

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.