



**FUNDACIÓN CENTRO SAN JUAN
DE JERUSALÉN**

**MANEJO SOCIO AFECTIVO DE NIÑOS
Y ADOLESCENTES EN
CONFINAMIENTO**



**QUITO-ECUADOR
2020**

SECOND SUPPORT GROUP

TOPIC: "The socio-emotional care of children and adolescents during lockdown"

DATE: Thursday, 26 November 2020

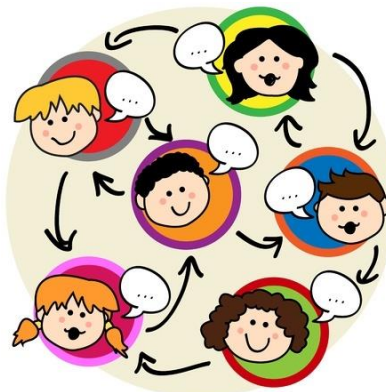
ADDRESSED TO: Parents

Objectives:

- Share experiences and concerns that have arisen during the pandemic concerning children.
- Illustrate their living situation with their children using materials that make it possible to convey and include emotions (modelling clay, paint). In such a way that they find socio-emotional support solutions for their children by themselves.



1. Introduction



❖ What Is a support group?

Support groups are groups of people who experience similar situations in life and who periodically come together to share their experiences. A support group is a safe place to exchange ideas on how to cope with difficult issues.

2. Development

❖ A tool for group development

With the aim of developing a dynamic and participatory support group, the Foundation's psychology department uses the "Mentimeter" tool. Participants can post and answer questions anonymously using a code provided by the facilitator and these answers are then revealed in groups.



❖ The socio-emotional care of children and adolescents during lockdown.

David notes that when the coronavirus reached Ecuador, we never thought we would come to experience this situation, we thought would be sheltered for a short period of time. Many children and adolescents have been in lockdown since 16 March. As parents, they suddenly had to break the news that children wouldn't be going to school for a few weeks. Many were possibly pleased because they thought it was going to be like a mini holiday, some possibly felt sad and others annoyed.



❖ Support group development

As adults, we are and were scared as well and the intensity will vary in everyone. Although it's true that every child and adolescent is experiencing this situation in a unique way, it must not be downplayed or go unnoticed, given that many negative emotions can be well hidden. It is important not to compare them with other children or adolescents and we must really pay attention to our expressions and tone of voice when talking to them.

○ What has been the biggest challenge I had with my children in pandemic times?

Parents shared their experiences at home and noted what the biggest challenge was with their children at home:

- Dealing with their sadness because they missed their friends and school
- Making the children take responsibility for their student duties, including checking their little sister's homework
- Controlling anger, crying, anxiety and wanting to go out
- Coping with boredom
- Supporting virtual education and not neglecting work.

Children often fill in the lack of information with a much more upsetting reality than the one that is taking place, thus increasing their



worries and concerns. Staying at home deprived children of much-needed movement and sensory stimulation.

Limited social contact could increase feelings of loneliness, an abrupt change in routine, or lack thereof, could increase disputes between parents and children and also create insecurity in children already in situations filled with uncertainty.



The most vulnerable children, or those who suffered the loss of a family member, were at particular risk; when lockdowns are long or are extended, the likelihood of it affecting our mental health is greater.

○ **How has the pandemic affected children and adolescents?**

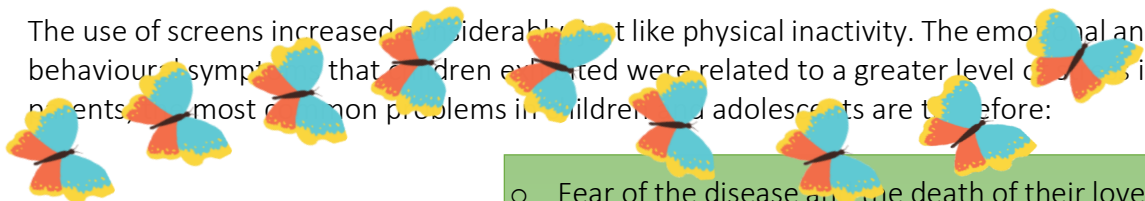
2020 will be remembered as the year when we, incredulous, saw how a pandemic changed our way of life in just a few weeks. When the mandatory lockdown was imposed on 16 March in Ecuador, the lives of millions of children and adolescents changed dramatically.



