



Citation: C. Borelli (2022) «We can't leave them alone fighting against a dragon»: Educators' Representations through Images of Adolescents' Wellbeing during Covid-19 Pandemic. *Rief* 21, 2: pp. 127-140. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36253/rief-12273>.

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

«We can't leave them alone fighting against a dragon»: Educators' Representations through Images of Adolescents' Wellbeing during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Numerose ricerche indicano l'urgenza di porre attenzione al benessere degli e delle adolescenti in questa crisi pandemica. Vista la carenza di ricerche di tipo qualitativo e in ambito pedagogico su questo tema specifico, il presente studio pilota ha la finalità di indagare il benessere degli/delle adolescenti attraverso gli occhi dei/delle professionisti/e dell'educazione e della salute che lavorano con loro. Nel mese di Aprile 2021 sono state condotte tre interviste a partire dalle immagini ("image-elicited interviews") usando le illustrazioni per stimolare i racconti. I risultati rivelano una tendenza generale negli/nelle adolescenti verso emozioni negative e chiusura in se stessi/e, così come difficoltà nella relazioni con se stessi/e e il mondo circostante; le professioniste intervistate sono preoccupate rispetto al benessere degli e delle adolescenti.

Parole chiave: adolescenti, Covid-19, benessere, educatori, interviste a partire dalle immagini.

Abstract

Numerous alarming research are indicating the urgency to shed light on adolescents' wellbeing during this pandemic crisis. Since qualitative and pedagogical literature on the topic is rather limited, this pilot study aims to investigate adolescents' wellbeing through the eyes of education and health professionals working with them. In April 2021 three "image-elicited interviews" were conducted in order to stimulate narratives and storytelling using evocative illustrations as a stimulus. The results reveal a general tendency in adolescents towards negative emotions and self-closure, as well as difficulties in the relationship with themselves and the world around; professionals are worried about adolescents' wellbeing.

Keywords: adolescents, Covid-19, wellbeing, educators, image-elicited interview.

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Introduction

In this global crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic, which is clearly not just a health and economic crisis but also a social and psychological one, there is an urgent need to address the issue of adolescents' wellbeing. Therefore, the aim of this exploratory descriptive pilot study is to deepen various aspects of adolescents' wellbeing during the first year of the pandemic, by analyzing them through the eyes of education and health professionals working with them. The present study, consisting of three "image-elicited interviews" conducted in April 2021, is a pilot study introductory of a broader research on the same topic that will involve adolescents, their perspective and their feelings. Nowadays (Summer, 2022) interviews to adolescents themselves are also being conducted: data are still under analysis.

A strong push to investigate this topic came from the growing concern generated by the numerous restrictive measures that strongly hit adolescents' lives in Italy (as in many other countries), especially in the first year of the pandemic: the impossibility to meet peers, distance learning and the suspension of recreational and sport activities have stressed them continuously for a long period. Without entering the debate on the need to close the services dedicated to youth, though keeping in mind that data are confirming the extremely low virus transmission rates among people aged 0-19 (Gandini et al., 2021), we cannot deny that adults' prevalent attitude towards adolescents during the first year of the pandemic has been that of expecting them to be comprehensive about the situation, while constantly demanding their sacrifice, as if they were adults. But they are not. And we do have a pedagogical responsibility towards them as educators, adults, parents, politicians, citizens. This sense of responsibility pushed me to look for narratives on and from adolescents.

