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Dear parents,

Thank you for standing by your teens and supporting schools through the HBL period!

With the upcoming holidays, your teens will be spending more time at home. This presents you with the opportunity to deepen your relationship with your teens and bond more as a family. By making small changes to what you say and do, you can relate better to your teenager, and equip them with the much needed support and positive attitude needed for life.

This issue of Parent Kit provides you with tips on how you can frame your conversations with your teenagers positively, and things you can do to guide your teenagers to become mentally and emotionally resilient. It also suggests ways in which your family (your teens included) can bond while showing care for each other. #SGUnited

#wearebehindyou #SGUnited

"AFLAME FOR TRUTH"



Home-Based Learning

Stay Home, Stay Safe, Stay Curious!

Recommended for parents of Secondary and JC/CI students



Parent Kit

PART

04

Missed our last issue?

[Click here](#) for our previous Parent Kits on Home-Based Learning



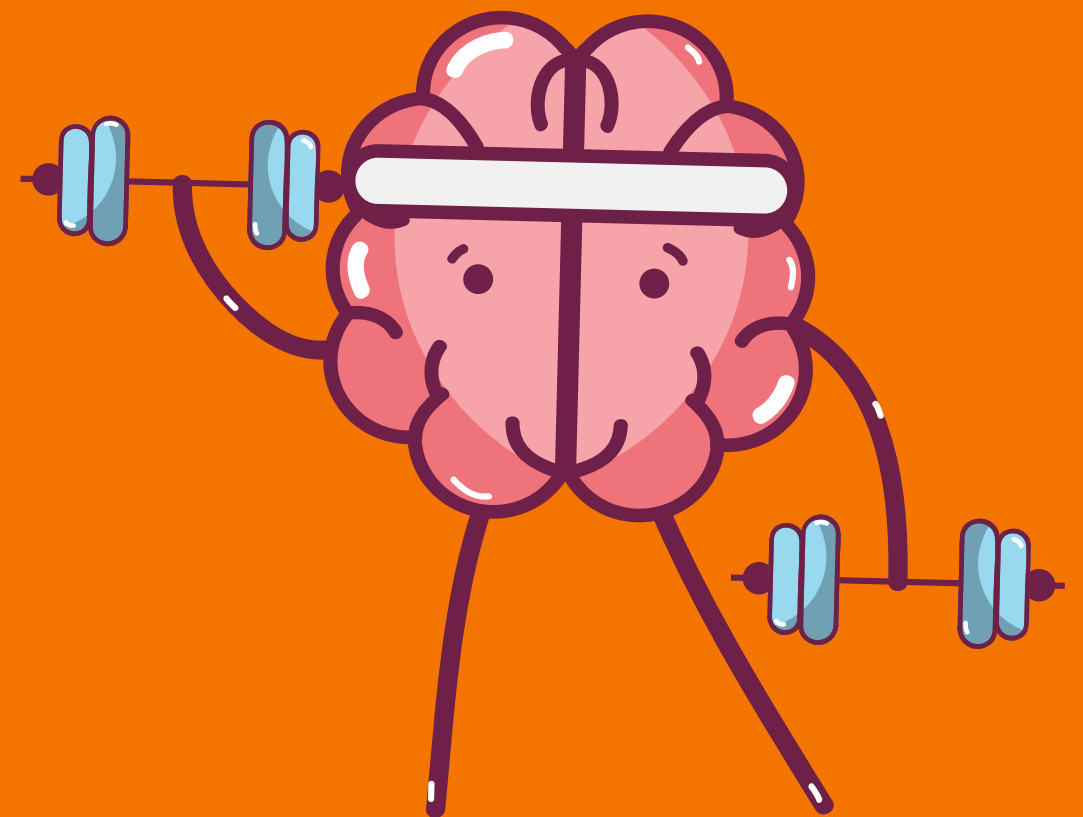
Your teens will be spending more time at home with the on-going HBL and the upcoming school holidays. Take the opportunity to get to know your teens a little better and build positive relationships with them.

When you take small steps by incorporating positivity in your words and actions, your teens will be more receptive and develop the positive attitudes and dispositions that will help them relate better to you and family members.

In turn, they can impact those around them more positively, which will help in your well-being as well!



