



Practical guide for young people

#Youth&Life



*Dječija duša
treba da se sluša*

#YOUTH&LIFE



INTRODUCTION

This guide was created thanks to the initiative of the youth, who by their questions and considerations always bring much joy and inspiration, love and new views of life.

We thank you!

We hope this guide will help you to better understand yourself and the world in „pandemic“.

Your expert team of BHIDAPA and your Youth Center „John Paul II“.



What is happening to my everyday life and how can I adapt my life to these rules?

The pandemic of corona virus disease has changed the lives of everyone, and since scientists have not enough information about this kind of virus, we don't know how long this will take. It is a heartening fact that the world is rapidly working to create a vaccine that could protect us.

The rules that come with pandemic are strict and difficult to endure. Also, it is necessary to adapt to a completely new situation. Schools are closed, classes are transferred online, family members are constantly together and occasionally the situation can become tense. However, what is most difficult for young people is a ban of movement. What they need most, socializing with friends, fun and movements now are disabled! Or better to say, it is necessary to organize them differently to make it easier to withstand the isolation! People have the ability to reset to new circumstances, which confirms the entire human history so far.



HERE ARE FEW WAYS HOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER AND HOW YOU CAN BETTER ADAPT TO THE EXISTING RULES

01

Remember, you're not trapped, you're safe in the house. The rule of prohibition of movement, physical distancing, hand washing and wearing masks are designed to keep us safe. That we don't infect others or that others don't infect us. Young people are not at risk of corona virus, their immunity is strong enough to resist to corona virus like to common flu or cold, but we can't say this with certainty. In order not to get a health system "overlaid" with many sick people at once, it is necessary to slow down the pandemic. This requires patience and solidarity! You can help if you change the perspective of looking at the current situation: you're not trapped, but you're safer in the house so help others and society in general.



02

Hang out online! People are social beings and they need to hang out with other people. This is especially true for young people. The period of development that young people are going through, called adolescence, is a specific period in the growing up of each person. Adolescents become more independent and friendships are becoming more important to them. Our friends need us to exchange opinions, to learn from each other or to listen to each other in difficult times. What is important here? Support, fellowship and friendship are important. Is that gone now? No! It just took a different form. Try to organize a meet-up online. Text your friend, send a joke, do video call and have a nice chat! Nevertheless, online meet-ups have certain rules and you need to consider here your own safety.



03

Keep your daily routine as much as possible. In time of crisis such as this, it is normal to feel fear, anger or sadness. We can also be irritable, nervous, confused or have trouble sleeping. Psychologists say that these are normal reactions to abnormal events! Psychologists also say that every crisis brings with it the possibility of growth. The experiences we have now can empower us for future challenges. To cope with the isolation as better as possible, make sure you keep your daily routine as much as it is possible. An important part of the daily routine of youth is school. Make sure you get well organized. Make your own daily schedule and work plan for the school. Breaks when you can rest and refreshments should be part of your daily schedule.



04

Exercising, hobbies and creativity. Use this time to have fun through some creative work. Drawing, working with clay, designing graffiti, and coloring books as fun activities can be also relaxing for you. On the other hand, exercising is lifting our spirits! Yoga, Pilates, endurance and strength exercises will help us maintain physical fitness and maintain a good mood.



In a very short period of time, almost overnight, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to changes with dizzying speed in the world such as we used to know it. Our own lives have changed fundamentally and we are forced to stay home. Parents work from home; children and young people do their educational activities online. We do not meet people that are dear and important to us. A dangerous and invisible enemy, the Corona virus, is lurking around us. It's nothing like it was a few months ago. Our plans and outlook for the future have also changed. In ordinary circumstances, thinking about the future in all of us can awaken various questions, uncertainty, concern, anxiety. Such situations regarding the future are especially pronounced in extraordinary circumstances, in times of crisis, such as these, because then there is a particular feeling that we have no control over what is happening. It is true that there are things going on around us and in the world right now that you have no influence over, but to mitigate these unpleasant states, be aware that you can do things that can affect your future:

- You are in no way responsible for the occurrence of this condition, nor you can do anything to make it different, but you can protect yourself and your loved ones by following the recommendations on movement and hygiene. That way you can influence your future.
- You can influence the future by taking care of your physical and mental health. Exercise regularly. Try to identify your emotional states and discuss it with your loved ones. Sleep regularly. Eat healthy and have a balanced diet. Stay in touch with your friends through social networks. Seek the assistance of a specialist if necessary. This will make it easier to get through this crisis and to be ready to see its end.

