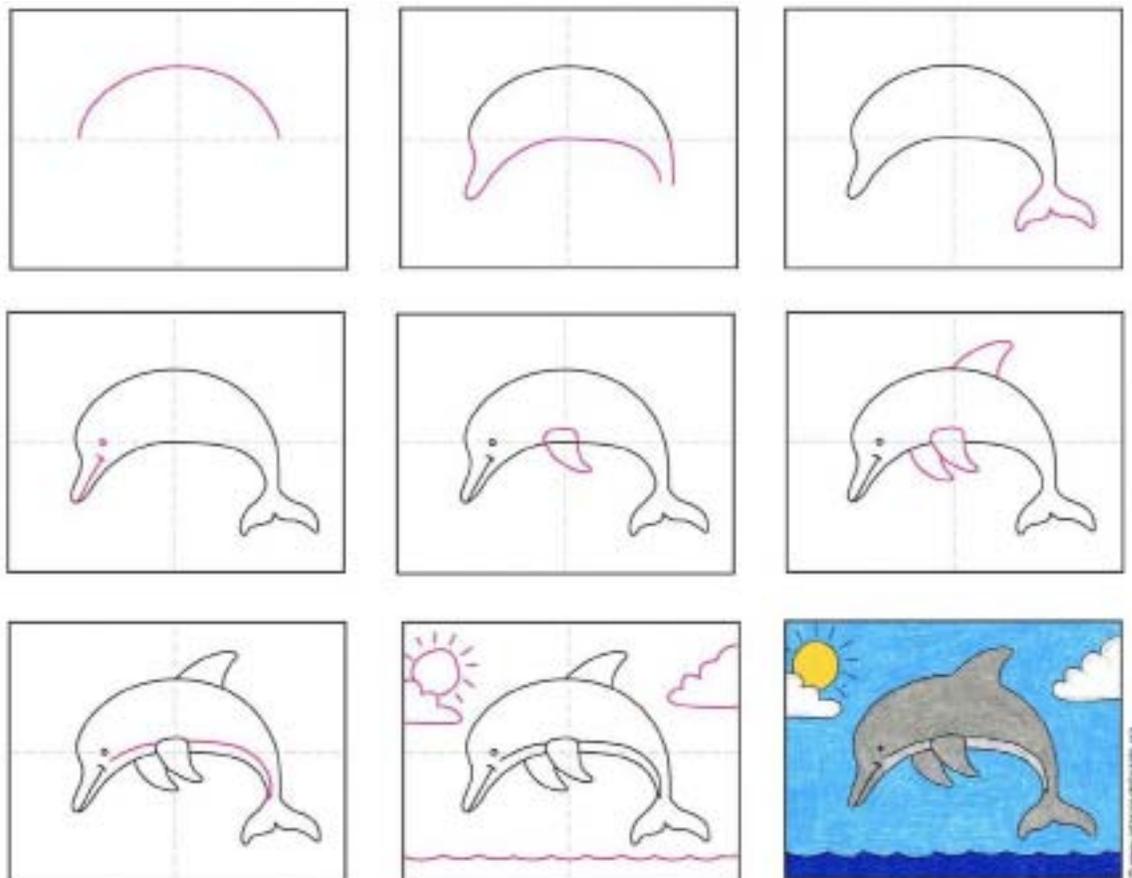
# DRAW IT! with Caroline

### Draw a Dolphin

#### Step-By-Step:

Bring the ocean to your home this month and create a dolphin picture!

Tip: Fold and unfold your paper in half long ways and short ways to create the gridlines. These lines will help you make your dolphin proportionate.





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WISDOM

### **Crisis Situations**

*"One of the most damaging ideas we carry into a crisis situation is that something must be done right now....We see danger all too well, but we often miss the opportunity."*

*"When a crisis erupts, we should take a moment, pray, breathe deeply, relax, write down all possible options and talk them over with a person we respect, think about our ability to cope with the worst possible outcome, and keep the faith. After all, faith is our best weapon."*

*From Parenting with Love and Logic ©2006 Page 144-146*