BE THERE FOR FAMILIES AT A DISTANCE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the families we serve need us more than ever. By developing, delivering, and supporting positive youth development programs at a distance, we can help our families as they navigate these unprecedented times.

The virtual delivery of programming can take many forms and may vary from CYP to CYP. The key ingredients for any approach are you, your staff, and your families.

How much virtual programming you offer, how often you offer it, and in what formats you offer are determined by your resources and your families’ needs. The following is guidance and best practice for developing virtual programming, resources to support your efforts, and models that may be used as is or as examples.

No matter your approach, virtual programming is grounded in the same principles of our day-to-day work. We want to create an opportunity for youth to explore, to learn, to share, and to apply their learning in new ways all in a safe, caring, and positive environment.

BEST PRACTICES & TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Start small and increase your frequency and offerings of virtual programming.
- Consider your local schools and their virtual coursework. Plan your virtual programming to support or augment schoolwork rather than competing with it.
- Schedule virtual programming at the same time each day (or week) whether it's a social media post, email, or virtual connection.
- Use an activity plan as your guide to formatting and planning activities.
- Plan virtual activities with the experiential learning model of do, reflect, apply.
- Evaluate your virtual programming efforts with your team, families and youth to consider what is working well, what needs improvement, and what needs to be eliminated.
- Remain flexible in how youth & families participate in your virtual programming.
- Involve several staff members in the delivery of virtual programming.
- Create hashtags for social media sharing.
VIRTUAL YOUTH PROGRAMS

ADULT SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

Activity information is shared with youth and families to complete at home at the families' convenience.

MEDIA-BASED ACTIVITIES

Staff provide activities, tours, conversations, challenges or stories via recordings. Recordings are completed and shared with families for use at their convenience.

SYNCHRONOUS ENGAGEMENT

Staff connect with youth and families in an online environment such as Facebook Live, Instagram Live, GoToMeeting, or Zoom. Synchronous programming can build connections and a sense of belonging.
PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Determining what your families need and what you can do to provide support. Consider a quick check-in either by email, text, conference call, or online survey to determine what activities are of the most interest and which virtual formats are accessible by your families.

Plan your virtual programming a week at a time. Consider a theme or connection across a majority of your virtual activities. Make use of your activity plan in planning activities.

Consider sending documents and/or instructions prior to the activity. This may increase your success rate.

If you have not conducted the activity virtually before, consider trying to virtualize the activity with staff members as a practice before sharing the activity with youth and families.

Share virtual programming with your families in a variety of modes. Engage over social media, send emails or texts, and reach out through channels that your families are accustomed to receiving information from you.

Document virtual activities using the standardized activity plan and after action report.

If offering a synchronous activity, start the event with fun icebreaker, offer the main activity and a time for participants to reflect, wrap up the activity and close with any announcements.

PRESENTER PREP

If you are the person in charge of facilitating the virtual programming, here are some tips for success!

- Be fun and have fun.
- Have a plan. Think through the live format and practice with a teammate.
- Keep instructions simple and clear.
- If you are "going live," ask a co-worker to assist you as the moderator.
- If using a virtual platform (GoToMeeting or Zoom), clear your screen of unrelated items. There is no need to share unrelated information if you share your screen for viewing.
- Practice your activity, your discussion, and your virtual platform.
- Stand up when possible. Your voice is stronger and clearer if you are standing.
- Remember you have an audience; look into the camera to connect with the audience.
SAFETY FIRST

Even though programming may be shifted to a virtual platform, there are still measures your CYP program should consider to support the safety and well-being of youth and families.

- Consider issuing a permission slip to parents for their youth to access programming on virtual platforms (e.g. GoToMeeting or Zoom).
- Require at least 2 CYP staff be present when using GoToMeeting or Zoom.
- Require participants to register for activities supported by GoToMeeting or Zoom and share link only with registered participants. Do not publish virtual meeting urls publicly.
- Require participants to enter a meeting ID# and password (sent after registration) for GoToMeeting or Zoom activities.
- Only allow the presenter/organizer to access screen sharing permissions.
- Ensure the moderator can mute/unmute participants and disable private chats.
- Immediately abandon any virtual event that is taken over by non-registered users.
- Review the Navy Social Media Handbook for additional guidance.

HELPFUL TIPS

Create Group Agreements to remind youth of expectations such as check your tech, be kind online, listen actively & speak up.

Designate additional staff to act as "co-hosts" to monitor chat & question boxes and general health of the event.

