



# "I know we are all going through a similar experience right now. Boredom. Stress. Anxiety. Confusion and fear:" Qualitative Analysis of Adolescent Mental Health Blogging During COVID-19"

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## Introduction

- Downstream effects of COVID-19 have resulted in a **mental health crisis**<sup>1</sup>
- Adolescents and young adults (AYA) are experiencing rises in rates of depression and anxiety, contributed by a lack of socializing with peers<sup>2</sup>
- Supporting Our Valued Adolescents (SOVA) is an ongoing social media intervention created in response to the existing need for adolescent mental health support, allowing young adults to dis mental health in a moderated and anonymous space
- SOVA Ambassadors are AYA asked to write monthly blog posts comment weekly on others' posts. Participants are allowed to k about "whatever they want, so long as it pertains to mental health."
- When COVID-19 began to affect the United States in March 202 there was an increase in interested participants and posts about pandemic, lockdown, and its mental health effects

**OBJECTIVE:** Analyze online written content in the form of blogposts by AYA engaged as peer bloggers a social media intervention to understand young people's experience of coping with mental illness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Methods

- **Participants:** Twenty-three majority White female AYAs ( $M_{aae}$ = years, SD = 3.1) were primarily recruited through the University Pittsburgh's online research registry, Pitt+Me. Participants wer encouraged to write monthly blog posts and leave comments other posts, and were compensated \$15/month for activity.
- Qualitative method design: Full blogposts that included words related to COVID (i.e. quarantine, pandemic) were extracted between mid-March and mid-September 2020 from SOVA and imported into NVivo software.
- A preliminary codebook was developed using thematic categor blog topics, structure, coping strategies and emotions mention
- Analysis: Conducted a content analysis and summarized data ι template analysis approach.

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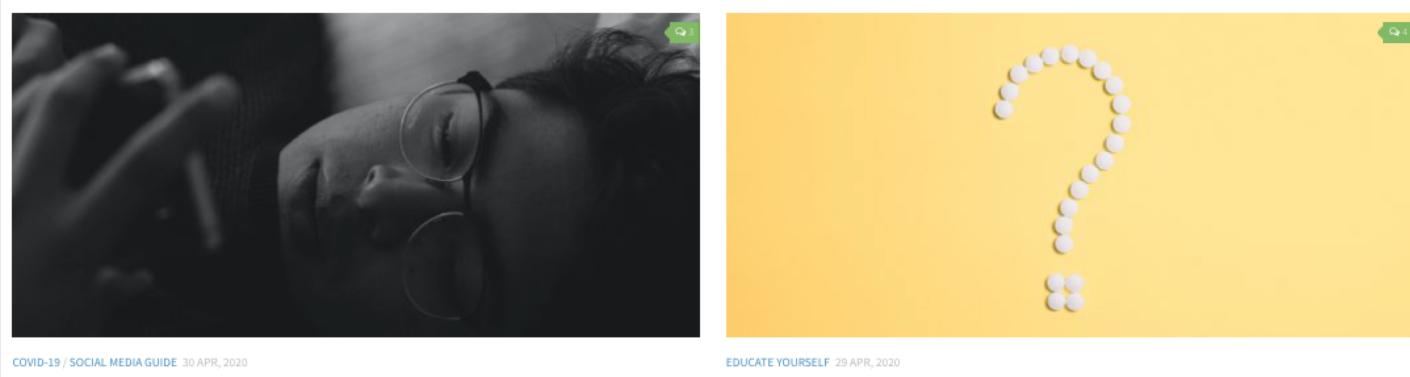
### **Results in Progress**

- Of the 69 blog posts written by blogging ambassadors between March and September, 29 (42%) discussed the pandemic and/or its effects.
- Five blogsposts and 12 comments written throughout the first five weeks (March 16<sup>th</sup>-April 21<sup>st</sup>) have been analyzed thus far. Coding has been done by the first two authors to further develop the codebook and to build rater reliability.

### Table 1: Codebook in Progress

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iscuss	<b>Code Sections</b>	Sample Codes	Examples From Blogs
s and blog	Blog Topic	Adjusting during COVID; loneliness and socializing	"A Quiet Quarantine" (ID 82)
020, out the	Blog Structure	Present problem – share solution	"wanted to share some tips and tricks that have helped me in the last couple days" (ID 70)
	Concern for Others	All in this together; reassurance	"It will all be okay" (ID 82)
rs for	Coping Mechanisms	Emotion focused; problem focused; social coping	" I have done a lot of baking haha. I've also used this time to catch up on Netflix shows which is something I never was able to do." (ID 86)
,=21	COVID Effects	Habit changes; mental illness; takeaways	"I think that's an important lesson we can take away from this whole experience." (ID 63)
ty of ere on	Problems Expressed in Relation to COVID	Socializing; everything being online; educational concern	"being stuck in a house with your family can be stressful" (ID 88)
ls d	Time Period Discussed	Transitions, life pre-COVID, life after COVID	"It has been really challenging for me to adjust to living back home in my small town again." (ID 82)
ories of ned. using a	SOVA Platform	Blog helping user, enjoying a post	"This was a good blog for me to read" (ID 96)

"I find it hard to focus on my online school, keep up with my studies and even write this blog post. My mind is just in other places and its hard not to think about and worry about the things going on in the world around us." (ID 70)



COVID-19 / EDUCATE YOURSELE, 28 APR, 20

Social Media Spike

one thing I have abundantly more of now. Tim

Socializing and Quarantine As we all are going through a situation of a mandated stay-at-home, we find ourselves not being able to go hang out wi our friends.

<sup>1</sup>Pfefferbaum, B., & North, C. S. (2020). Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. New England Journal of Medicine <sup>2</sup>Loades, M. E., Chatburn, E., Higson-Sweeney, N., Reynolds, S., Shafran, R., Brigden, A., ... & Crawley, E. (2020). Rapid Systematic Review: The Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Context of COVID-19. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.

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# UPMC CHILDREN'S

Is it just me or am I going on social media platforms way more than usual? I think this is a trend that I can attribute to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being guarantined, having a stay-at-home-order, and being scared to leave the house leaves me with

The Semester Is Over, Now What? Being a college student definitely can be stressful, but during the stay at home order, along with added stress from the coronavirus, it was a nice escape to keep busy with coursework and final projects





BE POSITIVE 27 APR, 2020 Taking Things One Day at a Time mmonly given and useful pieces of advice in regards with coping and living in quarantine has been to stablish a routine. This is incredibly important! Regardless of quarantine or not, having some sort of structure in your routine and your daily activities can help the mind feel more organized, less cluttered, and less vulnerable to messy - and potentially chaotic - thinking

### **Preliminary Conclusions**

• Adolescents and young adults participating in this online mental health intervention showed evidence of experiencing worsened mental health; however, they also demonstrated resilience and positive coping.

• Bloggers appear to be concerned for others and want to give support throughout this shared experience.

