

## Tips for Parents:

# Supporting Your Child During the COVID-19 Crisis

This pandemic is difficult for everyone, and may feel especially frustrating for teens. They're no longer in school and can't see their friends like they normally would. They probably can't do a lot of things they love such as playing a sport or participating in a favorite club. They may even be missing major events like prom or graduation.

It's OK for them to feel overwhelmed sometimes and there are ways you can help support your child's behavioral health during this difficult time.

## Things You & Your Child Can Start Doing Now

- **Get your kids moving!** The recommendation is 5 minutes every half hour for young kids and more for older kids. People need to move their bodies to stay healthy and balanced. Even on rainy days there are great web-based options like yoga videos on YouTube - even pushups, situps, or wall squats count as movement.
- **Check in with your teen throughout the day** - ask about their school work or just how they're doing with all of the upheaval. Most teens are self-sufficient, so it could be possible to lose track of them in the shuffle of an otherwise busy home.
- **When possible, limit screen time.** Many of our daily activities now happen via screen: school work, social time, news, etc. Make sure that kids have the opportunity for activities that don't require one. Involve them in cooking meals, take a walk together (great time for low pressure conversation!), or encourage them to learn something new.
- **Offer choices whenever possible.** Using straightforward boundaries can help your child feel a sense of control. For example, "Do you want to watch a movie or play a board game tonight?"
- **Provide structure and routine.** Set aside a place in the house for school work. Write a loose schedule. Try getting up and going to bed at the same time. Knowing the plan for the day will reduce everyone's anxiety.
- **Maintaining social connections is essential for both you and your kids.** Find ways to stay connected to friends and loved ones. Phone, video conference (Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, etc), email, and even paper mail are all good options.
- **Let your children know they are contributing to the solution by staying home.** It's important for kids to understand that what they are doing matters.

## Help is Always Available.

You don't need to be in a crisis to reach out to one of the resources below.

Reach the **Crisis Text Line** by texting **ACT** to **741741**.

Contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**