- You are forced to spend a lot more time with your parents and family, which is why you all feel the pressure. Take on some of the household chores. Organize family games or watching movies. This can have a long-term beneficial effect on family relationships.
- Try to take the best for yourself from this situation. You have free time, and there are innumerable opportunities provided by modern technology. Choose some fun skill or knowledge you can master. Upgrade yourself so you can use it in the future.
- No one knows with certainty until when this situation will last in our country and in the world. However, you do not have to abandon your dreams of the future. Make plans. From them, formulate short-term goals that you can achieve in these circumstances.



Why was I deprived of my freedom of daily activities?

The pandemic of the Covid-19 virus has led to changes in the daily life of every human being. The inability to gather, to attend school in traditional way, to socialize face-to-face and to maintain our daily lives is the result of measures aimed at preventing and reducing the number of patients, given that despite the efforts of scientist, the vaccine still does not exist.

The virus is transmitted from human to human, so the measures are directly aimed at reducing any unnecessary contact, which further affects our daily lives filled with many direct contacts. Although young people are more resistant to the virus, older people and people with chronic illnesses are at risk. Therefore, in case of an infection this group of people has increased probability of complications and mortality. Also, young people can be infected with the virus without showing signs, thus transmitting the virus. The incubation period, which is the time from the moment of infection to the onset of the first symptoms and lasts approximately 14 days, also significantly increases the possibility of transmission of Covid-19 virus. Therefore, despite the difficulties arising from the inability to carry out daily activities, it is important to comply with these measures.

Being responsible and behaving in accordance with the measures implies changing our daily activities, but this does not mean that our freedom of these activities is deprived. Activities have changed, but we still have the freedom to find our own creativity in adapting to the current situation. Certain activities can certainly be sustained during this period as we did before the current crisis, we can adapt other activities with a little of imagination and creativity, or we can substitute them for completely different activities.

We certainly now have time to explore more deeply the areas of interest we have not been able earlier to find the time for, or we can try new activities and find new hobbies that we enjoy, as well as areas where we are successful. Moreover, even though physical contact is disabled, technology allows us to maintain social contact with our loved ones as well as many fun contents. Therefore, despite the restrictive measures that have changed our everyday life, we still have the freedom to choose to create our own time, the structure of the day and maintain close social contacts.



How do I do something useful when I don't have the strength and motivation because of the news that surrounds me?

The coin you take has a face and a reverse. The hand you are looking at has a palm and back of the palm. Every situation has at least two places, or two angles from which we observe and experience the situation. Each individual has their own biorhythm. When we add it all up, we understand that it is normal that sometimes we do not have the motivation and strength for everyday life. And when we are still in the situation of Covid-19 with all this information, everything is even harder and it seems hopeless. But just knowing about at least two options gives us a choice. Sometimes we need to allow ourselves time out and be a little powerless and unmotivated. That point is just needed to get the input for what we want. The moment of realization brings us to a new level. Remember that now you have more time for what you wanted until you were not limited. Now you can plan the day, watch a movie, comedy, and some creative clip. Listen to Covid information only during the evening news. You can now be online without anyone reminding you of how much time you are spending on the Internet. Peer communication continues with more creativity and utilization of technology. Sit down and think about what good you have in you and around you, and what would be useful. Everyone is creator of their present. Surely you can do it. Select a positive viewing angle. When you get tired, take a break.



There are young people who have become accustomed to some of their orders and schedules and after a long time they are now back in the house together with the whole family and there comes tensions, disagreements because they are closed all day together.

How to channel negative emotions within one group that is closed and essentially focused on itself?

