



10 Things Teens Need Right Now



Far West counselors who are currently working with teens provide some insight into the challenges that teens are experiencing right now. We thought this would be good for parents and teachers to know.

1. Kids are drowning in homework. It feels like much more than they received in the past.
2. Organizing their homework is hard. They need college-age executive function skills, which many kids have not developed yet, especially first-year high school students. Many kids are falling behind because of difficulties keeping track of their work, planning their projects, and turning in completed assignments remotely. This is a big source of stress.
3. Many teens feel isolated and withdrawn. Fear of rejection and lack of emotional energy make it difficult to reach out and connect with friends. Parents can help their kids plan some physically distanced contact with friends or relatives. Consider creating social “pods” with families who are practicing good COVID-19 safety measures.
4. Teens need to hear from adults that they are cared for; that includes parents, teachers, family friends, and other relatives.
5. Teens need family outings—hikes in the woods, trips to the beach, and visits to friends or family who have been practicing safety measures. Variations in activity and scenery will help break up the tedium of online school.
6. Kids need parents to listen to them talk about their worries and disappointments—no school musical, no school sports—without judgment. Don’t try to problem-solve; just be sad with your teen. They just need to know you care.
7. Teens need a break from the stress and chaos of COVID-19, the election, online learning, and social challenges. Create a safe and nurturing environment in your home, and try to keep family stress under control. Allow your kids to do some isolating in their rooms.
8. If your kids are overly stressed or depressed, they need you to speak up and offer to get them counseling. Talking to another adult can help them sort out their problems and learn some helpful tools. Your kids need you to recognize the signs of depression and suicide and when to get help. <https://stopasuicide.org/>
9. Teens need and want your appreciation for the hard work they are doing in adjusting to online school, trying to complete assignments, and continuing to take safety precautions around COVID-19. It might not always look that way to you.
10. Most of all, your kids need your support, not your criticism. They know they are responsible for completing their schoolwork. We adults can support them in doing this by reminding students of their capabilities and their value to their family and community.

