

Game app monitors young people's mood during coronavirus crisis

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In a few weeks' time, we can expect weekly updates about young people's mood during the coronavirus crisis. Erasmus MC and Tilburg University are launching the Grow It! app to prevent psychological

problems and also to obtain insight into young people's mood.

Young people and students miss their sporting activities, friends and even their final exams. Also, due to tensions and (financial) problems at home, psychological complaints such as stress and gloominess are an imminent threat. Grow It! is a [smartphone app](#), in the form of a game, that specifically supports young people aged 12 to 25 years with their feelings of anxiety, gloominess, loneliness and stress during the coronavirus crisis.

Weekly update about young people's mood

With the app, young people aged 12 to 25 years will obtain more insight into how they feel as well as some healthy distraction. The data that young people enter will very soon provide a weekly update about young people's [mood](#) before and after they return to school. The app is part of the project How do adolescents cope with the Corona-crisis: a smartphone study led by Manon Hillegers, Chair of Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Psychology at Erasmus MC-Sophia Children's Hospital.

Game and diary in one

Young people can download the app for free on their phone, choose an animal's name as a nickname, become part of a team and join in the game. Each day, at five random moments, they receive a short questionnaire about their sleep, exercise, emotions, social behavior, loneliness and stress. They are also offered challenges. Such challenges include, for example: bake or cook a tasty treat for neighbors or tell your friend what you like about her. These tasks help young people to share their feelings or to engage in an activity. At the same time, the app works as a sort of diary.

Will teenagers really go and bake something for the neighbors?

Hillegers: "Previous pilots have revealed that young people really like the challenges. Some of these challenges can be completed in a few minutes, for example, telling a friend what they dreamed about. The challenges have been taken from a coping strategy that helps activate people. We know that as a result of these challenges, young people get bored less, which is something they are really suffering from at present, and learn to share their emotions more easily."

Weekly survey of young people's mood

Via the app, the researchers want to help young people but also obtain insight into their emotions. Hillegers: "The young people fill in what they're doing, where they are and how they feel. Via this method of experience sampling modeling, we can obtain a lot of data to form profiles of people and acquire insight into how the mood changes over time. Will that change when young people return to school?"

Initially, the app will be offered to [young people](#) in the age category 12 to 25 years in the region Rotterdam Rijnmond, but everybody can download the app and participate. The initial goal is to recruit about 1000 participants.

More information: Do you want to participate? See growitapp.nl/doemee

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