They left school a few days earlier hardly being able to say goodbye to their schoolmates and without knowing how many months it would take to meet up with them again. Children's social interaction was practically limited to their family members during lockdown.

In one of the first studies carried out in Spain, which was published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, it is reported that 8 in 10 participating parents noticed changes in their children during lockdown. Concentration problems, concerns, anxiety, nervousness, anger, boredom and a greater dependence on parents were common reactions in children and adolescents during the first few weeks of the pandemic.

The use of screens increased considerably, not like physical inactivity. The emotional and behavioural symptoms that children exhibited were related to a greater level of stress in parents. The most common problems in children and adolescents are therefore:



- Fear of the disease and the death of their loved ones
- Lack of contact with children and adolescents their age

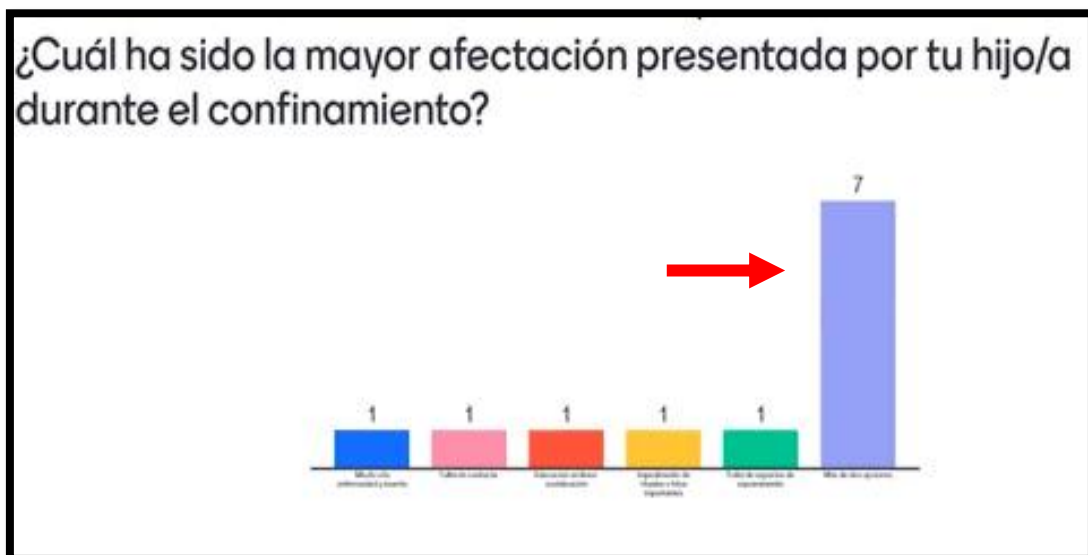


- Lack of contact with their extended families
- Lack of recreation spaces in the fresh air and movement.
- Online education that doesn't allow for the incentive and motivation of "everyone working"
- Social events that couldn't be experienced in isolation, including: moving from one grade to the next, first communion, marriage of a loved one, not being able to say goodbye to a loved one who had died, graduations, outings etc.



○ **What has been the main concern exhibited by your child during lockdown?**

Parents answered what their children's concerns were during lockdown from the above options; most participants answered that their children had more than one concern

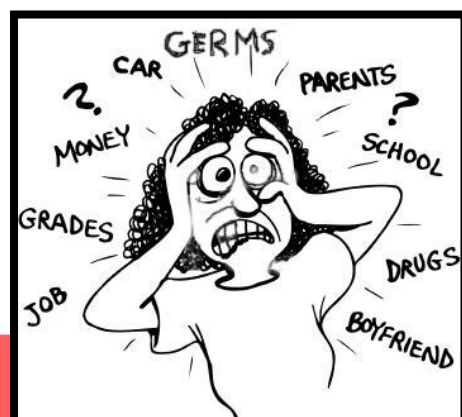


○ **Which factors increase or create emotional instability in children and adolescents?**

Pressure often comes from external sources (family, friends, school), but can also stem from the individual themselves. Because there is often a discrepancy in what we think we should be doing and what we are actually doing in our lives, the pressure we impose upon ourselves can be very significant.



