



## Prioritizing Mental Wellness for Adolescents amid COVID-19

Unlike other crises or situations around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic affects every community in some way, including school communities. The unpredictability of this crisis sometimes creates feelings of helplessness for adolescents and their parents and guardians, who may struggle with how to support their young adults.

Many adolescents are feeling grief related to the loss of:

- social connectedness,
- a “regular” school routine,
- and assumptions about safety and health.

In addition, parents and guardians can experience:

- Compassionate Grief: Feeling the loss or grief experienced by others, i.e. knowing that your daughter is missing out on experiences they want to have.
- Anticipatory Grief: The feeling we get when future events are uncertain, i.e. worrying that children and adolescents might not get to experience the holidays in the way they had hoped.

Research tells us that engaging in certain activities can help combat stress. If someone is feeling down, practicing gratitude, spending time in nature, getting exercise, and helping others are good ways to combat ongoing negative feelings. Don't be afraid to try something different with your daughter; you might consider making a meal together, learning a new skill, trying a Pinterest project, doing a family or virtual book club, or creating and distributing kindness rocks in your neighborhood. Holding family competitions and hosting teleparties on Netflix are all also good ways to feel connected while still maintaining social distancing guidelines.

It is normal to feel disappointment and worry in these unusual times. However, we know that some students may experience mental health concerns different from or beyond the impact of COVID-19. If you have noticed any of the following, please encourage your daughters to speak with her school counselor here at Magnificat:

- sleep disturbances (too much or too little)
- abandonment or loss of interest in favorite pastimes or activities
- unexpected or dramatic decline in academic performance
- weight loss or loss of appetite
- excessive worrying or fear
- extreme mood change

The above list is not exhaustive, and counselors are here to offer support and resources if you have concerns. Please reach out to your daughter's counselor if you have any concerns at all.

**Additional resources:**

- Ask Lisa: The Psychology of Parenting (podcast on a variety of topics related to parenting adolescents in particular).  
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ask-lisa-the-psychology-of-parenting/id1525689066>
- Toolkit of parents of adolescents during COVID-19:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/adolescence.html>
- Resource with a variety of supports for parents and guardians:  
<https://childmind.org/audience/for-families/>
- Toolkit for parenting amid the pandemic:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/adolescence.html>