A spike in requests for mental health support during COVID: "The fear is that people would die of loneliness."

The safe-stay-at-home, the growing unemployment rates and the increasing pressure lead many Israelis to deal with an additional crisis which is just as destructive. The NGOs that provide assistance and support report an increase of a few hundred percent in inquires for mental health support, and a growing number of people report gripping anxiety and depression.

Written by Hadar Gil-Ad

The Corona virus led to disastrous consequences on the health and financial infrastructures in Israel, which led to an additional health crisis, a less visible one, but one that is no less destructive – mental health crisis.

And not only adults suffer. 16 years old Yanay from Haifa is also experiencing mental distress due to the shutdown. "Things at home are rough. My mom was fired, we have a lot of expenses. One day I came to school wearing a black shirt and the principle scolded me, saying I can't arrive at school without a school uniform. We had to pay to buy uniform instead of food."

In the meantime he's being assisted by ELEM, which is stepping in to help those the state has turned its back on. "I told them things at home are tough, and they bought the uniform and some supplies for me. But now with the shutdown I can't even go to ELEM and it's tearing me apart. This feeling that you're stuck at home, not knowing when you'll be able to leave next, it's a very complicated feeling."

[This is an edited excerpt from a full article about the mental health crisis during COVID]