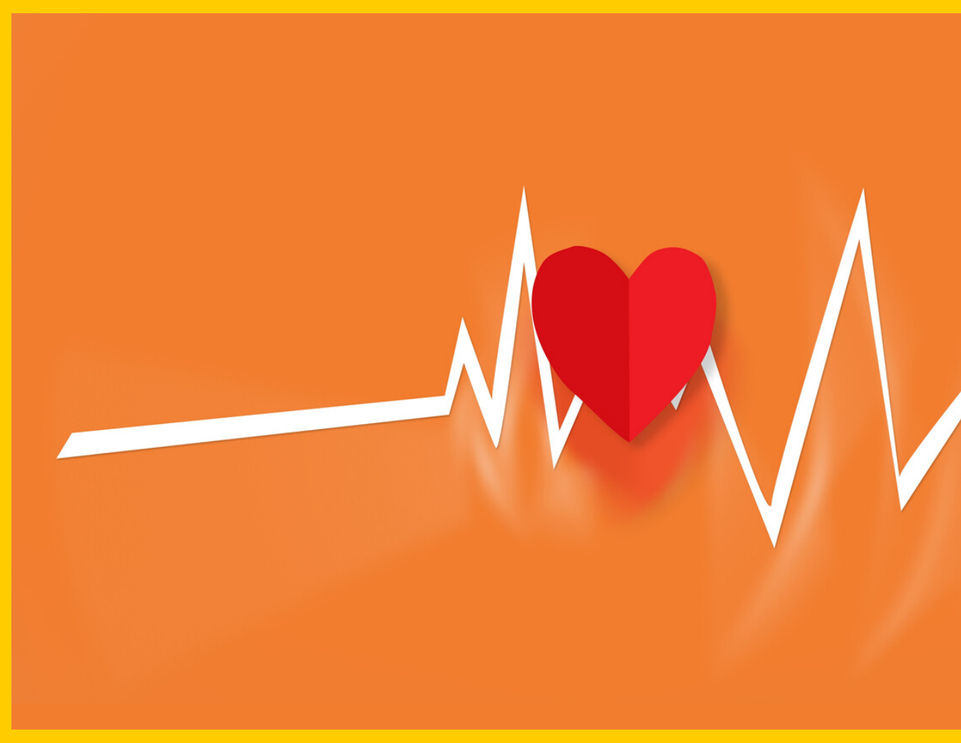
COVID-19 AND SOCIAL DISTANCING
WE NEED OUR TEENS TO LEAD THE WAY!

The race is on to enact **two metre (six feet)** distancing habits for everyone!

This will slow down the spread of COVID-19 and allow our health system to save lives. This is a scientific **FACT**.

Health officials and politicians are shocked to see so many people going out and getting close in public spaces. Old habits are hard to break, but this is important. **This is a crisis!**



TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Teen social distancing will save lives! Teens must spread the word about social distancing, not the virus!

- The longer we wait to social distance the longer we will have to do it.

- Do teens and their friends know and understand what social distancing is? Stay home. Keep two metres (six feet) away from people.

- Be clear. This means:
  - No parties, no sleepovers, no lunch dates, no coffee dates, no sports matches, no exceptions

- Understand why we must adhere to social distancing rules and what the risks are if we don't.

OUR YOUTH KNOW HOW TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGE

Our youth have the capacity to show leadership as society struggles to deal with this pandemic. They know how to mobilize and inspire thousands through their social media connections.

We've seen them do it with the issue of climate change, gun control in the US, and a wide range of social justice initiatives right here at home and abroad. No one knows how to be a social influencer better than our youth.

Already famous and young social influencers are speaking out. Our teens and young adults need to be influencers and demonstrate to all of us the importance of true social distancing.

How To Engage Your Teens

1

HOLD A FAMILY MEETING - NOW!

Start the conversation . . .

- What are your teens observing in your community? What are their concerns?
- What does your family know about the situation and where are you getting information from?
- Does everyone in your family know what social distancing means? Stay home unless you need to go out for something essential like food or medical supplies. When you are around people stay at least two metres (six feet) away.
- Encourage your teen and their friends to use social media, Google Hangouts and messaging Apps - the tools they know and love - to make a positive difference in our collective fight against COVID-19.
- Review other recommended safety measures:
  - Effective and frequent hand washing
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Most importantly, stay at home and limit your exposure to others!

2

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Talk about leadership and action versus fear and helplessness.

The actions and decisions of young people will absolutely make a big difference in how effective we are at “flattening the curve.” They can also help find meaningful ways to help us cope with our current new reality.

Recognize that none of this is easy, but we are all in it together. Encourage communication.

3

MAKE LISTS

- Family expectations to stay safe
- Creative and fun things to do while at home (both independently and as a family)
- Inside tasks, outside tasks
- Meals for the coming week
- School work to be done
- What are some skills you would like to learn during this time at home? (baking, cooking, tying a tie)

How To Engage Your Teens

4

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Check in every day and keep the conversation going (try not to ask one or two questions at a time). Here are some questions to consider:

- How have you been spending time at home?
- What more can we do together?
- How can we balance our lifestyle best in this situation (work, spirituality, fun, physical activity, hobbies, meals, etc.)?
- Are you/we spending too much time on social media or the computer?
- What is the hardest part of being away from friends? Remind teens that adults miss their co-workers and other friends too.
- Are we getting enough fresh air and exercise?
- Celebrate some of the benefits we have noticed about our change in routine.
- Is there anything we can do to make social distancing easier for you?
- Why do you think some people (teens and adults) are finding it difficult to follow social distancing recommendations?
- What would you do or say if you knew some of your friends weren't social distancing?
- How does it make you feel when you see some of your friends aren't social distancing?

5

STAY INFORMED

- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
  www.simcoemuskokahealth.org
- Psychology Works" Fact Sheet: Coping With and Preventing COVID-19
  www.cpa.ca/covid-19
- https://smho-smso.ca/blog/how-to-support-student-mental-health-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/

This flyers was produced and shared by the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.