To be able to channel emotions it is very important that we recognize them, understand them and that we are able to share them with our loved ones. When our family knows how we feel, it is easier to understand and support us in the way we need it. The problem, and often the conflict arise when we expect people to know our thoughts and feelings without telling them.

Openness in communication, respect for our own, but also others emotions can help us to cope with the current situation, when we are often or constantly indoors with the family. It is important that we have time for ourselves when we do what is giving us rest, entertainment or peace, and that can be anything: listening to music, reading books, exercising, watching movies. We all need to sometimes isolate ourselves and listen to how we are feeling. It is also important that conflict is a normal thing that happens in all families and that if we communicate everything that bothers us but also makes us feel good, by our family members, we can improve the relationship.

Admit that we have made a mistake, that we are sorry for some words or actions, but also to say what hurts us is the foundation of growth and development of ourselves as well as of the entire family.

What will it be like to adjust to my 'usual' activities when I go out of the quarantine?

The crisis caused by the Corona requires rapid and sudden forms of adaptation. When sudden changes occur in life, they provoke reactions aimed at reorganizing our habits and daily functioning.

It is therefore important that we adapt to new circumstances. Adjustments are usually accompanied by different emotions, thoughts and behaviors. In these circumstances, we can feel fear, sadness, anger, disappointment. We think that something bad will happen to us or to our loved ones, that our long-term plans will be permanently changed, that we ourselves have no influence on our own desires and decisions. These emotions and thoughts often result in withdrawal, impulsive behavior, loss of motivation and willpower.

Fortunately, crises are passing. Post-crisis adjustments are needed. Although this is a time of returning to familiar habits, it still requires a gradual entry into the activities that we had to stop or change because of the crisis. Emotions similar to those that accompanied the adjustment to the crisis may emerge during the exit of the crisis. Usually, during a crisis period, we expect that after the normalization of the situation, we will feel exclusive relief, happiness and satisfaction. Such emotions and moods will certainly be present. In the event of any difficulties after the crisis, it is important to discuss this with your loved ones, and if necessary, seek the support of experts.



In this situation, we are left to the media, cell phones and technology. The entire life is now adapted to the new situation, restrictions, news, i.e. bombardment with the news of one thing only – the corona virus. We lose the feeling that there is something else in the world, we lose the sense of connection with others ...

How in this situation can we make up for the physical lack of closeness of our loved ones – family, friends ...?

In the situation we are currently in, which is new and uncertain to us, the natural response of our organism is to seek information that will give us an explanation and a sense of at least some control over the situation. So the goal of informing is to reduce anxiety. However, constant exposure to too much information and media content, on the other hand, raises anxiety and leads to anxiety that can overwhelm us, because no matter how much information we collect and share, the situation is such that we have no control over it and cannot know its outcome. Therefore, it is important to monitor how we feel before embarking on frantic news reviews, reading portals, gathering new information, and how we feel as doing so. If we feel uncomfortable and anxious, which intensify as we are exposed to excess information and have the feeling that we are in a vicious circle of such feelings, it is time to limit our exposure to such content. It is recommended that we review the news maximum of twice a day and keep these intervals as short as possible. It is also important to search the information only from verified sources, from official sites that provide us with relevant information. In this way, we are in control of what we can realistically do, and now we are left with more time for other activities that can bring us more comfortable feelings and pleasure.

It is important to know that every emotion we feel in this situation, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is completely normal and expected.

We can feel sadness, anger, fear, anxiety; we can also feel joy that, for example, we have time for ourselves, that we needed rest, we may not even feel anything special and pretend everything is as it was. These are all normal emotions, states and reactions to the abnormal situation we are in. There is no right way how to feel and what to do. What is important is that we just bring awareness to that emotion and allow it to be there without removing it, suppressing it, and running away from it. The better we know and speak about our emotions, the easier it will be for us to deal with them. If we are aware of the emotional state we are in and we do not run away from it, we can also share it with a close person. In doing so, we encourage the other person to explore their feelings and share them with us. This is where we actually come to real connection, because it is difficult to be connected unless we are authentic and do not acknowledge what the real situation is. As social and emotional beings, we need social contact, exchange and connection.

