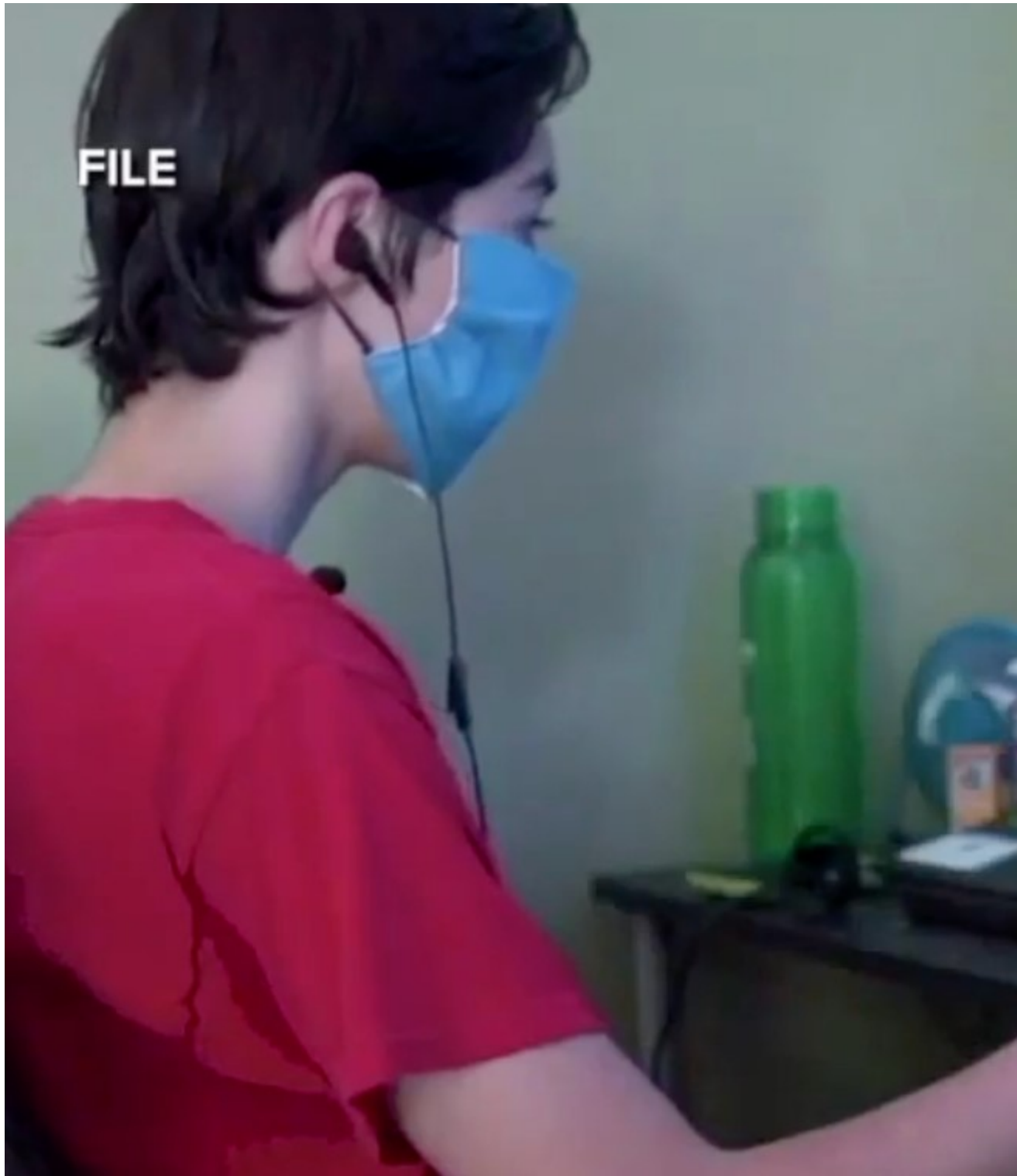


## **Kids, teens could be feeling pandemic-related stress. Here's how parents can help**

*Jenn Schanz*

From the global pandemic to the divisive 2020 election, kids and teens are absorbing a lot of the same stress 2020 has brought adults



(WXYZ) — From the global pandemic to the divisive 2020 election, kids and teens are absorbing a lot of the same stress 2020 has brought adults; and what's worse, is that at a time when play dates or sleepovers are discouraged for public health reasons, kids might be needing that social outlet the most. Most organized youth sports are on hold right now, and many school districts in Michigan have moved fully remote due to a surge in COVID-19 cases.

**Related:** [Full coverage of The Rebound Detroit's Managing Mental Health day](#)

“During adolescence, this is a time when kids are really primed to want to explore their environment, to seek out new experiences. And being stuck at home with your parents isn’t really the best way to fulfill those developmental needs,” said Dr. Hannah Schacter, an assistant professor of psychology at Wayne State.

**Related: [The Rebound Detroit: List of Michigan resources to help you manage your mental health](#)**

It's one of the reasons why she said seeing your kids glued to their devices right now shouldn't be unexpected, or even frowned upon.

In the onset of the pandemic -- kids, especially teens, missed out on some key social milestones like prom, sporting events, graduation.

“And now suddenly you have moments of hope, of maybe it’s getting better and maybe we’re heading back there and then suddenly that’s shifting,” Dr. Schacter said.

**Related: [How you can help seniors' mental health as we approach the holidays](#)**

Until Dec. 8, high school students statewide are learning remotely due to the an epidemic health order aimed at the slowing the spread of the virus. It's a move Dr. Schacter said could pose a greater problem for students who rely on in-school academic or social support.

“It requires a greater sort of pro-activeness to seek out those services which is not always entirely possible in a virtual environment,” she told Action News.

[In a new study](#), the CDC found that since last April, around the country mental health related ER visits for minors are up. Visits for things like anxiety, stress, panic, and acute PTSD.

The data was collected from hospitals in 47 states, and found that mental health visits for kids ages 5-11 went up 24 percent compared to last year and 31 percent for kids ages 12-17.

Dr. Schacter said just like adults, kids are absorbing the stress and in some cases the fear a global pandemic brings. So what can parents do?

Firstly, watch for any patterns of different behavior over several days or weeks.

"Are kids suddenly not sleeping well regularly? Are they complaining of sort of physical ailments where there's not a clear medical origin of it," she said. "Being really socially isolated and distant," she said. During this time, these traits shouldn't automatically be pushed aside as common teenage angst, she explained.

Secondly, when talking about stress related to the pandemic, it's important to validate your child's feelings.

And thirdly, remember to take care of yourself both mentally and physically too; because your kids are watching and learning.

"Kids are highly attune to their parents experiences and their parents emotions," Dr. Schacter told Action News. "Even if parents feel maybe like their kids aren't listening, they are probably picking up on more than you may think."

*Additional tips for helping your child cope with stress from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services:*

# The Rebound DETROIT

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH

## HELPING YOUR CHILD COPE

- ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS
- LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD SHARE THEIR CONCERNS
- PREPARE THEM FOR POSSIBLE STRESSFUL SITUATIONS BY HAVING A DISCUSSION
- BE GENEROUS WITH HUGS
- AVOID SHARING YOUR PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CHILD
- MAKE SURE THEY GET PROPER REST

SO

Click [here](#) for advice on how to talk to your kids about coronavirus.

### **Additional Coronavirus information and resources:**

[Click here for a page with resources](#) including a COVID-19 overview from the CDC, details on cases in Michigan, a timeline of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's orders since the outbreak, coronavirus' impact on Southeast Michigan, and links to more information from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC and the WHO.

View a [global coronavirus tracker](#) with data from Johns Hopkins University.