

## 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.

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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.

Consultation  
completed in 2020

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