
Germany: Welskop-Deffaa (Caritas), “with the pandemic, fears and depression, young people need immediate help”

Many children are at the end of their tether: this is the conclusion that has been reached by the Caritas child and adolescent mental health centres. Fear, loneliness, depression, eating and sleeping disorders, and suicidal tendencies: nearly one child out of three is hugely affected by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and shows psychological disorders. That's why Caritas is asking the Federal government and the Lander authorities to extend their support services to fight psychological stress in children and adolescents. “Young people need help, right now. Our psychological advisory centres for children, adolescents and parents are raising the alarm”, Eva Maria Welskop-Deffaa, president-elect of the German Caritas association, states. “The politicians' daily look at the figures of the pandemic crudely blurs the view of the second level of the coronavirus-induced dangers. In addition to the physical consequences of a Covid-19 infection, the psychological consequences of the anti-pandemic measures have been the most urgent problem for a long time. As Caritas, we highlight such development and the need to take determined actions against it», Welskop-Deffaa said. School social workers report psycho-emotional stress in young people. This leads to difficult situations in their school life and in their everyday life. “Depression in adolescents often shows different traits compared to adults, such as difficulty concentrating, insecurity or physical symptoms, such as headache. After the pandemic, we have had more young people carrying along further concerns, such as loneliness. Because of all this, expanding the therapeutic facilities for children and adolescents is important”, Jennifer Catsam, team leader of the Caritas online suicide-prevention advisory service, states.

Valentina Bombelli