

The COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Teenagers' Mental Health and their Education

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Author Biography:

My name is Josephine Desaulles. I am 16 years old and study in Paris at École Jeannine Manuel in the IB system in grade 11 / year 12. I am French and during the COVID-19 pandemic I lived in Singapore, Shanghai and now in Paris. This is my first time writing a research paper. I chose to write my research paper on this pandemic as it has been a very important part in my life. I found it worth researching more about the subject and how people my age reacted to the virus.

Abstract

The spread of Covid-19 as a global pandemic over the last two years has plunged the world into unprecedented and drastic changes to everyday life. This paper will focus on how young adults in high school between the ages of thirteen and eighteen have been affected. Those teenagers in the prime of their character development phase of their lives have profoundly felt the obligation of the pandemic to stay indoors, thus creating a disruption in their routines. Between the lack of social interactions with their peers, the lack of outdoor activity and the collective anxiety and fear due to the presence of an unknown new virus, the abrupt spike in mental health issues during this pandemic shows the strong impact of COVID-19 on this age range. The change that has most affected teenagers is the need to stay inside to prevent the spread of

this virus. This has increased the amount of screen time for teenagers, contributing to their lack of social interaction and feelings of self-isolation, and left them unable to physically exercise in the way they used to. Some of them need this release of endorphins to keep from exercising self-harm, and the pandemic has pushed many to go back to old tendencies. This has not been helped by the collective trauma caused by the virus and the amount of misinformation available on the internet. Fear and anxiety of this virus added to changes in the routine of a developing adult created by the pandemic have been the main effects of this pandemic. To add a more personal dimension to this paper, I have added my personal experience throughout this pandemic and how the lockdown personally has affected me.

Key words : COVID 19, teenagers' mental health, education, social isolation, collective trauma, fake news, disruption of routine, social interaction, screentime

The COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Teenagers' Mental Health and their Education

Since March 2020, the normality of daily life has been compromised. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected absolutely everything, including the way we communicate and think. Living in isolation from one another has particularly affected those in transition periods. In particular, adolescents spend most of their teenage years, 13-18 years-old, trying to figure out their identity and who they want to be. The pandemic's impact on disrupted daily life has hindered adolescent development and added stress to teenagers' education and overall health. Indeed, making teens spend days indoors while online studying without being able to meet friends easily has a detrimental effect on their mental health. I argue that the COVID-19-imposed self-isolation has completely changed the way teenagers learn and interact, and has had a significant impact on their mental health.

Due to government-imposed rules and regulations that imposed social isolation, teenagers are spending less time outdoors and are having fewer social interactions. As a result, both high school and college students now spend most of their time in front of their screens, both to study and socialize. While digital connection can be helpful, it is different from in-person interactions. Many teenagers developed mental health issues as a result of the pandemic, such as addictions, anorexia or depression. Moreover, the change in their routine, loss of life to COVID, and isolation, led some to turn to substances or increased their use in comparison to that before the pandemic.

The pandemic also comes with an increased sense of collective fear and anxiety, coming from the struggle of governments to predict when or how this crisis will end. Those types of emotions are amplified and spread, especially online, during uncertain times. “Fear thrives on ignorance and misinformation can be, spontaneously or deliberately, used to manipulate emotional responses.” The combination of fear and ignorance can lead to a rapid spread of false information about COVID-19, which carries real-life consequences such as fewer people getting vaccinated. However, as the world becomes more digitally connected, also, more resources become digitally accessible for those who understand how to use them wisely. Furthermore, the costs and time associated with commuting allow for additional time to be spent on studying or socializing online.

Increased Screen Time

The enforced social isolation as a direct consequence of the pandemic, had an impact on teenagers' social life. Those more mentally fragile, or in need of a routine, were significantly impacted for the worse. Life was for the most part moved online and as a result, teenagers spent more time on their screens and less time outdoors¹. A study surveying 624 teenagers on April 30, 2020 explained that 64% of teenagers reported that their outdoor activities drastically declined in the early months of the pandemic. Yet, in the same batch of surveyed teenagers, 77% confirmed that they thought outdoor activities beneficial for relieving their stress associated with the pandemic². Let us concentrate on a single individual in the study, a 17-year-old ballerina dancer who had been suffering from suicidal thoughts and panic attacks before the pandemic. She explained that dancing made her oblivious to the negative feelings around her, it served as a way of relieving the daily stress. When the pandemic started, her ballet school closed and it left a void in her daily routine, making her depressed and anxious. Unable to relieve the built-up anxiety, she burned herself with the iron metal and stabbed herself with her makeup brushes³. In cases like this, where sports and activities mean everything to the teens, where sports make them feel safe, taking it away from them may be life threatening. This girl relied on those

