



Old Bawn Community School Tips for parents/guardians during lockdown

Focusing on Teen Wellbeing During Lockdown

How can I support my teen's wellbeing?

Your teen might be feeling a mixture of emotions about coronavirus and the current situation, and this can be really worrying and stressful for both of you.

We're living through a period of change and uncertainty, so it's natural to feel upset or unsure about what you should do.

You're not alone and there are lots of things you can try to support your teen.

1. Help them manage their feelings

Your teen might be feeling a mixture of emotions right now. It's important to stress that it is ok to feel what you feel. You could try to encourage your teen to do some of the following:

-  Suggest mindfulness or journaling as a way for them to process their thoughts.
-  Help them to manage their worries by having time set aside each day for 'worry time', where they can talk to you about how they are feeling.
-  Ask them what advice they would give to a friend who was feeling worried.
-  If they are feeling anxious, encourage them to try simple breathing techniques, such as breathing in for a count of four and breathing out for a count of seven.
-  Share what helps you when you feel anxious or stressed, for example doing some exercise or going for a walk in nature. Encourage them to see if this helps them to manage their feelings.
-  Focus on things that they can control, like choosing how they spend their free time, and following guidelines to help others.
-  Remind them that events like this don't happen often, and it won't be forever.

2. Encourage them to connect with friends and loved ones

They are probably missing seeing friends and family members they haven't seen in a while.

Encourage your teen to virtually connect with their friends and family

3. Encourage them by encouraging things they can do

Their lives have changed a lot over the past year - exams have been cancelled, they've been apart from their friends and family, and they may feel unsafe at the prospect of catching the Coronavirus. It may help to:

-  Encourage them to do what they can to look after themselves and other people.
-  Look at mindfulness or journaling as a way for them to process their thoughts.
-  Include them when talking about looking after older relatives and shopping for essentials.
-  Encourage them to find ways to exercise safely, either on their own or as a family, for both their physical and mental wellbeing

4. Promote positive contribution

During this time, you could encourage your teen to think about how they want to contribute to home life or wider society.

There are also lots of volunteering opportunities that your teen could take part in, such as virtual befriending or volunteering at a food bank.

5. Respect their boundaries

Spending more time at home might make your teen feel like they've lost their independence, and this will be difficult for them.

Try to find ways to spend time together without always being on top of each other.

You should respect their need to spend time on their own, too.

6. Think ahead to the future

We don't know how long the coronavirus pandemic will impact our day-to-day lives, but we do know that this won't last forever.

Help your teen to focus on what they can control. For example, you could encourage them to make plans for the weekends and life after lockdown. Knowing what to expect may help them to worry less.

Planning some fun activities together will also help them have something to look forward to.

7. Help with grief

Sadly, during this time your teen could experience the death of someone they know. This may be because of coronavirus or it may be unrelated. The outbreak of coronavirus also means that there are some restrictions around the usual ways we grieve.

For more information on supporting your teen with grief and bereavement, visit **The Irish Hospice Foundation** and **Hope Again** websites.

Self-Care Plan: Encourage your teenagers to give it a go!

5 ways for your teen to look after their mental and physical health

-  Aim to move your body for 30 minutes, five days a week, whether that is a brisk walk, cycle, yoga or an online workout.
-  Set and stick to daily routine. Set a wake up time, morning routine, get out of your PJ's and stick to a schedule you plan out the night before.
-  Up-skill yourself. Pick one thing you'd like to work on; a new language, cooking, baking, gardening - something you felt you had no time for before.
-  Dedicate eight minutes a day, on your own with no devices, eyes opened or closed and just be with your thoughts. Notice how your body is feeling, reflect and listen to music.
-  At the end of each day write down 3 things that made you smile/ that you're grateful for. See an opportunity in every setback - I see people being kinder, reaching out, checking in, encouraging, volunteering - let's look after each other and ourselves. We've got this. This too shall pass.

Remember, if you need to speak with someone, you can contact the following support services:

-  Turn2me.org
-  Mymind.org
-  Shine.ie/covid
-  Suicideorsurvive.ie
-  Helplink.ie
-  Pieta.ie
-  Aware.ie
-  Hospice foundation.ie
-  LGBT.ie
-  Mental Health ireland.ie
-  Grow.ie
-  Inclusionireland.ie
-  Exchangehouse.ie
-  Traveller counselling.ie
-  Bodywhys.ie
-  Childline.ie
-  Belongto.org
-  Jigsaw online.ie
-  Spun out.ie
-  Alone.ie
-  jo@samartains.ie

Teen friendly resources for self care

-  Netflix: Headspace - meditation made simple
-  Instagram: Self Care Podcasts - Stacey Soloman and TY Alexander
-  Self Care Journals: Can be purchased in Aldi or online
-  Smiling Mind App: Mindfulness app which can be downloaded onto phones.
-  Yoga: 7M App which can be downloaded onto phones.
-  Youtube Fitness: Joe Wicks Youtube channel.