The number of specific studies on adolescents during Covid-19 was not high in the first year of the pandemic, and it is growing more recently: most studies investigated children and adolescents together, without a specific focus on adolescents; nonetheless, they all warn us about the urgency of taking the issue into account. A Chinese study (Duan et al., 2020), for example, conducted during the diffusion of Covid-19, revealed a strong increase in depression and anxiety among children and adolescents from 7 to 18 years of age. The impact of the quarantine was studied by an Italian-Spanish survey (Orgilés, Morales, Delvecchio, Mazzeschi, Espada, 2020) involving parents with children aged 3-18: 85,7% of them reported changes in their children's emotions, difficulty in concentrating (76,6%), boredom (52%), irascibility (39%), restlessness (38,8%), irritability (38%), loneliness (31,3%), discomfort (30,4%) and concern (30,1%); moreover, parents' stress (declared by 75% of them) was associated with an increase in emotional and behavioral symptoms in their children. The conclusions of a literature review on the impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of previously healthy children and adolescents (Loades et al., 2020) are – again – pretty alarming: «Children and adolescents are probably more likely to experience high rates of depression and most likely anxiety during and after enforced isolation ends. This may increase as enforced isolation continues» (Loades et al., 2020, p. 1218). An Italian survey on opinions, moods and expectations of students aged 14-18 (Ipsos, Save the children, 2021) revealed that more than 1/3 perceive distance learning as a negative experience, and that fatigue, uncertainty and concern are the most spread emotions among adolescents; more than half of them also declared that staying home from school has negatively influenced their friendships, their ability to socialize and their mood. A qualitative analysis of adolescents' self-reported challenges during the pandemic (Scott et al., 2021) reported challenges related to academics (23.7%) but also in mental (14.8%) and physical (13.2%) health and friend (11.4%) domains. A Brazilian analysis (De Figureido et al., 2021) of the

biological, environmental, and social factors of the pandemic impacting on children and adolescents' mental health highlights «the neurobiology changes triggered by the stress caused by the different facets of COVID-19 outbreak» (De Figureido et al., 2021, p. 5), such as psychiatric disorders, neuroinflammation, changes in diets, brain plasticity, social behavior. 67–70% of the children and adolescents who responded to a Canadian study (Cost et al., 2021) reported to have experienced deterioration in at least one mental health domain (among: depression, anxiety, irritability, attention, hyperactivity, and obsessions/compulsions); rates of deterioration were higher in children/adolescents who had a pre-existing diagnosis. A German representative online survey (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2021) revealed that 2/3 of the children and adolescents were highly burdened by the pandemic, and those with low socioeconomic status, migration background and limited living space were affected significantly more.

This brief literature review shows that:

- the specific topic of adolescents' wellbeing has not received much attention yet (especially in the first year of the pandemic);
- most studies on the impact of Covid-19 are quantitative (especially through self-reported surveys);
- almost all research concerning this topic is from a psychological point of view;
- most published research focuses on the very first period of Covid-19 pandemic, while the consequences on the long term have not been extensively analyzed yet.

Furthermore, at least in Italy, political actions seem not to have considered the needs of adolescents' specific age. It is a delicate age of change and development under numerous points of view: identity, development task, self-concept, physical development, cognitive development, plans for the future, sexuality, relationship with family, peers, school and work (Palmonari, 1993).

Therefore, the importance of this study is highlighted by different factors: firstly, the lack of specific research on the impact of the pandemic on adolescents' wellbeing from a pedagogical perspective and with qualitative lens invites to analyze the phenomenon through new eyes; secondly, the urgency for it is revealed by psychological research and by its implications; lastly, since politics has not guaranteed specific measures for adolescents' wellbeing yet, as pedagogists and educators we have the responsibility of shedding light on it.

Despite the limited dimensions of this study, which preclude any generalization, some important and urgent topics are identified, which might be interesting to take into account both for next steps in research and for policy makers' future decisions. Furthermore, the original contribution brought up by the present study has to do with its narrative dimension: it is not a quantitative measurement of adolescents' wellbeing, but a qualitative storytelling of their experiences during the first year of the pandemic seen through the eyes of the adults who take care of them. This choice of investigating the topic starting from the adults' perspective was partly due to logistical-organizational issues (Covid-19 restrictions were making it hard to reach minors and even to obtain the approval of the ethical committee on time), but it was also considered interesting to deepen the educators' point of view as a pilot study, whose results would be helpful to later orientate the following step of research involving adolescents themselves.

