

For immediate release

New research identifies Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People's Mental Health

COVID-19 has led to an elevated awareness of threat in the environment and has caused major disruptions to families' lives, through social distancing, school closures, and now effective lock-down.

A new research survey launched this week from experts at the University of Oxford. It will track children and young people's mental health throughout the COVID-19 crisis to identify what advice, support and help can actually protect their mental health.

COVID-19 presents a rapidly changing situation where different pressures, including changes to children and young people's social lives, daily routines, and access to education as well as challenges associated with families spending extended periods at home, will arise for children, young people and their families over time.

Data from the first 1300 parents who have responded indicates that their top three stressors currently relate to:

- Work (54% of participants reported that this was causing quite a lot or a great deal of stress)
- Their children's wellbeing (52%)
- Friends and family outside of the household (50%)

Professor Cathy Creswell, Departments of Psychiatry and Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, said,

'Research has provided valuable information about how parents and carers can support their children's mental health in general. However, at this point, we know very little about what might be most effective in the current context of COVID-19. We hope to have more than 10,000 parents and carers across the UK complete the new online survey. Their responses will help us really understand how families are coping and what support could make all the difference to children, young people and their families at this time.'

This [survey](#), called **Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics)**, aims to track children and young people's mental health

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throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Survey results will help researchers identify what protects children and young people from deteriorating mental health, over time, and at particular stress points, and how this may vary according to child and family characteristics. It also aims to identify what advice, support and help parents would find most useful.

Parents/carers will be invited to complete an online longitudinal weekly questionnaire for a month, then fortnightly for a month, and then monthly until schools reopen. The first survey takes about 15-20 minutes, and subsequent surveys about 10 minutes. Parents/carers will be asked to answer questions about family life and relationships, overall health and well-being, parenting, psychological symptoms and how they and their child are coping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In collaboration with colleagues at University College London, parents of 11-16 year olds are now also being invited to give permission for their adolescent to take part and give their own perspective on how they are getting on.

Regular summaries of key findings will be made available via the UKRI www.emergingminds.org.uk research network website throughout the study and will be shared directly with partner organisations in health and education services and the community and voluntary sector, to inform the development of effective support for children, young people and families.

This research is supported by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, the Oxford and Thames Valley NIHR Applied Research Consortium and the UKRI Emerging Minds Network Plus.

Ends

Notes to editor:

- This new survey Co-SPACE (COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics) is online at <http://cospaceoxford.com/survey>.
- The University Department of Psychiatry's mission is to conduct world-class research, teach psychiatry to medical students, develop future researchers in a graduate programme, teach doctors in training, promote excellence in clinical practice, and develop and provide innovative clinical services. It supports research in four key areas: neurobiology, psychological treatments, developmental psychiatry and social

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psychiatry. The Department is committed to the translation of scientific discovery into benefits for patients. www.psych.ox.ac.uk

- The University of Oxford's Experimental Psychology Department's mission is to conduct world-leading experimental research to understand the psychological and neural mechanisms relevant to human behaviour. Wherever appropriate, we translate our findings into evidence-based public benefits in mental health and well-being, education, industry, and policy. Key areas of research include Behavioural Neuroscience, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, and Psychological and Brain Health.
- Funding for the University of Oxford's coronavirus research is crucial to the development of a vaccine and the subsequent delivery of effective drugs to combat this new virus. Unprecedented speed, scope and ambition is required.
Please [make a gift](#). Any gift made will help contribute to the fight against coronavirus.
- The NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre is a partnership between the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Oxford. We aim to bring the best science to the complex problems of mental health and dementia.
www.oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk
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