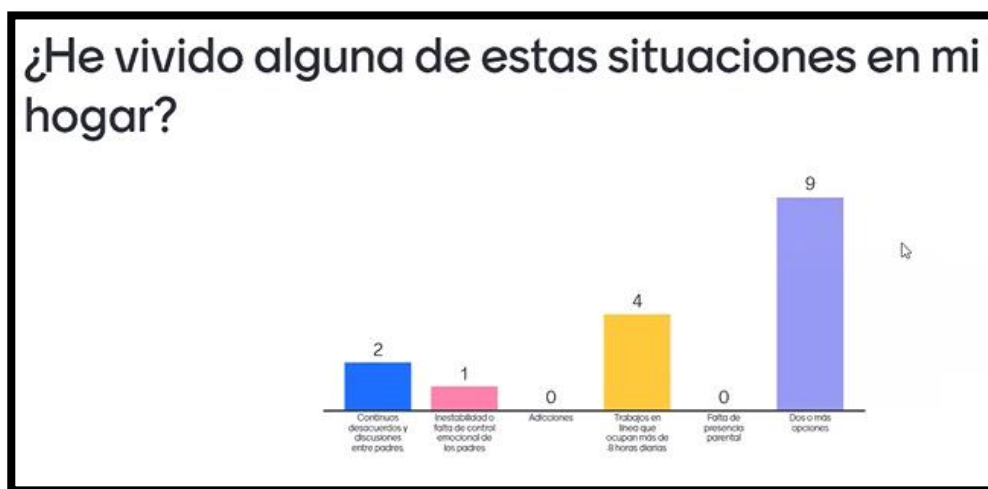
- Constant disagreements, arguments between parents.
- Disagreements between partners about raising the children.
- Parents' instability or lack of emotional control.



- Addictions, including the mobile telephone
- Online work that takes up more eight hours every day and also takes up spaces shared with family
- Lack of parental presence

- **Have I experienced any of these situations in my home?**

It can be noted that many experienced two or more situations from the above options in their home; there were several family disputes during the pandemic.



One of the key factors in predicting how a child will be following a crisis, is how well parents cope with their own stress.

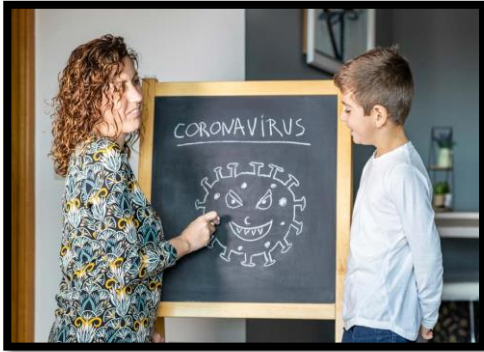
If they are overly stressed and don't have effective mechanisms to cope with it, there is a greater likelihood that their children will have problems.

It's not that parents or carers can't be stressed and worried, or be scared and angry, or any of these things. But the question is, how do I cope with these feelings? Do I lose hope and see the world as an outright dangerous place? Or do I say, "Okay, these are the things we're going to do to ensure that we're as safe and healthy as possible"

- **Consequences**

- Constant stress caused by physical and mental illness.
- Not having sufficient motivation to study
- Depression - anxiety - isolation
- Night terrors
- Lack of development, delays in socialising.
- Worsening of past symptoms or disorders.

- What have I done to deal with these situations with my children?



- **Discuss**

What is happening with Covid-19 should be discussed openly, without being pessimistic, but not with false expectations. Provide information that is reliable and appropriate for their child's age and stage of development. Let their children know that some COVID-19 stories shared online and social media may be based on rumours and inaccurate information.

