



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Managing Change:

An Activity and Discussion Guide for Kids Ages 6-9

BACK-TO-CLUB



Introduction

Families and youth across the country have been figuring out how to live, work and play during the COVID-19 pandemic. With schools closing early this spring and extracurricular activities cancelled, many youth have now spent weeks to months in their homes. Kids have had to adjust to tremendous changes in their lives. They have had to adapt to entirely new daily routines, like learning to do school at home and finding ways to keep busy inside. They have likely experienced special occasions that would typically involve community, friends and family – like birthdays, the last day of school and holidays – in their homes.

Many kids are experiencing a range of emotions that include both positive and negative feelings. Some of these emotions may be indifference, boredom, confusion, worry, and some kids may also be managing symptoms of anxiety and depression. With supportive relationships, consistency, comfort and reassurance, many youth are successfully navigating the significant transitions they're experiencing. Other youth may be facing additional challenges, may not have the same supports in place, and/or may not be coping as well. It is important to understand how your youth are managing the changes and how they are feeling so that you can best support their well-being.

Your Club or Youth Center may be open to some or all youth this summer and beyond, or you may be serving youth in-person, virtually, digitally, by sending take-home meals or activities, or through a combination of approaches. Transitioning to your Club or Youth Center's summer routine may bring another change for your youth. They will be looking to you for guidance on how to navigate these changes and adapt to the routines this summer and beyond.

Activities and discussions that focus on emotional well-being can help youth to process some of the changes they have experienced, explore and name their feelings, and gain tools for managing their emotions. This resource provides a series of activities and conversation starters to help youth process the changes they have experienced and to understand and manage their feelings.

How to Use this Activity and Discussion Guide

Middle childhood, ages 6-9, is characterized by some very specific developmental changes. Kids in this age group are rapidly developing skills.

- They are able to describe their experiences and talk about their feelings and thoughts in more complex ways.
- They are able to follow a longer series of commands or steps than they were in earlier ages.
- Socially and emotionally, kids in this age group are able to show more concern for others, want to be accepted by their peers, and are starting to think about the future.

Using activities along with conversations can support youths' developing skills providing them with multiple ways to explore their experiences and feelings. Some kids can express their thoughts and feelings quickly. Other kids may need more time to think about their feelings. Starting with an activity can give all kids the opportunity to think about their thoughts and feelings first and then be ready to share what they would like in a conversation.

Below you will find activity ideas and conversation starters for kids ages 6-9. It is recommended that you use the activities and conversations together in the provided order to best support your youth's



emotional well-being. However, these activities and conversation starters are designed to be adaptable in order to best meet your programming needs. As such, you can:

- Use just the activities
- Use just the conversation starters
- Mix and match the activities and conversation starters
- Use just one, multiple or all of activities or conversation starters
- Add in your own activities and conversation starters

Your Club or Youth Center may be serving youth in-person under social distancing guidelines, virtually, digitally, by sending take-home meals or activities, using other approaches, or using a combination of methods. These activities and conversation starters can be used in a range of ways. Here are some ideas.

If serving youth virtually, you could:

- Host and facilitate virtual activities and conversations with youth.
- Invite specific groups of kids, like youth in a leadership club or on a sports team, to join a virtual activity or conversation.
- Host a virtual discussion series. For example, schedule a conversation each week on a different topic and share the topics in advance. You can even invite families to join in.

If serving youth digitally, you could:

- Post the instructions and the handouts, have youth complete the activities at home, and then have them upload photos of their work to your Club or Youth Center's Facebook page or the digital platform you are using.
- Create and post a series of short videos that introduce the activity and provide the activity instructions. Post the handouts or a link to the handouts. Have youth complete the activities at home, and then have them upload photos of their work to your Club or Youth Center's Facebook page or digital platform you are using.
- Host digital conversations. Post a few questions each week on your Club or Youth Center's Facebook page or digital platform and ask youth to post their responses.

If providing take-home resources, you could:

- Create take-home packets with the activity instructions, handouts for the week, and the conversation starters. Encourage families to engage kids in doing the activities and having the conversations at home.

Be sure to check out the guidance below to support you in facilitating effective virtual programming.

