



WEEKLY PEP TALK

FOR OUR SUPERHERO PARENTS

Q: How do I help my child resolve emerging social conflicts with peer relationships?

A: In both middle and high school, hurt feelings in peer relationships are common and can lead to stress as well as be a point of growth for youth. Parents are most helpful to teens and preteens when they take the social distress in stride and have [strategies to coach them to resolve the conflict on their own](#). However, it's important to be aware of when the concern is social disagreement or bullying. Often social conflict with teens involves a misunderstood comment, a spilled secret, feeling left out of a video chat, or a one-sided friendship. In resolving disagreements, it is challenging for this to happen via email or text where they cannot see each other. Suggest to your child to use video chat to resolve these conflicts to see body language and tone of voice to avoid miscommunication. Also encourage your child to avoiding late night attempts to resolve conflict. It's a delicate balance between teaching children to stand up for themselves while being respectful to others.

Q: How do I support children with underlying mental health issues that have been exacerbated by social isolation?

A: For [youth with pre-existing anxiety and depressive symptoms](#), this time may feel quite overwhelming, scary, and confusing. Children and teens may have difficulty making sense of what is happening due to limited life experience and the limits of their normal child/adolescent brain development. Having a history of anxiety and depression may make youth more vulnerable to the frequent news updates regarding this pandemic and the decrease in social supports from their peers and trusted adults at school/community. While it may be hard for all of us, it's important to model calmness for your child when you can. If your child has a therapist, stay connected to that provider to continue the support and structure that will meet your child's mental health needs. Show your child/teen that you are present and interested in hearing their thoughts and feelings. Help your child notice and talk through their experience of anxiety by using "I feel... because" statements. Practice relaxation strategies with your child/teen including [mindful breathing](#) or mindful walking to help them stay in the moment. If you are in search of a mental health professional for your child or yourself, please reach out to your child's pediatrician, your health care provider, or Glastonbury Youth & Family to help with this search. [Here's a helpful anxiety workbook](#).

Q: What's a quick self-care strategy for me as a parent during this time?

A: During these unsettling times, remember to practice gratitude and thanksgiving every day. When overwhelmed, identify 3 good things in your life today. Give yourself permission through positive self-talk to take time to engage in and celebrate the things that bring you joy.

Week of April 27, 2020

Quote of the Week:

"We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated."

- Maya Angelou

Words from GYFS:

The Glastonbury Youth & Family Services team of clinicians and school social workers have been fielding questions from our community. Since it is likely you are having similar questions during this unsettling time, we thought we would share these questions and responses with the entire community.

If you want to submit a question, please e-mail:

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Weekly Pep Talk Organizers:

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