Disable "join before host" features for online platforms to ensure CYP staff are present in all synchronous events.

Interact positively online modeling a respectful exchange of ideas. Engage and comment on social media in a positive manner.

Take the opportunity to address constructive feedback on your social media page for all followers to view. If necessary, take the conversation offline and inform your supervisor if necessary.

If a participant posts inappropriate content on your social media page, remove the content and "mute" the participant until an offline conversation on "online expectations" can be held.
CONSIDERATIONS

The virtual delivery of programming can take on many forms and may vary from CYP to CYP. The key ingredients for any approach are you, your staff, and your families.

- Establish a CYP social media page or request an existing MWR/Command social media page broadcast your virtual programming.
- Utilize the email addresses of each family registered for SAC. Blind copy all email recipients.
- Request the use of text messaging programs to contact parents and promote opportunities and activities.
- Connect with families by phone. Call and check in with parents and share plans.
- Request families with youth 5-12 years-old not registered with SAC to register with the CYP to access virtual programming.
- Register a paid membership with GoToMeeting or Zoom.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- Monday
  - Post the activity schedule to social media.
  - Email the activity schedule to all registered families.
- Tuesday
  - Post a video to social media of a staff member demonstrating a fun game that can be played with basic household items.
- Wednesday
  - Post a link to social media of a fun virtual tour (e.g. Yellowstone).
- Thursday
  - Post a video to social media of a staff member conducting mindfulness exercises & techniques.
- Friday
  - Host a SAC virtual meet-up on GoToMeeting or Zoom. Check-in with youth about their week, who played the game at home, what they learned about Yellowstone, how yoga improved their demeanor.
**SAMPLE SCHOOL AGE CARE SCHEDULE**

**GREAT OUTDOORS WEEK**

**Monday**
Reduce & Reuse at Home
Yellowstone
- [https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm?](https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm?)

**Tuesday**
Mindful Walking
- [https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/stress_less_with_mindful_walking](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/stress_less_with_mindful_walking)
Who Lives in a Tree

**Wednesday**
Insect Infested Log Snack
- [https://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/resources/educator-resources/up-for-the-challenge:-lifetime-fitness-healthy-decisions](https://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/resources/educator-resources/up-for-the-challenge:-lifetime-fitness-healthy-decisions)
Maryland Zoo
- [https://www.marylandzoo.org/animals/live-cams-feeds/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIu-PJl9PB6AIVC4eGCh1wGAh7EAAYASAAEgI-3vD_BwE](https://www.marylandzoo.org/animals/live-cams-feeds/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIu-PJl9PB6AIVC4eGCh1wGAh7EAAYASAAEgI-3vD_BwE)

**Thursday**
Building Bird Feeders
Online Duck ID Puzzle
- [https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/quizzes/male-diving-ducks-puzzle/#_ga=2.5391987.1121351093.1585552708-571718463.1584563735](https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/quizzes/male-diving-ducks-puzzle/#_ga=2.5391987.1121351093.1585552708-571718463.1584563735)

**Friday**
Animal Instincts Workout
- [https://family.gonoodle.com/activities/animal-instincts](https://family.gonoodle.com/activities/animal-instincts)
Listen to the Great outdoors
- Spend 15 minutes quietly listening to sounds outside trying to identify what you hear
SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- Monday
  - Post the activity schedule to social media.
  - Email the activity schedule to all registered families.

- Tuesday
  - Host a Instagram Live session to facilitate mindfulness exercises & techniques.

- Wednesday
  - Post a link to social media of a fitness challenge (e.g. squat & pushup challenge)

- Thursday
  - Post a video to social media of a staff member describing & demonstrating a gratitude activity.

- Friday
  - Host a Keystone Club meeting on GoToMeeting or Zoom. Check-in with teens about their week, how the mindfulness technique improved their demeanor, who completed the fitness challenge, ask teens to share their completed gratitude projects.

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- Establish a CYP social media page or request an existing MWR/Command social media page broadcast your virtual programming.

- Utilize the email addresses of each family registered for the Teen Program. Blind copy all email recipients.

- Connect with families by phone. Call and check in, share plans, and gather input.

- Request the use of text messaging programs to contact parents & teens.

- Request families with teens 13-18 years-old not registered with the Teen Program to register with the CYP to access virtual programming.