Guidance for Virtual Facilitation

- Be sure to follow the safety guidelines outlined in [Creating a Safe Live Virtual Club](#).
- The [Virtual Club QuickStart Guide](#) provides the foundation of what is necessary for addressing online safety, parental permissions, choosing a technology platform, tips for scheduling interactive sessions, and more.
- Consider your group size. A group size of approximately 6-8 youth can allow for all youth to share and also ensure that there are not long stretches with no dialogue.



- Consider hosting discussions that are approximately 30 minutes in length. This will give you enough time to introduce the conversation and allow youth to warm up and get engaged but not to drag on too long.
- Think about how you will facilitate the discussion and the flow of the conversation. Consider, in advance, how you will introduce the topic, which of the questions you will ask, and how you will close the conversation.
- Practice using your technology before the discussion starts.
- Start your discussion with group agreements. Guide your group through the following steps to make sure everyone feels welcome, included, and ready to participate:
 - Check your tech. Does everyone know how to use the features that will allow them to fully engage in the dialogue?
 - Be kind online. Always use kind words and be patient with each other.
 - Listen actively. Do your best to stay present.
 - Speak up. If you have been talking a lot, pause to allow others to jump in the conversation. If you haven't shared yet, look for an opportunity to let others know you are there and interested in what's going on.
 - Facilitate a virtual emotional check-in to further create a safe space, a sense of connection, and get people ready to share. For example, have youth share an emoji that shows how they are feeling today.

Additional Considerations

Before engaging youth in conversation about COVID-19, it is important you are prepared. Below are additional items to consider that will help you have a meaningful, empathetic and safe discussion with youth about their feelings and experiences related to the pandemic. Additionally, there are myths and facts about COVID-19 provided in the appendix of this guide.

Review Your Club's Safety Policies on Disclosures of Abuse

It is essential to review your Club or Youth Center's safety policies and be prepared to respond and report, should youth disclose past or current abuse, or urgent mental health issues. For immediate safety and life-threatening mental health concerns, call 911. For concerns of past abuse or ongoing abuse, neglect, or endangerment, follow your state's mandated reporting requirements. In addition, make sure to report safety related incidents according to your organizational policies, and use the BGCA's Safety Helpline for additional support at 866-607-SAFE.

For more information, use the links below:

- [Safety Policies & Actions](#)
- [Mandated Reporting Disclosures of Abuse](#)
- [Disclosures of Abuse](#)

If you have questions about using this resource in your Club, or general safety questions, please reach out to the safety team at childsafety@bgca.org.

Acknowledge that the Conversation May be Sensitive Topic for Some Youth:

Talking about uncertainty, changes, and stressors may be upsetting for youth and lead to a variety of strong emotions. Before your discussion, try saying something like:



“This is a safe space where you can express your emotions and ask for help. Today we are going to be talking about some things that may cause you to feel some strong emotions. There is no wrong way to feel. You can pass or take a break at any point if you don’t feel comfortable. Both I and [insert name] are here to help. Does anyone have any questions before we start?”

However you word it, your statement should acknowledge that talking about these topics may be difficult, and it should encourage them to take breaks as needed and to talk about their feelings with adults that they trust.

Report and Refer as Appropriate

This discussion guide is not a therapy or counseling tool and should not be used in this way. Some conversations may cause youth to become emotional, share personal stories about past trauma, or even open-up about their mental health.

It is important to keep in mind that you are not expected to take on the role of a therapist or counselor, nor would it be ethical for you to do so. You should, however, be able to recognize when youth are disclosing abuse or another traumatic event, and to report and refer as appropriate.

You are not alone in supporting Club youth. There are many caring adults and professionals available and able to provide support when necessary. If you have a social worker or therapist on staff, ask them to be available to step in if needed during or after program. If you do not have a social or therapist on staff and need additional guidance, be sure to connect with your supervisor.

The links below provide additional information and support:

- [BGCA's Incident Response Guide](#)
- Visit to 211.org for more information on local resources.
- Utilize the free Crisis Text Line by texting CLUB or 741741 to talk with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.

Be Honest

Your goal throughout the conversation is to help youth make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, factual and minimizes fear and stress. During the conversation, you do not have to be able to answer every question – you can say “I don’t know” and point them to available resources.

