FOR Parents

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), may be stressful for you and other people at your school. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in people of all ages.

It is normal for anyone, including teens, to feel stressed by COVID-19. Parents can help their teens cope. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 outbreak calmly, confidentially and factually, they can provide the best support possible.

Not all teens respond to stress in the same way. Some behavior changes to watch for:

• Anger, fighting, or bullying
• Skipping school
• Changes in eating behaviors or eating disorders
• Running away
• Isolation or withdrawal
• Self-harm (such as cutting or self-mutilation)
• Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco

Parents can help support their child by:

• Taking time to talk with and listen to your teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19.
• Reassuring your teen that they are safe. Let them know it is okay to feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress.

FOR Youth

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Reactions during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

• Fear and worry about your own health and that of your friends and family.
• Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
• Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
• Anger or sadness.
• Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

You can help manage your stress by:

• Avoiding excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19, including social media.
• Taking care of your body. Exercise, take deep breaths, stretch or meditate.
• Trying to eat healthy foods and get enough sleep. Avoid alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
• Doing something you enjoy. Talking to friends and family. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with someone you trust.

If you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with your stress, these resources are available to help:

Call the Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

Tips for coping with stress

FOR Youth

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Hotlines and Crisis Lines

• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
  https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

• Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741
  https://www.crisistextline.org/

• Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQ youth: 1-866-488-7386
  https://www.thetrevorproject.org/

• Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860
  https://www.translifeline.org/hotline

• WeRNative (for Native Americans) Chat:
  https://wernative.worldsecuresystems.com/ask-auntie/chat.htm
  https://www.wernative.org/

Local Resources

• Kids’ Link Hotline: 1-885-543-5465
  https://www.lifespan.org/centers-services/kids-link-ri

• BH Link: 401-414-5465
  https://www.bhlink.org/

• Samaritans of Rhode Island: 401-272-4044
  http://www.samaritansri.org/

Rhode Island Mental Health Information and Community Providers

• https://www.sumhlc.org/treatment-locator/mental-health-providers/
• https://bhddh.ri.gov/mh/index.php
• www.health.ri.gov/violence/about/suicide/