

Young Voices of the Pandemic

Mission Australia's Youth Survey report on young people's concerns about COVID-19

Among young people¹ who said COVID-19 impacted on their education, sense of isolation and/or mental health² in 2020:



Worries about their education



41.1% of young people who were concerned about their education were 17 years old (n=223)

"My biggest issue was online schooling, I feel as if not having physical contact and being withheld from a learning environment has effected my studying and learning capability." Male, 18, Vic

"The biggest issue I have been dealing this year is my stress, mostly with getting back from online learning and I feel like I have been falling back a bit with my grades and I'm scared to fail." Female, 15, NSW

"I just need more support and reassurance that I won't be put at a loss because of COVID." Female, 17, NSW

Feeling isolated



43.9% of young people who were concerned about being and feeling isolated were living in Victoria (n=152)

"The biggest issue that I have faced within the past year is what the corona virus has taken away from me. I have been trying out for a team for 5 years, finally made it but now we cannot play." Female, 17, SA

"Just during quarantine, how easy it is to fall into a bored stupor." Male, 15, Vic

"The COVID lockdown...I wasn't able to spend as much time with my family and felt disconnected." Male, 16, ACT

Decline in mental health



68.9% of young people who were concerned about their mental health were female
(n=199)

“My biggest issue this year was my struggle with depression. Whilst I’ve had depression most of my life, the quarantine, isolation and cancelling of events, alongside a ton of stress from my final year of school, has not been too kind on my mental state.” Male, 17, WA

“The biggest issue I’ve been dealing with is my mental health. My family homelife hasn’t been the best and it was getting harder to feel loved, supported and safe when going through the COVID ‘holiday’/quarantine. I was contemplating suicide and I thought no one wanted me around.” Female, 15, Qld

What do young people think should be done about their concerns?



18.5% of young people suggested solutions to their concerns

→ Help young people to help themselves

“Students need to be given techniques to handle stressors such as mindfulness strategies. Teenagers don’t automatically know how to deal with stress. This is a skill they need to be taught. I have found education in mental wellbeing particularly lacking in my years at school. In my opinion teaching students strategies to deal with stress should be an absolute must in all schools.” Female, 17, Qld

→ Supports to achieve educational goals

“I feel like we should be given more leniency with our end of school results and more assistance through the last years of our schooling. This could be helped through assisted university entry and leniency to future endeavours of the students after they graduate.” Female, 17, NSW

→ Support from Government and services to support wellbeing

“I guess making therapy/counselling more open and decreasing the stigma around it would be good.” Female, 16, NSW

Notes

1. Young people are aged 15-19 years

2. 953 of 1,650 young people who cited COVID-19 as their top personal concern in 2020

Greenland, N. and Hall, S. (2021) Young Voices of the Pandemic—Youth Survey COVID-19 Report 2020. Mission Australia: Sydney, NSW