



TOTAL INSIGHT THEATRE - COVID-19 STORY

To say 2020 didn't turn out as expected is an understatement. March brought about an unfathomable amount of change; with stay-at-home laws, distancing rules and mandatory face masks, with all industries battered by the change.

One who bore the brunt, and still continues to do so, is the arts sector. With theatres forced to close and most schools early on in the pandemic closing too, the space for workshops, performances and after-school sessions disappeared.

But one thing remained: the **need** for the arts.

With our aim to increase children and young people's access to the arts, no matter their start in life, we knew we needed to do something to make our same facilities accessible during arguably the most challenging and jarring year many of us have experienced. This is why we in 2020, we launched a number of online projects to support children and young people as they process the ongoing impact of COVID-19, helping to keep them connected and safe.

Here's our 2020 round-up:

In It Together

A free, virtual creative hub and support scheme which launched in September to provide creative relief and coping mechanisms to children and young people to process the impact of COVID-19.

Consisting of ten workshops, held once a week via Skype, the hub focused on two main elements: creativity and mental health wellbeing. Using writing, spoken word, music, text and character work, as well as improvisation, movement, devising and physical theatre, the wellbeing workshops helped young people to assess their own wellbeing, as well as providing resources and contacts to help them navigate through the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath.

Crossing the Threshold

Funding from Arts Council England's Emergency Response Fund enabled us to deliver Crossing the Threshold, which engaged young people from across England in a digitally adapted initiative to explore periods of isolation brought about by the pandemic, processing mental health implications in a safe space.

Despite the lack of physical closeness, our initiative was successful in effectively communicating with individuals, receiving the following feedback:

- **94%** of participants said taking part **helped them process the impact of COVID-19, boosting their wellbeing**
- **94%** of participants said they **felt better connected with other young people** taking part in the project
- **100%** of participants said they gained a **sense of achievement** and said they would **recommend other young people to take part** in a similar project.

"This project is the kind of thing that helps young people and just people in general so much with their mental health. Despite being far apart from everyone I don't feel so alone."

My Mind Matters

We created a verbatim film to spotlight young people's mental health during lockdown, which was accompanied by 12 video clips from therapists and organisations offering further support for young people and providing actionable advice for anyone experiencing mental health trauma brought on by the pandemic.

And then, to end the year, our Founder and Chief Executive, Adam Tulloch was listed as a Children & Young People's Champion finalist in the Children & Young People Now Awards 2020 for his work with Total Insight Theatre. With the winners announced in 2021, we're hoping that we can leave the bad experiences of 2020 in the past, and look forward to a brighter, more connected future in 2021.

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 Total Insight Theatre

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