

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

CREATE asked 28 young people (aged between 14 - 18 years) with a care experience about their experiences during COVID-19.

Young people most frequently reported that their greatest concern during COVID-19 was the reduced contact with friends and family.

More than 75% of participants felt they were coping reasonably well with social distancing and had a good level of understanding about what was happening.

While some young people used other methods to contact family and friends (e.g., video or phone calls), many found these methods difficult.

Most young people said that their education was affected by COVID-19 with 81% (N = 22) of participants rating a mid- to high level of impact.

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I wasn't allowed to visit them (family members). We were only allowed to ring each other on the phone. We're back visiting each other so that's good. It was hard. (Male, 17)

Mostly because you can't see your friends, but you could speak to them online and stuff, but it was hard to cope without seeing them. (Male, 16)

I did not like studying at home. It was hard and stressful. Everyone found it stressful. (Female, 18)

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Key Messages

- COVID-19 has affected young people's lives in many ways. Participants in this consultation most frequently expressed concerns about being unable to see their friends and family and the impacts to their education. Other areas of concern included the impacts to their mental health and not being able to do their usual activities.
- Young people consistently commented on the importance of social connection, particularly face-to-face interactions with friends. Some related reduced social interaction to difficulties with their mental health and quality of life in care.
- Most young people rated that COVID-19 had a mid- or high amount of impact on their education. Young people expressed difficulty learning from home, particularly experiencing challenges with technology, motivation and inadequate support.
- Most young people rated the impact of COVID-19 on their transition planning as low. However, many young people over the age of 15 did not appear to be engaged in transition planning or have a good understanding of what transition planning was.



I felt very isolated. (Female, 17)

Actions

- Work with young people to support them to stay connected to peers and maintain healthy relationships (e.g., creation of peer support groups).
- Ensure young people have access to affordable mental health care if they need it (e.g., support to manage emotions about COVID-19).
- Ensure young people have contact arrangements to stay connected to family members and the resources to enact these plans.
- Ensure that young people who need support at school are identified and are provided support (e.g. teacher aides, mental health support, access to resources such as internet connection and computers).
- Ensure young people are engaged in transition from care planning.
- Ensure that recovery initiatives are co-developed with young people and any information designed for young people is accessible and easy to understand.

Contact CREATE in VIC
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