



SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN DURING COVID-19

Teenagers can teach us a lot about adaptability, innovation and resilience, and teens can thrive in this new time.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has upended everyone's lives, including teenagers who must now navigate school and socializing online. Drs. Lee Beers and Danielle Dooley have some suggestions for supporting your teen during COVID-19.

As mothers of teenagers, we have witnessed firsthand the dramatic change in our teenagers' lives over the past few weeks because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Schedules that were once packed with school, sports and other events now loom a lot emptier in the coming weeks. The independence and autonomy that our teenagers once enjoyed has been limited by social distancing and school closures.

The good news is that there are lots of aspects of this new way of living that teenagers will readily adapt to, and are probably better suited to than adults. For example, they are already pros at digital engagement with friends and family, and many teenagers already had to manage school assignments online.

5 strategies to support your teen during COVID-19

Use the following five strategies to help your teen through this time:

1. Schedule: Setting a schedule with your teen remains important. Even though distance learning may be starting later in the day, and they don't physically go to school, they need your support in establishing a schedule and routine.



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2. Screen Time: Children of all ages are engaged in screens more than ever before, for connection to school and friends. However, we still need to monitor what our teens are doing on the screen and maintain limits on the amount of screen time that can be spent watching movies or TV shows, and texting with friends.

3. Social Connection: Using technology, we can support our teens in actively engaging with their friends. We've told our teenagers we expect them to FaceTime with a friend at least once a day. Texting, snapchatting and browsing Instagram are no substitute for some live on-screen interaction, which is vital for their development and connection to peers.

4. Special Events: Many teens and young adults may have had special events coming up, such as high school or college graduation, or a special dance or event at their school or in their community. It's important to assure our teens that these milestones will be celebrated – perhaps at a different time and in a different way, but that we recognize the importance nonetheless. Teens can play an active role in redesigning these events; many schools have formed committees of students to plan these future events. Encourage your teen to participate and share their views and ideas.

5. Supporting Your Community: Teens can put their innovation and creativity to work by helping local organizations that are supporting community members in need during this challenging time. Have your teen research options for supporting your community, including making sandwiches for local food banks, collecting diapers, wipes and infant formula for a local diaper bank, sharing messages on social media about how to support the community and organizing support for elderly neighbors and family members.

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