2. Method

The present study is intended to be the first step of a wider research on adolescents' wellbeing during Covid-19; therefore, it is exploratory and descriptive in nature. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, since the goal is to deepen the lived experience of participants and the “how” and the “why” related to the topic of research.

The interview method was chosen in order to allow a deeper insight into the topic; specifically, an “image-elicited interview” was used. The term derives from the more established “photo-elicited interview” method (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Harper, 2002). The reason for choosing images is to favor storytelling by stimulating metaphoric narratives which allow the interviewee to express both the facts and the emotions connected to them.

Drawing inspiration by different uses of the photo-elicited one, the image-elicited interview was organized in the following way: the interviewee was asked a very broad and open-ended question about her perception of adolescents’ wellbeing in the first year of the pandemic, and she was required to answer by choosing – among 30 evocative illustrations – those which better responded to the question. She was then asked to motivate the choice. Some other questions were asked at the end, leaving the interviewee free to use the images or not, in order to cover a list of important topics decided by the researcher in advance (based on the existing literature cited above)².

The 30 illustrations were chosen by the researcher among a broader number of images contained in the well-known board game called Dixit©³. This game has also been recently used⁴ in educational and therapeutic contexts since its illustrations are intrinsically metaphoric and evocative, especially in training courses for professionals in the areas of psychology and education (Corbo, 2021). The researcher’s choice of the illustrations was guided by the will to offer images that might evoke emotions related to everyday life during the pandemic (e.g.: living in a restricted environment, feeling lonely, different types of relationship with others, desire to escape, discovering new talents, daydreaming, different positive and negative emotions...).

The sampling process was strongly influenced by the restrictions due to Covid-19, that during Spring 2021 were limiting the chances to reach more and more diverse participants. Participants were therefore found through convenience sampling, and these specific educators were chosen in order to try to take into account different situations and contexts adolescents might experience. The sample consists of three professionals working in different sectors of education and healthcare services in Emilia Romagna region (Northern Italy):

- Elisa (fictitious name), working as a socio-cultural educator in a residential childcare institution for girls;
- Erica (fictitious name), a high school English professor;
- Greta (fictitious name), a psychiatric rehabilitation therapist working in a psychiatric ward.

The three interviews were collected in April 2021, through videoconferences.

A paper-and-pencil thematic analysis was then carried out in order to identify the main aspects that emerged and the different points of view on them. After transcribing the entire audio recording, the analysis was accomplished from two different perspectives: firstly, the verbal text was analyzed, through an inductive thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke, 2006); secondly, the different meanings given to the images (concepts and metaphors) were collected.

² List of topics asked at the end in case they had not already emerged from discussing the chosen images: restriction rules, relationships (friends and family), relationship with themselves (perception of self, relationship with the body ...), school and learning, life plans, social networks and technologies, need to be in nature/outdoors.

³ Dixit© is a registered trademark owned by third parties. The game is produced by Libellud. Italian distributor: Asmodee. Created in 2010 by Jean-Louis Roubira, a child psychiatrist. Illustrators of the used decks: Marie Cardouat, Carine Hinder, Jérôme Pelissier. Further details: https://www.asmodee.it/linea_dixit.php

⁴ Cfr: <https://psicodixit.org/> (last consultation: 29/07/2022)

3. Results

In this section, both the analysis of the verbal text and the concepts/metaphors emerged from the illustrations will be reported, since they seem to both contribute to the construction of a broad and deep overview on adolescents' wellbeing during Covid-19, according to the representations of the education and health professionals working with them.

3.1. Analysis of the verbal text

The different topics that arose from the analysis of the verbal text were categorized in three different groups:

- adolescents' emotions/feelings as perceived by the interviewees;
- interviewees' meaning-making of different facets of phenomena regarding adolescents' lives during the pandemic;
- interviewees' own emotions/feelings as adults/educators.

