Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC

COVID-19 Guide to Mental Health Resources for Children, Teens & Young Adults

Many young New Yorkers are feeling overwhelmed, sad, anxious and afraid. This guide includes high-quality mental health information and services that can help. All resources in this guide are free and accessible by phone, text or online.

Who this guide is for:

- Children, teens, and young adults
- Parents and caretakers
- Professionals who work with young people

Resources for Teens and Young Adults (13-24)

Learn

Understanding how you feel and learning about mental health can help with emotional relief.

- **A short video** explores and normalizes **feelings of sadness in young people and shares coping strategies,** from KidsHealth.
- **Young Men's Health** is an educational resource on emotional health for young men.
- **Press Pause's 10 animated videos on mindfulness** can help teens deal with common stresses that can make them feel overwhelmed.
- **6 mental health strategies for teens to protect their mental health** during COVID-19, from UNICEF.

Talk & connect

Staying connected with friends and family can help you cope with anxiety, reduce stress and stay positive.

- **OK2TALK** is an online community for teens and young adults experiencing mental health problems, offering a space to share their personal stories of recovery, tragedy, struggle or hope.
- **Teen Talk** shares information about stress and mental illness, answers frequently asked questions and provides suggestions for helping friends who may need support.
- **Seize the Awkward** presents strategies for connecting with friends and family and offering mental health support, from the Jed Foundation and Ad Council.
- **Teen Line Online** offers support provided by teenagers who are trained to listen, help clarify concerns, and explore options, between 8:30pm-12:30am.

Ask for help

If your symptoms of stress are becoming overwhelming, there are many free, confidential ways to connect with a mental health professional who can help. Reach out to one of the services below.

- **NYC Well** provides free, confidential mental health and substance misuse services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 200 languages, regardless of immigration status. Call 1-888-NYC-WELL (692-9355) or text "Well" to 65173. You can also chat online at nyc.gov/nycwell.
- **Crisis Text Line** offers free, emotional support and information 24/7. Text "HOME" to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis counseling.
- **ULifeline** provides mental health resources for college students. For immediate support, text "START" to 741-741 or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- **Virtual counseling appointments for City University of New York (CUNY) students.**
- **The Trevor Project** has a 24/7/365 suicide prevention and crisis intervention hotline for LGBTQ youth and their loved ones. Call 1-866-488-7386.
- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** offers 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call at 1-800-273-8255.

Resources for Parents, Caregivers and People Who Work with Young New Yorkers

Tips to have supportive conversations with the young people in your life

1. **Try to check in regularly** with the child, teen or young adult in your life to learn about how they are feeling, what they know and are worried about. Keep the tone conversational and curious.
2. **Validate their feelings** and concern by using affirming language like "I can understand why..." or "It's normal to feel that way."
3. **Follow their lead and let them guide the conversation.** Avoid "over-sharing" detailed information about COVID-19, such as the number of new cases or fatalities, as this may be alarming.
4. **Focus on what they can do to help** by brainstorming creative ideas to give back or lift their spirits.
5. **Encourage them to ask for support** and share appropriate resources.

Learn more tips for supportive conversations here, from TeenMentalHealth.org.

Parents and Caregivers

Learn

Developing an understanding of how COVID-19 may be affecting the mental health of young people can help you to better support the children, teens and young adults in your life.

- **Guidance on how an infectious disease outbreak might affect your family emotionally**, typical reactions by age group, and activities to help your family cope, from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- **5 Ways to Promote Children's Resilience to the COVID-19 Pandemic**, from Child Trends.
- **A Symptoms Checker** providing information about potential mental health challenges and common symptoms, from the Child Mind Institute.
- **A menu of articles on how to protect your child's wellbeing during a health emergency**, from Sesame Street in Communities.
- **The Creative Curriculum Ready!Rosie Program** shares brief, research-driven videos on a variety of topics to answer caregivers' frequently asked questions about emotional health and COVID-19.
- **Attend a COVID-19 Facebook Live Chat on parenting**, from the Child Mind Institute.
- **Explore the NYC Well App Library**, which can help you find the right app or online tool to support your own health and emotional wellbeing.

Talk & connect

Regular supportive conversations can be a vital source of comfort in young people's lives.

- **A tip sheet for parents** to discuss the coronavirus with their kids, from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- **A tip sheet to help caregivers talk with children and youth** about their fears, and model positive preventive measures, to help reduce anxiety, from the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Nurses.
- **An overview of how infant and toddlers may react to a crisis and ways to help them heal**, from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- **An American Sign Language (ASL) YouTube video** about how caregivers can support children.

Do

Age-appropriate activities can provide support, help develop resiliency, and promote understanding among young people.

- **Simple activities** to keep children busy and build their resilience during health emergencies, from Sesame Street in Communities.
- **#COVIBOOK: Supporting and Reassuring Children around the World** provides a child-friendly explanation of coronavirus and has been translated into over 25 languages.
- **"My Hero is You"** is an illustrated children's book developed through storytellers in several countries affected by COVID-19.
- **The "Learn about Coronavirus Coloring Book"** for children up to 5 years old, from Sesame Street and the Public Broadcasting Service.
- **Help kids cope while sheltering in place** includes suggested activities from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Ask for help

If stress or sadness becomes overwhelming for the young people in your life – or for you as a parent or caregiver – reach out for help. Free, confidential mental health services are available.

- **Tele-mental health services** available to students and families during COVID-19: visit the Department of Education's tele-mental health index.
- **NYC Well** offers confidential mental health and substance misuse services. Trained counselors can provide you with support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 200 languages, regardless of immigration status. Call 1-888-NYC-WELL (692-9355), text "Well" to 65173, or chat online at nyc.gov/nycwell.
- **New York State's COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline** offers support to those experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Helpline is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling. Call at 844-863-9314.
- **City-run, non-profit, and private clinical mental health services** by location: visit the NYC Well service finder website.
- **Free and low-cost mental health services for children and adolescents:** visit the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's services page.
- **Mental health and other social services** available to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals in New York City: visit the Health Information Tool for Empowerment (HITE) website.
- **Help for children and youth with serious emotional disturbance** who may need intensive treatment: visit the Children's Single Point of Access.

People who Work with Youth

Learn

Deepening your understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic may be affecting the mental health of youth can help you better support children, teens and young adults.

- **Wide Open School's online portal** shares resources for educators on de-stressing, socio-emotional learning and mediation.
- **A list of children's books on loss** for children from birth through age 8 who have experienced the death of a parent or loved one, from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- **Resources to help children from birth through age 8 cope with stress and violence** in the home or community, from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Adapt & support

Expert advice and COVID-19-specific tools can help you strengthen your work on behalf of young people

- **The toolkit "COVID-19 and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: How to Provide Services When Everything is Different"** helps providers adapt early childhood mental health consultation for the COVID-19 crisis, from the Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation at Georgetown University.
- **The webinar "Zealous Advocacy during COVID-19: Practical Tips and Best Practices"** includes ideas about how to navigate representing young children and their families, from the National Association of Counsel for Children.
- **"Webinar Series: Addressing Abuse and Neglect During COVID-19"** covers the potential for abuse and neglect during COVID, and addresses the roles of clinicians, home visits, early childhood educators, and child welfare officers, from ZERO to THREE.
- The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8255.

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