¹ Anonymous, "THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS", *Child and Adolescent*. Accessed on the 31 July, 2021. <https://www.childandadolescent.org/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-high-school-students/>

² Emily Henderson, "Outdoor activities help improve mental health and well-being of teenagers during the pandemic," *News*, March 8 2021. Accessed on 31 July, 2021. <https://lifestyle.livemint.com/relationships/raising-parents/what-do-pandemic-restrictions-mean-for-teens-social-life-111615863578129.html>

³ Rose Wong and Kailyn Rhone, "As COVID rose, so did teen suicide attempts. Girls are most at risk." *Tampa Bay Times*, July 28, 2021. Accessed on July 31, 2021. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2021/07/28/as-covid-rose-so-did-teen-suicide-attempts-girls-are-most-at-risk/>

specific moments where nothing else mattered except her next dance move. As a matter of fact teenagers that are a part of a sports team are less likely to commit suicide⁴. Gathering these sources of evidence, we can see that outdoor activities are absolutely necessary for teenagers' wellbeing, especially those predisposed to mental health issues. With social isolation being imposed by governments around the world, teenagers were stuck in their rooms and therefore less likely to willingly go outside and practice their favorite activities. In addition, teenagers who were a part of sports teams could not practice or meet up with their teammates which added a feeling of frustration. All of these factors play a role in a person's well-being as the more you exercise the better you will be mentally and physically.

However, in some isolated cases, this free time spent indoors has created time for teenagers to set themselves goals and challenges. Online workout routines to do at home with limited equipment were also posted on YouTube. Short-term challenges became popular and encouraged people to set a short-term goal with a specific focus. Videos posted by Youtubers like the "two-week challenges"⁵ by Chloe Ting were a good exercise that kept teenagers motivated to stay fit and healthy. Athletes began taking classes online with routines that could be done at home with their teammates exercising at the same

⁴Jean M. Twenge, "Teens Did Surprisingly Well in Quarantine", *The Atlantic*, OCTOBER 13, 2020. Accessed on August 7, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/10/how-teens-handled-quarantine/616695/>

⁵ Chloe Ting, "Two Week Shred Challenge," Chloe Ting, August 2020. <https://www.chloeting.com/program/2020/two-weeks-shred-challenge.html>

time as them. More than half of the athletes continued to receive virtual training from their clubs and coaches.⁶

This time gave the opportunity for teenagers to slow down and engage in a different daily routine and allow themselves to choose what they wanted to do during quarantine. They could try new activities, which they would have never thought about if they were not in this situation, like juggling or painting. This meant that the lack of possibility of outdoor activities and outdoor interactions generated more time for teenagers to focus on themselves; they learned to appreciate their own company and listen to what they wanted to do. Teenagers also managed to save money from their commutes and other activities. Instead of spending time and money on going to the cinema or to different theme parks, they would have to change their routines and participate in different activities which made them stay at home or around their home. Instead of spending time and energy going to school, they now only had to wake up and open their computer. This rearrangement of their routine gave them an opportunity to study or bond, but the physical aspect of socializing remained a challenge.

Staying Home

⁶ Isabella Q. Liu, “The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on High Performance Secondary School Student-Athletes”, *The Sport Journal*, July 22, 2021. Accessed on August 9, 2021. <https://thesportjournal.org/article/the-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-high-performance-secondary-school-student-athletes/>