3.1.1. Adolescents' emotions/feelings as perceived by the interviewees

The main emotions reported by the interviewees, for what they observed in adolescents, are the following:

- Boredom: it is difficult to fill the days and to organize time. «When boredom impends, it is very complex for them to cope with it» (Greta).
- Repetitiveness: everything happens at home and in front of the computer, every day in the same way, «an eternal roundabout that repeats in the same way, every day, every week, without notable changes. [...] It's like the Pink Floyd video where children are grinded and become meat» (Erica). This monotony sometimes pushes towards self-closure.
- Loneliness: feeling lonely even if there are relatives all around in crowded houses. «It is not enough to put people together in the same space in order to create relationships» (Greta).
- Emptiness: «feeling abandoned, free falling» (Greta), there are no handholds, and no safety nets.
- Need and desire for corporeality: it is a strong need that adolescents manifested and could not (or did not want to) suppress. The situation impacts also on «sexual life, which should be at an important exploratory stage at this age» (Elisa).
- Sense of interdependence: both positive (supporting each other: «sisterhood» [Elisa], friendship...) and negative (risk of quarantine because of others' behavior; sometimes, «difficulty in understanding the potential risk for others that everyone has the responsibility for» [Erica]).
- Desire to escape: feeling imprisoned in their own homes, desire to escape (sometimes put in action). «She needs freedom, and she needs to go; she says that we are tightening too much» (Elisa)
- Nostalgia for relationships, «especially for those who did have a group of friends or were finding it» (Elisa). This pushed them to find ways to meet anyway, to «find a way to survive [...] without deleting relationships» (Elisa).
- Self-closure: especially for those who already had difficulties in getting into relationships with others, this period made them withdraw in themselves even more. «It was perfect for them [...] they could hide behind a screen» (Elisa).

- Depression / Sadness: «these were the prevalent emotions» (Greta). «The headmaster says she is receiving a lot of calls from parents saying their children are depressed [...] but these are things that I cannot perceive, I don't know how they are feeling behind those switched-off cameras» (Erica).
- Difficulty in finding pleasure: «difficulty in recognizing and reaching beauty» (Erica), «difficulty in finding pleasure, even in the activities you have always loved, because now you have to do them alone» (Greta).

3.1.2. Interviewees' meaning-making of different facets of phenomena regarding adolescents' lives during the pandemic

It was interesting to outline the different perspectives on certain phenomena of adolescents' lives in this period.

- Regulations: adolescents' attitudes towards the various norms (distancing, closures...) were various. While Erica highlights a spread difficulty in respecting the norms due to adolescents' sense of invincibility and lack of care for others, both Greta and Elisa stress the risk for socially fragile adolescents to use the alibi of respecting the norms as an excuse to withdraw themselves even more in their self-closure.
- School: Erica deepens the topic of the lack of participation to distance learning, which in some cases means being totally absent, in other cases it means not answering to teachers' questions, in other cases keeping the camera off all the time... This problem is getting worse while going on after months of distance learning. She thinks this is probably due to the repetitiveness (everything happens inside a digital tool), and to the lack of physical relationships; «but it helps if you try to involve them, to make them feel welcome» (Erica). Elisa states that some girls improved their school performance, because in distance learning they were less stressed by social factors, while for others the lack of school in presence was tough to bear since it implied the interruption of important friendships.
- Sport: all the three interviewees agree on the huge loss that the suspension of sports has created, under different points of view. Sports are an important opportunity for relationships, to keep the body fit, to have a healthy routine out of home, to have the chance of playing a different role...
- Technologies: Greta highlights the issue of the excessive amount of time adolescents need or want to spend connected to digital tools every day, which is having problematic consequences («on sleep-wake rhythm, [...] on attention skills» [Greta]) and often leaves «a strong sense of loneliness after using it» (Greta). On the other side, Erica underlines the difficulties that students are having in using technologies for learning and creative purposes, since their technological skills are often limited to amusement applications and to social media.
- Plans for the future: Elisa stresses the lack of opportunities that adolescents are now experiencing, which might also influence their plans for the future (e.g. the impossibility to attend internships, or to experience their first jobs). Also Greta says that many of them need to change their plans. On the other side, Erica thinks that it depends a lot on the situation: in some cases - especially where students are well supported by personal, familiar and economic resources - they are still very determined about their plans; in other cases, they are a bit more confused, or they are postponing the issue.

