

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

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Intro: WORLD: we got this.

The podcast talking big global challenges with the experts taking them on brought to you by the School of Global Affairs, King's College London.

Throughout this series we will be discussing some of the major global challenges we face, deforestation to global pandemics.

In our first season of WORLD: we got this, we'll be speaking with experts about the factors at play during a global pandemic, the differing global perspectives and ultimately the way in which we can meet this challenge. This podcast was being planned long before the outbreak of COVID-19 but all that changed just a couple of weeks ago.

Now of course I'm recording this from home and everyone we speak to in the coming episodes is also going to be working from home.

But the key thing is that they're still working, they're still researching, they're still teaching and they're still trying to understand how we can wrestle with this global pandemic.

Because that is what the podcast is all about so here we go.

James: Hello and welcome to the podcast my name's James Baggaley from the School of Global Affairs at King's College London. The Centre for society and mental health has only recently launched here at King's

It's aim is I quote to 'explore today's changing world and help us understand the social factors that shape and promote mental ill health'. They probably could not have predicted the scale of change our world might witness in the space of just 2 months and yet they have already been working to help us understand how this pandemic is affecting our mental health.

This week I had the chance to speak with Eco directors Professor Nicholas Rose and Professor Craig Morgan. As you'll hear we discussed how this pandemic is affecting mental health, what we can do to support one another and what policy changes government can make to help alleviate some of the effects of this crisis. We also discussed how this pandemic may demonstrate the need for a shift in how we think about the effects of wider government policy on both our physical and mental well-being.

I hope you enjoy today's episode.

I want to start by asking a question that we ask all our guests on the podcast how are you and how is your lockdown going, Nick if you'd like to go first.

Nicholas: Yeah thanks James so I have a partner who is deemed by the NHS to be exceptionally vulnerable so we are shielding which means we can't go out of our flat at all we don't even get the one hour so it's interesting to learn to live in the small space for about four weeks now we've been doing it we look out of the window and see the weather but we're fine.

Craig: Yes thanks very much James I guess a little less or a little bit more fortunate than Nick's circumstances and things are fairly straightforward for me. Stay fairly well and just a final bit more time to read it out the bits of exercise but fairly uneventful.

James: Craig if I can come to you first what kinds of additional pressures and anxieties might people be facing due to this COVID-19 outbreak and its subsequent lockdown?

Craig: Thanks James I mean I think actually the different situations that myself and Nick are in tell us that the experience for people is going to be very different in June the lockdown and the impact on people's mental health and wellbeing is going to be very different depending on people's circumstances.

I think in general there is a lot of worry, lot of upset and distress and I think that's very natural and understandable we're living through times which none of us have got any kind of precedent for and I think people are facing a lot of challenges that come from this. In addition to the worry about the pandemic itself there's lots of uncertainty around employment people whose incomes are at risk or have been lost creating I think tremendous amount of anxiety. People are living in conditions now where they're somewhat isolated, have limited contact with friends family and so on these are bound to be having effects as well on people's sense of themselves their well-being and people living in more cramped conditions, more difficult conditions and so on and so I think there's lots of potential effects on mental health and well-being.

Nicholas: Just to add to that a bit, one thing that happens more or less to different people in different ways is that our routines of living have been thrown upside down and obviously it takes quite a while for people to find new ways of living, adapting to their circumstances and for some as Craig says those circumstances they have to adapt to are much more difficult than others if people are in financial difficulties if people have been previously relying on food banks or people have been previously relying on care from social workers or community supports of various sorts and this suddenly stripped away and the routine things that we used to do to manage our lives nipping to the shops, buying something from the pharmacy, getting our medicines, going to the GP and so on.

All those not only become much more difficult but they become sort of fraught with a certain anxiety, I can't go out but I can imagine every time you go out you see an empty street, you see people wearing masks, it's understandable that people should feel disturbed, disrupted, uncertain and take time to find their feet...

and then I suspect the effects on how people are feeling will change over time that maybe as a bit of disruption, maybe even a bit of excitement and peculiarity at the beginning everybody watching the telly and bouncing about to Joe Wicks or whatever and then as the reality sets in day after day, week after week I think things are likely to change.