**Here are some ways
you can foster a stronger
relationship with your teens:**



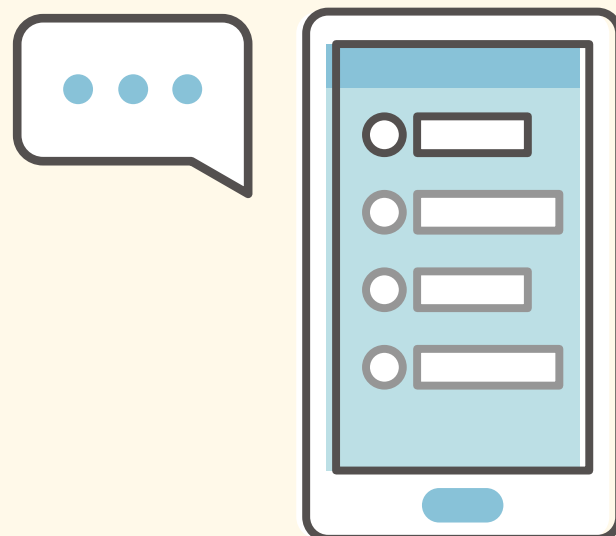
When your teens spend all day on their phones, discuss and agree on meaningful offline activities together.

INSTEAD OF SAYING

"Why are you always on your phone? Can't you do something else?"

HOW ABOUT

"Could you help with the household chores instead? Take a break from your phone and let your eyes rest."



- Be aware of how your teens are spending their screen time. Your teens could be on their devices for valid reasons like school work or staying in touch with the people whom they miss.

When your teens spend all day on their phones, discuss and agree on meaningful offline activities together.

- Discuss why it is important to find a balance between online and offline activities.
- Involve your teens in deciding how best to spend their time at home. Decisions could include:
 - The amount of screen time deemed acceptable
 - The kind of meaningful offline activities such as exercising, helping around the house and spending time with the family



Bonus: Get your teens to suggest a bonding activity that involves the whole family.



How much screen time is too much screen time? [Click here](#) to read more. We've also included 'teen-friendly' family activities on pg 14.

When your teens give you the infamous and singular ‘ok’ to all your questions, gently probe further or let them have ‘me time’.

INSTEAD OF SAYING

“Are you sure everything is ok?” or “Do you know any other words than ok?”

HOW ABOUT

“When you say ‘ok’, what do you mean?”

“Which is the most/least ‘ok’ part of today?”

“Great that everything is ok. If it’s not, you can tell me.”

- You can nudge them into conversation by asking follow-up questions (like the ones shown above) to help them explain what ‘ok’ means.

When your teens give you the infamous and singular ‘ok’ to all your questions, gently probe further or let them have ‘me time’.

- If they still do not wish to converse with you, be patient. Strengthening your relationship with your teens takes time. Your teens may simply want some space or privacy at that moment and may reach out to you later.
- Provide them with the reassurance that if and when they need you, you will be there for them. Do make yourself available if your teens need to speak to you about something.



Practise conversing with your teens! When chatting with them, listen quietly to really get to know them and withhold all temptation to object, criticise and judge. Try this everyday for 7 days! Here are some [other tips](#) on how you can hold a meaningful conversation with your teens.



When your teens say "Life sucks", encourage them to be positive and practise gratitude.

INSTEAD OF SAYING

"You think only *your* life sucks?"

HOW ABOUT

"It's a tough time for everyone right now. Let's focus on what we can be thankful for."

- Acknowledge your teens' frustrations but guide them to be grateful for the things they have, whether big or small, and to know that they are contributing to the safety and well-being of their friends and community.
- Being grateful is an important life skill to have. It encourages us to be positive, regardless of the situation we are facing. This promotes mental and emotional well-being.

When your teens say "Life sucks", encourage them to be positive and practise gratitude.

Here are some ways you can guide your teens to be grateful:

- Take note of the things that made them smile throughout the day, even if it is for just a second
- Keep a personal gratitude journal
- Keep a family gratitude jar (see pg 15 for how to do this)
- Share what they are grateful for at meal times or in the family chat group
- Pen notes of encouragement to a friend, family member, teacher or even a frontline or foreign worker



When your teens feel anxious due to the current situation, **encourage them to focus on what they can do.**

INSTEAD OF SAYING

"What's wrong? Tell me."

