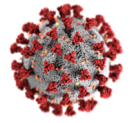


Children and Covid-19

Why are children suffering?



While all of us have suffered to some extent from the pandemic and the effects of both the virus itself and lockdown it has become clear since lockdown started in March that many children and young people are struggling with the impact which Covid-19 has had and is having on their mental health.



With the proposed full return to school this month and pressure on parents to return to work we expect the crisis to become more serious with no certainty on the extent of the actual impact on children or young people and what issues it will create.

Issues for children and young people which could impact their mental health:

The impact of isolation from peers, friends and family for a prolonged period.

Issues and concerns over falling behind in their education – particularly when the child has limited access to home schooling.

Family members becoming seriously ill with Covid-19.

Bereavement of family or friends due to Covid-19.

Worries about returning to school with Covid-19 still around.

Future exams and grading systems and their impact on long term prospects and plans.

Concerns about changes to the school environment due to Covid-19 such as the wearing of face masks.

The impact on family members who are key workers.

Living in a violent or abusive household.

Once schools are open, the risk of the virus spreading to family members who are vulnerable or shielding.

The impact of a second wave.

Further school closures including pressure on parents or carers who work.

Isolation
Abuse
Bereavement
Change
Exams

Young People are Lonely: nine in ten report missing being face-to-face with people and three-quarters feel lonelier and more isolated during lockdown.

Young People need safe spaces, with more than half feeling that their relationship with their family has become more strained during lockdown.

Young People are Struggling with School, 56% are worried about falling behind.

Back on Track
YMCA
August 2020

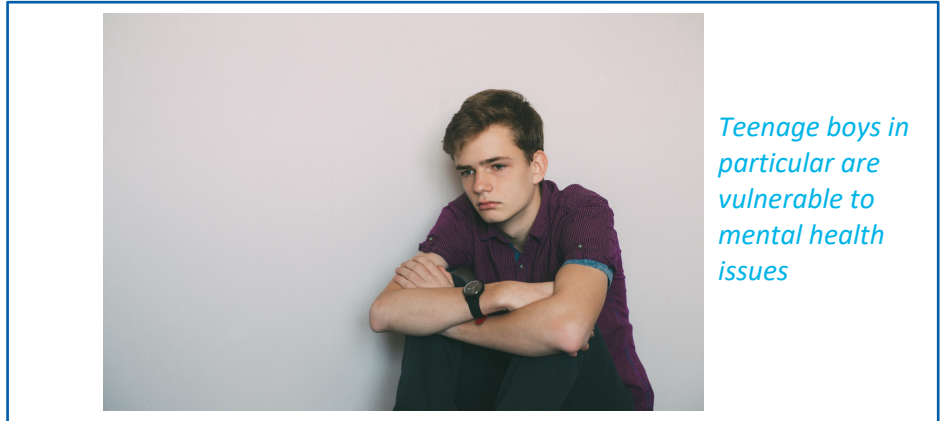
The New Normal

“Adolescents are at a unique period in their lives when the social environment is important for crucial functions in brain development, self-concept construction, and mental health... peer interaction is a vital aspect of development”

The effects of social deprivation on adolescent development and mental health

THE LANCET CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

June 12, 2020



During the pandemic and consequent lockdown many children have been trapped in environments which intensify emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The isolation and anxiety caused is exacerbating pre-existing mental health issues. New psychological and emotional problems are also emerging.

Now schools have re-opened, but life is not returning to normal. Many children consider school to be their 'safe place', but new Covid specific health and safety measures mean that children placed into a bubble may find themselves removed from their wider circle of friends. Trusted adults will have their faces hidden behind masks. Warning signs everywhere:



STOP COVID-19

DO NOT ENTER

The trauma faced by children during and after the pandemic is significant, yet we don't know what the actual impact will be, we may see panic attacks or school refusal and attendance issues.

Therapeutic services offered by providers like Kids Inspire are essential to overcoming fears and developing resilience.

A Response to Covid-19 Talk Together Project

**Support
Mental Health
Self-Esteem
Confidence**

“Schools can provide a safe environment for children to return to. However, this will not be a smooth transition. Things cannot and will not go back to normal by themselves. Psychological and therapeutic support will be needed for the children to regain their self-regulation and regain a sense of safety and resilience.”

