

DISABILITIES, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS, AND COVID-19

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

- We talked to three family members of people with disabilities about COVID-19.
- They live in the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, and the United States.
- COVID-19 made them all feel alone because they did not have the same support as before.



COVID-19 IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- Dragana is a mom. She lives in the United Arab Emirates. She was scared that COVID-19 would stop her child with a disability from reaching her goals.
- During lockdown, it helped that the police in Dubai let her family walk outdoors.
- It also helped to talk to other families of people with disabilities on social media. However, their family likes attending in-person programming better.



COVID-19 IN IRELAND

- Peter is Margaret's brother. Margaret helped write this article, and she is a Special Olympics Athlete Leader.
- Family was very important when they lost all other forms of support.
- Margaret kept working out and talking to her family through Zoom, and she went on walks. These habits made the pandemic feel easier.
- Margaret loves to be with people, so she is happy that she can be social again.



This article was written by Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellow Aida Mohajeri and Special Olympics Athlete Leader Margaret Turley in 2022.

For more resources and to read the full report, visit <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/fellowship-program/fellowship-program/>

DISABILITIES, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS, AND COVID-19

COVID-19 IN THE UNITED STATES

- Lori is a mom, and her daughter is autistic. It was very hard when her daughter could not go to in-person events anymore. Her daughter did not like virtual programs.
- Her daughter is scared of vaccines. A lot of doctors did not know how to help. Their family drove out of state to find a doctor that was able to help.
- Her family liked going on walks, but they were scared, because a lot of people did not wear masks.
- They are happy that in-person programs are back now, but it is hard to get used to being apart during the day again.



CONCLUSION

- Globally, a lot of families of people with disabilities felt alone during COVID-19.
- In Canada, about 60% of parents of people with disabilities worried that their child would feel alone.
- In the United Kingdom, double the amount of people with disabilities felt alone versus people without disabilities.
- Family members started to do more than they usually do to take care of their family member with a disability because they did not have support.
- Technology helped, but most people liked in-person programming better. In the future, we should find out more about the bad effects of technology, so we can try to only use technology for good.
- The month of July is Disability Pride Month. The pandemic is still happening. It is important to know that People with disabilities and their families still don't have the same help and services as before, and a lot of people still feel alone.



This article was written by Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellow Aida Mohajeri and Special Olympics Athlete Leader Margaret Turley in 2022.

For more resources and to read the full report, visit <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/fellowship-program/fellowship-program/>

DISABILITIES, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS, AND COVID-19**REFERENCES**

"About Us: Who We Are." Samuel Centre For Social Connectedness. Samuel Centre For Social Connectedness, March 9, 2022. <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/about-us/>.

Al Hosany, Farida, Subhashini Ganesan, Shammah Al Memari, Shereena Al Mazrouei, Faheem Ahamed, Ashish Koshy, and Walid Zaher. "Response to COVID-19 pandemic in the UAE: a public health perspective." *Journal of Global Health* 11 (2021).

Al Amir, Salam. "Coronavirus: New Dubai Permits Required for All Journeys - Including Walking to the Shops." *The National UAE*, April 6, 2020.

Arim, Rubab, Leanne Findlay, and Dafna Kohen. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadian families of Children with Disabilities. Statistics Canada=Statistique Canada, 2020.

"Athlete Leadership." Special Olympics. <https://resources.specialolympics.org/leadership-excellence/athlete-leadership>

Baumer, Nicole. "The Pandemic Isn't over — Particularly for People with Disabilities." Harvard Medical School. Harvard Health Publishing (blog), May 25, 2021.

Brown, Lydia X. Z. "The Significance of Semantics: Person-First Language: Why It Matters." *Autistic Hoya* (blog), 2011. <https://www.autistichoya.com/2011/08/significance-of-semantics-person-first.html>.

"Coronavirus and the Social Impacts on Disabled People in Great Britain: March 2020 to December 2021." *Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain*. Office for National Statistics, February 2, 2022. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondisabledpeopleingreatbritain/march2020todecember2021>.

Garfin, Dana Rose. "Technology as a coping tool during the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications and recommendations." *Stress and Health* (2020).

"Resources to help during the crisis." Special Olympics. <https://resources.specialolympics.org/resources-to-help-during-the-crisis>

Rooney, L., and F. McNicholas. "Policing'a pandemic: Garda wellbeing and COVID-19." *Irish Journal of psychological medicine* 37, no. 3 (2020): 192-197.

Doebrich, Adrienne, Marion Quirici, and Christopher Lunsford. "COVID-19 and the need for disability conscious medical education, training, and practice." *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine* 13, no. 3 (2020): 393-404.

Kahane, Leo H. "Politicizing the mask: Political, economic and demographic factors affecting mask wearing behavior in the USA." *Eastern economic journal* 47, no. 2 (2021): 163-183.

Kennelly, Brendan, Mike O'Callaghan, Diarmuid Coughlan, John Cullinan, Edel Doherty, Liam Glynn, Eoin Moloney, and Michelle Queally. "The COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland: An overview of the health service and economic policy response." *Health Policy and Technology* 9, no. 4 (2020): 419-429.

Sekhri Feachem, Neelam, Kelly Sanders, and Forrest Barker. "The United States' Response to COVID-19: A Case Study of the First Year." Case Study, Synopsis. University of California San Francisco Institute for Global Health Sciences, 2020.

This article was written by Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellow Aida Mohajeri and Special Olympics Athlete Leader Margaret Turley in 2022.

For more resources and to read the full report, visit <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/fellowship-program/fellowship-program/>