



Refuat HaNefesh:

A Guide to

Mental Health

in Quarantine



USCJ's youth movement

Chevre,

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and we want you to know that your USY family is here for you. Quarantining is hard, and being away from friends, loved ones, and school can affect you in so many different ways. We're all in this together, and we want to make sure everyone has the tools and resources to take care of themselves or seek help from others.

In this guide you will find many resources that can help you and your friends stay physically and emotionally healthy. We hope these tips, tricks, and connections will serve as supports – both on days when you're feeling okay and also on others when you need a helping hand. **In addition to these resources, remember that our USY community has never been stronger or more supportive** – you can find programs from USY and our many regions on multiple nights of every week. Always remember that your USY family doesn't end when the Zoom call is over. **Your friends and staff members are always available for you to lend an ear, make you laugh, or just to talk.**

If you are looking for more resources, have any questions, or if you and your families need anything, please remember that you can always message us on Instagram or Facebook, or find our contact information on the USY Website at www.USY.org/staff.

We're here for you, now and always.

**B'ahava,
The USY Staff Team**

If you or a friend is experiencing serious mental health issues, seek appropriate professional help immediately.

Things to remember during quarantine

It's okay if you are not feeling like your most productive self.

Our routines are ever-changing in this time. We've moved from our typical schedule to something drastically different. Changing up our daily routine can deter the way that we function in our everyday lives. If you don't feel as though you're being your most productive, creative, or exciting self – that's okay.

Your emotions are valid.

No matter your age, location, or how much family you have: your life has been disrupted in a major way. It's okay if you're feeling upset, angry, confused, or something else. It's not a competition with others to see whose life has changed the most or in the most difficult way – you are allowed to feel the things you're feeling.

Be kind to yourself.

Be honest with yourself about your personal bandwidth, and if you're not feeling up to something – whether that be a Zoom meeting, a FaceTime, or something else – don't feel bad if you need to cancel. It's okay take the time you need to ensure you are meeting your own needs. Make sure you're taking care of yourself physically as well as emotionally and mentally.

When to seek professional help:

Remember that while having trusted adults in your life is important, most are not mental health professionals and therefore not adequately trained to handle a situation with the proper care. If you or someone you know starts to experience more severe mental health issues, please seek professional help. Refer to the resources listed at the end of this guide for additional assistance.

Try to forgive yourself during times when you're struggling. Remember that it's okay not to be okay.

Our top five mental health tips for coping while in quarantine:

- **Consistency is key!** Maintain a daily routine with consistent sleep, activity, and healthy eating habits.
- **Go outside!** Sunlight and fresh air are vital to keeping a healthy mind.
- **Get moving!** Whether it's just going on a short walk outside, or taking a workout class in your home, activity and exercise are essential in maintaining good mental health.
- **Do what makes you happy!** Try to make time for the fun things you enjoy. Whether it's playing music, arts and crafts, baking, or watching your favorite TV show, make sure to set aside time to enjoy yourself.
- **Stay social!** Connect with others and try to find moments of humor. Sick of Zoom? Call up your friends, write them letters, or participate in a recipe or book exchange. There are lots of creative ways to stay connected!

Remember that if you are experiencing a difficult time, it's always okay to ask for help.

Supporting friends during COVID-19

Look for warning signs that may indicate your friend is really struggling and needs help. This can include what they are posting and sharing online.

Don't wait for someone to reach out to you - if you haven't heard from your friend (or even if you have and feel as though they could use a friend to talk to), reach out to them and ask how they are doing.

If you are concerned about a friend's well-being, it is important that you speak with a trusted adult immediately – whether that be a parent, teacher, USY staff member, etc. You should never carry this weight alone, and the adults in your life are here to help.

How to start the conversation:

“Are you okay?” Ask the question and mean it. Practice non-judgmental and active listening.

“I've noticed that...” Open the conversation by explaining behavior changes you have noticed. For example, “I've noticed that you've been showing up to work late a lot lately.” Then, express genuine concern.