Sue Bell
Clinical Director
Kids Inspire

The project team will work with children and young people with low level depression, anxiety, low mood and concerns or worries about Covid-19 which, amongst other things, may result in panic attacks, school refusal or attendance issues.

What is Talk Together?

It is a therapeutic service within the county of Essex which, because of Covid-19, is delivered mainly by video-link and telephone.

Who benefits?

Children and young people from the age of 4 to 18, with some exceptions for people with special needs.

How are children referred?

Referrals are made by schools, family doctors or key workers.

What Happens Next?

It is imperative that we do not forget that one size does not fit all and that needs will fit across a continuum from early intervention to complex trauma. All children are first screened and once they are accepted onto the programme they receive three initial support sessions. For some children this is all the help they will need.

The length and intensity of support offered is tailored to individual needs by qualified and accredited therapists. Sessions could be 1 on 1, in small groups, or as a family.

Early Intervention	Complex Needs	Extremely Complex Needs
3 to 10 sessions	Up to 20 sessions	Up to 30 sessions
Where lockdown has caused issues or exacerbated pre-existing issues.	For children or young people with pre-existing mental health issues or trauma or loss.	Pre-existing mental health needs or trauma with additional Covid-19 related trauma or loss.

450 sessions are provided each week – this expected to rise substantially with the start of the new school term

A Treasure Bag is a bag of art, craft and play resources

“Thank you so much! The strategies and motivational help look fantastic.”

Mum



Treasure Bag

Therapeutic Play

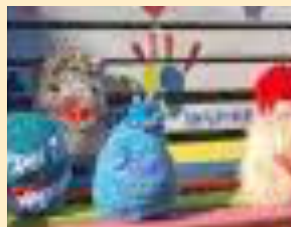
Treasure bags are used mainly for the youngest children. During on-line therapy sessions this valuable resource enables them to interact with their therapist through play and art activities.

The contents of the bags vary between children according to the child's specific needs, but they cost about £15 each.

Since March 2020 when UK lockdown began over 250 treasure bags have been passed to children taking part in therapy sessions.

What is in a Treasure Bag?

Treasure bags are tailored to each child, their age, needs and the type of therapy.



For the youngest children they contain activities that allow the child to join in with play therapy when on-line with a therapist.

The bags can be used for children up to the age of 16 where art materials can be provided to help deliver effective online art therapy



The need for all types of mental health therapy for children is expected to rise dramatically once the new school term is underway when teachers and other professionals begin to interact with children who may have been suffering in silence for months.

What We Hope to Achieve

Self-Worth
Resilience
Strength

Early intervention stops a problem becoming a crisis.

A return to school means mental health issues among children will become more visible and the need for support greater than ever.

Now is the time to draw on the expertise of those with established trauma informed practices. Specialist support for those who have survived Covid-19 physically is imperative if children and young people are going to recover emotionally.

Support for users will include therapy sessions, on-line support with specialist practitioners, and art and play therapy using treasure bags. Continuing support will be provided by volunteer mentors.

A happy outcome is a happy child



Outcomes

An ability to manage feelings and behaviour in a healthy way

Improved confidence and self-esteem

Resilience to the current situation



Confidence to go forward

Since March 2020 the Talk Together project team have undertaken more than 7,000 sessions in Essex, and with the opening of schools expects to deliver in excess of 500 sessions per week.

With your support children will not become part of a Covid-19 damaged generation; but will emerge from this crisis with increased self-worth and resilience.

How Your Money Will Be Spent

Every Penny Counts

With Your support we can reach our target

Help up to 35 children and young people suffering emotional turmoil because of Covid-19

Our initial target is £4,500

This will provide

35 children with an initial three sessions to assess their needs

or

10 children with 10 therapy sessions

Your Donations

£12

Will pay for a session with a mentoring volunteer



£15

Buys a treasure bag to help the youngest children

£42

Covers the cost of one session

£126

Pays for the cost of the initial 3 sessions to assess the needs of a child or young person in need of emotional support



£420

Will pay for 10 sessions with a trained therapist

£1,020

Enables a therapist to help a child through 20 sessions

£1,920

For children in the greatest need, £1,920 will pay for 30 therapy sessions



Thank you