But the point that Craig and I have made whenever we're asked this question is that we shouldn't mistake these anxieties, these uncertainties, the sadness and sense of having lost things in one's life or serious mental health problems. It would be strange in fact it would be abnormal if people didn't respond by feeling disturbed, distressed, upset, disrupted. If people felt everything was just the same as it always was that would be a strange response.

James: It's interesting you say that I myself I think weekend after last was being a little bit odd and then I was reminded by my partner that we're currently in a lockdown situation in which the country is operating on not the normal so it would be as you say odd not to feel a little strange.

Nicholas: and people are gonna go up and down and probably those ups and downs will be intensified by the fact that for most of you know for twenty-three hours a day we're stuck with just the people we happened to be stuck with we don't have others to talk to, the journey to work which we've always cursed is actually a sort of strange point of readjustment in the structuring of one's life.

Coming back from work the winding down et cetera all those things are gone so we have to invent...

everybody has to invent new ways of living for themselves and as I said for some these are relatively easy for those who are already in difficult circumstances or whether as Craig said the financial problems are overcrowded, with kids home from school et cetera, worried about where their next meal is going to come from. These are understandably going to cause a huge amount of anxiety and distress.

Craig: and I think it's actually important for people to hear that I think it's important for people as they struggle with some of the challenges that this throws up that actually the feelings of anxiety and so on are understandable and in themselves at this point not necessarily something to be concerned about and then maybe some reassurance in that indeed many many people are going to feel in this kind of way.

James: OK I mean...so Craig and Nick you both mentioned there this idea that we shouldn't mistake any rise in mental health or even our own mental health, some of the feelings we might have as perhaps wider problems. You wrote in that piece for the King's website in your blog post that:

'the spike in symptoms of depression and anxiety was reported the day after the UK Prime minister announced the lockdown, however to think of these responses and symptoms as indicative of mental health problems risks pathologising the natural process of adapting to radical change circumstances'.

I mean Nick you touched on it there, can you tell us what you meant by this and why it's important?

Nicholas: Why it was important is because it shapes the ways in which people feel they should respond, both the people themselves and the experts and others around. If we start to think of these feelings that we have as symptoms of serious mental health difficulties which require expert intervention, then one set of actions will be taken...

often focusing on mental health first aid, getting specialist help to individuals and so on trying to diagnose these using standard classifications scales and so on.

If you think about how people normally manage their distress most people most of the time when they're feeling distress an anxious and disturbed, they manage without going to experts they manage these through talking to their families, talking to their neighbours through social supports and so on and I think the thing that Craig and I were trying to get to in that piece was that actually we should think about the importance

of restoring if we have those kinds of everyday supports in people's communities and especially the supports for those people who do not have easy access to friends and neighbours and so on and so forth. We should try and think about how we can mobilize community resources for people to talk to just to have an ear to talk to, someone is listening to you, someone who says 'I know how you feel I'm feeling like that too'. That's probably as important if not more important in the short to medium term than seeking to think of this as a serious mental health problem that needs experts to diagnose and intervene.

James: And Craig in that piece that you Nick wrote for the King's website you mentioned that we're already seeing levels of anxiety increase following the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. I mean what is the data telling us, has research already been done on this?

Craig: I think what I was struck by was this report from the University of Sheffield and all stuff they found that in the 24 hour period after the announcement of the lockdown that there was a spike in psychological symptoms and experiences of anxiety and depression and it just struck me that it is such a normal natural response to a very dramatic announcement that there should be worry, some concern about the future and implications and so on...

and exactly as Nick says I think in framing that as indicative of a symptoms of mental health problems I think is the wrong way to think about it certainly at that point is the wrong way to think about it because it does imply a certain kind of response, and I'm not sure again exactly as Nick said that that's the response that is necessarily the most helpful and nor is the one that is going to allow us to understand the impact of this as we go forward and I think there's a lesson here and this is around the research we do.