With little possibility to go outside, teenagers found themselves isolated from their friends having fewer social interactions. The great disruption in the routine caused by the need to stay indoors meant that they felt frustrated to miss out on social events, sports competitions and extracurriculars. The types of activities that would feel normal for their previous lives, would be needed to create a healthy balance⁷. This fear of missing out and not being able to see their friends made many teenagers feel lonelier, as they were often disappointed by the lack of online updates some of them needed to keep busy⁸. It appears that social distancing did not have the same effect on boys versus girls. In a survey sent out to Pakistani adolescents aged 13-17, boys displayed more anger management issues, and girls showed more somatic complaints. But there was no gender difference with depression and anxiety symptoms.⁹ This previous statement excludes teenagers already suffering before the pandemic from depression. The impact of the disruption of routine on mentally unstable adolescents has been discussed in the previous paragraph with the single example of the ballerina, accounting for a wide-ranging group. We can therefore understand that social distancing has created a huge gap in teenagers' social lives. Being able to physically see someone is completely different from seeing that same person

⁷ ANI, "What do pandemic restrictions mean for teens' social life?" *Lounge*, 16 March, 2021. Accessed on 31 July, 2021.

<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/relationships/raising-parents/what-do-pandemic-restrictions-mean-for-teens-social-life-111615863578129.html>

⁸ Glynda Alves, "Covid blues: Not being able to meet friends made 69% Indians lonelier, 50% felt social distancing weakened relationships", *The Economic Times*, October 29, 2020. Accessed on August 9, 2021.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/covid-19-is-making-us-better-friends/articleshow/78927470.cms>

⁹ Saima Majeed and Mujeeba Ashraf, "Psychological Impacts of Social Distancing During COVID-19 Pandemic in Adolescents of Lahore, Pakistan", *King Edward Medical University*, November 7, 2020. Accessed on August 9, 2021

<https://www.annalskemu.org/journal/index.php/annals/article/view/3631>

through a phone, which was the only possibility to stay in contact with friends. Teenagers have felt a barrier being put up with their past relationships and their new ones. They wished everything could go back the way they were before without needing to stay away because of avoiding the spread of the virus. The effect of depriving social life on teenagers has affected their mental health to an extent that teenagers' parents should be aware of. Parents should be involved and make sure that their teenager knows that they are there to talk to if needed.

Teenagers around the world experienced different social isolation depending on their social isolation environment and space or their ability to access the internet to continue online learning. In countries with high GDP, we could see a contrast between higher-income families that can afford to access the internet compared with families that were unable to pay for internet for their teenagers. For example, in the United States, even with government aid there are at least 6-10 million students who lacked internet before schools shut down as a result of COVID-19.¹⁰ However, looking at the world scale, 1.3 billion children aged three to seventeen do not have access to the internet at home.¹¹ There are many more obstacles than just having access to the internet that are preventing teenagers

¹⁰ ERIN RICHARDS , ELINOR ASPEGREN , ERIN MANSFIELD, "A year into the pandemic, thousands of students still can't get reliable WiFi for school. The digital divide remains worse than ever." *USA TODAY*, February 4, 2021. Accessed on September 1, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2021/02/04/covid-online-school-broadband-internet-laptops/3930744001/>

¹¹ "Two thirds of the world's school-age children have no internet access at home, new UNICEF-ITU report says," *UNICEF*, 30 November 2020. Accessed on 1 September, 2021 <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/two-thirds-worlds-school-age-children-have-no-internet-access-home-new-unicef-itu>

from accessing online classes. A sick relative may need their help, or in order for their parents to work they may need help with their younger siblings. There may also not be enough quiet space in the house to be concentrated on their classes. All of these factors were accumulated and refrained many teenagers from attending their classes and continuing their curriculum.

Being away from their friends, many teenagers are now confined to interactions solely with their family members. The time that they would usually spend outdoors with their friends or exercising, they are spending it in their home. Even though being together 24/7 made families have more arguments, it also created a stronger connection and helped them be honest with one another to create a healthy home environment.¹² A number of parents explained that the pandemic helped their family bond in a way they would have never had if the pandemic had not happened. They were able to find activities that the whole family appreciated and got together for new activities and hobbies. This meant that not only were families creating better bonds and really getting to know one another, but they also managed to find activities and hobbies to do together which created quality time. This period has helped families unite in a positive manner even when the COVID-19 pandemic will be over. It has created an unbreakable relationship which is very healthy for teenagers to grow up in.

¹² Subhadra Evans, Antonina Mikocka-Walus, Anna Klas, Lisa Olive, Emma Sciberras, Gery Karantzas, and Elizabeth M. Westrupp, "From "It Has Stopped Our Lives" to "Spending More Time Together Has Strengthened Bonds": The Varied Experiences of Australian Families During COVID-19", *NCBI*, October 20, 2020. Accessed on August 9, 2021.

