

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

During these difficult times, our young people need us even more! **A recommended best practice is to reach out 2x per week to check in on youth.**

Being in touch regularly can help reduce social isolation, keep youth on track with their goals, reduce educational lapses, clear up any misinformation, and maintain much-needed connection.

This document includes **coaching questions** that can be asked to:

- ❖ Gauge how your young people are doing/feeling and assess any urgent needs (including food and housing for those living independently);
- ❖ Provide emotional support;
- ❖ Develop or continue discussing goals;
- ❖ Figure out how you can stay connected with them.

If the Coach does NOT yet have a relationship with the young person or met them before, please review the Fair Futures Coaching Manual for best engagement practices.

- Remember to first introduce yourself, your role, and the purpose of your Fair Futures program using **youth language** that your team developed.
 - *(If you have not gone through this exercise yet to develop language, please reach out to Katie and Emil to schedule a TA session.)*

If the young person is not responding or engaging, remember:

- That is normal. *Keep reaching out and don't give up!* Be consistent and regular in reaching out to them. They may need time to trust that you really care and are there for them.
- Try different approaches! Think out of the box. If calls don't work, text, or try social media. Send them a video or an article.
- One approach is to write them a hand-written letter (or a goofy postcard!) and send it to their home. They may never have received one before, and this shows you genuinely care.

In addition to reaching out to young person:

- ***Make sure to check in with the young person's foster parents*** to see how they are doing, ask about the young person, and to make sure that they are in touch with the agency regarding any needs they may have.
- ***Make sure to coordinate with the Case Planner*** about any key information and to let them know you have been in touch with the young person/their foster parent.

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

Well-Being & Goals

Power Question: Please know that although social distancing is required, I am here for you. What can I do to help?

Question: What are you doing to cope with all of this? What are your concerns?

Question: What is your plan for staying connected by phone and video as we are encouraged to keep our distance and stay at home as much as possible?

Tell me how you are managing staying mostly inside? (If applicable, add: in tight quarters with everyone together?)

Question: How are you keeping busy?

- Is there anything I can help you with, like creating a daily schedule? (*Structure is important!*)

Question: This is actually a good time to explore different activities and goals that you've always wanted to but never had time for!

- Are there any goals you want to keep working on or any new goals you have in mind?
- (If not) ... What is something you've always wanted to do/learn how to do but didn't have time for?

If the young person is open to it, now is a great time to start coaching around goal setting! Have them start off by setting small, measurable steps towards those goals, and follow-up with them about their progress. Use the "G.R.O.W" model from the training (see Fair Futures Manual).

Question: During this downtime, what career paths or job opportunities would you like to explore together?

Some additional prompts:

- "Before the COVID-19 outbreak you expressed an interest becoming an EMT. Is that still something you're interested in exploring? What do you think of exploring this career path while we have this time?"
- "You've always expressed an interest in _____. Do you want to look up opportunities online together?"

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

- “I heard of this cool assessment called Hats & Ladders that suggests different career paths based on your interests/preferences. Want to test it out with me over the phone?”

This can be a great time for all youth to do career exploration activities, learn about a field of work the youth has expressed interest in, and make plans for after COVID-19. (Also, as the Fair Futures Goals & Steps framework, all coached young people do at least one career exploration activity each year – now is the perfect time to do this!)

Question: During this time I know we are not able to meet in person due to social distancing but I would like for us to remain in constant contact. What is your preferred way of staying connected? When can we talk again this week?

TIP! Talk with youth about facts and myths (where should they go for accurate information as opposed to social media).

Let youth know all of the tips that ACS and public health officials have put out, including:

- This is a time to stay home to protect yourself and others
- You may not feel sick, but the more people you are around, the more likely it will be for you to be a carrier and you could unintentionally infect someone else
- If you feel sick, tell your foster parent
- So that I don't become a carrier or get sick, I'm going to lay low for awhile
- Our contacts over the next few weeks will most likely need to be over video
- Discuss how to download Zoom

If young people have been AWOLing from foster homes, say:

- I know it will be hard to stay indoors, but for your safety and the safety of your foster family, this is not the time to be outside.

Education – High School & College

Question: How are you feeling about being out of school for so long?

- Explore concerns the youth may have

Question: What ideas do you have for staying on track with your educational goals?

- What are some of your friends and/or family doing? *(This question frames the discussion around them not feeling like they're going through this alone.)*

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

Power Question: Fast forward into the future and COVID-19 has ended. What's the first thing you'll want to do?

