

I [REDACTED] and have done so for the past 20 years. I also have [REDACTED] one day a week for the last 15 years.

In these roles I have witnessed the social and economical results of the multiple lock-downs on the communities I am in. There are many in our local community who have lost valuable relationship skills as a result of not being able to get out and socialise or work with people.

A lot of the students, I have especially noticed, struggle to be motivated for their future; they have lost imaginations, and hopes and dreams. They seem unable to plan because they have been stifled for so long, and are fearful of what the future holds, rather than excited to be going out into the world and living a full life.

Also, many of the people I come into contact with at work are less inclined to be hopeful and are more worried about the future, their families and how they are coping or not coping after having been locked down for so long. A lot are dealing with mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, with family members and it is placing strains on relationships.

I believe that the health system has failed on many fronts. When COVID 19 first came onto the scene, it seemed that a lot of doctors and medical personnel completely forgot all previous knowledge about viruses and breathing illnesses, and therefore caused a lot of unnecessary distress. Rather than looking out for those who were most at risk (and they were generally those most at risk from any respiratory illness) the medical profession seemed to set out to cause panic. I think this was a huge mistake on the part of the health industry, and it will take a long time for people to trust their doctors and other health personnel again.

COVID 19 has caused a lot of deaths, but the majority were not from the illness; a lot were from loneliness (being shut into rooms in nursing homes, this was told to me by a friend who works in a nursing home), and suicide because people could see no hope.

In the future I would like to see that actual proven science and health knowledge is at the forefront, rather than panic and fear-mongering. And people being allowed to have a say in what they are allowed to do, rather than someone in an office somewhere dictating what people can and can't do. The city is very different from the country regions, and having the same regulations is not always relevant - not being allowed to travel more than 5km, when the nearest town is 20km or more away, is a bit ridiculous.