Recently, very often there has been used the term “social distancing”, but when we understand what it describes it is more appropriate to use the term physical distance. So what is prescribed by the corona virus protection measures is actually physical distance but it does not have to include social and emotional distance. On the contrary, although we are physically separated, today's technology allows us both social closeness and emotional exchange. Social networks and platforms that allow online contact between two or more interlocutors in real time, both audio and visual, give us space to connect and share. Social connection is important because of the experience of acceptance and belonging, and some earlier studies have shown a high correlation between social connection and support and emotional resilience. Social support can also improve our ability to cope with stress.



While it may seem difficult to replace “live” contact and face-to-face interaction with some online contacts, as well as all the activities we've done before with the activities in the online world, it's worth a try, and now we have time for that. We may also be surprised and discover some of our strength capacities, skills, abilities and potentials that we did not know existed, discover some new interests, and through all these activities maintain and awaken what is most important to us, connection with close people.

Young people are already used to connect through social networks, mostly via text messaging, but in this situation it is recommended that these contacts be made via video call, since this way is closer to live contact, where we can see reactions, non-verbal communication, and such allows us to resume some joint activities. Find with your friends (or family) what is in your common interest and try to be creative to find a way to make it happen in an online environment. Here are some ideas for online ways we can connect with family and friends:

- To exchange the emotions, support and compassion we need, we can organize a shared virtual coffee, where we can talk about how we feel, what we need, we can remember some common moments from the past, exchange favorite photos, talk about plans and ideas for the period after the emergency.
- To participate in some joint activities, we can organize a joint movie, series, or show watching (most of them are now available online). Also, most museums now have virtual tours available, and we can take advantage of this situation to visit museums together and view exhibitions from around the world, which we may not otherwise have the opportunity to see live.
- We can play video games together, but with the help of the camera and creativity we can also play the traditional ones such as jamb, monopoly and the like.
- In this situation where movement is restricted, it is especially important to maintain physical activity, which is possible through joint exercise with a friend over the camera (yoga, aerobics, and fitness and strength exercises).

- Dancing can also be one of the choices of physical activity. By learning new movements in a new and fun way, we can contribute to a greater connection with friends, but also to our physical health.
- For fun, we can organize a virtual party with more friends via video call. It can be a regular party, and it can be on a certain theme, which can bring even more laughter and fun. Also, it is important that someone takes care of the music and that we agree on the details that are important to us.
- We can connect with family through a shared online lunch or perhaps a picnic, organized by everyone in their own space, living room/ patio/ backyard depending on options.
- We can explore new interests by learning new skills together (foreign languages, creative work, various hobbies, cooking, etc.).
- We can offer help to the elderly people from our family and from our environment by going to the store or pharmacy for them (respecting all prescribed protection measures) and thus, through help and care, we can establish a connection.

You may like some of these activities and manage to have fun and connect with friends and family through them, but also perhaps none of the suggested ones will suit you. You may simply not feel the need to explore new ways of communicating and learning new skills. And that is fine. In the end, to try to be there for ourselves and others in an authentic way, to get in touch with our emotions, to talk about it with a person close to us, to provide support, at this point is quite sufficient for connection. pružiti podršku, u ovom trenutku je sasvim dovoljno za povezanost.



Restrict reading news (and only from trusted sources)

- It is important to get accurate and timely public health information regarding Covid-19, but the overexposure to the virus in the media can lead to heightened feelings of fear and anxiety. Psychologists recommend coordinating the time spent on the news and social media with other activities not related to quarantine or isolation, such as reading, listening to music, or watching television.

Create and follow a daily routine

- Maintaining a daily routine can help both adults and children maintain a sense of order and purpose in their lives, despite the unknown of isolation and quarantine. Try to engage in regular daily activities, such as reading, exercising, or learning, even if they have to be performed remotely. Have a clear schedule of your meals throughout the day, as well as defined time to go to bed and time to get up. Plan your activities well in advance and set yourself realistic daily goals. Not only will adhering to your usual routine make you more active, but it will also make it easier for you to adapt to the outside world when it comes time to return to your daily tasks.