HOW ABOUT

"It's ok to be worried. If you share what you are worried about, we can see what we can work on together."



Teens may not like to be “confronted” or caught off guard with pointed questions. You may choose to leave a note or drop them a text. Let them work through their emotions first.

- **The fluidity of the COVID-19 situation affects teens in different ways. Some might enjoy their time at home and look forward to the upcoming holidays. Others might be worried about being sufficiently prepared for exams or about their friends and loved ones catching the virus.**

When your teens feel anxious due to the current situation, encourage them to focus on what they can do.

- Acknowledge that worries are normal during times of uncertainty and ask them to share their concerns with you. Encourage them to focus on things that are within their control. This will help them manage their anxiety.
- If the behaviour persists, reach out to their teachers. You can help them together.



To get your teens to be more comfortable and open to sharing their emotions with you, you could start by sharing your own struggles and how you overcame them. This helps your teens understand that it is normal to struggle with difficult emotions during trying times.



What's within your teens' control? Read the 'I can' [checklist](#) to find out. You can reference these areas in your conversations with your teens.

Take care of yourself so that you can take care of them.

Having to balance working from home and supporting your teens through the HBL and holiday period may take a toll on your emotions. It is important that you take care of yourself so that you can take care of your family. Small changes in what you do can have a positive effect on your well-being.

Here are some tips on how you can take care of yourself:

- Have 'me time' - Set aside some time to do something you enjoy. (Cooking, meditation or something relaxing!)**
- Limit your own screen time - The constant exposure to social media and news outlets to COVID-19 related news may cause some anxiety. Set limits on screen time and use offline time to recharge and connect with your family.**

Take care of yourself so that you can take care of them.

Here are some tips on how you can take care of yourself:

- Practise gratitude – Being thankful for what you have helps you stay positive and reminds you of the positive aspects of life.
- Maintain a healthy mind and body - Getting enough sleep and exercise helps to boost the immune system so that you have the physical and mental strength to go about your day.
- Find support – Reach out to people who can help you with the issues you are facing. It can be a friend, family member or close colleague. There are also community helplines like the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) [Parenting Support Providers](#) that you can reach out to.



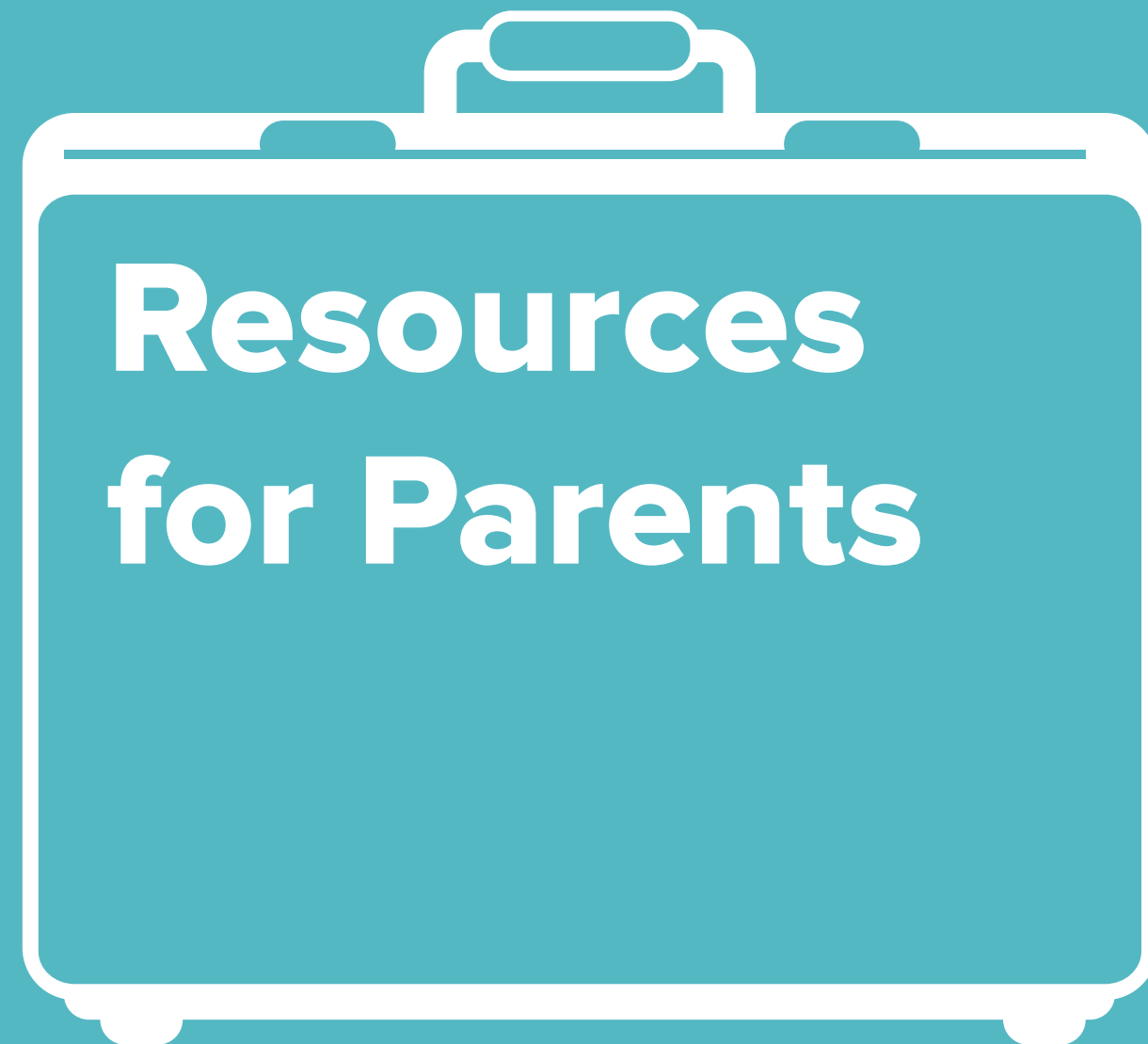
If you need additional parenting support, [register via this form](#) for the online Positive Parenting Programme.

