



MENTAL HEALTH FOR EVERY ADOLESCENT

Mental Health and the Pandemic

A GUIDE ON GETTING THROUGH COVID-19

Hey there!

There is a lot of uncertainty in these times that can contribute to stress and may lead to feelings of loneliness or sadness. Feeling stressed in times of unpredictable change is normal, and it is okay! A pandemic can bring fear and anxiety, especially when there seems to be no end to it. In such situations, it can be difficult to adequately prepare yourself, and this can lead to even more stress. Also, surveys reveal that with the ongoing social distancing directives in place, many young Americans can feel the negative impact of isolation on their mental health.

This toll on your mental health might manifest itself in the form of a lack of sleep, feelings of isolation or loneliness, worsening of physical and mental health conditions, or even increased alcohol and drug use. This increased stress, while completely understandable, can still be detrimental to your overall health and difficult to cope with. Use this guide as an aid to navigate these difficult times and take care of your mental health.



Staying productive and healthy

1

Create and stick to a schedule



Set yourself up for success by getting enough physical activity and maintaining your mental wellness. This can include meditating, journaling, or dancing. Short bursts of these activities may help you let out some pent-up energy so you can focus on your work.

Create healthy habits

2

Focus on your task at hand for 25 minutes, and then take a 5-minute break to relax and unwind. Set a timer if needed. Repeat this four times, and after the fourth 25-minute work with a 5-minute break session, take a break that's 15 to 30 minutes long. Continue these intervals throughout the day. This will empower you to take control of your time and help manage distractions.

3

The Pomodoro Method



Allow yourself to be lazy. Listen to your body and mind and their needs.

- Take a short walk: A 20-minute walk once or twice a day, especially when you're feeling frazzled or indecisive.
- Find an engaging activity: A puzzle or game (maybe something you can do remotely with friends like sudoku or skribbl), or a creative endeavor like drawing, knitting, cooking, painting or mask making.

Take necessary breaks

4

Keeping in touch with friends and family

1

Make Spotify Playlists Together

This one is easy! Just pick up your phone, and give your friend or family member a call. If you're uncomfortable or not used to talking on the phone, you could try using the audio recording feature in your text messaging app to send and receive some voice messages. Hearing someone's voice can be closer to experiencing their presence in person as compared to reading their text messages.

Spotify has a collaborative playlist feature that you can use to share music with your friends and family! Click "create playlist", give your playlist a name, then click the three dots, and choose "collaborative playlist". Now that the playlist is collaborative, click the three dots again, click "share", then send the playlist to the family and friends of your choosing. Now you'll all be able to add songs to the playlist using your own Spotify accounts.

Phone a Friend

2

3

Video Calls

Binge watch with family and friends without leaving your own couches by hosting a virtual Netflix Party! Using the Google Chrome browser on a computer, go to [NetflixParty.com](https://www.netflixparty.com), then click "get Netflix Party for free". This should take you to the Google Chrome extension store. Click "add to Chrome", then click "add extension", and a "NP" symbol will appear in the top right corner of your screen. Now log into Netflix, pull up the show/movie everyone wants to watch, click on the "NP" icon, click "start the party", copy the URL link given, and send it to everyone you want to join. Now you can watch and chat with your friends while social distancing!



With social distancing, standing at least six feet away from everyone can get a little lonely. However, with video calls, you can get as (virtually) close and face to face with as many people as you'd like! Some easy to use programs that we recommend include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Whatsapp, Skype, Facetime, and House Party. Catch up with your friends and family while seeing their lovely faces!

Netflix Party

4

How to spend extra free time



1

Lift yourself up intellectually

There are many benefits to the internet. You can access various resources like ebooks, podcasts and videos that can help you learn and experience new things. Being curious can stretch your thinking and prevent you from dwelling on the situation at hand. Also, remember to study for your APs and/or college standardized tests!

With online classes, procrastination might creep up on you without you even realizing it. Be aware of how you are spending your time. Try to allocate and organize a few hours for each task you need to get done. However, it is also important to realize that it is okay if you don't get some of your tasks done. Be proactive, but don't be too harsh on yourself.

Be proactive

2

It is important to stay active during isolation. It keeps your body and mind engaged. Wake up early, and go for a jog (preferably when there are no people around for social distancing purposes) or even jog in place. This can help you stay attentive and get ready for the day. Also, there are plenty of home exercise videos available on YouTube, and you can very well get a great workout in while staying in your living room.

3

Start an exercise routine

Do you still have clothes from elementary school, and you keep reminding yourself to give them away, but you've never had the time to do so? Well, now is the time! You can go at your own pace while you start looking for items you don't use or need anymore. Once you have collected everything, you can donate or give those items away to those who do need them. Also, a clean space helps you have a clean, clear mind.



Spring Declutter

4

Social distancing without feeling lonely

1 One-minute kindness

Some of the more obvious ways to overcome loneliness are to talk to your friends and family or to meet new people. Use this pandemic as an excuse to reach out to some of the people in your social circle that you might not have talked to

in a long time. If there is someone you have always wanted to talk but haven't yet, try to be spontaneous and send them a message, it will for sure make their day too!

3 Surround yourself with warmth

By immersing yourself in nature, you get to keep your body active. You'll also start to realize that you are not alone, and you'll gain a better perspective of the situation we are all in. Spending 5 minutes in your backyard or hiking a trail will give you the positive boost of energy that you need to seize the day. Also, sunlight is a good source of vitamin D which can help support your immune system.

Likes and positive comments are some of the ways that we show virtual affection nowadays, and social media is definitely a great way to interact with others during these lonely times. However, nothing beats receiving a personalized direct message, email, or text with a check in, compliment, nice thought, or meme. When you send others a kind message, whatever the contents may be, it says to them, "hey, I'm thinking about you, and I care". This gives them some happiness and a sense of connection that will last a lot longer than a like on Instagram.

2 Deepen or broaden your relationships

Warmth can mean anything from curling up under a cozy blanket, taking a hot shower, or making a warm cup of tea. Research has shown that warmth not only helps the body physically, but it has psychological benefits as well. It can remind you of what it feels like to have physical touch and to be cared for, and it can give you a sense of being safe.



4 Spend time in nature

RESOURCES

Social Media

- **Lisa Olivera** - therapist who shares helpful tips, advice, and practices on her Instagram account
- **Obe Fitness** - Live and on-demand fitness classes
- **Facebook Group by Talkspace** - Helpful with managing COVID-19 anxiety

Online Support Platforms

- **7CupsOfTea** - A place for supportive, online, confidential venting and therapy through talking with a volunteer
- **Talkspace** - Allows for unlimited messaging and video conferencing, making it a convenient app for addressing a variety of mental health needs
- **Betterhelp** - Has a variety of ways to contact a therapist, including live chat sessions
- **Teen Counseling** - Teens can chat, message, speak over the phone, or video conference with a therapist that has experience treating patients in their age group
- **MDLive** - Has psychiatrists that can prescribe and manage medications

For more information on the pandemic, visit www.cdc.gov

What next?

Coming out of quarantine can be hard. You may have mixed emotions about the pandemic, which can range from happiness and relief to guilt about being unable to return to work and regular school. Constantly having to monitor your own or your loved ones' health can also contribute to stress. You may experience sadness, frustration, or fear of getting the virus once the quarantine has been lifted. However you may be feeling, it is important to give yourself time to adjust to the new normalcy of life. Progress will be slow and non-linear, and recovery will take time. Remember that this experience has honed our resilience and fortitude, and we will all come out stronger than before.



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