



PRESS RELEASE

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How the Gibraltar Youth Service and their service users have adapted and are coping with the lockdown and isolation

The Gibraltar Youth Service has had to adapt rapidly its services and activities for young people by delivering virtual online youth work sessions through Zoom.

These sessions, which commenced when the lockdown was announced, are becoming increasingly popular amongst the young people enabling them to stay connected with their leaders and other members. The activities on offer include educational quizzes, creative art therapy, scavenger hunts, bingo, countdown conundrums and letter writing to name a few.

More recently users have been asked to share their experiences of the lockdown and whilst the majority stated they were bored at times, missed their extended families and prefer a more structured routine it was also obvious that many young people in our community are able to adapt to changes and build up resilience through challenging times.

Whilst anyone can acknowledge the mental and physical stress of isolation at home, it is encouraging to hear our youth discuss their coping strategies and identify the life skills they are developing.

During the lockdown period, many of the youth club members have taken cooking and baking as a pastime, recognising they are more aware of ingredients used and some feel they are eating a healthier diet. The participants have also stressed and wish to promote the impact this lockdown has had on the environment. A member said; "the air is much cleaner and I can actually hear the birds singing in the morning". There is a great sense of appreciation of the outdoor life that was taken for granted prior to the lockdown; young people are beginning to appreciate the natural beauty Gibraltar has to offer.

As part of their coping mechanisms some young people have taken up hobbies which help keep them entertained as well as giving them a sense of accomplishment, reading their first book or writing a poem or story, complete a jigsaw puzzle or develop their creative skills through art.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport



Technology has also been a life-saver and support for many, as some say they are able to connect with friends and extended family members, which is important for the emotional well-being, thus reducing their anxiety. As part of other means of entertainment, they are watching and creating “TikTok” videos and memes with access to playing console games a popular amongst many.

The Youth Service are encouraging young people to write a diary, complete a time capsule or create a poster about their experience during lock down as this period of our life will go down in history and can be shared with future generations.

If you are a young person and would like to get involved in the Youth Service zoom sessions please go to our website www.youth.gi, follow us on twitter or contact Mark Zammit, Principal Youth Officer on mzammit@gibraltar.gov.gi or call 200 78637.