Ongoing Impacts of COVID-19 on the Child Life Community

Data Collection Window
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Takeaways from these survey results
Survey Participants

5250
Number of ACLP members that were sent the survey

1045
Number survey responses (complete & partial responses)

985
Responses from CCLSs in the USA

44
Responses from CCLSs in Canada

11
Responses from CCLSs in other countries

30
Responses from academic professionals

45
Responses from community-based child life specialists

84
Responses from students
How Child Life Copes

How would you assess your ability to cope with changes brought by the pandemic in July, August, and September?

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about coping with changes during the pandemic. The chart is divided into three categories: Work changes, Home life/family changes, and Shelter in place/stay at home orders. The responses are categorized as Very poor, Poor, Well, Very Well, and N/A. The chart notes that the response distribution is similar to that for April, May, and June.](chart.png)
How Child Life Copes

What one thing is most helping you cope effectively with the changes brought by the pandemic?

- Strong activities
- Zoom
- Gardening
- Online
- Friendships
- Child life
- Reading
- Yoga
- Connections
- Walks
- Support
- Coworkers
- Spending time
- Social media
- Routine
- Able to work
- Husband
- People
- Coworkers & colleagues
- Running
- Consistency & routine
- Therapist
- Home
- Possible
- Social support
- Together
- Faith
- Close friends
- Going outside
- Focusing time
- Communicate
- Work
- Spouse
- Family
- Prayer
- Support
- Opportunities
- Family & friends
- Work
- Team
- Exercise
- Netflix
- Supportive
- Children
- Team
- Connecting friends
- Family
- Life
- Video chats
- Job
- Loved ones
- Flexibility
- Parents
- Therapy
- Maintain
- Talking
- Love
- Changes
- Group
- Facetime
- Partner
- Technology
- School
- Dog
- Help

What one thing is most detrimental to your ability to cope effectively with the changes brought by the pandemic?

- Communication
- Information
- Staff
- Demands
- Schedule
- Workload
- Future
- Socialization
- Leadership
- Spouse
- Travel
- Social media
- Loss
- Isolated
- Constant changes at work
- Challenges
- Time
- Team
- Job
- Support system
- Children
- Worry
- Fear
- Of unknown
- News
- Lack of support
- Situation
- Inability to see friends & family
- Control
- Work
- Child care
- Changes
- Sick
- School
- Missing
- Stress
- Kids
- Hospital
- Management
- Isolation
- Social distancing
- Fear
- Community
- Child life
- Normal
- Lack of social
- Struggling
- Anxiety
- Risk
- Patients
- Internship
- Stay home
- Orders
How Child Life Copes

What is one thing that brings you joy right now?

gardening baking patients smiles Connecting help Walking sleep job Focusing home personal life kids Still able work time internship children crafts time with pets activities time with family and friends zoom time outside ability work Spending quality time transition to fall talking Spending time Sports exercise church Reading music Playing Cooking food interactions healthy hobbies

What is one worry keeping you up at night?

child life team hospital safe fear leadership home love internship worry opportunities unknown future staff financial security stability work & job security needs family & loved ones hours COVID-19 pandemic everything return to school students health support sick time election move change volunteer stress concern patient
How Child Life Copes

What self-care activity is most effective right now?

- tv
- organizing
- books
- baking
- Naps
- massage
- listening
- music
- beach
- therapy
- taking baths
- watching tv
- Quality time
- Talking
- Time away work
- music spent
- Cooking
- quiet home
- house
time
creative
- sleep
- podcasts
- reading
- deep breathing
- time with friends & family
- enough sleep
- exercise & fitness
- Drawing
- spending time outside
- Playing
- work
- Art
- pets
- activities
- meditation
- eating
- Journaling
- good Rest
- Reading
- Bible
- prayer
- Watching movies
- relax
- distraction
- painting
- morning
- mindfulness
- Prioritizing
- alone time
- kids
crafting
- finding
- gardening
A state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. Symptoms of burnout include:

- demotivation and detachment from your work
- depleted energy levels
- detachment in personal relationships
- lower productivity
- lower resistance to illness
- pessimistic outlook on work or life
- physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion
- time away from work

Based on this definition, how would you rate your personal risk of burnout?
Burnout

How is your burnout risk affecting the following areas of your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional relationships</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/school performance</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to prioritize</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to empathize/connect with children and families</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to comprehend complex information</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not at all
- A little
- Moderately
- A lot
- N/A
"Outside of work it takes extra time for me to find motivation to do basic tasks like grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning. It is nearly impossible to perform tasks outside of the daily necessities. There are many home projects that have been put on hold indefinitely due to lack of energy, motivation, and head space."

"Mother died in another state in March. No funeral, dad is now declining & can’t visit him unless I use all my vacation due to quarantine restrictions..."

"The stress of feeling like I may get sick at work and pass on to family"
How is your burnout risk affecting the following areas of your life?

"Struggling to empathize with adults making unsafe choices at the moment. Taking extra vacation days right now to allow more recharge time at home and to increase my performance while at work. Difficulty identifying first priority tasks and forgetfulness regarding passwords/passcodes."

"Making big life decisions outside of my work."

"My mental health is stable, but I cry more easily and more often."

"I don't have much empathy for family/friends complaining that they have to work from home. We hospital workers don't have that luxury."

"I find that I am more negative than I have been in the past. I am seeing things with more of a skeptical outlook right now."

"I think my level of burnout is different in my home life and my work life. At home I'm high burn out and work I'm low. Work at times feels like a vacation..."

"My ability to be present with my son. I find myself often wanting to disconnect and "turn off" both at work and home."

"Managing my staff's burnout and mental health."
Burnout

Who do you turn to when you're feeling symptoms of burnout?

I seek support...

[Bar chart showing the number of responses for each category.

- Child life colleagues: 314
- Other colleagues: 35
- Family: 177
- Friends: 175
- Mental health professional: 61
- Other: 79

- In person: 478
- By phone/video call: 210
- By text/email: 72
- On social media: 6
- Other: 62]
**Burnout**

Are you seeing indicators of burnout in child life colleagues?

- **Yes**: 584
- **No**: 91
- **N/A**: 156

Are you seeing indicators of burnout in non-child life colleagues?

- **Yes**: 700
- **No**: 73
- **N/A**: 57
Return to School

What option best indicates your family's child care/school status?

- My child(ren) have returned to school in person: 75%
- My child(ren) have returned to school virtually: 84%
- My child(ren) have returned to school in a hybrid model: 50%
- My child(ren) are homeschooling: 4%
- My child(ren) go to a child care center: 48%

- My child(ren) go to home-based child care: 17%
- My child(ren) are cared for by myself/a partner/a family member in our home: 56%
- My child(ren) are cared for by a nanny/sitter in our home: 17%
- My family's child care/schooling needs are not being met: 13%
- Other (please specify): 14%
Return to School

If your child(ren) are enrolled in K-12 schooling, how much support are they needing from you personally to be successful?

- A great deal of support: 76
- Some support: 73
- A little bit of support: 29
- No support needed: 8
- N/A: 66

My child(ren)'s child care/schooling status is impacting my work life...

- In a positive way: 27
- In a neutral way: 115
- In a negative way: 77
Takeaways

Members of the child life community are all experiencing the impacts of the pandemic in their own unique ways. While the majority of the community seems to be taking this in stride, there is a significant number that are struggling.

For those of you that have been coping well, perhaps these results are a reminder to check in on your colleagues - there may be more going on behind the scenes.

For those of you that have been struggling, know you are not alone - far from it in fact. Just as we normalize challenging experiences for children and families in our work as child life specialists, we hope this report normalizes your pandemic experience and provides some new ideas for coping strategies.

We can't predict the future or what new challenges and opportunities the next few months will bring, but the child life community was made for this. Be kind to yourselves and remember to apply the same attention and care to yourself that you are always bestowing on the children and families you see: seek support when you need it, take time to refuel, and give yourself grace.
ACLP will reissue these surveys periodically to track trends in the child life field as the world continues to grapple with COVID-19. The accuracy of these reports is dependent on your participation - please retake it even if you have not experienced changes from the previous survey.

Questions? Email mroloff@childlife.org.