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The Impact on High School Students' Decision Making

Applying to colleges became a challenge since many students were not able to complete extracurricular activities, and some did not want to pay for an online university experience. 58% of 3785 interviewed students from 100 different countries around the world believe that they do not see the value of paying the fees for an online experience¹³. Those financial concerns were especially seen in Asia-Pacific and North America. The value offered by certain university programs because of this new online way of teaching is rightfully put into question. In addition, teenagers are incapable of contributing to the needed fees as what would usually be their summer jobs are canceled. Students know that to fill their university folder, they must accumulate certain activities to be recognized and qualified for their wanted universities. High schoolers during the COVID-19 pandemic will not choose their university according to the same criteria that higher schoolers did before. This means that different trends will be seen as to the number of students that will apply to different universities. However, this does not mean that universities will admit students with the same criteria as they did before the pandemic. They will be more understanding of the situation and accept that they were not able to perform the same activities that students did in the past. The fact that parents do not want their children to apply to a university that will have its courses online means that students will probably be going to

¹³ Study International Staff, "High school graduates want to study overseas despite COVID-19, says survey", *Study International*, July 30, 2021.

<https://www.studyinternational.com/news/study-overseas-survey-cialfo/>

university closer to their homes to continue living with their parents for economic reasons. This online learning in universities has changed high schoolers' mindset as to where they would consider pursuing their education.

Pandemic and Teen Mental Health

Online learning has resulted in a sense of loneliness, vulnerability, and of being isolated from the outside world among teenagers. During the pandemic, teenagers were living in a world where diseases and social distancing were all that people talked about, and this left many with higher risk of depression and stress. People with strong personalities were affected, showing how everyone was impacted, not only mentally fragile people. Healthline explained that one in three adolescents will meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder by the age of 18. This figure has been observed during the isolation period. Studies have shown that boys and girls had similar rates of negative changes in their sleep (24% for girls vs. 21% for boys), said WebMD¹⁴. This impact on their sleep schedule has a negative impact on their mental health as it has disrupted their normal lifestyle. This enforces their need to try and adapt to this new way of living. Forty-six percent of parents saw worsening signs in their teenagers' mental health since the start of the pandemic in March 2020¹⁵. These statistics have drawn attention to the worsening factors of the pandemic on teenagers' mental health. Teenager years are the most fragile and sensitive years, they

¹⁴ Robert Preidt, "Pandemic Has Harmed Mental Health of Teens", *WebMD*, March 15, 2021. <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20210315/pandemic-has-harmed-mental-health-of-teens#1>

¹⁵ Robert Preidt, "Pandemic Has Harmed Mental Health of Teens", *WebMD*, March 15, 2021. <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20210315/pandemic-has-harmed-mental-health-of-teens#1>

shape you into becoming the future adult you want to become. This period of life was already one in which many had depressive tendencies pre-COVID. Most teenagers are engaging in after effects due to the feeling of loneliness felt during their social isolation. School counselors are unavailable to reach out to and talk to physically during this time. Their friends have been taken away, and they can no longer physically see them, which is different from talking to them about their issue through a phone rather than doing it face to face. They feel vulnerable and like no one is there to talk to them when they most need the attention. This feeling triggers their mental health and their ability to focus on their online class.

Looking more specifically at substance use during the pandemic, we can observe that there has been a rising trend. Teenagers often turn to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco as a coping mechanism to deal with stress, anger or fear. In some cases they feel the need to prove themselves to their friends and classmates and want to reveal this rebel side. A study estimates that before COVID, 28.6% of teenagers used alcohol. However, during the pandemic, this number rose to 30.4. Teenagers went from drinking twice a month to more than three times a month. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* explained that teenagers turned to substances because it made them feel good, they felt lonely with no possibility to turn to their friends during this period. Feeling lonely and being confined exaggerated feelings of being incapable of functioning without the substance in question. A possible explanation for this rise in numbers and feeling of these emotions is that, though there may be many uncertainties around the new lifestyle of teens during this COVID-19 pandemic

with many outdoor activities being closed and their daily routines being flipped upside down, these drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana helped them forget and escape from their anxieties even during this period of crisis. Even though this period is a time of uncertainty, they relied on daily routine activities that were during the crisis and smoking or drinking for some was one of them. Those substances attack their lungs, brain and liver resulting in more mental side effects.

