

How has COVID-19 Affected the Mental Health of Children and Young People in the United Kingdom?

The impacts of coronavirus are vast, and changing week by week. As a result, issues being raised and discussed by the fast-growing Kooth community of children and young people evolving continuously.

Of the thousands of digital conversations being had, we are seeing spikes in many presenting issues, such as sadness, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, abuse and loneliness. It is critical that we meet the needs of children and young people through this crisis, encouraging those with emerging concerns to express themselves and those with ongoing issues to continue their support.



The Headlines



Increased Demand for Mental Health Support

We are seeing more young people than ever looking to Kooth for support. Now that traditional means of support are closed to many, it's clear that digital has a vital role to play in supporting mental health and wellbeing. Offering anonymity and freedom to access help when it's needed is key; we're there for young people when they need us.



Children are Feeling the Impact as Family Bonds are being Tested

Young People are discussing parental arguments, with many saying they would usually see friends or 'escape' for a while. In the current situation, many have said they feel trapped. An increase of 2,849% has been observed due to increased issues with 'sibling relationships'.



Quarantine Sees Sharp Rise in Sadness and Depression

Many Young People are unhappy that they can't see their boyfriends/girlfriends. One young person whose parents are separated and who lives with her Mum is regularly seeing her Dad and his 'new family' on TikTok, which is causing a lot of anxiety.



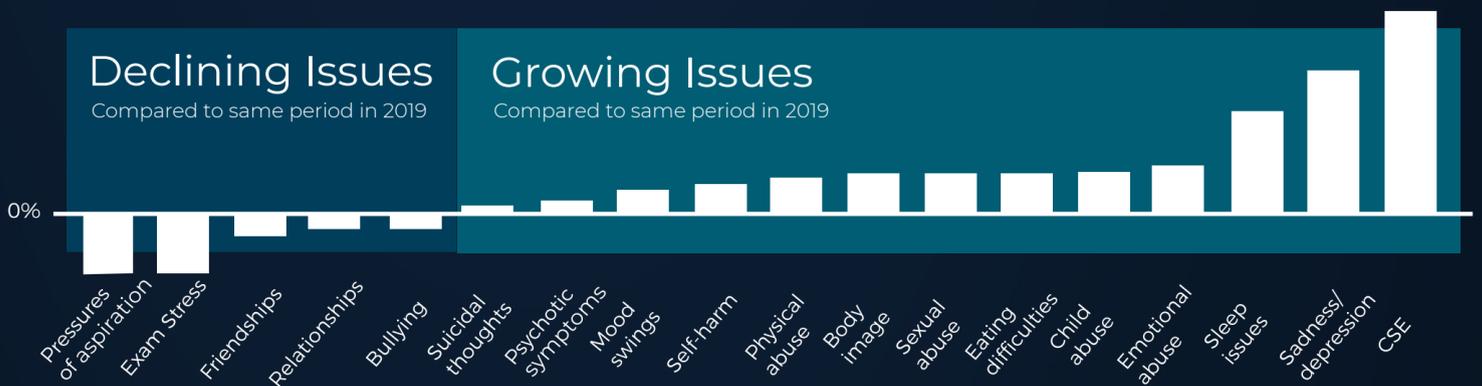
Children Bear Brunt of Increasing Violence at Home under Lockdown

In such close proximity to each other, and within an international crisis where emotional intensity can only be heightened, domestic violence is given more fuel than the situation ordinarily would have.



Lockdown Produces Increasing Levels of Loneliness

There has been a sudden and significant change to people's ability to interact with others due to lockdown. For some, work or school may have been their main source of social connection, and people are not able to access their support network in the same way.



Children are Struggling to Sleep Properly in Lockdown

Sleep is a big concern. It's clear a lack of regular routine is interfering with sleep patterns. Young People are reporting not feeling tired or having not done enough during the day. Many are experiencing racing thoughts when trying to get to sleep.



Suicidal Thoughts Show Concerning Upward Trend

Many people are suffering from the loss of services which they relied on to manage their self-harm or suicidal ideation. Young People are feeling a loss of pastoral and peer support. Teachers are no longer able to keep an eye on them.



Lockdown brings a Rise in Children's Eating Difficulties

For Young People with eating disorders, it's a struggle for them to find their safe foods or food brands. When they hear about people in this country going without food, there is a lot of guilt around eating being discussed.



Health Anxiety Escalates amid Coronavirus Outbreak

We are continually fed content about the health crisis, so it's almost impossible not to be impacted by this. There is a healthy level of caution to be felt so that our instincts kick in and we can keep ourselves and others safe but there is also a growing amount of health anxiety that can only exacerbate worries and anxiety.



Psychotic Symptoms are Showing an Increase

During the current crisis, it is crucially important that we are alert to signs that someone may be developing a psychotic illness and that those with an existing presentation continue with their treatment. Challenges to attending face to face services (particularly if medication plays a role in treatment) needs addressing as a priority during the lockdown period.