

COVID-19's impact on youth mental health the focus of new research

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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 today from experts at the University of Oxford, 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.

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 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 will take about half an hour, and subsequent surveys

about 15-20 minutes. Parents/carers will be asked to answer questions about family life and relationships, overall health and wellbeing, parenting, psychological symptoms and how they and their child are coping during the Covid-19 pandemic. 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 organizations in health and education services and the community and voluntary sector, to inform the development of effective support for [children](#), [young people](#) and families.

Provided by University of Oxford

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