Collective Trauma

This period of uncertainty that affected teenagers' mental health can be understood with reference to the notion of Collective Trauma. This term means that a group of people are concerned and damaged by the same event. In this case, the whole world is traumatized by the effect this pandemic had on their lives. Teenagers' futures have been impacted as this universal trauma creates greater individual and collective fear. In addition, teenagers are more vulnerable to these repercussions, as they haven't had as much time to develop healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with uncertainty and stress. Therefore, they are more likely to turn to self-destructive ways of dealing with their emotions that can be such as distress and discomfort. Teenagers typically have less perspective than adults, so it's harder for them to imagine a better future in the middle of a pandemic. Teenagers are the age group that spend the most time on their social media platforms, this may lead to them being repeatedly exposed to information and images related to the crisis. Since they are being exposed to all of this information being published online, it is hard for parents

to limit their knowledge. Looking more specifically at the spread of the COVID-19, we understand that this pandemic took place in a very digital world where teens could attend classes, which was not possible prior, however, they also had a chance to connect through social media.

In addition, because teenagers' brains aren't fully developed yet, they react to certain information disproportionately and differently than adults. They lack the maturity needed to cope with life-changing decisions and situations. For parents, it is hard for them to know how to comfort them, as they themselves do not know what will become of this pandemic. They are unable to predict the next steps that will be taken by governments to limit the spread. This uncertainty does not help with the reassuring of teenagers that suffer from collective trauma. However, the word "collective" in "collective trauma" means that they are not the only ones in this situation. It helps create a strong sense of unity, of feeling like our generation can get through anything. Like the generation that fought in the world wars, this pandemic has brought teenagers together and created a purpose for a new generation. Some adolescents have used this to create a community. It brought together the world to try and fight this pandemic to finally get rid of it and move on to live a normal life.

Social Media and Information

Collective trauma can be accentuated by the “fake news” read online by teenagers. Fake news is the publication of wrong or misleading information. Anti-vax content has been especially easy to diffuse using social media. Twelve different online ‘influencers’ have managed to gain 59 million followers each across many social media platforms. They have been posting anti-vaccine content to persuade people to refuse their dose. A TikTok influencer has explained in one of his posts that he would rather die than get vaccinated. The TikTok in question generated 66,000 views in total. As the word influencer suggests, these content creators gain followers who think they are preaching the truth and should be listened to. With teenagers spending more time on their screens due to social isolation, they are more susceptible to finding these articles that could possibly mislead them and push them to commit to an inaccurate position. The spread of unverified information through social media can invite unwanted feelings, as teenagers may be naive and believe what they read or see on their favorite channels. The idea of this information being spread results in irrational fear that traumatizes them. In an effort to fight the spread of misinformation, the World Health Organization has partnered with social media creators such as Tik Tokers or Instagrammers to provide a feature to report posts and comments that could potentially spread misinformation. This feature helps reduce unwanted posts and fear from the followers and readers. The new setting on certain platforms could certainly help get rid of unwanted information that could generate panic among teenagers. Teenagers could also learn how to verify their sources instead of believing what they are told. The skill to question and analyze sources critically is usually taught at school. If teenagers are concentrating less when studying from home, they are more likely to be-

lieve the information that provides the easiest answer. To be able to differentiate fake news from news that is reliable, teenagers must be able to develop a critical mindset and ask themselves who published the news, when was it published and for what purpose was it published. They should be able to categorize and not fall into the trap of believing nonsense. To make sure that the news is reliable, students may want to compare the information with other sources to make sure the same information is found in different places. If teenagers are able to differentiate the wrong from the right and learn from their mistakes, they will be able to avoid fearful emotions.