“Do you want to take a social distancing walk?” Engaging a friend, family member, or loved one you are concerned about in a healthy activity like taking a walk together can be a great way to start a conversation. Doing an activity while you talk can take some of the nerves and discomfort out of the conversation.

“How are you, really?” Sometimes when someone says they're fine, they're not. Try to be aware of warning signs that friends might be displaying so you can know when to offer extra support.

“What do you need from me right now?” Sometimes our first instinct when talking to friends/family who are struggling is to offer advice, try to solve their problem, or to say whatever we hope someone else would say to us. Remember that everyone processes stress in different ways, and try to ask what your friend needs at that moment.

You might feel uncomfortable starting the conversation, but it could be a huge relief for your friend.

Conversational Tips for Supporting Friends

You might think to say...

Instead, try saying...

“Everyone gets anxious sometimes.”

“What you’re going through sounds really difficult, I’m sorry.”

“You should just try spending time in nature, meditating, or doing yoga.”

“What’s something you can do to help yourself feel a sense of calm?”

“Life could be so much worse.”

“The struggles you’re facing are valid.”

“Cheer up.”

“I care about you and I’m here to listen. Do you want to talk about what’s been going on?”

“I don’t completely understand what you’re feeling, but I know it must be difficult. How can I best support you?”

If you’re not sure what to say, try this:

**For more information and assistance,
check out these resources:**

Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
800-273-8255

Trans Lifeline
877-565-8860

The Trevor Project
(For LGBTQA+ young people under 25)
866-488-7386

(SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline
1-800-985-5990

Text/Chat Lines

National Suicide Prevention Chat Line
[Click Here to Chat](#)

Crisis Textline
Text HOME to 741741
[Message them on Facebook](#)

IMAlive Chat Line
[Click Here to Chat](#)

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline
Text TalkWithUs to 66746

Websites

No Shame On U
Follow [No Shame on U on Facebook](#)
for daily Mental Health tips

Jed Foundation
Guidance on how to recognize a friend's
emotional distress online and how to
get that friend help.

The Jewish Education Project
Jewish and Secular Mental
Health Resources

TeensHealth
A safe place for teens to access honest
and accurate information on
mental health issues including specific
information about the novel
coronavirus (COVID-19) and
coping with stress.

National Alliance on Mental Health
Information for teens and young adults
about managing mental health and
supporting friends

TrevorSpace
An online community for LGBTQ
young people to connect

**Looking for activities to fill your time in quarantine?
Join a USYfi program at www.usy.org/events!**

A Prayer for Hope מי שברך לתקווה

Written by Daniel Warshawsky

May he who blessed our forefathers:
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

מי שברך אבותינו: אברהם, יצחק,
ועקב.

And our foremothers: Sarah, Rebecca,
Rachel, and Leah.

ואמותינו: שרה, רבקה,
רחל, ולאה.

Hear my prayer.

שמע את תפילתי.

Give me wisdom, insight, and intention.

תן לי חכמה, בינה, וכוונה.

Wisdom to remember the good,
insight to deal with evil, and
intention to find my purpose.

חכמה לזכות את הטוב, בינה
להתמודד עם הרע, וכוונה למצוא את
מטרתך.

Find the light in my heart. Build the
hope in my soul. And strengthen my
faith in myself.

תמצא את האור בלבי. תבנה את
התקווה בנפשי. ותחזק את האמונה
בעצמי.

Please, help me to navigate the
darkness, and find myself in the silence.

אנא עזור לי לנווט באפילה,
ולמצוא את עצמי בדממה.

Give me strength to trust the people
close to me, and open my heart to the
wisdom of others.

תן לי כוח לבטח באנשים הקרובים
אלי, ותפתח את לבי לחכמת
האחרים.

Heal the soul that dwells in this body.

תרפא את הנפש השוכנת בגופי.

And let us say: Amen.

ונאמר: אמן.

It's okay not to be okay.

Thank you to those who assisted in creating this Mental Health Guide

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