

Teens & COVID-19: Tips for Family Facilitation of Teen Socioemotional Wellness
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Losing the routines teens rely on can be a big source of stress. It's not easy for teens to initiate conversations with adults and discuss their feelings. Although giving them unsolicited advice may make them defensive, there still are some ways parents can be helpful when needed.

Encourage healthy habits:

Getting into a late-to-bed, late-to-rise schedule is a common concern. Keeping a consistent sleep schedule is especially important to maintaining a positive mood and their ability to fulfill academic expectations. Make sure that they are eating properly and sleeping and being social and engaging in pleasant activities.

Diffuse tensions at home:

Having family members around more often can feel overwhelming or create strain. Parents need to think about when to give young people more freedom and how to make sure that their teens' time is still structured.

Emphasize social distancing:

A sense of isolation from social distancing is one of the major stress factors for teens. Listen to what they're feeling and be direct about how you can work together to make this situation bearable. Loosening rules about time spent on social media, for instance, will help compensate for the socializing time lost with school closings.

Encourage positive use of technology

Allow your teens to stay connected to friends during social distancing by phone, text, video chat, or social media. Playing games online with friends can also be relaxing and enjoyable for your teen.

Validate their disappointment:

The most painful part of the pandemics may be losing important experiences: sports seasons, proms, theater productions, graduations, etc. Give them room to share how they are feeling and acknowledge the real stress they may be under.

Help find ways to keep their mind and body healthy:

Mindfulness teaches teens how to manage stress and anxiety and deal with difficult emotions. They can improve sleep habits, improve their attention span, reduce levels of anxiety, lower the chance of substance abuse, help regulate emotions. Practicing yoga and meditation isn't the only way to maintain mental health. Finding a family activity such as movie night can be a de-stressor.

Seek community supports:

BHS deans, guidance counselors, social workers and staff are all available to help with both academic and non-academic concerns. B-PEN offers an array of COVID-19 related resources on their website. Communication between school and family, school and students and students and students should be clearly mapped. Professional organizations such as the Brookline Center has a 3-4 month wait list.