Supporting Children

CATHOLIC NEW YORK

Letters

As we enter the 10th month of the Covid-19 pandemic, parents and caregivers continue to face challenges in childcare, homeschooling and disruptions of routines. This is a difficult time for adults, but what about children and adolescents? Parents' stress in coping with the pandemic can negatively affect their children's mental and emotional health. In addition, children may feel isolated and are likely to be missing opportunities for social connection and exercise through in-person schooling, clubs, leagues, teams and their faith communities.

Children and adolescents with pre-existing mental or behavioral health conditions are at particularly high risk. This is why access to telehealth is vital right now.

Teletherapy allows those in need to receive counseling and support from a safe distance. At Astor Services for Children & Families, we've seen the critical need for virtual children's counseling services. Since mid-March, we have provided more than 109,000 tele-mental health sessions and admitted 2,942 new clients in New York state's Hudson Valley and the Bronx.

Parents, continue to speak with your children and, more importantly, listen to them. Maintain routine as much as possible and help your children practice self-care with exercise, proper nutrition and limitations on screen time. Use free resources such as YouTube to find age-appropriate movement classes and deep breathing exercises you can do as a family.

For those living in New York state's Hudson Valley and the Bronx, including families we are connected to through our long affiliation with the Catholic Charities of the

Archdiocese of New York, help is near. To access resources for families and children under age 26, or for support, please call our toll-free hotline: 1-866-ASTOR01.

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