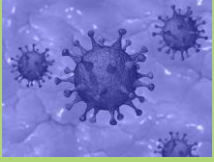


COVID-19 and Youth

Youth Voices



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American Academy of
Pediatrics (AAP) Council
on School Health
(COSH)

18 in the time of COVID

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Member of the Vermont RAYS (Raise Awareness of Youth Services), a Youth Health Advisory Council

Freshman year of college was supposed to culminate in a life-altering loss of innocence. Instead, I find myself back in my hometown, mindlessly scrolling Tinder in search of, well, I don't know. I can't go to a party to meet someone authentically, but even going out to dinner with one stranger poses its risks. All I want is to have a hard-line rule, embrace the solitude and see what I can make of it. But when I see everyone around me living for themselves, excusing it with the mental health crisis that we all face, it's hard not to feel like I might as well be selfish too. They year will go down as a source of collective trauma for my generation. We have been forced to navigate transitions with no decision-making power, no knowledge of what's to come for the few decisions we can make, and often no support. And in this time of transition, I'd ordinarily be learning lessons from the folds around me. Now who do I turn to? Tinder guy? These days, no matter what I do, a part of me says it's wrong. The overhanging guilt of my actions weighs on me every day. I'm steering a rudderless ship, and it's terrifying.

I wish I could tell you how to help. Unfortunately, complaining is significantly easier than coming up with solutions. All I can say is please check in with the young people around you. They're looking for an outlet, a way to feel release, someone to tell them that the right thing is possible. College students are not equipped to handle the onslaught of moral dilemmas that a pandemic brings. These are supposed to be the four most reckless years of my life, but I spend them reflecting in my bedroom every night. The plus side is that we're all trying to better ourselves. I think we're ready to learn, to make lifestyle changes, and to put our wellness first. Crisis creates the most unique opportunities, which is why I say that adolescents are listening. Seize the moment, and you'll have our trust and confidence for years to come.



[VCHIP YOUTH HEALTH INITIATIVE](#)

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