

COVID-19: The views and experiences of young people with an out-of-home care experience in Tasmania

CREATE in Tasmania asked 26 young people (aged between 14-17 years old) with a care experience about their experiences during COVID-19.

89%
of young people rated the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on their education or training in the middle to high range.

Young people also indicated that their mental health, physical health, and family contact were affected during COVID-19.

Generally, young people felt they had a good understanding of what was happening and were coping well with social distancing.

Carers and friends were good sources of help and support during COVID-19.

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I got a fair bit behind school because there wasn't really anyone to explain it and we didn't get much help during quarantine. (Female, 14)

[My greatest concern during COVID-19 was] probably the state of my mental health with not being able to get out and do the things that I normally do. (Male, 17)

I can't see my siblings as I don't live with them. (Female, 15)
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Key Messages

- Most young people reported that COVID-19 affected their education in some way. Difficulties described included:
 - inability to access technology they needed to learn at home,
 - limited learning support and help,
 - concentration and motivation challenges, and
 - limited social and emotional support.
- Those whose mental health had been affected by COVID-19 commented about:
 - feeling angry, lonely, stressed, and/or worried;
 - missing friends;
 - an increase in arguments in their homes, and
 - limited ability to use self-care strategies.Some young people felt their mental health conditions had worsened.
- Young people's physical health was affected by their ability to exercise (e.g., unable to go to the pool, gym). Some were able to adapt the way they exercised.
- Family contact changed or stopped for many young people. Some noted that this reduced the quality of interactions and caused some distress for those involved.



School is one of my main ways of socialising and letting off my anxious feelings... [At home], you don't necessarily have people to bounce ideas off of and people there for support. It's getting better now. It's going to take a long time to get back to close to normal, but it's getting better. (Male, 17)

Actions

- Make sure all young people can access extra support they might need for school e.g. teacher aides, tutoring, mental health support and financial support.
- Provide support for young people's mental health. This includes allocation of funding to youth-focused mental health services to reduce delays, and support for strengthening relationships between young people and carers.
- Support young people to re-engage in physical activities and exercise, including education about finding different activities when needed.
- Ensure young people have plans and resources (e.g. phone credit, internet connection) to connect with family members that work for everyone.

Contact CREATE to get a
copy of the full report.
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