

Mental Health Tips for Teens by Teens while Staying-at-Home

Children's Hospital Colorado's Youth Action Board consists of 17 high school students from across the Denver metro area plus Fort Morgan. They are passionate advocates for youth mental wellness aiming to create more caring, connective, and supportive environments for themselves and their peers. In this challenging time, they have developed this tip sheet to support teens across Colorado.

<https://www.childrenscolorado.org/mentalhealth>

Important things to do and remember

- This will pass. We don't know when and how, but it will pass. Breathe.
- Move! Getting your body moving, even inside, helps your brain stay calm.
- Create something, any kind of thing, to keep your brain engaged. Baking, drawing, etc.
- While staying up-to-date as things progress, remember that a little less screen time is a good thing! Use your socials to connect with people more than keep up on the news; and when the news gets overwhelming, tell your friends you're signing off for the day and just check out.
- It can feel super scary out there, but it is still important to get outside and breathe in the fresh air. We are Coloradoans still, so we need it. Take a moment for yourself outside.
- Remember EVERYONE is stressed out and just be extra kind when you do come in contact with other people.

Lean in to your friends and family

- Talk with your siblings! Remember them? Even if they are younger, they can be fun! Teach them what you love to do! Dance parties are highly suggested :)
- Talk with your parents and spend time with them. Try to have family dinners, play a boardgame, or watch a movie together.
- Call your friends. Check-in if you haven't heard from them in awhile.
- Create study groups and do work together.
- Do things for others if you can while practicing physical distance. If you're going to the store, see if a friend or neighbor needs something. Drop it off and wave from a distance.
- Get crafty. Make friendship bracelets and send them in the mail.
- Start a gratitude snap/text chain.
- Try connecting with friends and family in fun ways like writing letters, going on group facetimes, sharing and creating playlists, playing online multiplayer games, or even watching a movie on Netflix with them.

Things to do while you're at home

- Look for free virtual experiences to help with the challenge of not being able to leave the house. [These museum, zoo, theme park tours are really cool!](#)
- Try those new hobbies out you've been wanting time for. Bring out that ukulele you never get a chance to play. Branch out.
- Start that meditation practice you know is so good for your mental health. [Here's a free resource](#) that can get you started.
- Do something small that you can accomplish and brings you joy. Knit a small square even.
- Reorganize your room or a room in your house. Redecorate and declutter, make your space feel new and fresh.
- Get back to what you used to love and enjoy before being so busy with school and life Cook, bake. Go old school.
- Giving up sports is hard, but keep up your activity level and strength for when they start up again. Create new goals to conquer while working out on your own.

PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE'S YOUTH ACTION BOARD

- In some kind of book club or just enjoy reading and writing? Try joining an online book club or a writing competition, even just journaling!
- HBO offers movies that are in theaters now that you can pay for; however, Showtime does have free movies.
- Arts and crafts! Whether it's painting, drawing, knitting, or anything else, there are plenty of Pinterest projects online.
- Exercise, take a walk, a bike ride, find a work-out or yoga video online that fits you! This is just one that many have seemed to enjoy.
- Remember this time is difficult, so be kind to yourself. Try having a self-care day, whatever that means to you.

Managing your time

- Routines are difficult to develop when things are ever-changing, but they also help make this chaos feel more organized. Force yourself to have a routine, a bedtime and wake-up time every day. Not a fan fave, but it's really good for us. You don't have to get up at 6a or 7a right now, but sleeping away the day can feel really depressing.
- Get those 8 hours of sleep we're always told are so important and never have time to squeeze in. Maybe even take a nap. Being on the computer all day is extremely exhausting. So short power naps can help give your brain a rest from all the screen time.
- When studying, do the 50/10 method. 50 minutes of studying, then a 10-minute break. You can track the time on your phone or create playlists of about 15 songs, so you know when it's time to give your brain a break.
- Sit down on Sunday evening and plan out your week. Use a spreadsheet or a table to organize everything you have to do for all your classes and then make to-do lists for the day.
- Decide if focusing on one class per day works best for you. Or if working on multiple classes for 2- hour chunks works best for you.
- Keep yourself motivated by giving yourself an incentive, like working hard in the morning so you can relax and play in the afternoon or setting up a time to connect with friends at the end of the day after you've completed your to-do list for the day.
- As best you can, create separate spaces for work and for rest and play.
- Reach out to your teachers and classmates if you're struggling. Remember, everyone is in the same boat trying to figure this all out very quickly. Talk about what's working and what's not with your teachers and peers.

Practice kindness and offer support

- Learn how to respond to someone in crisis. Here's 2 of many resources:
- <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness>
- <https://riseaboveco.org/How%20to%20Be%20a%20Good%20Friend.pdf>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/laugh-cry-live/201810/10-tips-offering-real-comfort-people-in-crisis>
- Remember that it can be stressful to all be in the house together, so this is a great time to practice your conflict resolution strategies. Here are some simple resources:
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/turning-point/201506/3-steps-resolving-conflict-within-your-family>
 - <https://www.verywellmind.com/conflict-resolution-skills-for-healthy-relationships-3144953>
- Be nice. Be extra appreciative of our essential workers - grocery stores, mail carriers, delivery people, janitors. Write letters of gratitude.

Free essential resources

Food: 1- 855-855-4626

Internet

Mental Health Services: 1-844-493-8255, Text "TALK" to 38255

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Support Services: 1-800-799-7233; 303-322-7273

Resource Guide for the Denver Metro Community