Validate Youth and Listen to Their Voices

When you are asking youth to share their feelings, it is important to respond to them with validation that you are listening. It’s also important not to tell youth how they should feel or that you know how they feel.

Amplify their voices, not yours. Avoid talking about how you feel/how you think they should feel. Give youth this time to be center stage. Don’t discount members’ feelings with statements such as “You are going to be fine,” or “I know how you feel.” These statements shut down the conversation and youth may no longer feel safe bringing up their emotions.

TIP: Two ways to validate youth’s feelings are to reflect back what you hear them saying and to ask clarifying questions. Here are some statements and questions to help validate youth:

- Reflect back what you hear youth saying by saying “What I hear you saying is...”, “I can hear that you feel...”, and “Your feelings are totally valid. You’re not alone. Can anyone else relate to this feeling?”
- Ask clarifying questions like “How are you feeling about things now?”, “What do you wish would happen?”, and “What was your reaction to that?”



Activities and Conversation Starters

The activities below can be completed individually, to help kids process their thoughts and feelings. You can also do the activities as part of an ongoing project where kids work on the activities and then put them together as a time capsule.

The activities below are part of the kid's 'COVID-19 Time Capsule' created by Natalie Long of LONG Creations and is offered for public use [here](#). The time capsule is also available in French and Spanish. You'll also find bonus pages that can be added to the time capsules.

As you guide kids through the activities, consider doing the activities yourself. Just like your youth, you have been through a lot of changes in your life and have probably experienced a range of emotions. These activities can help you to reflect on your feelings and to gain some tools for managing your emotions. An adult version of the time capsule is also available for public use and is provided [here](#).

Conversation starters are provided below to help you facilitate discussions with your youth that support their emotional well-being. You can use the conversation starters with the activities or without them. If using the conversations along with the activities, facilitate each conversation after conducting each activity.



Activity 1: You Are Living Through History Right Now

Supplies:

- Handouts: page 1 (cover page) and page 2 ('You Are Living Through History') in the kid's COVID-19 Time Capsule
- Containers for the time capsule such as a shoe box, a clean and dry 2-liter soda bottle, small plastic bin, etc.
- Markers or crayons
- Magazine or newspaper clippings (optional)
- Photos (optional)

Activity Instructions:

1. Have your youth create a time capsule container by selecting and decorating the outside of a box or another container.
2. Tell them to decorate the cover of your COVID-19 time capsule, page 1, and add their name.
3. Tell them to complete page 2 'You Are Living through History,' by adding photos, newspaper and magazine clippings, and artwork to the worksheet. Color and decorate the pages.
4. Encourage them to collect or create other small mementos that can fit in their containers that represent the changes they have experienced (like art or crafts they have made, notes or messages they have received, etc.).
5. If possible, have youth share a few special things they have added to page 2 'You Are Living through History' or a few mementos they have put in their time capsule containers. Or, have them upload a picture of what they created to your Club's virtual or digital programming page.
6. If you are making time capsules, have your youth add these pages to their containers.
7. Use the following conversation starters to help youth process some of the changes they've experienced. Depending on your Club or Youth Center, your conversation may be in person, virtual, delivered via digital prompts and responses, or sent via take-home questions.

Conversation 1: Adjusting to Change

We have all experienced a lot of changes in our lives since the coronavirus started spreading, like schools closing, spending a lot of time at home, and adjusting to new routines. Let's talk about some of the changes that you have experienced.

- What are some of the things that have changed for you?
- What are some new things that you have been doing at home?
- How are you staying busy?
- What are some of the things that you miss doing?
- What are some things that you wish you could do or that you are looking forward to doing?

Activity 2: All about Me



Supplies:

- Handouts: page 3 ('All about Me') and page 4 ('How I'm Feeling') in the kid's [COVID-19 Time Capsule](#)
- Markers or crayons

Activity Instructions:

1. Tell your youth complete page 3, 'All about Me' and page 4, 'How I'm Feeling'. Color and decorate the pages.
2. If possible, have youth share a few of their favorite things from their 'All about Me' page with the group or have them upload a picture of that page to your Club's virtual or digital programming page.
3. If you are making time capsules, have your youth add these pages to their containers.
4. Use the following conversation starters to help youth process the 'How I'm Feeling' page. Depending on your Club or Youth Center, your conversation may be in person, virtual, delivered via digital prompts and responses, or sent via take-home questions.