Building positive relationships with your teens will provide them with the support they need and bring your family together to overcome these difficult times. It is also important to take care of yourself and to seek support if you need it. Keep your spirits high and show care for each other – within and beyond the home.

Together, we stand united to overcome the virus!

#SGUnited





**‘Teen-friendly’
activities for
family bonding!**

Gratitude Jar

- 1. Find a box or an empty jar.**
- 2. Get an A4 size paper and cut it up into 8-10 small pieces.**
- 3. On each piece of paper, write down some prompts. These prompts will serve as conversation starters for you and your family to show gratitude. Be creative! Some examples of prompts could be:**
 - I am grateful for three things I see...
 - I am grateful for something Mum/Dad/friend/teacher said/ did...
 - I am grateful for the time to...
 - I am grateful for having technology to...
 - I am grateful for three things I smell...
 - I am grateful for my ability to...
 - I am grateful that even while staying at home, I am still able to...
- 4. Start this conversation at the dinner table before a meal or at night before bed.**
- 5. Each family member picks a prompt from the box or jar without knowing what the prompt is.**
- 6. Remember to thank each family member for sharing what he/she is grateful for! :)**



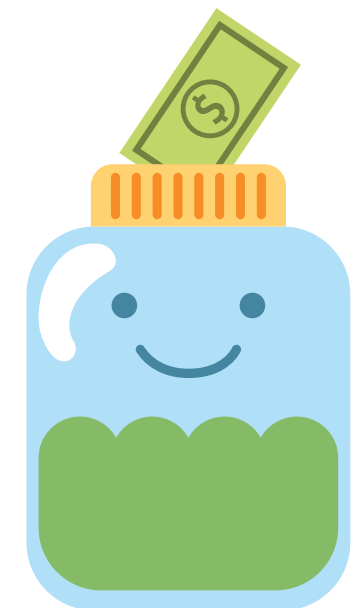
Reach out

- Encourage your teens to proactively reach out to their friends and classmates via phone calls, texts or video calls to see how they are doing. This sense of connection is important to their mental and overall well-being in order to retain a sense of normalcy in their lives. For ideas on how you and your teens can stay connected, browse the [SGUnited](#) website.
- Here are some [cute stickers](#) promoting positive messages that your teens can send to their friends and family to reach out to them! For more tips on how your teens can stay connected during this circuit breaker, check out [Families for Life's Facebook live video](#) here.