- Time: Greta explains that it is right now, after one year since the beginning of the pandemic, that the psychological issue is really exploding; in the psychiatric ward, they are receiving numerous new young patients every day. Elisa says that the first period of the pandemic was easier than now for adolescents; girls are now bearing it probably just because they hope to have the chance to go out this summer. Erica thinks that adolescents do not like these continuous and sudden changes in regulations and norms.
- Relationship with parents: Erica says that she does not know much about what happens at home, but she has been told that adolescents cannot stand their parents anymore and vice versa. Greta believes that often parents are not supportive enough and adolescents feel alone in their struggles; other times, though, they are important resources for adolescents. She also adds that the forced and long cohabitation has exacerbated difficult relationships: «Maybe they were in a sort of balance just because they were not seeing each other that much. [...] It is a situation that stresses everyone, even those relationships that used to work well» (Greta).
- Relationship with adults: Elisa thinks that the girls she works with are trusting adults a lot (sometimes even too much). Erica, on the other side, believes that adolescents are now upset because they were used to adults who solve all their problems, but this situation is not easily solvable; «in my opinion they are frightened, or disappointed, by the fact that this time adults do not have a solution» (Erica). On the other side, she also recognizes that students are perceived as a non-productive part of the population, so maybe they suffer the fact that they were not considered important, and now they are relevant just for the risk of transmitting the virus.
- Nature: Elisa says that the girls she is working with – who were used to have regular trips to natural contexts – are suffering the lack of this opportunity. «They are asking for it, they want to go» (Elisa).

3.1.3. Interviewees' own emotions/feelings as adults/educators

Each professional showed diverse emotions, feelings and thoughts, revealing different approaches towards their lives, their jobs and towards their own view and interpretation of the pandemic situation. It is interesting to take these aspects into account, since they are examples of different ways through which adults and care professionals are approaching the emergency situation, and this has consequences on adolescents too.

Elisa feels that adults are expecting too much from adolescents in this global crisis and she is surprised and proud of the girls she works with, because of the solidarity they showed to one another, and for being so patient about the (excessive) sacrifice we are demanding to them. «I would have freaked out much earlier if I were them», «We are asking too much to this generation». She explains to have suffered the lack of non-verbal communication (because of the mask) and of physical contact, which are important tools for her job, that is mostly relational. Furthermore, she is worried for those girls who are withdrawing into themselves, and she is wondering about how to avoid their residential center to be too protective and not encouraging enough to confront with the external world. Elisa also brings in important reflections and doubts about the educational role: since it is a new situation for everyone, also educators have to play it by ear, they cannot promise that today's efforts are worth for future wellbeing («this is the hardest thing»), and they often do not know how to manage the situation. She closes the interview stating: «I am worried about what is happening, both as a youth worker, and under a political point of view. Which consequences will there be? What do we need to work on? [...]


There will be strong consequences and we need to be prepared under the educational point of view, and I don't know if we will be».





