

Key research areas for coronavirus recovery identified

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Seven key areas of research to support society's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic have been identified by leading psychologists.

The devastating impact of the global COVID-19 emergency has fundamentally changed all aspects of society and needs urgent and wide-

ranging [psychological research](#) both now and in the future, according to a new paper published in the *British Journal of Psychology*.

Professor Daryl O'Connor, of the University of Leeds's School of Psychology, is the lead author of the paper.

He said: "The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest global biopsychosocial emergency the world has faced for a century, and psychological science has an integral and unique part to play in helping societies recover. With psychology taking a key role in helping to inform the initial response to the pandemic, it's vital that we also take a focused approach to support its recovery."

The new paper identifies seven key areas for research: [mental health](#), behavior change and adherence, work, education, children and families, physical health and the brain, and social cohesion and connectedness.

"The pandemic has affected how we work, educate, parent, socialize, shop, communicate and travel," said Professor O'Connor.

"It has led to thousands of bereavements, as well as frontline workers being exposed to alarming levels of risk and stress. Not only that, but it has highlighted inequalities and impacted hugely on vulnerable groups, particularly people from BAME communities, people with lower socio-economic status, older people and those with existing health problems, to name just a few. We mustn't forget that there have also been positive social and behavioral changes as a result of the pandemic: the levels of compassion and support exhibited amongst neighborhoods and communities being the most obvious. So it's really important to understand how these positive effects can be maintained and negative impacts mitigated as restrictions are eased."

The new paper, "Research priorities for the COVID-19 [pandemic](#) and

beyond: A call to action for [psychological science](#)," identifies the gaps in knowledge created by society's changing needs and outlines where robust new evidence is essential to helping to inform and shape decision-making for recovery strategies.

The research priorities were informed by an expert panel convened by the British Psychological Society that reflects the breadth of the discipline, a wider advisory panel with international input, and a survey of 539 psychological scientists conducted early in May 2020.

Professor O'Connor added: "We're calling on psychological scientists to work collaboratively with other scientists and stakeholders on innovative new research so that together we can take action to address the gaps in knowledge, develop robust understanding of what the 'new normal' means for people and take action to help drive recovery forward."

More information: Daryl B. O'Connor et al. Research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: A call to action for psychological science, *British Journal of Psychology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/bjop.12468](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12468)

Provided by University of Leeds

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