

Mission Australia conducted its 19th annual survey of young people aged 15-19 in 2020. The survey aims to identify young people's values, aspirations and concerns. This year's survey had a special focus on young people's experiences of unfair treatment and COVID-19.

**25,800**  
RESPONDENTS  
aged 15-19 years



**56%** Female **41%** Male **2%** Gender Diverse

**4%** identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

**20%** spoke a language other than English at home

### Top 3 factors to securing a job:

1. Flexible working hours 75%
2. More jobs in my local area 59%
3. Work experience 42%

### Top 3 personal concerns:

1. Coping with stress 43%
2. Mental health 34%
3. Body image 33%



More than double the proportion of females were extremely/very concerned about coping with stress (56% compared with 25% of males)

### Top 3 most important issues in Australia today:



**Equity and discrimination**  
40%



**COVID-19**  
39%



**Mental health**  
31%

Since 2019, the % of young people identifying **EQUITY** and **DISCRIMINATION** as an issue of national importance has increased from **25%** to **40%**

## COVID-19

Young people were asked to comment on their biggest personal issue experienced in the past year. In 2020, the top 3 biggest personal issues were:

1. Education 34%
2. Mental health 17%
3. COVID-19 9%

Of the **9%** of young people who felt **COVID-19** was their biggest personal issue:

**33%** were concerned about COVID-19 and education

**31%** were concerned about COVID-19 in general

**21%** were concerned about COVID-19 and isolation

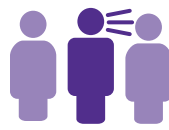
**17%** were concerned about COVID-19 and mental health

**7%** were concerned about COVID-19 and financial problems

## Young people were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment. In the past year:



**Experienced  
unfair treatment**  
27%



**Witnessed  
unfair treatment**  
55%

39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents had experienced unfair treatment compared with 29% of non-Indigenous respondents

### Of those who experienced unfair treatment:



**41%**  
had experienced unfair treatment due to their gender



**30%**  
had experienced unfair treatment due to their race/cultural background



**26%**  
had experienced unfair treatment due to their mental health

### Of those who witnessed unfair treatment:



**62%**  
reported it was due to a person's race/cultural background



**49%**  
reported it was due to a person's sexuality



**41%**  
reported it was due to a person's gender

*"Discrimination, seen in both race and sexual or gender preference. I myself have not been victim to this discrimination but I have seen those close to me be affected by it. People should be more educated about LGBTIQA+ and race issues."* **F, 17, TAS**

### Recommendations:

- ✓ Replicate and fund flexible and alternative learning options for young people.
- ✓ End the digital divide and ensure access to reliable internet and devices for young people.
- ✓ Focus on mental health prevention and early intervention measures, including online and outreach.
- ✓ Implement a permanent increase to income support payments for young people and their families.
- ✓ Replicate and fund early intervention services to prevent youth homelessness.
- ✓ Fund youth-specific social housing.
- ✓ Develop a new National Anti-Racism Strategy and partner with young people on anti-racism initiatives.
- ✓ Put young people at the centre of service design and development.
- ✓ Develop a national approach to supporting youth employment.

**If you are a young person and need someone to talk with, you can contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7) [kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au)**

**To download the report:**  [missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurveyreport](https://missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurveyreport)