



MENTAL HEALTH

APPROACHING THE CLOSE OF A TRYING YEAR

The year that we'll never forget.

Of all the things we had planned for ourselves at the beginning of 2020, few of us suspected a global crisis that has challenged and changed our way of being in so many ways.

Whilst it's impossible to measure all aspects of how COVID-19 has affected the world, here are some trends that have been statistically recorded during the year, summarised in an article for the New York Times:

What's gone up:

- Rates of unemployment
- Global deaths
- Appreciation of healthcare workers
- Working from home
- Home schooling and e-learning
- Meal delivery

What's come down:

- Global greenhouse emissions
- Healthcare worker pay
- Organ donation and transplants
- Traffic
- Road accidents
- Dining out

Of course, what's less difficult to estimate is the psychological toll that the pandemic has had on individuals and families, especially those who have lost loved ones to this novel coronavirus.

According to the World Health Organization, the pandemic has had a "devastating impact on mental health services globally", which includes an inability to cope with the soaring rates of mental health disorders. This has had a serious effect on global economies.

Moving forward

In a feature article for Forbes, leadership strategist Enrique Dans says that "there will be no return to normality." Instead, he proposes that we need to restructure our lives "based on a new reality that will be with us for many years."

This means taking steps to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus, building resilience, and putting systems in place to support and conserve mental health. These efforts may include maintaining routines, exercising, and connecting socially – even if it's virtually.

In closing, the only way for the world to move forward, says Dans, is to "rethink our obsession with growth, find ways to protect the most vulnerable, share research and learning, and redesign everything to put people, not profits, first".