So the way that we often do this kind of research is we ask questions about feelings of anxiety, sadness and so on and these fluctuate massively from day to day in our normal everyday lives and they will certainly do that across the course of this lockdown and pandemic and I think we risk doing something with the research which is to misrepresent the nature and the extent of mental health consequences in that we risk overamplifying the extent to which there are mental health problems a consequence of this if we count every period of experiencing anxieties, worries and so on as symptoms of mental health problems.

James: and so thinking ahead we're going to see continued social distancing measures in many countries where we see outbreaks, where gonna see continued levels of lockdown, we're not sure exactly what that will be depending on the ability to test. But what are the sort of medium and long term effects of this crisis on our mental health?

Nicholas: As Craig and I have said in the in the short term everybody is going to feel certain kinds of distress and we shouldn't pathologise that. In the medium term our view, my view certainly is that the mental health challenges are going to be greater for those who are already in various kinds of vulnerable or disadvantaged situations...

because for them the difficulty of managing without employment, the difficulty of managing without secure income, the difficulty of managing on often quite inadequate welfare benefits, the difficulty of coping in very overcrowded circumstances for some or in social isolation for others. If they're extended for a long period of time, may certainly lead to people feeling more distress than they're able to cope with in their everyday lives.

So my sense is that in the medium term what we ought to do is to focus on providing or rebuilding the kind of social support networks that those people in those vulnerable situations require, then of course there may be a place for individual mental health interventions. There are digital ones which Craig probably knows more about than I do but we know that in many disadvantaged communities ten years or so of austerity has

stripped away the social supports in all sorts of ways and I was pleased to see that the Communities Minister just on Friday I believe, announced that a very considerable amount of money was going to local authorities to try and rebuild those social supports because those local authorities are completely strapped for cash at the moment and they're running out of money and they don't have the money to prioritize the kind of supports which need to go to vulnerable communities and vulnerable individuals.

Craig: I was just going to add to that and agree very much in relation to the kind of short, medium and long term effects. I think that but also differentiating a little bit the effects of different aspects of this so there's worry concern about the virus itself and the risk it poses to people's health but there's also the worry and concern that relates to the lockdown...

and that in particular has and is bound to happen I think the strongest effects amongst those who are already essentially living at the kind of margins, for whom work is already insecure and for whom income is already marginal and it's those losses that are going to have the most profound effects and I think it's as this continues that those kinds of concerns and worries and so on are going to intensify there going to intensify much more so amongst people who are living with that degree of uncertainty.

I think that there are other aspects to it as well which I think are important to flag there are particularly vulnerable groups for example women who are living in homes situations that are problematic possibly with abusive and violent partners and of course the longer that this goes on, the more difficult and challenging those situations are going to be and we've already heard charities talking about massive increases in reports of domestic violence and so on.

So the long term effects of the continued lockdown are potentially profound on our mental health but it particularly so amongst the more disadvantaged and vulnerable groups within society and I think the one other aspect to this which is important and it relates to what Nick is saying about the need for us to draw from our natural resources. Possibly unique to this situation compare with other similar kind of crises in the past, is that the lockdown actually takes from people at the very source of natural support that might otherwise be available, that capacity to speak to socialize with friends family to draw from that kind of input.

So we almost have a kind of a double hit of massively increased anxieties around various kinds of issues but also then a loss of the natural support that might otherwise enable us to deal with those kinds of challenges...

and so I guess in terms of what needs to be done then there's a lot I think that government can do to reduce the source of anxiety that people are experiencing and particularly in relation to income, in relation to work security, in providing for people who are most vulnerable to be able to access source of help and support and so on so I think that there's a lot of dimensions to this but also a lot that can be done by government and by policy and over and above what we might do ourselves in our kind of communities.

Nicholas: Absolutely agree with Craig just to make a couple of extra points, I know from my personal experience that having been advised that if we were shielding as I said we were, there are various sources of support that we could access. Trying to access those supports even for people to pick up medication, to find slots from supermarkets, to deliver food, to understand what we should do in medical emergencies and son on, it was actually even for us, who are pretty savvy in the internet, it's actually quite difficult to work your way through all the different processes to find information. So information is really really important and ease of access to that information is really important.

