



Teens: Taking Care of Yourself During COVID-19

1 Recognize that this is a unique and challenging time

- There are changes in your regular routine, school work, time with friends, time with family, extra-curriculars, work, etc.
- There are worries and emotions associated with all of these changes and feelings of not being safe.
- Feelings of distress are natural while coping with and adjusting to these changes.
- Recognize your stressors, but also realize how you can reduce them.

2 Stay active

- Physical activities have many benefits: it's good for your immune system, increases energy, helps with insomnia and acts as an anti-depressant.
- Engage in stretching your body each day, whether that's in the morning, middle of the day or before bed.

3 Stay healthy and hydrated

- It's stressful on your body and mind when you skip meals and don't stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Try something different like flavoured waters by adding lemons or cucumbers or basil to your water.
- Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night; this can help with managing stress and coping with tasks you encounter throughout the day.

4 Help others

- Make a playlist for friends.
- Ask friends how they're doing. Share your difficulties, so others don't feel alone in navigating this situation.
- Send humorous messages or memes.
- Send inspirational and positive messages, pictures and videos.

5 Connect digitally

- Check out online tools that allow you to continue to connect with friends. For example:
 - Text, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or phone calls.
 - Netflix Party (a Google Chrome extension) allows you to watch a movie on Netflix with others, while also discussing the movie in real time.



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6 Organize and declutter

- We're all spending a lot of time at home, so it is important to have a space that makes you feel good.
- You don't need to go all "Marie Kondo" unless that brings you joy.
- Take on one task in one space.
- Pick something you can do in a short period of time, so you can see the results and feel some level of satisfaction and accomplishment.
- Write the tasks in your planner or calendar so that you plan to complete them during the day or week to help keep yourself organized and maintain some type of routine or structure.

7 Make something

- Is there a project or hobby you have wanted to try? If you can't start it, then do some research and planning related to it, so when the COVID-19 restrictions are over, you are ready to go!
- Make a healthy meal that you can share with family or while watching TV or a movie.
- Since going to the grocery store may not be possible, you might have to get creative with what you have at home, but that's all part of the fun.

8 De-stress through distraction

- Watch a funny movie, ride a bike, go for a run, have a hot bath, play a game, draw or colour or make plans for something in the future.
- Learn something new. YouTube has free online tutorials.
- Learn using free online sites such as Khan Academy or Google Arts & Culture

9 Take a break from social media and the news

- Between the news and social media, it's easy to become overwhelmed with COVID-19 updates.
- While it's important to be informed, constant and repetitive "breaking news" can cause a negative mindset and anxiety. It's also important to use reliable news sources.
- Recognize when you have watched enough late-breaking news and have other activities that can sooth or distract you.



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10 Take time to Zen

- Think about what helps you chill in times of social distancing.
- Teach someone in your family a breathing technique for calming.
- This link provides steps on how to teach different breathing exercises:
 - healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/uz2255
- These links provide calming music that is relaxing to have on in the background while focusing on your breathing:
 - youtube.com/watch?v=IFcSrYw-ARY
 - youtube.com/watch?v=wZGuQHCjvqY
- Try yoga, journaling, drawing, hot baths or music.
- Find a safe place to try a new workout.
- Try a mindfulness app such as Smiling Mind, Virtual Hope Box, or Mindshift.

11 If it's all just a little too much

- Recognize and reduce your stressors. Learn calming strategies that work for you.
- Look for activities that alleviate stress (YouTube, downloadable apps or podcasts).
- Practice gratitude, pause, reflect and be kind to yourself.
- Acknowledge how you are feeling, write in a journal, share with a trusted friend, family member or a pet.
- Look for, and notice, the good things like neighbours helping each other, sidewalk messages, etc.
- Turning on a diffuser with essential oils can bring peace and calmness into your environment.
- Set boundaries around conversations on COVID-19 and with social media use. Tell yourself you are turning your brain off from COVID-19 right now.
- If you are worried about your mental health or a family or friend, talk to a trusted adult, relative, faith leader, Elder, etc.
- You will also find guidance on how to support your friends who may be struggling with mental health through websites such as **Be There** by Jack.org.

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Community Mental Health Supports

Many of our community agencies are not offering face-to-face meetings, but continue to offer crisis counseling by telephone or teleconference:

- **St. Leonard's Crisis Response:** 519-759-7188 or 1-866-811-7188
- **Haldimand-Norfolk REACH Crisis:** 1-866-327-3224
- **Haldimand-Norfolk C.A.S.T (16 years and older):** 1-866-487-2278
- **Six Nations Crisis:** 1-866-445-2204 or 519-445-2207
- **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-688-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

Websites for COVID-19 Information

- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
Risk level for Canadians, current situation, travel advisories
- **Ontario Ministry of Health**
Ontario news, status of cases in Ontario – updated at 10:30 a.m. daily
- **World Health Organization**
Technical documents, questions and answers

Content Adapted from **ReachOut.com** and School Mental Health Ontario (**smho-smso.ca**)

