

# The Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 on Our Children

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I want to share with you my personal experience during the COVID-19 lockdown. I am a retired emergency room and pediatric physician. My active clinical practice has spanned over 40 years. I worked in departments of pediatrics and urgent care at an assortment of hospitals, including St. Joseph's Oakland, Henry Ford, and Beaumont. My passion in life is and has always been to give back to my community, by volunteering my time and sharing my knowledge and experience. I lecture frequently on preventive medicine.

With preventive medicine in mind, I started to gather information regarding how to keep our children and our seniors safe and healthy. I explored my hospital's public relations department for ways to get my message out. Over time, I developed a radio talk show where I could field questions from listeners regarding their health concerns.

This led to my own television show, called "Health Talk," on Bloomfield's community access channel. I have been producing this show for over 15 years, and it is the longest running show on Bloomfield's community access channel.

In 1999, I published my first book, "How to Keep Your Child Safe and Healthy." The proceeds from the sale of my book were donated to blind and deaf orphans in third world countries. With the kind cooperation of the Orphan Medical Network, my book has been distributed all over the world, including Mother Teresa's hospital in Calcutta. The highlight of my professional career came when I was inducted into the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit Heritage Hall of Fame, where my portrait is permanently hanging.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States hard. Fifteen months later, the virus is still striking many vulnerable citizens. But as time passes, research continues. Thankfully vaccines are now in place to fight this pandemic.

Like many other Americans, I became very depressed during the lockdown. I was socially isolated, unable to work, and barely left my home out of fear I would contract this terrible virus. But, I am reinventing myself and have become very comfortable taking care of my family, which includes my two beautiful grandsons who live with me. They are the apples of my eye, and with their schools shut down, they are now home with me full-time. I could see these kids becoming depressed due to their own social isolation. Family dinners became a great way for us to come together.

The pandemic inspired me to write my second book, "A Guide to Navigating Childhood Development", which focused on the physical and mental well-being of our elementary, middle, and high school students. I emphasized burning issues for our children, such as obesity, bullying, and drug use. I added additional chapters on COVID-19 and its impact on our kids. My book was published this year and it is available on the Apple Library. I do not know my future or our destiny, but I count my blessings in life and am grateful this pandemic gave me extra time with my family and needed time to complete my book.