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Love in the Time of COVID-19: Results of a Global Youth Consultation

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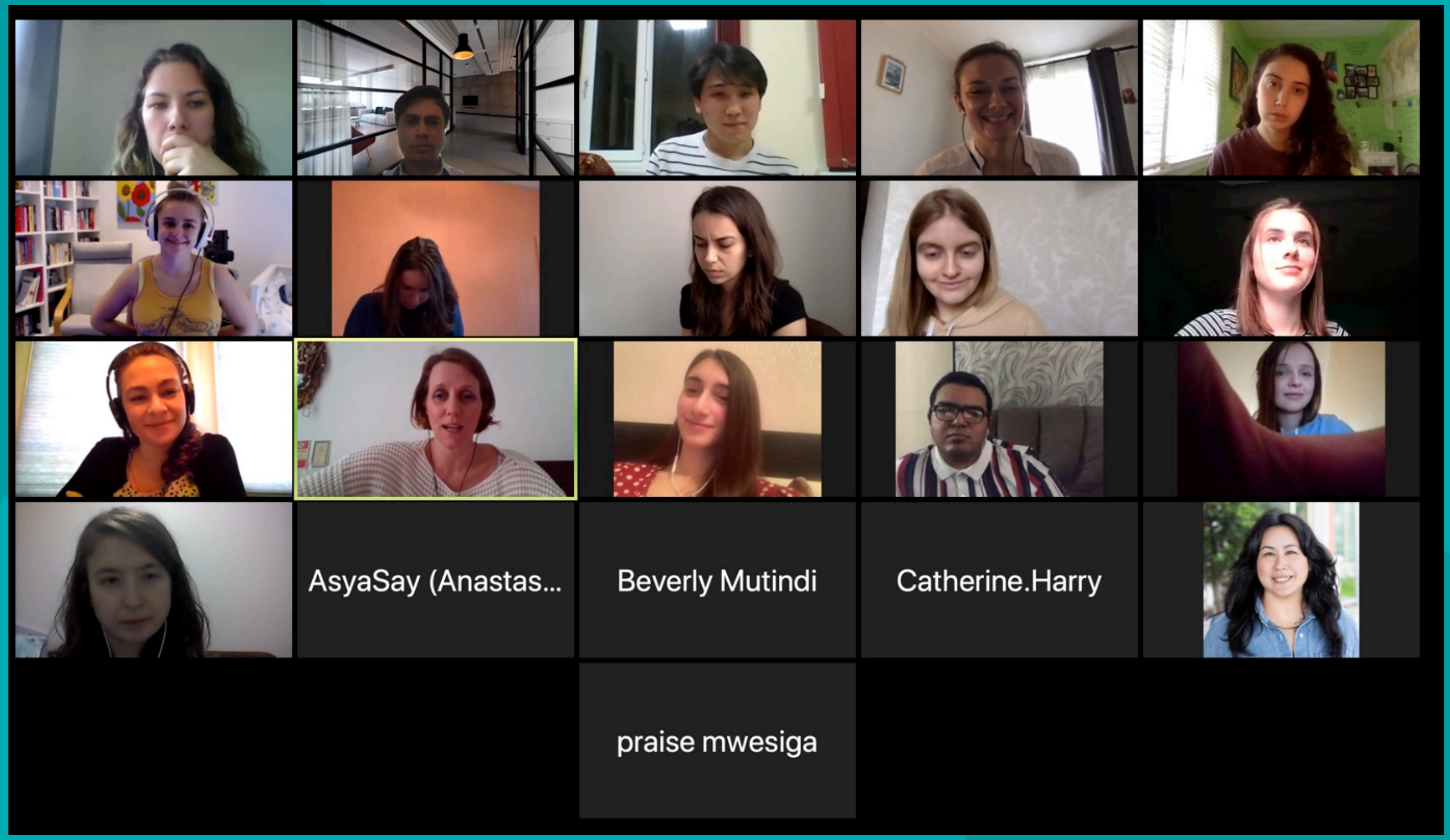

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What did we hope to learn?

- What are the main health and wellbeing challenges that young people are facing?
- How are digital spaces currently mobilizing providing support?
- What can organizations seeking to support young people do to fill the gaps?

Main health and wellbeing challenges

- General stress
- Anxiety, loneliness and amplified mental health problems
- Rise in domestic and gender-based violence
- Too much screen time
- Lack of service seeking for existing mental and physical health problems
- Limited service provision for existing mental and physical health problems

Sexual relationships

“Condoms are not being prioritized as they are more difficult to access and they want to hide that they are having sex.”

“… teenagers are locked in their houses and sometimes they don’t have much entertainment except to explore their body.”

Sexual health services

“They are calling us to ask about availability of abortion services and expressing guilt as they are worried that this is not an essential service at this time and don’t want to disturb doctors.”

Violence

“Youth are with families stuck in small spaces and simmering issues are coming to boil.”

“Use this time as an opportunity to bring to light conversations that might have been difficult before… Discussion around domestic violence is blooming in Russian media. People who never thought about it are talking about it.”

LGBTI+ young people

"… shelter at home is possible when you have a safe home. Many LGBTQ youth don't have a safe home or access to family support."

Mental health

“A lot of content being shared on blogs and through memes, but we are not finding useful and actionable mental health content. Like what to do if I am having a panic attack?”

Online trends

“Now, they are interested in anything that can entertain them and not be about COVID or about school.”

“All my friends downloaded tinder - dating is really about going out and meeting people. Obviously, you can’t do that right now, and there’s a feature to go anywhere in the world for free to chat with other people in other countries. People are bored right now.”

Digital spaces

“There is too much ‘everything will be okay’, rationally that might be correct but emotionally you are punching yourself.”

How do we support youth?

- Focus on the issues that youth are interested in and/or that directly respond to their challenges in the time of COVID
- Identify and target the most vulnerable groups with prevention messaging, programming, and support
- Position and provide contraception and other SRH services for young people as essential services
- Meaningfully engage and collaborate with youth to ensure programming and interventions are youth-friendly and directly and appropriately meet their needs

How do we use digital spaces?

- Harness digital spaces to provide health and wellbeing promotion and foster social connection and support
- Avoid over-emphasizing the risks of COVID-19 and move towards broader health messaging, including practical and detailed advice
- Clearly summarize laws around consensual and non-consensual sharing of images and provide assistance for recourse
- Provide signposting to youth-friendly services for mental health, sexual health and violence services that remain functional on platforms used by youth (e.g. hotlines, online counseling, etc.)

#VirtualVitality:

www.etr.org/design-4-learning/

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Questions & Comments?

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Thank You!

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