

How to Care for Students & Families who have COVID-19:

How can you care for students and their families during a time of social distancing?

- 1) **Respect the in-person social distancing, but find other ways to connect.**
Facetime, phone calls, texts, even mailing letters are all ways to stay in touch
- 2) **Listen well.** Sometimes people in crisis need a caring ear. Don't feel like you have to have a perfect or Biblical answer for every worry they share. Listen first and let them know you care. "Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- 3) **Offer help where needed as able.** You may not be able to physically help, but is the situation dire enough to call 911 to help (ex: parent is very sick and there is no adult in the house to drive them to the doctor or student is suicidal and you can't reach parent)? Do they have groceries or can you order them some essentials on Amazon? Or email localhope@gethope.net to request them to be added to Hope's grocery distribution list (currently we have a waiting list). If they are emotionally in need, walk them through the steps below but realize that they may need help beyond your ability. Point them towards the hotline below or do they have a counselor they can reach online? If not, they could email care@gethope.net for counseling referrals
- 4) **Speak truth.** After listening and loving well, you can speak truth into their lives. Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God. We don't know the outcome of this, but we know God is with them, loves them, and is in control when things feel out of control. We also know God is BIGGER than any storm that can come our way. When we are worried or afraid, follow the steps Paul gives us:
 - a) "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6-7

MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY:

We all feel stress and anxiety at times at varying levels. These are stressful times full of lots of uncertainty. First and foremost: If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:

- 911
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)

OTHER STEPS TO TAKE:

1) KNOW FACT VS. FICTION:

A lot of people are saying a lot of things about COVID-19. Not all of them are true. Stay informed from the CDC website. If you or someone in your house is sick, here are the CDC recommended steps to take:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>

2) ENCOURAGE SELF CARE:

Encourage them to take of themselves physically, spiritually, and mentally.

Physically: Are they getting enough sleep, food, and exercise?

Mentally: Are they taking breaks from the news and doing something relaxing, fun, or renewing?

Spiritually: Are they taking time to pray with God, soak in His word, listen to worship music, etc?

3) PRAY WITH THEM.

You don't have all the answers or solutions, but God does. Declare in faith God's love and care for this family and invite Him to help in specific prayer requests.