



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 24, 2020

## Coronavirus Panic and Lockdowns Causing PTSD in Children, Charity Warns

The coronavirus panic and associated lockdowns are having “devastating” effects on children, including post-traumatic stress disorder, a British children’s charity warns.

In a [new report](#), the Childhood Trust says it “is extremely concerned about the ways in which this crisis is adversely and disproportionately affecting disadvantaged children and young people.”

“Families who were already enduring hard, challenging lives have had to survive lockdown in the most appalling circumstances. For children in poverty, the crisis has multiplied the impact of the adversities they endure such as hunger, fear, isolation and stigma,” the report reads. “The consequence[s] of this have not yet begun to be understood.... It may take many years for the devastating impact on children to be fully documented.”



The report notes that “lockdown orders” have “created new challenges for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.” Forced to remain at home, they are more likely to witness or be subjected to abuse, and this abuse is likely to go undetected since they will not be seen by outsiders who are trained to recognize evidence of it. Abuse is also likely to increase because of the lockdown-induced economic collapse.

Higher alcohol consumption — the United Kingdom saw a 21-percent increase in retail alcohol sales during the lockdown — will also have unfortunate effects on children. “Alcohol dependency and alcoholism are both linked to issues of violence, domestic abuse and sexual assault,” according to the report. Moreover, since children are witnessing more drinking by their parents, they are more likely to become heavy drinkers during adolescence.

Children with existing mental-health issues have suffered as a result of the lockdowns and the hype over death counts that, in reality, [aren’t out of line](#) for a flu-like illness. In a survey of over 2,000 young people with a history of mental-health issues by the charity Young Minds, 83 percent reported that the virus situation had worsened their mental health. “A systematic review of 63 studies” found that “uncertainty about the length of quarantine, infection fears, boredom, frustration, lack of necessary supplies, lack of clear information, financial loss, and stigma will likely contribute to an increase of negative psychological outcomes,” says the report.

The [BBC](#) writes:



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Laurence Guinness, chief executive of the Childhood Trust, told BBC News many children it had spoken to were experiencing “vivid nightmares” about the coronavirus and death — a possible side-effect of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

These children had been particularly affected by the global death tolls, he said, which had made them worried their parents and friends would die of coronavirus.

“The rising death tolls being reported every day — these kids have seen all of that and internalized it,” he said.

An 11-year-old boy quoted in the report, for example, said, “Since there’s been a lot of deaths, it to me, feels like it’s going to end humanity soon.”

Galiema Amien-Cloete, a primary-school headteacher in London, told the BBC that besides being affected by their parents’ anxiety over the virus, children are experiencing something akin to “bereavement” over their loss of routine, contact with friends, and schooling.

The Children’s Trust pointed to other problems the lockdowns are causing for children. Many, particularly those from poorer households, are not getting regular education; Guinness told the BBC that the loss of routine and special educational attention has been “catastrophic” for children with autism. Disadvantaged children are also being deprived of the free meals they get at school each day, and families are struggling to feed their kids because of the lockdown-driven unemployment and supply-chain disruptions. Homeless families have it even worse: Avoiding germs is almost impossible in shelters, buying necessities is difficult with stores closed, and non-emergency medical attention is hard to come by.

All of this, of course, could have been avoided had governments implemented policies to protect those truly vulnerable to COVID-19, primarily the elderly, but otherwise left people alone. Instead, an entire generation of children may well be suffering the effects of the panic and lockdowns for years to come.

“People keep saying ‘when the coronavirus is over,’” Amien-Cloete said. “But there is no ‘when this is over.’”

“It’s like grief,” she added. “They say you never get over someone’s passing, you only learn how to live with it.”

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*Michael Tennant is a freelance writer and regular contributor to The New American.*



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