Volunteer or donate as a family

- Involve your teens in discussions on how your family can lend others a helping hand! You could explore various charities and non-profit organisations as a family and decide to help those that you find meaningful.
- Visit [giving.sg](#) to find and contribute to charities' efforts to address the needs of communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.



Exercise

- Keeping active is important to boost the immune system. From gentle stretches to high intensity workouts, there are lots of apps and videos for you to choose from. You can start with these [home workouts](#) suggested by HPB.

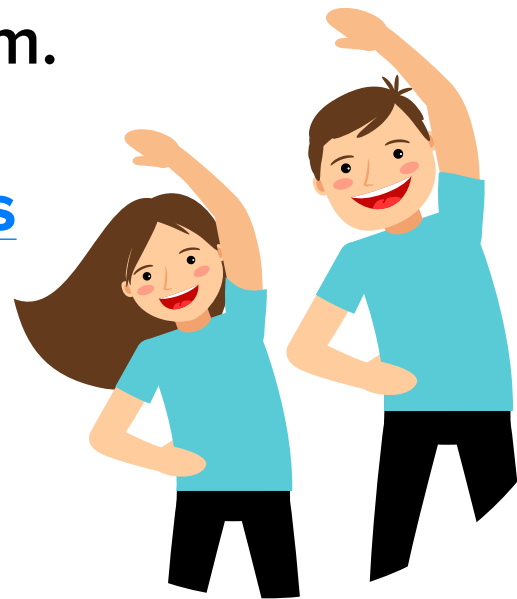


Chart your family tree

- Now that your teens may have more time on their hands, get them to chart their extended family tree and figure out who's who.



Hold a cooking competition

- Have members of the family team up to prepare a 3-course meal according to the family's dietary and nutritional needs. Appraise and enjoy the dishes together!



Watch a movie/ TV show or read a book and discuss it

- Time to put Netflix and Youtube to good use for family bonding. Each person could take turns to suggest a programme that everyone will have to watch and discuss. Alternatively, have each family member suggest a book to read. Find a book with [Libby](#).

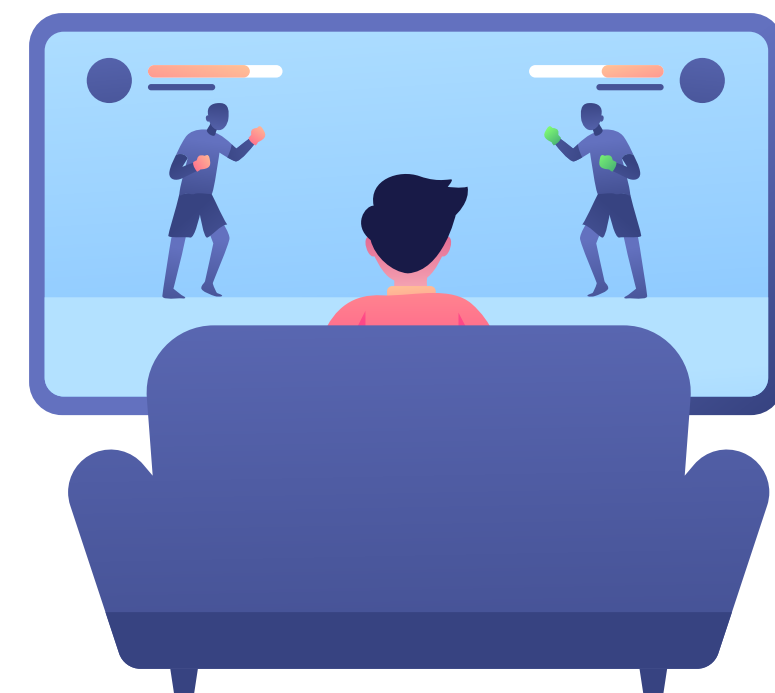


Try out your teens' leisure activities

- Never understood Mobile Legends or Tik Tok? Let your teens teach you! Remember to keep an open mind and embrace what your teens might find engaging about the activity.



Many of the ideas featured can be found on the [Families for Life website](#). Check out all the activities when you have the time.



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