Erica's mood is very different: she alternates moments of discouragement about the difficulty of her students in understanding the importance of respecting Covid-19 regulations, and moments in which she recognizes how difficult it is also for her to avoid physical contact and to work and meet people only virtually. «I was bothered by their attitude of ignoring the rules, since I've had a tough experience with my parents», «I myself find this routine grinding... and I have always loved my job». On the other side, like Elisa, she admits the impossibility for educators to give answers and solutions to this difficult situation. «Maybe they are launching a cry of alarm, though I don't know how to answer to it. The pandemic regards everybody. I am trying to convince them through rationality, but maybe they think on other levels». Erica also stresses the importance of shedding light on the positive sides, on what is working, on the continuities: this could help find the strength to go on, to innovate, to make our part.

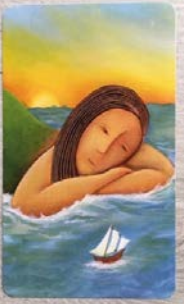



Greta talks less about her own emotions and feelings: the conversation with her remains on the professional level. Nonetheless, she expresses concern about the psychological and psychiatric care services: she underlines the fact that the need for this type of service was already higher than the available resources, and that the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. «In this situation, the need is in exponential growth, and the resources that both public and private services can offer are rather limited. We are trying to individualize and to guarantee an answer to each specific need, but it is hard. Today as ever before the need is evident, and today as ever before it is so hard to respond to the need. Even the things that were possible, today are much harder to implement: everything is more complicated».

3.2. Concepts and metaphors emerged from the illustrations

In Table 1, the concepts and metaphors related to the illustrations are reported, showing the different choices and interpretations of each professional.

	Elisa	Erica	Greta
	Socio-cultural educator (residential childcare institution for girls)	English professor (high school)	Psychiatric rehabilitation therapist (psychiatric ward)
	<p>Boredom: watching the red fish turning around again and again, no way out. Girls switched themselves off.</p> <p>Ambivalence: staying home is a protective, but also boring, and even an alibi for someone, an excuse not to go out.</p>		<p>Too much time using technology (from morning to night), though it is necessary since it is the only channel for communication, relationship and learning. But then it leaves a strong sense of loneliness.</p>

	<p>Importance of relationship; want/need for corporeality; interconnected lives. For some girls the residential center became a sort of uterus.</p>		<p>It represents a relationship that works. It's important to make them understand that there is somebody they can truly rely on.</p>
	<p>Reciprocal help, support, resilience. They took one another by hand to support each other.</p>		
	<p>Need of going out and do things. It reminds me of a girl who really escaped from the window...</p>		
	<p>We are close in a bubble, which is protective and reassuring, but that is not reality. Impossibility of experimenting and experiencing the world. I am afraid that the protective glass is too thick.</p>		

	<p>Nostalgia towards relationships</p>	<p>Seeing that life goes by in front of you; she is watching this little and interesting object where a potentially attractive life is taking place, but it is going away. The boat with the real life is in front of you, but you can't get on it.</p>	
		<p>Loneliness, uniqueness, want to disappear; feeling surrounded by professors asking you to do things; the others are just an indistinct mass.</p>	<p>Isolation and loneliness, even when you are in close proximity with your relatives. Not feeling the sense of belonging to something anymore.</p>
		<p>Is it a coffee grinder? No, it is a carillon... Anyway, it represents repetitiveness, always the same music, an eternal roundabout. The notes on the floor represent adolescents' cheery voices full of potential that are now free falling.</p>	<p>Feeling at the mercy of events, feeling powerless. But it also represents sadness, difficulty in finding pleasure even in those things that you used to love, because you used to do them with others.</p>
		<p>A plurality of individualities, each of them is close and hanging by a thread. But there is no interaction. We are all in a bubble, also institutions (like school) are closed in bubbles and do not interact with each other.</p>	<p>We lost the feeling of belonging to a group (family, school, sport...), and also the role(s) we used to have in those groups. Now we are all in these bubbles...</p>