Secondly as Craig says our natural sources of support are probably most important when people face a crisis. so we know from previous research on short term crises that actually former mental health intervention

immediately after a crisis like having an experience in a fire or bombing and whatever it happens to be, that's actually not terribly helpful. What's most helpful is for people to have a chat with their friends about something which is completely different, go down to the Cafe have a talk about a football match or whatever it happens to and try and restore your normal contacts.

Now we know those things are really really difficult to do in the current circumstances so one thing that we need to do is try mobilize the huge resources that there are in communities to be in touch with people who are isolated, this army of three-quarters of a million people standing ready to provide support and having stood ready for two or three weeks still waiting to be told how they should provide that support, shows us that there is actually a great depth of willingness in our communities for people to reach out and help others...

and I think the ways in which government can support those are really important and support the charities and support the local authorities and support those at a multitude of local levels seems to me to be most important.

Craig: And I think there's another really important aspect of this and that is the moment the way that we do keep connected in exactly what we're doing here is using the internet, but for those who say have lost their jobs or their income has declined and who are looking and need to cut costs in order to be able to provide food and so on one of the things that I'm most like to go is access to the internet. These are costs that for many people are going to be challenging.

So again those people who are living at the kind of financial margins their capacity to be able to connect with people by the Internet is also the thing that is likely to be more often reduced and I think we need to think very seriously about that and as a simple measure and I'm not an economist so I don't know about the cost of these kinds of things but providing free internet to people at a time of crisis like this may well be a simple thing that could go a long way in people connected and supported.

James: We've heard about how some of the economic inequalities within society are actually driving health inequalities and in this case we include mental as well as physical health...

I guess two things first of all what are the kinds of ways that those economic inequalities have a direct impact on people's ability to access mental health provision and secondly with direct reference to some Michael Moore, his review just came back to show that economic policy of the UK government is having a kind of direct effect on health inequality, do you see those same kinds of issues coming up in terms of mental health?

Craig: Thanks James I guess this is just a the illustration of how the pandemic is amplifying and laying bear the inequalities that run through society. If you think for example about kids who are off school because of school closures, the way now that is teaching that learning is continuing is primarily through online resources and of course that is going to be more difficult for households where there is, you know limited access to the internet, where there's limited access to computing and so on. So in just that small example we see the way in which these kinds of inequalities that run through society already are amplified in the context of this pandemic and make more difficult , more challenging for people who are more disadvantaged.

Nicholas: I absolutely agree with that and just to follow that up in relation to the people who are already experiencing mental health problems...

so I think this has exacerbated the difficulties of those who are already experiencing mental health problems and receiving mental health support. First as you implied James the kinds of gradients of disadvantage and their implications on health that Michael Marmot and his group have pointed out in relation to physical

health and certainly also apply to mental health where mental services have been stripped to the bone a both of those in the community and indeed in patients services.

We also know that those who have serious mental health problems also are likely to have co-morbidities that is to say they're likely to have other health conditions as well, and that means that many of those with serious mental health problems also are probably considered by the government to be amongst the most vulnerable and asked to limits if not to shield to limit to a minimum their social their social interactions. So these are people who are normally rely for their support on care workers on community care coordinators, on community nurses on visits to mental health centres to talk to their psychiatrist or their mental health worker and so on...

and all those supports which are as important just for the communication and the feeling of being touched as they are for any sort of expert intervention all those supports become much much more difficult. So I think and again as Craig has stressed as well those who are already vulnerable, who are already isolated already experiencing both physical and mental health difficulties are likely to have those amplified in these situations and from my point of view the solution there has to be to try and restore as far as possible those social supports.

Some could be provided digitally some could be provided by technology, some can be provided by neighbours just knocking at the door by people phoning up or whatever, the telephone doesn't require a huge amount of Internet ability to be able to use and it's quite a useful instrument for talking to one another so social solidarity and social links and the feeling that we are all in it together is a great support to mental health...

and we know that at the moment we're not all in it together that some are definitely feeling the effects much more than others and we need to try and build that solidarity. You mentioned what earlier events might show, before the Second World War experts were predicting that there would be a very big rise of a mental disorder, of people wanting to go to hospital or people needing expert mental health support during the Second World War and in fact that was not the case.

