

# Coping in these Uncertain Times

## How to Support your Teen's Mental Health

### CPLA Newsletter Highlights

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING  
TEENS THIS SCHOOL  
YEAR

HELPING TEENS  
CONNECT WITH  
OTHERS DURING THE  
PANDEMIC

KNOW THE SIGNS OF  
ANXIETY AND  
DEPRESSION

6 SELF CARE TIPS FOR  
PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

CPLA provides  
**FREE**  
counseling  
services to  
students at our  
partner schools

If you'd like to  
get support for  
your child, reach  
out to your  
school's principal  
or your student's  
teacher to  
request a CPLA  
referral form!

## Tips for Supporting Teens this School Year

### HOW TO HELP TEENS COPE WITH HEADING BACK TO SCHOOL DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME

1. **Be aware of common challenges** for teens including anxiety, depression, academic stress, grief, economic hardship, and race or identity-related trauma.
2. **Pay attention to any changes in your child's behavior and mood.** Check-in with them if they seem to be acting differently. Some things to look out for may include, avoiding school, not wanting to see friends, losing interest in things they usually enjoy, changes in eating or sleeping habits, or disruptive behavior.
3. **Communicate with your teen!** Ask how they are doing and make sure they know you are there for them if they ever want to talk about anything.
4. **Validate their emotions.** Don't downplay their feelings if they are feeling sad, angry, or anxious. It is ok for teens to feel this way sometimes so hear them out and let them know these are normal feelings.
5. **Prioritize emotional support.** Put your child's emotional needs first and support them during difficult times.
6. **Make space for grief.** Losing a loved one can be difficult but talking with them about it can help.
7. **Help them reemerge with new routines.** The pandemic may have made it difficult for them to connect with others the way they used to. You may want to create new routines or keep old ones.
8. **Model self-care.** When you take care of your own mental health you can better take care of your child and they will also learn to take care of themselves by watching how you take care of yourself.
9. **Reach out for help** if you are worried about your child. Refer your child to a CPLA counselor who can help them.

## HELPING TEENS CONNECT WITH OTHERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

HOW YOU AS A PARENT/CAREGIVER  
CAN HELP YOUR CHILD NAVIGATE  
MAKING CONNECTIONS AGAIN

Returning to school and being social may be overwhelming or cause anxiety or loss of confidence for teens. Offer them support and understanding for what they are feeling. You may even share how you were feeling nervous about returning to work and explain how you were able to navigate those nerves and help them come up with a plan to do the same.

### Create opportunities for connection:

- Offer to have your child invite friends over
- Allow them to go hang out with their friends and do things they enjoy
- Encourage them to do activities such as taking a hike with friends or playing sports

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

WHAT SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR SO THAT YOU CAN  
HELP SUPPORT TEENS WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING

### DEPRESSION

- Unusual sadness or irritability
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Changes in weight
- Shifts in sleep patterns
- Sluggishness
- Negative self-talk (“I’m no good.”)
- Feeling worthless or hopeless
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide

### ANXIETY

- Recurring fears and worries
- Trouble concentrating
- Extreme self-consciousness
- Avoiding difficult or new situations
- Physical ailments, like headaches or stomachaches
- Repeated reassurance-seeking
- Sleep problems
- Substance use
- Disruptive behavior
- Drop in grades or school refusal

## 6 Self-care tips for Parents/Caregivers

BY TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF, YOU CAN BE AN EVEN BETTER CAREGIVER FOR YOUR CHILD

#### TIP #1: Make time for yourself

Allow time to recharge and decompress. For example, you could take a walk, read a book, take a bath, etc.

#### TIP #2: Make healthy choices

Small changes such as taking a walk or going to bed earlier can help reduce stress.

#### TIP #3: Be realistic

Set realistic expectations and forgive yourself if you can't meet them. You are doing the best you can!

#### TIP #4: Set boundaries

Caring for yourself by saying "no" to things you can't commit to taking a break as needed can help you feel less overwhelmed.

#### TIP #5: Do things that bring you joy

Make time for hobbies and activities you enjoy

#### TIP #6: Set an example

Taking time for yourself is important. By taking care of yourself, you send a powerful message to your teen and it allows them to learn how to do the same.