		<p>Difficulty in reaching beauty.</p> <p>Difficulty in using technologies for creative and learning purposes.</p>	
		<p>Adolescents think in black and white, they hardly understand and tolerate grey areas, like the one we are experiencing now with the pandemic.</p>	
			<p>Feeling of emptiness, abandoned; free falling. Lack of handholds and safety nets. There is nothing to hold on. Before the pandemic we thought we were able to hold us on something, but now?</p>
			<p>She is satisfied in playing for others. It's her passion. Fortunately, sometimes there are resources to rely on. She knows that music makes her feel better, so she plays. Families with economic chances could activate some resources.</p>





			<p>Feeling imprisoned, boredom and difficulty in organizing time. Using technological tools fools our capacity of organizing time.</p>
			<p>Adolescents often want to be able to manage on their own. But they can't, because they only have a very little sword. We can't leave them alone fighting against a dragon (the dragon is this situation and their malaise).</p>
			<p>He was watering his plant but now it does need it anymore because the conditions changed. Expectations and plans for the future had to change.</p>
			<p>With this situation, some adolescents had a regression in the capacities they had acquired or that they were working on.</p>

Table 1. Concepts and metaphors arisen from the images chosen by each interviewee

Discussion

According to the education and health professionals' who are part of the sample, adolescents' prevalent feelings after one year of pandemic were: boredom, repetitiveness, loneliness, emptiness, need and desire for corporeality, sense of interdependence (positive and negative), desire to escape, nostalgia for relationships, self-closure, depression/sadness, difficulty in finding pleasure. Furthermore, interviewees identified different and ambivalent attitudes in adolescents towards technologies, school, peers, adults, parents, regulations. The body was the great absent: relationships were virtual, and sports were forbidden, with strong consequences. Perspectives for the future seemed dulled. Major risks were identified in those adolescents who were withdrawing in themselves. All the interviewees noted a progressive worsening of adolescents' wellbeing over time under many points of view: psychological and psychiatric problems were growing. «Those who were already feeling bad, now feel even worse; those who were in a sort of balance, have now collapsed» (Greta).

Professionals also talked about how they were feeling and about the concerns connected to their role of responsibility in a delicate moment, in which there are no clear answers or strategies to apply, with even less resources than before.

Under a methodological point of view, the use of images seems to have been useful in generating rich narratives, full of anecdotes and drenched with emotions. Probably it could be even more powerful if used to talk about oneself, since images seems to be directly connected to one's own emotions. Having left the first question very open and broad («Choose the image(s) which better represent how adolescents feel, in your opinion, and explain why») has been a good choice, as it allowed to bring up those topics that were perceived as more urgent or important.

This trial was useful in order to understand methodological limits and potential, and to reorient its use for the next step of the research, which involves adolescents directly. It was also interesting to notice the potential of this interesting method not only for data collection, but also, possibly, to activate processes of awareness through self-narration starting from images, following and expanding the suggestions from experts in autobiography and storytelling for professional training and self-care (Cambi, 2002; Demetrio, 1996; Sirignano, Maddalena, 2012; Ulivieri, 2019).

The main limitations of the present investigation are the sampling mode and consistency, and the experimental method of collecting data. Despite the impossibility to generalize the results, this study might give interesting insights on adolescents' wellbeing, from a perspective that has not been investigated yet. There seems to be a progressive decline in adolescents' wellbeing, probably due to the fact that their needs have not been considered a priority in the general chaos of this global crisis.

These reflections might hopefully have important implications both for researchers, as they invite us to further investigate this relevant topic, and for policy makers: there is an urgent need to stop or at least slow down this snowball of adolescents' malaise that is becoming bigger and bigger while we ignore it. How? For example, by taking care of caregivers (both parents and care professionals), and by finding ways to provide adolescents with the necessary opportunities to favor their growth instead of stopping it.

Now, after more than one year from the interviews, data on the same topic are being collected from adolescents themselves. The analysis is not finished yet, but it will be interesting to note any similarities or differences, due both to the different points of view (adolescents themselves instead of adults working with adolescents) and to the different periods of the pandemic (and related changes in regulations and restrictions).

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