- **Support**

Parents should support the virtual education process by showing interest and concern; help them to understand where possible, explain or clarify a topic that hasn't been learned fully; don't neglect the support of young children.



- **Routines**

Routines are customs or habits that are acquired by repeating the same task or activity several times.

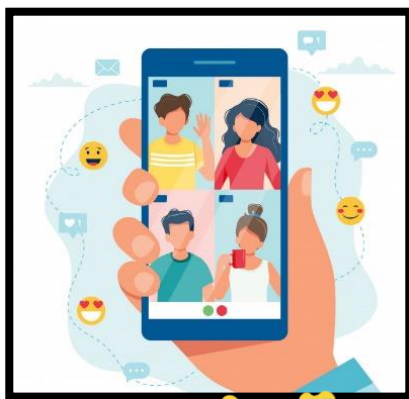
Creating a routine is simple, since the daily activities are shown in pictures that will be placed on a board in the form of a calendar, which will be in a visible place and at a suitable height for children to see.

Creating and sticking with routines helps children to improve their tolerance and resilience. They also create security for them as they are expecting the activities they're going to do.



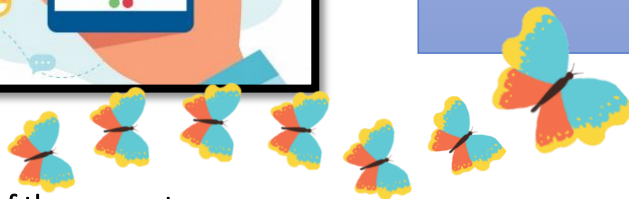
- **Express thoughts and emotions**

Safe spaces should be created in the home where children and adolescents can express their thoughts and emotions and these should be respected. Children should be reassured by telling them that they're protected and it is okay if they are feeling upset.



- **Socialising**

After losing contact and interaction with their friends, it is important for parents to encourage their children to socialise using alternative means, like video calls



- ❖ **End of the support group**

- **Work with modelling clay**

Carla notes that expressing emotions can be done using various artistic techniques; manual activities generally prompt us to pay attention to our body and get settled in the here and now, thus letting go of worries and anxiety. Modelling clay can be used in the following manner:



- First ask the individual to pick any colour of modelling clay and then begin to knead,
- Ask them to focus their full attention on this moment. Ask: what does this colour of modelling clay represent for them? What happens when I continue doing this activity? How do I feel?
- Now tell them to recall a situation that they have experienced in recent days that they would like to change; it can be with their children or with something else where necessary. It can be a situation or an emotion and we take half of the colour of modelling clay that represents this.

- Ask them to begin kneading by imagining: "they're kneading and letting go of their emotions in this modelling clay. They're now going to make the situation more flexible and I'm going to give it a shape, which may also represent the situation and should ask themselves: What did I do? What does this shape represent?" And set it aside.
- Now ask them to think of a situation that is the opposite of the previous one: a good time or good feeling with their children and tell them to pick another colour that represents this situation and to only select half of the full amount
- Likewise, tell them to knead it, feel it and I begin to give it the shape of something that represents this pleasant situation.
- They now have two shapes that represent these two situations that have been part of their lives,
- Reflect upon the lessons that these situations have left them for their development.
- Tell them to take the other half of both colours and knead them, but I'm now mixing the two colours, that they intend and decide to take the lessons that these two experiences have left within them
- Finally, ask them to make a new creation, a new symbol image that may help me in my development as a father, mother.
- To finish, ask the individual to do an expression of the experience that they reflect upon accepting what they experienced and that they have the decision to create something new using the experience they had, which will help me in life.
- It's important that we work on emotions as parents and that this slowly transfers to our children.

- Ways for children and adolescents to express and include their thoughts and emotions

It's not easy for children to understand abstract concepts and emotions seem quite abstract. Understanding them without giving them a name is even more complicated. Children therefore need to understand their emotions to be able to express them and thereby have good emotional development and a mental equilibrium that will help them to work more adequately on empathy and assertiveness, which are essential in all environments.

Various techniques can be used to express emotions using art, including:

- Encouraging them to write a diary
- Drawing, painting, modelling clay