People access hospitals less frequently, people felt less in need of expert support, the rates of suicide dropped and so on, and that's partly...

I know there's a myth of the Blitz spirit and social solidarity and so on but it's partly because in that period of total war there was a sense that we were all in it together, that everybody was suffering and of course in those situations during the bombing people would get together in the air raid centres and so on. We need to try and recreate some of that and I'm not being hand-wavingly romantic about that but we do actually know from evidence that these forms of social support reduced people's levels of anxiety and depression and reduce their need to access specialist services.

I think there's an there's a longer term question which perhaps we ought to get to in a separate bit of this discussion which is what are going to be the longer term implications of this kind of event for people's mental health.

James: Yeah I think it's really interesting you mentioned the Second World War I guess younger generations often feel that they maybe wouldn't match up to that challenge but I think it's striking how similar the reactions to this are when you go back and read some of the recent histories of the Blitz actually some of the reactions are similar to what we've seen in this in this crisis or perhaps we're not as changed as we think we are. I just realised-

Nicholas: So just to make a point on that James I'm sorry to jump in but for instance if you look at something, a recent horrible event the fire at Grenfell Tower you saw how rapidly the people around in that community stepped in much more rapidly than government, much more rapidly than the official agencies, stepped in to provide support for those people whose lives have been shattered by that event we're not as disconnected as people sometimes say and there are huge wealth of resources there amongst our young people and in ethnic groups and amongst churches and religious organisations, who are ready and willing and stepping up even now so to provide that support doesn't mean government should do nothing but it does mean the government should make sure that those resources are themselves supported in whatever way possible.

James: We've already spoken a little bit about those groups that are most adversely affected by this crisis, thinking ahead we've often seen minority groups come together as a form of both solidarity but also as an actual tool to tackle both physical and mental health challenges, and thinking about BAME, LGBT+ and even young people, are those groups able to exist in lockdown? Are they existing, are they continuing and actually how important are they to supporting society's mental health?

Craig: Thanks James I think it's difficult for me to speak about those particular groups as such but I guess we all draw to a certain degree from our own kind of a social backgrounds and social groups and I guess I could give a fairly personal example which may relate to this about how there's a tremendous amount of social solidarity that is there bubbling beneath the surface and he's coming to the fore in this crisis.

My parents are currently in a situation where they're isolated and in lockdown, I come from and they live in a town in Yorkshire and within a very short space of time the community has pulled together in a really tremendous way to ensure that those who are living in these kind of conditions get food and that there is people who are going to supermarkets and delivering food, that there's access to medicines that there's access to money and so on. In fact my parents who, we lived during the mine trike in the eighty's, my dad was a miner and their comment on this is that this is the spirit of the strike coming to the fore, this is spirit of solidarity and togetherness and looking out for one another in situations of extreme challenge and I do think that we're seeing that.

I'm not sure to what extent that's occurring in other populations in social groups but I suspect it is, I suspect there's a tremendous amount of that going on out there in communities and that I think is something that gives us a tremendous amount of hope for what might come from the crisis that there might be something positive and that these kinds of a social connections that are there and that have not gone away could actually be fostered and could be part of a new approach to the way that we relate to one another into politics.

Nicholas: Yep if I could just add, I mean my personal experience I live in a completely different situation from Craig's parents. I live in a block of flats in central London and neighbours that I've seen for years but I've never really said anything to them apart from the weather's good or the weather's bad or the lifts out of service again or something like that...

have come up knocking on the door, have texted and e-mailed, have baked cakes and drop them on because we can't let them but have drop them on outside the door and knocked and said that they're there, have gone shopping for us and gone to the pharmacist for us and so on, quite without asking they just step forward and did that and said that they like to do it. So I think there are those resources there now I think both Craig and I would want to stress that these resources cannot substitute for effective political and policy responses but those political and policy responses need to recognise and support those...that wealth of community spiritedness that exists in the population and not as we often hear not deny that it exists. It is there and I'm no great fan of some of our previous governments and the rhetoric of the quotes of the big society but society

does exist, community connections do exist and when it comes to mental health they are really crucial and that those and this is what the Marmot report also shows that those individuals who are living with fewer social supports are those individuals who are likely to experience greater levels of mental distress, greater levels of stress and all the consequences of that. So if we can rebuild or recognise and support some of these things at the local level I think we will go a long way towards learning something from this particular event.

