

Mothers in Crisis: Thoughts and reflections of similarities and differences of motherhood during times of crisis

I think the kind of shock nature of it all, where people's lives are thrown upside down overnight, people experiencing changes to life that there was no precedent for, that they didn't know how they would deal with and just having to suddenly make decisions on the spot because of a big life changing situation. And I think also probably differences with things like your usual, daily life being thrown into chaos. If children suddenly couldn't go to school or communication between family members, friends, support networks was suddenly broken down in a way it hadn't been before. I think there are parallels to the impact on people's lives in a way, differently, but kind of an outside fear and danger affecting how people's family lives had to become. I think that there is that parallel.

~JG

Yeah, I think the length of time we felt it was going to go on for, I feel like World War Two people thought it would be over in a couple of months or six months or a year. And actually that went on for years, you know. And then I think that wore people down and the same with COVID I think we they kept saying oh it'll be over by Easter, it'll be over by the summer oh look, it's happening again in the winter and I think sometimes it's better to let people know this is like go on for 12 months or 18 months. We will cope with it, but this is what's going to happen rather than getting people's expectations up that, you know, that gig you were going to go to in September or that wedding you were going to host or, you know, having your baby were all things that could happen in a free space and it didn't happen. And I think that that's what reminds me an awful lot with the war. They like, you know, knowing what's going to go on a lot longer than it did. And then I suppose the other thing is like I mean, in one way I think we were lucky because although it was hard keeping your kids close, we knew where they were, we knew they were safe, we could help protect them whereas I think World War Two, it was the opposite. They sent their kids away, like in evacuations. And again, that wasn't organised very well and kids were sent away. You didn't know where they were or how they were being taken care of or their education. I mean in both senses I think the education system is, is an issue because I remember reading that when kids got sent away during the evacuation, there was sometimes small places that couldn't cope with the amount of children, so they didn't get educated. So their education was massively disrupted. And I feel like our children's education has been massively disrupted. I don't think we'll know the longevity of that for quite a while yet of the missing foundations of certain things, and now they're supposed to be able to catch up, but you can't because you don't have the foundation for it. So I think there are quite a lot of similarities.

~RWa

I guess, yeah. Like fear. Fear of people. I mean, it is different, but I guess you kind of like, sort of like, you know, like when everyone's panic buying and then there wasn't like any formula or any water, any toilet roll, stuff like that, things were rationed back then, not then we were in a much better position than World War II. Yeah, I guess you could relate stuff back.

~ **RWi**

I wouldn't say it's the same, but I would say it's similar and very traumatic for everyone, no matter how old you are or whether you understand what's going on or not.

~ **JL**

For me, no. I have to say I think what they went through during the World War was hugely more than what happened during the COVID. There was more camaraderie, families lived closer together. I think what was the difference this time was the fact that people were isolated. During the war, they weren't. During COVID, they were.

~ **Lesley**

I'd say the COVID was the worse really to me.

- Why did you think that was?

I don't know, really. I was young then, wasn't I when the war was on. I probably not take it as seriously when you're a child.

~ **Isabelle**

Uh, I'm not really sure if I'm honest. I think the fact that you were isolating, I suppose, or you were less isolated, yeah, but from what I've read and from what I know, I didn't happen in my family because my dad never went anywhere.

But, you know, he was ground crew. So, he wasn't in any danger as such. But, I mean, I know there were families that dad went away, and they never saw him for years. And to me, I think...well, we used to sit there and say it I suppose, David and I, you know when they were complaining - I can't see so and so - well what the hell did they think went on in the war when they were away fighting and they might not come back at all.

~ **Mandy**

No, because we knew what was going on. We knew the bombs were coming. We knew all about the Germans and all the rest of it. But they never told us the truth about the Covid.

They only told you what they thought we should know and kept a lot undercover and they weren't honest with us. I think old people got the by the bad end of the stick on that one. And the way, they actually threw them out with Covid and it spread and people died and that should be on their conscience what they did.

~ Joyce

I imagine they were both not very nice times to live through. It's obviously difficult to say because I've not really spoken to anyone that lived through World War Two about World War Two. My grandparents never spoke about it, and I imagine that will be the way that I am about COVID in the future.

Because even though I'm happy to talk about it now, I'm not sure I'd be happy to talk about it with my kids and their kids. I don't know. It'd be a difficult conversation. I think one of the things I really struggled with being a mum and a doctor in that situation...

I looked after other mums with children of similar age to mine who didn't make it. And just seeing that parallel like I'm the same age as this woman. She's got children the same age as mine and she's lying on the bed and I can't do anything to make her better. Now that was so hard. I don't think that was something that I'd want to share with my kids.

~ Carla

I think the similarities would be just the feeling of maybe like the fear of the unknown, maybe. And, and again, just having to like just, just carry on going and just keep doing what you're doing until things get better again.

~ Milly

Yeah, absolutely. I didn't realise actually until I did the project. Obviously, it was different in the sense of, you know, the things shutting down but I think the fear, I think the not knowing, you know, what do I do? Do we go in? Do we not go? Do I send my kid away?. You know, there was lots of decisions to be made. I think, you know, in World War Two, you didn't have as much information, which, you know, information is a blessing and the opposite is also horrific, isn't it? But yeah, there were a lot a lot of similarities. I loved hearing the stories from the other ladies that lived through the war.

~ Mary