Be connected to other people

- Your face-to-face interactions may be limited, but psychologists advise using phone calls, text messages, video chats, and social media to access social support networks. If you are feeling sad or anxious, look at this as an opportunity to talk about your experience and the emotions you are feeling. Reach out to those you know who are in a similar situation. Facebook groups have already been formed to facilitate communication and support among quarantined individuals. Be in contact with yourself, become aware and actively regulate your emotions, thoughts and behaviors, pay more attention to taking care of yourself and the people around you. These days most people live under constant stress. Some are afraid to get infected, some care for their loved ones, some find it very difficult to restrict movement, and some find it difficult to cope with the inability to engage in social activities they used to be part of. Most people currently experience fear, anxiety, sadness, and stress more often than it has been the case recently, and it is therefore very important to be aware of what is going on in us and to strive to actively regulate what we experience and do. Relying on pets for emotional support is another way to stay connected and aware of your emotions.

How to learn to deal with stress, boredom and worry except through food?

Lately, our lives are changing every day, and these changes are at moments very radical and unpredictable. This is very difficult for us, as human beings, to accept and difficult to deal with. While it is important to live in a way that we are present at every moment exactly where we are, being in the present, people have an awareness of themselves and the time that passes. We have the ability and the need to plan, and the uncertainty about what tomorrow brings is hard to accept. In addition, people have a need to understand and control the world around them, i.e. to have the feeling that they are capable of dealing with it. In situations of uncertainty, it is important to recognize and focus on what is certain, what gives us a sense of security. Although these things may sometimes seem less important than global ones, they are the only ones we can act on, so it's best to do so.

You should limit the thinking about the future in this situation, especially if you notice that this causes you significant discomfort. Instead, it's good to focus on the present moment and what we can do today. Although this is not a natural or pleasant condition for us, in this situation we are forced to think and live from day to day, sometimes even from hour to hour. No one is comfortable with that, but we have to get used to it. We need to exercise because our ability to cope with the uncertainties we face every day will determine the quality of our daily lives, our relationships with others, our current well-being, and the mental and partially physical health with which we will emerge from this crisis. Here are some simple but important tips that we can use to overcome the situation we are in and adequately deal with the stress and boredom that are the side effects of the pandemic.



Avoid conflicts

- In some cases, people will isolate themselves with a small group of people, either with family or close friends. It can reduce the feeling of loneliness; however it can also pose other challenges, especially increasing the possibility of arguments and fights. Even our dear and loved people can get on our nerves, especially when we are long enough with them in the same space. You can get in a better mood by having a short exercise, or distance from people for at least 15 minutes. After doing so, the reason for the quarrel no longer seems so important.

Healthy lifestyles at the time of the pandemic

- Get enough sleep, eat well, and exercise in your home if you have the possibility for that. Try to breathe deeply, and to stretch. There are many online deep breathing exercises that effectively relax the mind and body. It is normal that, being constantly at home and when we are bored, we are attracted by unhealthy foods in larger quantities, but it is important to keep in mind that with a healthy diet we build and keep the immunity strong, which is very important in a period that brings healthy risks to us all. Healthy lifestyles are important, especially during periods of intense stress, to keep our body and mind healthy and clear.

Begin with rituals in quarantine

- Why not do something special with this newly-acquired time during quarantine days? For example, you can write a diary for recording your thoughts and feelings that you can later think about as the days pass. Connect with a family member/friend via FaceTime or similar apps every morning or start drawing a picture that you can edit a little bit each day, try some free online course of foreign language, drawing, aerobics or yoga. Dedicate yourself to a hobby you haven't had time for due to school and other obligations... Having some special ritual at this time will help you to look forward to each new day.

It is important to accept that this time is challenging, but that we must take care of ourselves and of others. Let's follow the instructions given to us by the competent services and authorities.

How to deal with different characters within the family and how to design everyday life so that there are as few conflicts as possible?

