

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | November 20, 2020

REMINDER: Parents Lead resources are available to support North Dakotans during the pandemic

BISMARCK, N.D. – The COVID-19 pandemic has created routine disruption, disappointment due to cancelled events and stress for many people, including children and teens. The recent increasing number of cases in the state has resulted in academic challenges for many and modified extracurricular activities. Parents and children may feel disappointment or sadness that the school year and activities are not happening as they had planned.

Parents Lead offers tips and resources for parents during this time. It is important to acknowledge that both parents and their children may be grieving. Recognizing that grief can be like a roller coaster with good days, bad days and in-between days is a great first step. There are many ways to support children and teens by empathizing with their loss, spending time together and identifying creative ways they can continue to engage in their favorite activity or sport.

“As parents and trusted adults, we can model for our children how to deal with disappointment, practice gratitude and how our behavior has an ability to positively impact others,” said Laura Anderson, the North Dakota Department of Human Services’ Behavioral Health Division Assistant Director.

Some additional ways parents can support their children and teens include:

- Encourage them to connect with teammates and friends virtually to socialize, practice their activity or do a virtual group workout session.
- Help them identify things they can do at home to improve their skills, like reading books, watching videos of professionals or practicing at home.
- Empower them to check in with their coach or activity lead to identify ways to stay involved or connected. They may have ideas of routines for skill development drills and activities to do at home.

“We are all being impacted by COVID-19 and this shared experience is something that connects us all,” said Anderson. “What our children remember isn’t predetermined and we can help them form positive memories while also learning how to cope with disappointment.”

The Behavioral Health Division continues to develop new resources not only for parents, but also for community members and professionals. Individuals are encouraged to check the [Parents Lead website](#) regularly for new resources, links to helpful information and for updates on supporting families during these times.

The primary goal of Parents Lead is to provide parents and caregivers with tools and resources to support them in promoting the behavioral health and well-being of their children. Interested individuals can also follow Parents Lead on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

The department's Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety, access to services and quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. Learn more about the work of the Behavioral Health Division at www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/.

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