

I HAVE TEENAGE CHILDREN AT HOME DURING LOCKDOWN. WHAT CAN I DO?

You may notice your teenage children are moody, angry, or stressed. It can be very hard for them to be missing normal school, separated from friends and stuck indoors all day. They can be worrying a lot about COVID-19, about their social lives and about their schooling. They can be affected by conflict and stress in the house, during this difficult time. They can also be sharing the worries of the adults in the home.

There are some simple ways to try to keep teenagers as well as possible.

Stay healthy for all the family

- Follow all the COVID-19 rules, as a whole household
- Every day try to follow the same pattern of activities e.g. get up, wash, have break fast, do house work, arrange a fun activity together
- Eat nutritious food: avoid too many sweets and biscuits and other sugary food and drinks
- Do some form of exercise such as walking outside if you have a yard, dancing at home to music, stretches or even marching on the spot

Talk to your children but especially LISTEN to them

- Make time to just sit and talk in a calm way together
- Tell them what you know about the virus and how they can make themselves and others around them safe
- Reassure them that the virus is not likely to make them very ill if they catch it. Young people seem to get a much milder form of illness, if they don't have other health problems. But, we all need to follow the lockdown rules to protect those who are more vulnerable to severe disease e.g. grandparents
- Understand if they are angry or scared and have angry outbursts – this may be the way they can show their fear or frustration
- If they want to, and there is space, allow them to be alone and chat to friends on the phone or online
- Be loving and reassuring, even if they don't ask for help
- Listen to what they say to you without jumping in with advice or solutions: work out a way forward together

Computers and phones

- Allow them extra time on phones and computers as this allows them to connect with their friends
- But, they should not spend too much time watching news or on social media, as there is a lot of false information going around.

Family time

Set up a daily time for everyone to have fun together

- Dance, sing, or listen to music together
- Play games together
- Try to think of ways to connect without phones or computers

Look after yourself

- Act in a calm, quiet way
- Breathe deeply and slowly if you feel anxious or angry
- Sit quietly for a minute or two on your own, when you can
- Speak to your close relations or friends if you feel sad or worried

If you or your teen needs emotional support, please ask for help.

Contacts (keep trying they may be busy)

- South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) www.sadag.org – has many helplines 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 456 789 or 0800 20 5026 and others
- Lifeline general 0861 322 322 and their AIDS Helpline 0800 012 322
- Childline 0800 055 555

For more info and helplines visit www.messagesformothers.co.za or

www.pmhp.za.org

