

## TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR TEENS IN FOSTER CARE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

April 6, 2020

The Iowa Department of Human Services continues to observe and provide the most current Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) guidance. The health and safety of children, family, staff and administrators are of the utmost importance.

DHS' Transition Planning Specialists (TPS) have compiled this information for caregivers of teens in foster care and those serving young adults who have aged out of foster care. Please add the following tips and resources to your "toolkit" for helping keep young people safe, stable, and connected.



### STAY SAFE

It cannot be said too often. Both you and those you serve should follow trusted public health guidance, including tips such as the following:

- ▶ Implement personal protective measures.
- ▶ Stay home when sick
- ▶ Wash hands and faces
- ▶ Cover coughs and sneezes
- ▶ Clean frequently touched surfaces at least daily
- ▶ Practice social distancing measures:
  - Avoid large gatherings (e.g., assemblies)
  - Limit the number of attendees per gathering
  - Consider distance or working remotely or online learning when possible.
- ▶ Limit non-essential work travel and gatherings.
- ▶ Cancel extracurricular activities
- ▶ Stay tuned to changes

### IDPH web page for more information about COVID-19

- ▶ <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>

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## RESOURCES

The **Iowa Aftercare Services Program** has a lot to offer young adults who aged out of foster care, including case management and crisis funding for those who need it.

► <http://www.iowaaftercare.org/Resources.html>

### **Be Connected to Family and Friends**

Help teens and youth maintain contact with their friends and family through social media and online chatting, as appropriate. However, continue to discuss with teens how to have a safe online presence.

**AMP** has fun and interesting information about the foster care system, created for youth by youth.

► <http://www.ampiowa.org/>

**Fosterclub** is national youth group for children in foster care. They are there to help answer questions, offer our support, and inspire strength, bravery and resilience

► <https://www.fosterclub.com/blog/announcements/covid-19-message-team-fosterclub>

### **Help teens and youth find COVID-19 information, designed just for them.**

► <https://www.jewishboston.com/a-teen-guide-to-navigating-coronavirus/>

Many school districts continue to offer free lunches to students that can be picked up by drive through at the school. Free lunch and other information is on the **Iowa Department of Education's** website.

► <https://educateiowa.gov/article/2020/03/30/covid-19-guidance-and-information>



## REMAIN EMOTIONALLY STABLE

Dr. Busman says, "The goal should be to stay sane and stay safe." This article includes common sense **wisdom on how to manage** in the COVID-19 crisis.

► <https://childmind.org/article/supporting-kids-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness** explains how to stay connected, how to deal with anxiety, and more.

► <https://www.nami.org/getattachment/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2020/NAMI-Updates-on-the-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf>

### **Help teens and youth protect their mental health.**

► <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

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## Introduce young people to the “WARM Line”

The WARM Line is a peer-run, telephone based, non-crisis, confidential listening line for anyone struggling with mental health or substance use issues. The line is staffed by people who have been through a similar journey and are in recovery themselves.

The WARM Line can:

- ▶ Give support for individuals not requiring crisis management.
- ▶ Those in crisis are transferred to the Crisis Line for critical services.
- ▶ Provide an empathetic, non-judgmental listener.
- ▶ Provide community resources and assistance in accessing services.
- ▶ Help empower individuals pursuing their own directives.

Contact information and time.

- ▶ 1-844-775-WARM (9276), 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily.



## STAY BUSY LEARNING

There are many life lessons to be experienced and lessons learned, even while following all the rules about social isolation. Help young people find things that will keep them busy and keep them on their path to successful adulthood. Some may include doing laundry, planning and cooking meals, studying for their Driver’s Permit, and learning to drive. Some resources that may help are below.

Have conversations with a teen or youth about what they want to do in the future and help them explore different paths. Use websites such as **Future Ready Iowa** to explore interest/career assessments:

- ▶ <https://iowa.emsicc.com/assessment?radius=50%20miles&region=State%20Center>

Help your teen improve their **Financial Literacy Skills**

- ▶ <http://www.iowaaftercare.org/Resources/Financial%20Literacy%20Resources.html>

Review the **TIP “Transition Information Packet”** and work on learning **Independent Living Skills** that youth will need in the future. If a teen in foster care does not have a TIP binder, they can request one from their DHS worker, or it can be accessed online at

- ▶ [https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/TIP\\_1.2016.pdf](https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/TIP_1.2016.pdf)

Complete the **Casey Life Skills Assessment**, if it has not been completed within the last six months. A young person can request an assessment from their DHS worker or juvenile court officer. Furthermore, you can find activities to work on skills in the “Resources to Inspire Guide” at

- ▶ [https://caseylifeskills.secure.force.com/clsa\\_help\\_quickStartGuide](https://caseylifeskills.secure.force.com/clsa_help_quickStartGuide)



## RELIEVE STRESS THROUGH FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sometimes young people need to distress and have a little fun. Here are a few ways they can safely do so:

This site has **things to do when stuck at home**

▶ <https://raisingteenstoday.com/things-teens-can-do-when-theyre-stuck-at-home/>

Fun **online learning** activities

▶ <http://www.ifapa.org/publications/documents/3-24-20WeeklyWord.pdf>

**Netflix movies** teens would like

▶ <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/g26765931/best-teen-movies-on-netflix/>

**Tours** you can take from the safety of your home

▶ <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/>

**More ideas for things to do** when you are stuck at home

▶ <https://www.neatorama.com/2020/03/20/Tips-for-Being-Stuck-at-Home-With-Kids-and-Teens/>

**How to make crafts:**

▶ <https://family.gonoodle.com/channels/how-to>

▶ <https://www.wonderopolis.org/wonders>



## GET MORE TIPS

These are difficult times. Teens in foster care and foster care alumni need their connections with trusted adults more than ever...they need you. The Iowa Department of Human Services Transition Planning Specialists hope you can use these tips and resources to help the young people you care about remain safe, stable, and connected. Furthermore, we hope to continue to be a resource for you. If you have questions, please email.

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