Young people are certainly in a specific developmental stage. Dealing with the changes that bring adolescents closer to adults, makes of the adolescence the period in which the relationship between child and parent irreversibly changes and grows. There are conflicts, non-acceptance of change that happen, communication changes, fears arise in parents and in children. That is normal.

In the current situation, everything seems even more dramatic. Before you could run out of the house when you disagree with someone or didn't want a problem, but today you are forced to stay.

It is not easy for you, but at the same time you are in a situation where YOU can do a lot for the benefit of both yourself and your family.

It is important that you try to UNDERSTAND yourself as well as the situation we are all in. It would be good to allow yourself to observe everyone around you as individuals, to see how they individually react to the current situation and to see how different we all are. The virtue is to ACCEPT this difference. Many of the reactions that are directed at you have to do with their fears and dilemmas. Your creativity, the plan you make for your own obligations, various social games, clips from the internet, information on topics which interest you and exchange with family members can relax tensions and bring people closer to each other. There is no universal solution. Wealth of each individual is in the creativity of finding the best for him or her or for someone who is important to them.



Will society, after this crisis, strengthen the feeling of solidarity and will people experience this time as a “restart”?

Living in a pandemic can be traumatic experience for both the individual and the society, as it can at the same time represent an opportunity for growth and development.

Life, science and spirituality teach us that experiences during difficult times also bring positive changes. Many people, including societies, faced with problems they become stronger, not weaker. What we know is that almost each of us experienced something traumatic at some point in our lives. Trauma can be caused by different experiences, for example, relocation, traffic accident, feeling of loss of security and control, loss of a family member or someone important to us, war experiences, abuse, neglect, beating, illness, long-term crisis... The list of causes of trauma is endless, but the results of very different traumas are surprisingly similar. Many people recover from a terrible event without problems. So do society, after certain crises and traumatic experiences may experience the possibility of a fresh start, possibility to “restart”.

It is important to know that we have the capacity for solidarity and empathy; we have the capacity to deal with crises and recovery, growth and development. Crises are always a chance to rethink our beliefs and value systems, our responsibilities, the ways we treat ourselves and the world around us. Certainly solidarity and empathy triggers a sense of belonging and togetherness. This is also the time to feel the imperative of “TO HAVE” that we often live is not what makes us stronger and better, it is not what moves us to be there together and as one, but instead an imperative “TO BE”. BEING HERE, present with yourself and the world around you, being aware of yourself and others, being in touch with yourself and others with empathy and solidarity, is what makes us human beings. For human development it is necessary for the individual and the system to be open to active contact, responsible and reciprocal and requiring willingness for communion.

This “pandemic” crisis is a great challenge that we are all facing in search of a better “restart”. It leaves room for society, and society is made up of individuals, to strengthen a sense of solidarity and readiness for the paradigm of change “TO BE”, for a new and better step forward, for “restart”. It is certain that together we can achieve that, faster and better!

Young people certainly include something akin to a paradigm of change, ready for new challenges. You are important drivers of change in any society! And this practical guide created on your own initiative testifies to this. For that, our dear young people thank you very much! This message you are sending us through your questions and inquiries, it is very significant to all of us and our societies and can be summarized in a few words, and it reads: **Let us act responsibly and act with faith and hope!**





Nadbiskupijski centar za
pastoral mladih
Ivan Pavao II.

Title: Practical guide for youth #Youth&Life

The guide was prepared by the expert associates of the
Interdisciplinary Therapeutic Center for the
Protection of Children, Youth and Families
BHIDAPA in cooperation with the
Youth Center “John Paul II”

Editor-in-chief: dr. sc. Mirela Badurina

Executive editor: prof. dr. sc. Šimo Maršić

Authors (in alphabetical order):

Azra Arnautović

Belma Žiga

Dana Lončarica

Iskra Vučina

Jelena Subašić

Marija Pavlović

Mirela Badurina

Sabina Zijadić Husić

Tea Martinović

Translated in English by:

Minja Todorović

DTP:

Vladimir Žuržulović

Year: 2020

