

# Cedar Springs Mental Health Matters

## Week 2: Staying Connected



“Let's all remember to stay physically distant, but emotionally connected.”

-Dr. Bruce Perry

Healthy relationships act as a buffer against stress. The only way through this is together. Don't ever underestimate the power of human connection.

## Ways To Connect

- **Connect with Others**
  - Call/Skype/Facetime/[Zoom](#) - video is best for meeting social needs
  - Write a card or letter - note of encouragement/gratitude
  - Host a virtual meal
  - Attend a virtual exercise class or concert
  - Check in on others. Be specific: Ask how their days have looked, what they've been doing, how they feel about the future/present, if they feel safe, etc.
- **Connect with Culture**
  - Virtually visit museums around the world via [Google Arts & Culture](#)
  - Look at old photos together and discuss family history
  - Cook a cultural meal together
  - Make a collage/read a book about a culture

## Connection Ideas

- Virtual play dates (Identities form through interaction with peers. Even if kids are not having a conversation, but playing on their own virtually next to each other - it's helpful developmentally!)
- Play Tic-Tac-Toe with friends through the window with painter's tape or window markers
- Connect kids to be pen pals
- Make signs with words of encouragement or jokes. Hang them in the windows or [make with chalk on sidewalks](#)
- Virtual game nights: [Codenames](#), Charades, Scrabble Go
- Have a family member/friend call and read a book to kids each day
- Go for a car ride to a friend's house, make signs and hold up as you drive by
- Make up a dance, skit, workout video as a family
- Write letters to community members in nursing homes
- Social distance walking or driving [Scavenger Hunt](#)

## Put It Into Practice

- Schedule social connection time
- Write it down - put up a visual reminder in the house
- Aim for at least one social connection per day
- Make sure as the adult, you're doing this for yourself- model it for kids
- Go outside your comfort zone - reach out to set up a playdate

## Additional Resources:

- Click here to read: [Tips for Staying Connected](#)

## Additional Mental Health Support:

- [Network 180](#): (800) 749-7720 (available 24 hours a day)
- [Heart of West Michigan](#): Dial 2-1-1 (hotline to provide referrals to services in Kent County)

## For A Mental Health Emergency:

- Call 911
- [National Suicide Hotline/Crisis Response](#) : (800) 237-8255