- Register a paid membership with GoToMeeting or Zoom.
SAMPLE TEEN PROGRAM SCHEDULE

BETTER TOGETHER WEEK

Monday
Peace & Mindfulness
- https://www.cosmickids.com/category/watch/?energy=calm&changed=energypm
Gratitude Activity
- https://www.letterstostrangers.org/get-involved

Tuesday
Fitness Challenge
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bql6sIU2A7k&fbclid=IwAR2GxJucqPjMhNTdbkZZ9w8FQzUdjHSfAP6CVeN7UGAWdLodR97zNsRDvsMpm
Keystone Club Officers Meeting
- Host a pre-meeting with Keystone Club officers to plan the full Club meeting

Wednesday
STEM Challenge
- https://4-h.org/parents/stem-agriculture/youth-stem-activities/building-bridges/
Virtual Tour
- https://www.youvisit.com/tour/doilan

Thursday
Smart Girls / Passport to Manhood / 4-H Club / Keystone Club
- Each week rotate the focus and host a Club meeting and offer curriculum
Virtual Gaming
- Select a collaborative game, request teens to download the app to their phone, sync all players on a conference call platform, and BATTLE!!!

Friday
Mindful Session
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5sXaLzAhGQ
Creative Activity
- Use a paper towel or toilet paper tube as a brush to create your own abstract art
SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- Monday
  - Post the activity schedule to social media.
  - Email the activity schedule to all registered families.

- Tuesday
  - Post a video to social media of a YSF staff member or volunteer coach demonstrating a sports drill that can be replicated at home.

- Wednesday
  - Host a Instagram Live session to facilitate a fitness challenge with teens.

- Thursday
  - Share a NAYS start smart drill/lesson on social media.

- Friday
  - Host a Virtual Physical Education (P.E.) class on GoToMeeting or Zoom. Check-in with children/teens about their week, stretch, facilitate the P.E. class, stretch, and conduct a mindfulness technique.

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- Utilize the email addresses of each family registered for the YSF Program. Blind copy all email recipients.

- Connect with families by phone. Call and check in, share plans, and gather input.

- Request the use of text messaging programs to contact parents & teens.

- Request families with children 3-18 years-old not registered with the YSF Program to register with the CYP to access virtual programming.

- Register a paid membership with GoToMeeting or Zoom.
GET FIT TOGETHER WEEK

**Monday**
- Peace & Mindfulness
  - https://www.cosmickids.com/category/watch/?energy=calm&changed=energypm

**Tuesday**
- Fitness Challenge
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bql6sIU2A7k&fbclid=IwAR2GxJucqPjMhNTdbkZZ9w8FQzUdjHSfAP6CVeN7UGAWdLodR97zNsRDvsMpm

**Wednesday**
- GoNoodle
  - https://family.gonoodle.com

**Thursday**
- BGCA Triple Play
  - Email parents and teens a BGCA Triple Play activity to conduct at home

**Friday**
- P.E. & Trivia with Joe
  - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ
FROM THE FIELD

Reach out to your families with calls or text messages. This personal touch may remind your customers of a forgotten/missed email, social media post, etc. Some youth may be missing the staff and will love the chance to talk.

Identify CYP staff with strong, positive relationships with youth and parents to make phone calls to teens & parents about virtual youth program offerings.

Consider offering incentives for participation. If you have a rewards system in the program, consider creating a similar system or create something just for the virtual environment.

Partner with the School Liaison Officer and use online platforms to conduct Youth Sponsorship Council Meetings, Hail & Farewell Events, or Newcomer Orientation.

Design various "grab-and-go" activity bags for families to pick-up and enjoy at home.

Use GoToMeeting or Zoom to connect teens as they play an online game together.

Set up times for youth and families to call staff at the Center just to check-in, stay connected.

FROM THE FIELD

Request "influential" teens to recruit other teens to participate in virtual programming.

Collaborate with schools and the School Liaison Officer to host or attend virtual graduation celebrations.

Engage youth in planning activities and programs. Ask questions, listen to conversations, and offer opportunities for them to lead events and activities.

Create space in the building to post photos of at home activities. Ask parents and youth to email photos and build a CYP @Home wall. These photos also could be shared on social media.

If your SAC program is open, create opportunities for in-program youth and at-home youth to connect either in shared activities or online engagement.

Ask staff to share their talents through pre-recorded instruction that is posted for families to access. Videos could be leading a craft project, teaching a sports skill, or other activity.

Consider virtual tools to support parent engagement and learning, too. Host family night scavenger hunts or cooking together. Hold a parent meeting. Virtual programming can be our adult members, too.