Where do you see yourself academically? *(This question helps the young person see that a focus on their education is not on hold during these times and that effort needs to be applied to ensure future educational success)*

Question for high school student: Do you have access to the DOE portal to check messages from your school?

- If the answer is NO help them create an account to gain access

TIP! For high school students the DOE will be using Google classroom to deliver instruction. Talk with youth about the plan for their school for remote learning and find out if they have what they need or know how to get it (e.g. a computer or tablet and WiFi access).

- Schools are distributing information and tablets to those who need them.
- In order to get a device from the DOE, you must complete this tech request form at <https://coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices>. Make sure to check the box next to "I have read and agree to the Student Device Loan Agreement." Students in foster care will get top priority for a device.
- Spectrum is giving all students without Internet access to free data by calling (844) 488 – 8398.
- Parent Coordinators at your youth's school can be a great resource.
- Work with Case Planner to make sure the student/their parent know how to reach out to a teacher or counselor if needed.

Once they have access and are learning remotely:

- How does it feel to be learning virtually?
- Are there any areas where you feel you need additional support?

Questions for college student:

- Do you have access to your school's online learning platform?
 - If the answer is NO help them understand how to gain access and provide support.
- Do you have the technology to complete your educational assignments – computer, internet, etc.?
 - If the answer is NO help them understand how to gain access and provide support.

TIP! For college students, create a College Planning spreadsheet that details the following information:

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

- Student name, college name, contact person at the school
- Are they staying on campus or coming back home?
- What is the school's policy/practice around COVID-19? Understand the school's quarantine plan.
- Do they have access to food?
- Do they have access to medical attention if needed?

Career/Employment (for youth who are employed)

Questions: How are you feeling about being out of work?

- Explore concerns the youth may have

Question: Is your employer asking you to work at this time?

Question: Has your employer stated when you will be able to return to work?

Question (if the young person cannot work from home): During this downtime, what opportunities would you like to explore together?

Depending on the young person's situation:

- If a young person does NOT have a high school degree/HSE, now is a great time to help them explore going back to school once possible. Don't forget to meet the young person "where they are" – help them explore any fears they may have and try to understand the drivers of why they had left school.
 - If the young person had left school to make money, tell them about the paid internships that transfer schools, YABCs, and HSE programs have. There are also some evening schools/programs where they could work during the day and go to school in the evening. Emphasize that you will support them through the process.
 - *If they are interested in re-enrolling, read the High School Education section of the Fair Futures Manual and the "Alternative High Schools Selection Guide" in the Appendix.*
 - If they are not interested in re-enrolling just yet, ask them if they would be up for doing some online learning, and try to connect them to some resources – or even a book of interest. They may be feeling rusty academically and need a self-esteem boost before plunging back in!

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

- If they have a high school degree/HSE but were working in a minimum wage job not tied to a field of interest, now is a good time to help them explore post-secondary pathways (college, a vocational training program, etc.) or job opportunities more in line with their interests.
- If a young person has a high school degree/HSE and loves their job but lost it, the Coach can help them explore other opportunities. Loop in the Career Development Specialist, if your team has one!

Food (particularly if the young person lives independently):

Question: Considering some supermarkets and stores now have limited supplies and long lines, how well have you been able to stock up on canned and frozen goods and other essentials, such as soap and toilet paper?

Question: Do you have any concerns about being able to find or afford food?

If answer is **yes**:

- Say (if applicable): Do you know that all schools have grab and go breakfasts and lunches available for youth?
- If the concern is broader than breakfast or lunch, help them explore possible solutions.
 - If they have a Case Planner still, be in touch with them to put together a plan.
 - If they aged out and do not have a Case Planner, discuss options with your Supervisor at the agency.

Housing Stability (if the young person lives independently):

Questions:

- Do you have any concerns about being able to remain in your home?

If the answer is yes, and the issue is possible eviction, let young person know:

❖ ***Evictions have been halted in NY state until further notice***

If the answer is related to being in an unsustainable living situation with friends, family or non-relatives, explore possible solutions. If you are not able to identify solutions, say: I will bring your concern to my Supervisor and follow up with you.

COACHING BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

- Are you on public assistance?
 - Share with them that HRA has put in writing that they will not turn off benefits for missed appointments or missed meetings.

Closing

Please know that I am here for you. I wish you and your family all the best during this difficult time.

I will keep checking on you, and please reach out if you need anything at all!

Some additional info for them to stay updated:

- If you have any questions on finding medical care, you can call 311.
- To get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City, you can text COVID to 692-692. You will receive regular texts with the latest news and developments.