

Many New Yorkers are feeling stressed, anxious, and sad right now. Mental health support – whether that means staying connected to your loved ones, downloading a helpful app, or having a video session with a counselor – can help.

While you're staying home or practicing social distancing, technology can provide access to free, confidential support. Use the tips below to get connected.

## 1 If you need a phone or tablet, take advantage of free offers

- **NYC public school students** can request a free tablet through the Department of Education to support remote learning, including school-based mental health support and social-emotional education, by [signing up here](#).
- **Income-eligible New Yorkers** can receive a free cell phone and monthly airtime through SafeLink Wireless, a government supported program. Learn more about the program by visiting [this website](#) or calling 311.
- The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and T-Mobile are distributing internet-enabled tablets to **10,000 seniors** living in NYCHA developments in the **Bronx and Brooklyn**, to help aging New Yorkers access services and stay connected to loved ones during the COVID-19 crisis.

## 2 Get connected using low- and no-cost WiFi and mobile service options

### Free Wifi:

- [Visit this page to find free WiFi access locations](#) throughout the City, from Altice and Charter, providers that have opened their Wi-Fi hotspots to all users, not only subscribers
- Altice is offering [free broadband internet to K-12 and college students](#)

### Free internet service on a temporary basis:

- Households with a K-12 and/or college student who sign up for new Spectrum service may be eligible for [60 days of free broadband service](#)
- Families who sign up for new Comcast service may be eligible for [60 days of free Wifi service](#)

### Reduced cost internet and mobile phone service on a temporary basis:

- [AT&T](#) is offering open hot-spots, unlimited data to existing customers, and \$10/month plans to low-income families
- [T-Mobile](#) is offering unlimited data to existing customers, among other benefits

## 3 Download free applications (apps) that can help you cope and promote emotional wellbeing

Well-being and emotional support apps can help you cope anytime, anywhere. Explore a number of free apps on [NYC Well's website](#), many of which offer support in multiple languages, including:

- For anxiety and overall mental health specific to COVID-19, download [Shine](#)
- For veterans and service members interested in self-care and overall mental health, download [COVID Coach](#)
- For students who want to socially connect and reduce loneliness during COVID-19, download [Nod](#)
- For help with depression, download [Litesprite](#), a clinically validated mental health video game
- All New Yorkers now have free access to [Headspace](#), a specially curated collection of science-backed, evidence-based guided meditations, along with at-home mindful workouts, sleep and kids' content to help address rising stress and anxiety

## 4 Use free video conferencing platforms to connect with mental health support

- During the COVID-19 crisis, mental health providers are able to stay connected with their clients using common video chat apps like Google Meet, WhatsApp, WeChat or Zoom. To take advantage of video-based mental health support, you can use these free video chat apps:
  - Zoom offers free video and audio conferencing for up to 40 minutes, which you can access from your phone, tablet or a desktop by [creating an account](#). If you are new to Zoom, the [Zoom Help Center](#) offers step-by-step instructions, live trainings and webinars to help you get started.
  - [Google Meet](#) offers free video meetings to anyone with a Google account. You can register for a free Google account [here](#).
- You can also use these free video chat apps to stay connected with friends and family, which can help you cope with anxiety, reduce stress, and stay positive. Here are some [tips to stay connected with family and friends](#) during the coronavirus outbreak.
- If you would like to find a professional who can help, [explore this database of mental health and substance misuse providers](#) on the NYC Well website.

## 5 Stay safe online

Follow these three basic guidelines to protect your privacy online, from [the National Cyber Security Alliance](#):

- **Use a strong password to lock your computer, tablet and phone:** a strong password has at least 8 characters and includes a combination of special characters, lower/uppercase and numbers.
- **Think before you click:** if you receive an email from a stranger, consider it carefully before clicking on any links or following through on “crisis” situations, such as a problem with your bank account or taxes, urgent request for a wire transfer, or other fishy request. This type of message is likely a scam and should be deleted.
- **Share carefully:** posting personal or private information online can put you at risk.