Conversation 2: How I'm Feeling

We've all been through a lot of changes recently and it's totally normal to experience lots of feelings in response to those changes. For example, you may feel happy, relaxed, safe, sad, bored, lonely and more. Sometimes you may not feel strong feelings at all. All of these feelings are normal and these feelings can change from day to day and even from moment to moment. Let's talk about how you are feeling.

- What are some of words that describe your feelings?
- How are you feeling today?
- What are some of the positive things you have experienced while you've been at home (e.g., time with family, calling friends on the phone, celebrating a specific event, etc.)?
 - How did those things make you feel?
- What are some of the things that you have disliked about being home (e.g., being inside all day, missing friends from school, missing the Club or Youth Center, etc.)?
 - How do these things make you feel?
- What have you learned from this experience?
- What are some of the things that you are thankful for?



Activity 3: Staying Busy, Staying Connected

Supplies:

- Handouts: page 6 ('You're Not Stuck At Home, You Are Safe At Home') and page 7 ('Our Handprints') in the kid's [COVID-19 Time Capsule](#)
- Markers or crayons

Activity Instructions:

Note to facilitators: Not all of your youth may live in "homes". Some may live in temporary housing, shelters, hotels/motels or other places. Try to use inclusive language like "where you are staying during the coronavirus" when facilitating this activity and conversation.

1. Tell youth complete page 6, 'You Are Not Stuck At Home, You Are Safe At Home' and page 7, 'Our Handprints'. Color and decorate the pages.
2. If possible, have youth share a few of the things they are doing to keep busy from page 6, 'You Are Not Stuck At Home, You Are Safe At Home' or have them upload a picture of that page to your Club or Youth Center's virtual or digital programming page.
3. If you are making time capsules, have youth add these pages to their containers.
4. Use the following conversation starters to help youth reflect on and share ideas for keeping busy and staying connected.

Conversation 3: My Time at Home

Being at home for so long can be hard, especially when we are used to going to school, going to the Club or Youth Center, and playing with friends. Some days may be fun and other days may be boring. There are probably people that you are spending a lot of time with and others that you miss seeing. Let's talk about how you are connecting with others and staying busy, and let's share some ideas with each other.

- What is your day at home like?
 - What do you do in the mornings?
 - Afternoons?
 - Evenings?
- What are your favorite things to do in the day?
- What are your least favorite things to do in the day?
- What are some good ideas that you've come up with to do when you are bored?
- What do you most miss doing?
- What are you most excited to do when this is over?
- Have you spent time with any friends, family, teachers or Club or Youth Center staff by phone, email, video chat or other ways?
 - How have you connected?
- Who do you most miss seeing?
- Who are you most excited to see when this is over?



Activity 4: Special Occasions

Supplies:

- Handout: page 8 ('Special Occasions') in the kid's [COVID-19 Time Capsule](#)
- Markers or crayons

Activity Instructions:

1. Tell youth to complete page 8, 'Special Occasions'. Color and decorate the pages.
2. If possible, have youth share an occasion they may have celebrated during this time and what they did to celebrate. Or, have them upload a picture of that page to your Club or Youth Center's virtual or digital programming page.
3. If you are making time capsules, have youth add this page to their containers.
4. Use the following conversation prompts to help youth process some of the special events or milestones that may have happened during the quarantine and how these occasions may have looked different than they typically do.

Conversation 4: Events and Experiences

During these last few months at home, you and your family may have had special occasions like holidays, birthdays, graduations, the last day of school, and other events. These events and milestones probably looked different during this time than they would have if we weren't at home. There may have been things that you liked about these events, and there may have been things that you missed or wished could have happened. Let's talk about these special occasions and how they were different.

- Did you and your family have any events or special occasions during this time at home? What were they?
- Did you celebrate?
 - If so, what did you do?
 - Who did you celebrate with?
- What was different about these events??
 - How did you feel about that?
- Were there any special events that you were looking forward to that didn't happen because of coronavirus? (e.g., a vacation, a family reunion, an end-of-school celebration, etc.)?
 - How did you feel about that?
- Are there special occasions or events that you are looking forward to celebrating after it is safe to leave our homes??
 - What do you want that celebration to be like?