James: Yeah I mean it's been fantastic to see those networks come together and as you say been a real support for people in these recent weeks and it's fantastic to hear that they actually have a real effect on people's mental health as well and actually recommend there is a piece on The Guardian website from Owen Jones in which he speaks of people who have come together as part of the LGBT+ community to organize queer club nights and I hear is fantastic. I think the LGBT+ community has often found solidarity on the dance floor at the toughest of times and I'm glad that that's continuing even under lockdown so that's fantastic.

Just thinking ahead Craig and Nick I mean we've already talked about some of the things we might want to see from government in terms of alleviating some of the challenges posed by this crisis in terms of our mental health but I mean what would we want to see from government in the coming weeks and months?

Craig: I think that when or before that is to make the point that this crisis this pandemic occurs against a political and economic backdrop that is important to acknowledge over the past forty years, there has been sustained I think investment in public services in the NHS, increased uncertainty in precarity and employment as a consequence of changes in employment law and so on and that is part of the context in which this is occurring and is amplifying its effects...

and I think that what needs to happen is that some of that at least needs to be brought back that we need investment in public services we clearly need investment in the NHS and to ensure that frontline workers have what they need to be able to carry out what they are required to do as safely as possible.

So I think those things are absolutely critical I think there are some other things that I would like to see and I guess this is getting political, I think this crisis illustrates the tremendous value of something like a universal basic income to guarantee a certain level of security for people, which would mitigate many of the kind of uncertainties and the difficulties that people currently face because of the crisis and we talked about internet access at being an absolute necessity in critical in these times of crises but something which I think increasingly is critical for people across the board and a final thing, I guess relates to access to food. We all know about the impact that this crisis has had on food banks and their capacity to get food to people who need it most and we need to do something about that.

So there's a whole list of things I could go on and I know it does get political but I think it's really for me its occurring against a backdrop of forty years where we've operated in government which has functioned on the basis that there is no such thing as society and so it's really quite interesting that Boris Johnson now tells us that there is indeed such a thing as society and I think the way forward is for government to act on the basis that there is in fact such a thing as society and invest in it.

Nicholas: Absolutely echo all that...

and it may seem odd to people listening to this podcast that directing a centre, co-directing a centre for society and mental health requires us to address not the development or strengthening of psychiatric services, all diagnostic tests or whatever but to rebuild society, but I think that the Marmot report and other reports demonstrate as does a whole host of social and political research over the last century how crucial those things are the path to good mental health does not lie in better mental health services however important

better mental health services are, it lies in tackling the roots of mental health. The only things I'd add to Craig in this rebuilding would be rebuilding those local resources, devolving power back to local authorities and giving them the funds, devolving to charities and local organizations recognising the crucial role that they can play.

Perhaps the one thing the government really do need to look at again is the way in which payments for welfare social support are becoming increasingly conditional not just here in the UK but across many societies, many advanced industrial societies. By which I mean that people have to be means tested or go through a whole series of other tests in order to qualify for social benefits we already know before this pandemic that those readiness to work tests had very very damaging effects on people's mental health. The humiliation of going through some of these assessments, the ways in which people fail those assessments and therefore have their benefits withdrawn were really very bad for men's health and showed up in figures of suicide.

So we need to move away from these highly conditional welfare benefits whether we do so through a universal basic income as Craig mentioned, negative income tax other ways of making sure that all citizens in our society have sufficient income to live a life and are secure in the knowledge that they will always have that income, that I think is absolutely crucial and one sees something like this in some of the Nordic countries this is not pie in the sky, one can see the development of these kinds of approaches elsewhere, they are crucial not just for general wellbeing but for mental health itself.

James: So move away from a system that perhaps compounds some of those inequalities and problems as opposed to seeking to tackle them.

