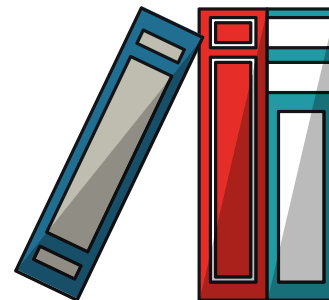


Intentional Mom Guide

Parenting your high-schooler during a crisis



High-School

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When young adults between the ages 13–18 experience a crisis **parents need to be more proactive** about their wellbeing. It's common for teenagers to seek their peers for support and they may not immediately come to you for help.

Encourage them to open up to you, but resist the urge to demand answers. Respect their need for space, while also doing your best to maintain connection. Offer to walk beside them through this time instead of offering them tons of advice or telling them what to do to feel better.

How to Help:

- Patience, tolerance, and reassurance
- Encourage continuation of routines
- Encourage discussion of experience with peers, family (but do not force)
- Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games
- Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings
- Talking about what they have seen/heard
- Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during outbreak

One of the best ways for a young adult between the age of 13–18 to cope with a crisis is by pointing out what they can control. When so many things in life feel out of control, empower them. Point out where they can make good choices and shift their focus from the areas where they don't have a choice. They also need to know that their thoughts and ideas matter.

[explain what you know and ask them what they know or have heard]

“Here’s what I know about (**name disaster/tragedy**). What have you heard?”

[observe their behavior and relate your own experience]
“When I’m feeling (**insert emotion you suspect they may be feeling**), I like to (**share your own reaction**)”

[acknowledge their feelings]

“It’s okay to cry.”

“You seem upset. I want you to know it’s okay to feel that way.”

[encourage them to connect and resist the temptation to isolate]

“Have you checked in with your friends lately. I’m sure they would love to hear from you.”

[remind them that they are loved by you and so many others]

“It may not feel like it right now, but you are not alone.”

[let them know that they won’t always feel the way they do today]

“It may be hard to imagine, but things won’t always be this hard.”

***Signs Your High-Schooler May Need Additional Help:**

Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.), sleep/appetite disturbance, agitation or decrease in energy, apathy, ignoring health promotion behaviors, isolating from peers and loved ones, concerns about stigma and injustices, avoiding/cutting school