Activity 5: Things I Will Remember from This Time Period

Supplies:

- Handouts: page 9 ('Letter to Myself') and page 10 ('Interview Your Household') in the kid's COVID-19 Time Capsule
- Markers or crayons

Activity Instructions:

1. Tell youth to complete page 9, 'Letter to Myself'. Their letters should focus on what they want to remember most from their time at home during coronavirus. This could be the people they spent time with, what they did during the day, how they felt, or a specific event or experience they had.
2. Tell youth to complete page 10, 'Interview Your Household'. Here, they should ask one or several of their family members the questions and write or draw their answers on that page.
3. If your youth want to, they can also ask one of their family members to do page 11 'Letter from Your Household'. Here, family members can write about what stands out to them from their time at home – what the days were like, how they felt, specific events or experiences, or they can write a message to the Club member.
4. Have youth color and decorate the pages.
5. If possible, ask youth to share something that they wrote about in their letter. You could also have them share some of the things they learned from interviewing a family member. Or, have them upload a picture of their letter or interview to your Club or Youth Center's virtual or digital programming page.
6. If you are making time capsules, have youth add these pages to their containers.
7. Use the following conversation starters to help youth reflect on their experiences from their time at home, as well the experiences that their family members have shared in the interview.

Conversation 5: Looking Back and Looking Forward

Our lives have looked pretty different during the spread of coronavirus than they did before. It may not feel like a big deal but you are living through history. When you grow up, you will be able to share what it was like to live through a time like this with others who may not have experienced it – like your future family or future children. Let's talk about the things you will remember most.

- Imagine it is a year from now and you are looking back on the time you spent at home, what will you remember about this?
- What are some of the things you have liked?
- What are some of the things you have disliked?
- What has been the biggest change for you?
- Have you been homeschooling?
 - What has that been like?
- What do you think the biggest change for your family has been?
- Are there things that you think your family has disliked? What are they?
- Are there things that you think your family has liked? What are they?



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- What are you most looking forward to doing when it is safe to leave home?
- What do you think your family is most looking forward to once it is safe to leave home?



Appendix: Myths and Facts

There's so much information swirling around right now about COVID-19 that it's hard to know what's a fact or a myth. Here are some of the most common myths about COVID-19 and the facts that you can use in your conversations with youth.

- **MYTH: COVID-19 is only a problem for older people or people who are already sick.**
- **FACT: Everyone is at risk for contracting COVID-19, regardless of your age.**
 - Older adults and people of any age who have serious medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19. However, people of all age can and have contracted the virus. Children typically only exhibit mild symptoms if infected, but they can give the virus to other people long after symptoms disappear
- **MYTH: There are many ways to treat or cure COVID-19.**
- **FACT: No home remedies have been proven to prevent you from getting COVID-19.**
 - Other supposed remedies, such as gargling with bleach and taking chloroquine, the drug commonly used to treat Malaria, can actually be downright dangerous. The best way to protect yourself from getting COVID-19 or the group of illnesses caused by the novel coronavirus include:
 - Social distancing or staying at least 6 feet away from people who do not live with you on a regular basis and avoiding places where you're likely to be in close contact with other people
- **MYTH: COVID-19 is just like the seasonal flu.**
- **FACT: COVID-19 is more serious and more deadly than the seasonal flu.**
 - Aches and pains, sore throat, fever – although they may feel similar to those suffering from their symptoms, the coronavirus is not the same as the seasonal flu. COVID-19 is significantly deadlier than the seasonal flu. People with COVID-19 also show significant breathing problems compared to those with the flu.
- **MYTH: I'm not experiencing any of the common symptoms of COVID-19 like a dry cough, fever, and body aches, so I can carry on with my life as normal.**
- **FACT: Some people may only experience mild symptoms while others may not show any symptoms of the disease but have the virus.**
 - Being asymptomatic, which means carrying the virus around without being really sick, helps spread COVID-19 from person to person. A person carrying the virus may falsely assume that it's ok to do business as usual- not practicing WASH-UP and social distancing– meanwhile the virus is being spread to their close family, friends and strangers alike. To be on the safe side, follow guidance from the experts on how to stay healthy and do your part to prevent the spread of the disease.



Sources

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