Nicholas: Yeah they don't compound them and actually one of the consequences is that some of the most marginalized groups become incredibly alienated from the system itself. Black and ethnic minority communities who suffer often the most in relation to this and perhaps most in need of some of these access to some of these social support benefits often feel extremely alienated from the system as the LGBTQ communities that you mentioned before James.

So these systems these conditional welfare systems often alienate and discourage and super marginalize, doubly marginalize the very marginalized people they ought to place at the centre of their concerns...

James: And finally the Centre of society and mental health has only recently launched here at King's your already speaking and discussing some of the issues in relation to COVID-19. Can you tell us a little bit more about what the centre is going to be doing, some of the research you might focus on in the coming weeks months and years and perhaps Nick if you'd like to go first.

Nicholas: Our centre which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council the ESRC is a big investment in trying rigorously to understand the effects of adversity and social change which is increasing adversity on people's mental health.

We're focusing in particular on three areas where we think this is most important on children and young people, on specifically marginalized communities and on work and welfare and in each of those areas where undertaking empirical research to look at the ways in which adversity impacts mental health of children, the mental health of the most marginalised and the effects of changes in work economy, in work in security and changes in welfare benefits, like the move to conditional benefits the way in which those changes are affecting a mental health.

One of the key features of our centre is that we involve people who have lived, experienced mental health problems in all aspects of our work, in developing the research strategies, in evaluating the evidence that we have in setting our research priorities and so on and one of the things that we are seeking to do in relation to this particular pandemic and responses to it, is to gather together some experiences of those people with mental health problems of their lives under lockdown of their lives in the pandemic we see this very much, our centre in our research program as not something just that we the experts do about them who have mental health problems but something that we do with those people who have experienced some of the worst of social adversity and who are experiencing mental health problems themselves...

because after all it is their lives and what they want from their lives and I should say what we want from our lives because most of us have had experience of mental health problems of one sort or another ourselves.

It is working with people with lived experience that we will begin to understand the real effects of things like this pandemic on people's lives and begin to understand what might actually, from their perspective make their lives more sustainable, make them more secure, more resilient, able to reshape their lives in the face of the difficulties that they confront.

Perhaps Craig might want to say a little bit more about some of the specific research that's going on and especially in relation to the children program that he directs.

Craig: Thanks very much Nick I guess one thing that we couldn't have anticipated when we set up the centre and were thinking about the centre in focusing on social change and mental health is that in the few weeks after the centre started we'd be living through possibly the most rapid period of social change that we've witnessed certainly in our lifetimes and so as a centre in having that focus in the coming weeks and months we will shape some of what we do to look at questions in relation to the pandemic and COVID-19.

So to take an example as Nic mentioned we've got three main areas of research that we're planning to pursue in relation to young people we've brought forward our plans to follow a cohort of young people in South London to look at the impact and the effects of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the situation of social distancing and school closures and I think the particular value of that is that this cohort is a very diverse cohort spanning both a large range of young people from different ethnic groups but also of different households socio-economic positions so it will give us an opportunity to try to understand what the impacts are across different groups...

and I guess then most importantly what can we do so what can be done within families within schools and within communities to support mental health of young people in these going to very difficult times. So one aspect of what we're doing as a centre is research. I guess another element to this is that we are also contributing where appropriate to reviews of evidence that will provide us with an understanding of what we currently know that's relevant to understanding the pandemic and its effects on mental health, and we work in various colleagues in relation to that...

and I guess the final thing is a need to come back to some of the elements of what we talked about in the podcast is that we're doing things like this that we're trying to get out there into the debate a focus on the particular impacts that the pandemic is having on the mental health of people who are most disadvantaged, most vulnerable and most marginalized.

So we do hope that the centre over the coming weeks and months will contribute to our being able to respond to the pandemic in situation that we can support people's mental health through the very very challenging times.

James: I wanna say a big thank you both Professor Craig Morgan and Professor Nicholas Rose as they've been fantastic guests and we hope to have more from them in the coming weeks I know that the centre will be producing work that'll be fascinating reading and I hope you check them out online both from their social media and their website.

Until next time remember WORLD: we got this.

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