

# Sharing Hope from Home

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If your school is temporarily closing to prevent spreading the COVID-19 virus, there are many ways you can spread hope from home.

## Taking Care of Yourself

Let's start with you. Remember to take care of yourself and do things you enjoy. It's okay if you feel anxious about the changes happening. But it's good to be open and communicate your feelings. Sharing your thoughts and concerns with your parents/guardians can help you support each other. Some other ways to reduce anxiety include the following:

- **Try deep breathing.** It takes your attention from your mind to your body. If you begin to feel panicked or overwhelmed, try breathing in for 4 seconds, holding for 7 seconds, and breathing out for 8 seconds. Repeat this process twice.
- **Talk out your worries.** Talking to a family member or friend stops anxious thoughts from bottling up in your head.
- **Laugh!** Laughter relaxes the body and decreases stress. (It also boosts the immune system, which can't hurt.) Watch a funny movie, play a game with your family, or do anything else that lightens the mood in your home.
- **Get 8–9 hours of sleep.** Sleep helps you think clearer, feel less stress, and be more motivated. Set an alarm for when you should go to bed and stick to it.
- **Don't fixate on worries.** It's good to stay informed, but avoid spending a lot of time focusing on the virus. If reading post-after-post, watching the news, or listening to predictions about the virus makes you feel nervous, put down your phone and shut off your computer for a while.
- **Connect with your family.** Take this time to get to know how each member of your family is doing. Take walks in nature, learn something new, or play games together. Put down phones and turn off TVs during dinner. Consider doing one or more Family Mental Health Lessons, which include short lessons, activities, and videos about various topics such as resilience, self-care, social media, and suicide prevention.

## Supporting Your Peers

Even though you don't see each other at school every day, you can still watch for struggling peers and find ways to support them.

- **Spend time in person.** While texting and social media are great ways of staying in contact with peers, it's important to talk without a screen between you. Without social interaction from classmates and with many parents working full-time, some

peers may feel lonely. Take the initiative and hang out in person. If this isn't possible, switch out texting for calling or Skyping.

- **Watch for signs of crisis on social media.** Watch for posts and comments that raise a red flag for suicidal thoughts. Reach out through private messages and offer a listening ear. If a person is in immediate danger (mentioning an intent, time, or plan), tell your parents or call 911 *immediately*. The following are a few examples to look out for:
  - "I can't do this anymore. Goodbye."
  - "You'll all be happier when I'm gone."
  - "I'm killing myself tonight."
  - "If no one responds, I'm going through with it."
- **Create a referral plan.** Make a plan for who to tell and what to do if you think a peer may be at risk for suicide. Along with alerting a trusted adult, the following page includes lifelines you can encourage struggling peers to use.

### Who can I tell if a peer is in crisis?

(e.g., tell mom or dad, call or FB my peer's parents)

### How can I help a peer?

(e.g., QPR, listen to my peer, share a lifeline number)

### Who can I talk to if I'm struggling?

(e.g., my parents, siblings, my best friend)

National Resources	How It Helps	How to Contact
SafeUT	SafeUT is a confidential tip line for bullying or concerns about someone in crisis. Students can also talk to a responder about any problems going on in their lives.	Download the SafeUT app for Android or iOS.
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	This national network of local crisis centers is open 24/7 to provide confidential, free emotional support to people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts as well as to those who want to know how to help someone else.	Call: 1-800-273-8255 Chat online: <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat">suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat</a> To speak to a crisis counselor in Spanish, call 1-888-628-9454.
Crisis Text Line	This line is open 24/7 for free help with any kind of crisis. A trained Crisis Counselor will respond to give the caller support.	Text "HOME" to 741741.
TeenLine	This line is open 6:00pm to 10:00pm PT and connects callers with trained teen counselors to talk about anything causing stress or worry.	Call: 800-852-8336 Text: 839863 Email: <a href="mailto:teenlineonline.org/talk-now">teenlineonline.org/talk-now</a> Download the Teen Talk app for iOS.
The Trevor Project Lifeline	This line offers free, confidential, 24/7 support to LGBTQ youth.	Call: 1-866-488-7386 Text START to 678678 Chat: <a href="https://thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now">thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now</a>