

6 mental health resources for students during the coronavirus pandemic

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The coronavirus has closed schools, and many students may need help regulating their mental health and dealing with anxiety.

In addition to physical health concerns related to the COVID-19 outbreak, the global pandemic is causing most people—especially children—mental health stress and concerns, too.

With schools across the country closed indefinitely and with states in various stages of social distancing or more severe lockdowns, students have lost their daily connections to friends and teachers. These abrupt changes in schedule can amplify anxiety and worry about what may happen to family members and friends.

[Related content: How to be a successful virtual teacher during the coronavirus](#)

Experts have urged parents and caregivers to limit children's screen time, remain calm when discussing the pandemic and measures states are taking to spread its transmission.

According to researchers at the University of California, Irvine, many people experience psychological distress resulting from repeated media exposure to the crisis.

“It’s a public health paradox that has been identified during and in the aftermath of other collective stressors, such as the 2014 Ebola outbreak,” says Roxane Cohen Silver, UCI professor of psychological science. “In the case of the current coronavirus, people may perceive it as higher in risk because it’s novel, compared to other viruses such as the more common influenza. This can increase worry that may be disproportionate in terms of the actual chance of contracting the illness.”

In a paper published online in the journal *Health Psychology*, Silver and co-authors from the Sue & Bill Gross School of Nursing – Dana Rose Garfin, assistant adjunct professor, and E. Alison Holman, associate professor – describe how media exposure during a shared trauma can amplify negative public health consequences.

These concerns and sudden changes combine to cause students varying degrees of mental stress. It’s important for parents, caregivers, and teachers who are in touch with students and families virtually to use available resources that calm, reassure, and promote wellness for children.

Here are some resources to use for anxiety and stress during a health pandemic:

1. [Global Teletherapy](#) services K-12 schools virtually with therapeutic services. As the number of homebound students grows exponentially every day, the company’s therapists will be providing complimentary support sessions to the country’s youth. These 30-minute support sessions will be held daily through June. They will range in age formats to discuss specific concerns. The group sessions will focus on keeping the students calm and engaged while homebound due to the current situation.
2. [Erika’s Lighthouse](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and raising awareness about adolescent depression, encouraging good mental health, and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health issues, launched the “We’re In This Together” campaign to empower teens who feel isolated and alone during this health pandemic. It provides practical, meaningful tools to support teens through these uncertain times when many people around the world are self-isolating. Resources for teens include a depression toolbox, which lets them know that hope and help is possible and it all starts with education on the topic. Teens also have access to apps for positive mental health and educational videos.
3. [Rise and Shine](#) from Children’s National touches on ways to help students deal with disappointment. As schools close, and birthday parties, graduations, sporting events and all other activities grind to a halt for the foreseeable future, millions of children, tweens, teens and young adults are faced with intense disappointment. Many of these events are occasions that have been long dreamt of or anticipated and the seemingly

overnight cancellations are more than many kids can handle. It is equally devastating for parents to see their children experience such disappointment.

4. The [Child Mind Institute](#) has a number of helpful tips when it comes to talking about the coronavirus with children. Parents and caregivers shouldn't be afraid to talk about the virus with their children, but it's important to keep those discussions developmentally appropriate. Sticking to a routine and emphasizing what the family is doing to stay safe are two important considerations.

5. [Meditations for Kids](#): This meditation app helps children relax through breathing, deal with everyday stress, become calm and centered, and can help address worry and anxiety.

6. [Stop, Breathe & Think](#): This meditation and mindfulness app helps users find peace anywhere. It allows users to check in with their emotions, and recommends short guided meditations, yoga and acupressure videos.