My Experience as a Teen Student in Singapore and Shanghai during COVID

Negative experiences that I had that were similar to other teenagers

Like other teenagers, I had some negative experiences during this unstable time. I spent my lockdown in Singapore, away from my dad who was stuck in Shanghai. We didn't see him for 5 months, which did not help to ease up the situation. Like other teenagers, I lost my two great grandmas during the pandemic. We had to log on the zoom link and participate in the funeral online, which felt awkward and unreal. We didn't feel a part of the ceremony because we were thousands of kilometers away, emotionally and physically disconnected. Another part where I felt disconnected was in relation to school. I was rapidly tired of staring at my screens all day instead of physically going to school. We found ourselves more distracted during classes as we did not all have the chance to be alone in a

room during the classes, some were in their living room and others shared a room with their siblings. Some did not see the purpose of dressing up, so they stayed in their pyjamas the whole day which disrupted their routines. Everything seemed upside down with a lack of purpose in our day.

Positive Experiences that you had that were similar to other teenagers

On the other hand, I saw lots of positive parts to this social isolation, the major part being the bonding time we spent with my family. With my mom and my siblings, we set each other goals for the end of the quarantine. My mom tried to learn how to juggle and play the harmonica, and with my siblings we wanted to do the Chloe Ting two-week workout mentioned a few paragraphs above. We also gathered to go on a walk every other week to release our energy. We started a new routine in our own little bubble. I also managed to keep in touch with my family that was thousands of kilometers apart by calling them a few times a week. With my friends, we organized Facetimes and Netflix parties to keep in touch. To keep in touch, we called my dad every day and had virtual lunches or dinners with him to simulate his company over the phone.

Unique combination of schools and travel: how my story is different

What made my COVID-19 experience contrast with other teenagers' was that I lived in two different countries that applied two completely different rules to avoid the spread of

the virus. As mentioned above, during the year 2020, I lived in Singapore and endured a lockdown during which the strict rules were followed by Singaporeans. The president called the lockdown a “circuit breaker” for people to understand the concept, which I found quite pragmatic and self-explanatory. However, in September 2021 I moved to Shanghai and found myself living a completely different life, where masks and social distancing measures were no longer applied in daily life. I could live a “normal life” compared to the rest of the world. Being new in a school where no activity or event was allowed, very few opportunities to naturally connect with students, and lots of restrictions like glass dividers in the cafeteria were enforced made smooth integration impossible. My family and I managed to travel around China during school holidays which seemed unreal to the rest of my family. France entered a third and a fourth isolation phase and our friends in Singapore could only invite a couple of people to their houses. It felt as if we were living in two different worlds. With this experience, I came to realize that teenagers around the world did not live the same lockdowns. They varied in length and intensity according to various factors: political regimes, government strategies with the spread of the virus, and local economic situations to name a few. Teenagers living in Wuhan for example had their strict lockdown a few months before teenagers living anywhere else in the world. Today, the spread of the pandemic in China has now drastically diminished and people are starting to live a more normal life than people living in the US. Nevertheless, this virus and period of social isolation, has affected and transformed the lives of every teenager around the world creating this bond between their generation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on teenagers' daily routines: everything changed and was turned upside down. The pandemic was an unprecedented event that left space for stress and unhealthy emotions. This has disrupted a well-oiled day to day machine. Daily activities which would seem normal before the pandemic were unacceptable during the pandemic such as outdoor exercise or simply just being outside of home or seeing friends, these activities are vital to shape teens into fully fledged adults both physically and mentally. The restriction of outdoors and exercise has weakened those who needed this in their balance, those already mentally fragile. They were unable to release their energy, which blasted out during social-isolation. Because fewer social interactions took place it impacted adolescents' social development, it isolated those who were introverted, however it did bring some privileged families closer together playing games, enjoying movies or doing outdoor activities together. It made families spend a lot of time together, and for some maybe a little too much. To stay connected and to try and maintain their social lives, teenagers had to communicate through their screens, which accentuated their screen time. In addition, their classes and courses were online, which disrupted their learning curve. For university, some feel the uncertainty of going far away when you can, and the financial hurdle can become especially real for some. All of these factors affected teenagers' mental health because of the upheaval of their routine and the constant uncertainty of their future because of the constant change in the governmental policies and the random spread of the virus. To help deal with their mental issues, mental

health awareness has grown to help get through what they may be thinking or feeling. This is a first-hand observation that has been made during the pandemic, however we must take a step back and evaluate the consequences of the pandemic on teenagers in a couple of years to truly understand the bigger picture of the situation COVID-19 has put us in.

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