



## **Stress and Coping: the Outbreak of COVID-19 Tips for Parents of Teens.**

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 has been stressful for many adults, teens, and children. The fear and anxiety can be overwhelming for many of us.

### **Watch for Changes in your Teen:**

- Increased irritability, arguments, anger, conflicts, “acting out” behaviors.
- Excessive anxiety, worry, sadness, and unhealthy sleeping habits.
- Returning to behaviors your teen had outgrown: for example, tantrums or outbursts.
- Difficulty paying attention and concentrating.
- Poor school participation, especially with the shelter-in-place and online learning.
- Avoidance of activities your teen had previously enjoyed.
- Loss of appetite and other unhealthy eating habits.
- Unusual headaches, stomach aches, or other pain.
- Using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- If your teen was already struggling before the shelter-in-place order, the new stress of the current situation could make life even more difficult for your teen.

### **How to Help Your Teen:**

- Talk with your teen about the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - Provide accurate and factual information.
  - Answer your teen’s questions and address rumors.
  - Limit your teen’s exposure to news media and social media coverage.
  - Remain calm as you reassure your teen:
    - We can stay safe.
    - It’s okay to feel upset. Share your own coping skills.
- Listen to your teen and their concerns, while trying to maintain regular routines in your home.
- Include your teen in decision-making about family plans and household chores.
- Help your teen to stay physically active and socially connected.
- Encourage your teen to develop projects that might help others.
- Encourage your teen to reach out to others for help and support.
  - **Contact the Contra Costa Crisis Center anytime, 24/7.**
  - **Call 2-1-1 or 1-800-833-2900 or text HOPE to 20121.**
- Set a good example of taking care of yourself.

### **How to Care for Yourself:**

- Care for your own physical health and mental health. Take breaks. Unwind.
- Connect with others.
- Stay informed, while avoiding excessive attention to news media.
- Reach out for help and support.

**For more information or for support for yourself or others 24/7:  
contact the Contra Costa Crisis Center.**

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