



## Young People and People with Learning Disability Development Report

March 2022



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## Summary

Funding provided by Healthwatch Staffordshire Community Cash Fund has provided Burton and District Mind with the opportunity to host a programme of Emotional Wellbeing workshops for young people (16-24) and for people with learning disabilities. This has been to support Healthwatch Staffordshire's priority:

### **The impact of Covid-19 on young people accessing and receiving mental health services**

The goal of this project has been to ensure young people or people with learning disabilities understand what mental health problems are, how to prevent them, how to discuss them and how to access services effectively.

Our project complies with the *Youngminds 2020 Toolkit* for "Supporting the participation of children and young people experiencing extra vulnerabilities", the National Survivor User Network's 4Pi framework for Involvement, and Burton and District Mind's Involvement and Participation Policy.

This report publishes and comments on the data produced by the activities from the project. For a summary of the project outcomes, please see the companion document Community Cash Fund Project Report.

Our key findings are:

- The pandemic has had a negative impact on the audience of this project, however, not to the same extent that national reports evidence.
- Further work is needed with the audience of this project to support psycho-education outcomes, particularly around awareness of emotional wellbeing vs mental health, confidence and self-esteem.
- The pandemic, to some, has brought positives, including closer relationships in the household, better connection with 'outside', and more time and importance put on self-care.
- The internet is an important source for information regarding mental health for young people.

We would like to express our gratitude to the staff at the partner organisations for making this project happen and for all their support:

- Jennie Taylor, Burton and South Derbyshire College
- Kim Hobson, De Ferrers Academy Trust
- Carl Ansell and Loz Cadman, Cherry Orchard Garden Service

And to our fantastic team of volunteers who absolutely pulled out all the stops to bring out the best in the project, in particular:

- David Bush, Community Help Associate
- Lesley Kirk, Development Associate
- Gemma Potts, Community Help Associate

## Recap of Activities

Working with local schools and colleges, and a local established learning disability service, Burton and District Mind have facilitated a bespoke programme of Mental Health Introduction sessions, co-authored by our Development and Sustainability Team, specialist young person's counsellor, and coordinated with the pastoral teams within the education settings.

The partnership organisations included:

- Burton and South Derbyshire College: Health and Social Care Department
- De Ferrers Sixth Form Academy
- Cherry Orchard Garden Service

The sessions were participatory and discussion-led to maximize engagement and involvement, delivered across two phases:

**Phase One: Emotional Awareness Workshops** delivered between January and March 2022. These provided information on:

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Self-Care
- Discussing mental health
- The roadmap of local mental health services

Due to the partners involved, the sessions scheduled were as follows:

College – 90-minute sessions covering all four topics delivered to 2 groups to Lv2 Health and Social students.

De Ferrers – 60-minute sessions covering all 4 topics delivered to 4 groups of A Level students as part of the 'enrichment' programme. Note: this was delayed due to covid-19 restrictions in January 2022 to mid-March 2022.

COGS – 4 x 45-minute sessions, each covering 1 of the above topics, delivered to 2 groups of mixed aged learning disability.

**Phase Two: Focus Groups** delivered in February and early March 2022, invited young people with existing mental health problems, or identified at risk of developing mental health problems by the pastoral teams, to a 90-minute session which explores further engagement and identification of community need. The sessions will provide qualitative and quantitative data exploring the impact of the pandemic on mental health and the access to provision of services.

**Involvement Survey:** Phase two was further supported by a community involvement survey, open throughout the project, to ensure we have also captured the views of the wider young person community, people unable to attend Phase 2 sessions, and young people not in education. This was promoted across the partnerships, on Burton and District Mind's website and social media channels, Community Together CIC, and through the *Kind Minds* newsletter published by Staffordshire County Council.

## Results

As the workshops were delivered in a facilitated learning style, much of the data captured from the participants matched what they had learnt in the session – which is to be expected. However, the exceptions or additional materials are noted below.

### Phase one: Emotional Awareness Workshops, summary of data

#### *Weather in your Head*

As part of the Ice Breaker exercise, we asked participants to ‘draw the weather in their heads’. This provides a practice of putting pen to paper, but also requires the participant to consider their own current mood in an abstract manner. We might relate calmer weather or sunnier weather to feeling relaxed or happy. We might relate cloudy weather with feeling low, and we might relate rainy weather as being upset. Thunder or stormy weather might signify someone feeling angry. For sake of comparison, we have scored the weather in terms of emotional wellbeing with the more positives scoring 1 and the more negatives scoring 5.

Weather 'scale'	Weather Description	Percentage of A Level Participants	Percentage of Health and Social Care Participants	Percentage of Learning Disability Participants	Average	Average of Weather scale
1	sunny	36%	5%	41%	27%	28%
1	hot	1%	0%	0%	0%	
2	clear	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%
2	cloudy	12%	11%	0%	8%	
3	Rainbow	0%	0%	6%	2%	40%
3	Unsettled	25%	48%	41%	38%	
4	fog	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%
4	rainy	9%	10%	0%	6%	
4	snow	2%	0%	0%	1%	
4	Windy	0%	3%	0%	1%	
5	Stormy	1%	5%	0%	2%	17%
5	strong hail	1%	0%	0%	0%	
5	thunder	9%	18%	12%	13%	
5	Tornado/Tsunami	1%	3%	0%	1%	
5	whirlwind	2%	0%	0%	1%	

#### ***Health and Social Care Students***

The group was made up of Level 3 Health and Social Care students, typically aged between 16 to 18.

*Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour: Emotional Wellbeing Vs Mental Health*

The first exercise explored the differences between Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

There was a strong response to the exercise on identifying the differences between Thoughts, Feeling and Behaviours. Four scenarios had been pre-written by the facilitators, but participants could choose which scenario to use:

Scenario	% Of respondents	Noted Thoughts	Noted Feelings	Noted Behaviour
<b>A member of the household becomes unwell</b>	41%	Constant thoughts about not having them anymore Are they going to be okay? What could happen next? Thinking about the worst-case scenario That they may die What is going to happen next? Can I help? Possible death, other family member worry	worried, sad, scared, angry Anxious & sad Overthinking Useless, ashamed, like a burden	frustrated, crying all the time Distracted isolating themselves and unmotivated Outburst of emotion quiet, reserved become unmotivated stopped communicating with others your sensitive, crying all the time hiding it all with humour, when alone bottled up all emotions lash out
<b>You notice a social media post that is unkind about you</b>	8%	why are they insulting me? Thinks I'm a weirdo, nobody likes me there's no point being here why?	anxious and self-conscious depressed and lonely have no one insecure, anxious	quiet and thinking the insults are true Depressed, anxious, mixed emotions
<b>You have deadlines for assignments looming</b>	44%	Will I pass my exams/ will it be difficult? Confused what to write or say	worried, nervous Stressed, Overthinking, angry	outbursts of sadness Tired & no motivation

		<p>Never going to get it finished</p> <p>I'm not going to finish in time</p> <p>overwhelming</p> <p>Overthink what things mean get stuck and give up</p> <p>I need to get it done but have no motivation</p> <p>Won't be able to get it in on time, won't be good enough</p> <p>worried you will fail</p>	<p>Worried, anxiety, stress and sadness</p> <p>Feeling down</p> <p>Feel stuck</p> <p>sad</p> <p>Like you can't do anything</p> <p>overwhelmed</p> <p>start to stress and panic because it's not done</p>	<p>short fused, angry,</p> <p>unmotivated, outburst of emotion</p> <p>bad</p> <p>outbursts of crying and feeling hopeless</p> <p>stressful, crying, not motivated</p> <p>procrastinate or rush the work</p> <p>rushed work</p> <p>ignore the problem</p> <p>isolated, cut off</p> <p>lack of sleep, not eating good,</p> <p>ignore it</p> <p>not doing the work because it's too stressful</p> <p>not talking</p>
<p><b>You have moved to a new area</b></p>	<p>8%</p>	<p>Excited</p> <p>What if I don't like the town or make new friends?</p> <p>everything new is happening to fast.</p>	<p>stressed</p> <p>scared, lonely, excited</p> <p>overwhelmed, anxious, almost like it's not real</p>	<p>get prepared</p> <p>may become withdrawn</p> <p>shy &amp; panic attacks</p>

*The Continuum of Mental Health*

The next exercise provided information on the Continuum or spectrum of mental health and mental illness. Participants were asked to note how they are aware if they are Excelling or Thriving, if they were Surviving, if they were Struggling, or if they were in Distress or Crisis.

How do you know if you are...			
Excelling & Thriving	Surviving	Struggling	Distress or Crisis
Doing well in life, feeling as if your	Stable, Physical/mental health is just okay	When you know you need help. You see a decrease in your mental health	

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physical / mental health is okay			
When you feel happy & enjoying yourself more	Worried about something	Feeling depressed with poor sleep	very poor sleep, exhausted & weight loss
	Withdrawn, Distracted	Anxious, stressed	Cannot sleep, weight loss. Thoughts of hurting.
	Feeling worried, having trouble sleeping and distracted	Anxious, depression, tired and poor performance	
	Worried, struggling , overwhelmed		
	Worried, nervous, trouble sleeping		
feelings of happiness not thinking about to many things at once	Distracted , crying	Always tired and bored never know what to do	always in bed, oversleeping, feeling rubbish
feeling happy			
sleeping well, confident, performing well and communicating	withdrawn, struggling to sleep, distracted easily and worrying about the future	poor appetite and lack of sleep. Anxiety and depression	wanting to hurt yourself, losing weight due to stress
feel positive and hopeful	happy and making good choices	struggling to keep up with the pace of life	negative thoughts and feelings
enjoying life	not enjoying life but not hating it, tolerating others	bad thoughts like everything is going to be bad	feeling suicidal, bad thoughts and isolating myself
can feel happy for at least a day	feeling sad but then feeling happy	anxious	staying in your room, self-harm
energetic, cheerful, positive and calm.	Worried, nervous, trouble sleeping	anxious, depressed, tired and a poor performance	very low mood, exhausted, weight loss. At risk of self harming
energetic, cheerful, positive and calm.	irritable, trouble sleeping, withdrawn, distracted	anxious, poor performance, tired, depressed	very low mood, weight loss, very poor sleep, at risk of seriously hurting yourself
confident, on top of the world, happy	sleeping well, normal appetite	falling behind, anxious, sad, worried	depressed, not motivated, exhausted
loving life			low attendance at school, withdrawn
your feeling mentally and physically happy. On top of the world	feeling okay maybe even numb, not too stressed	stressed, feeling upset, anxious	may feel they cause damage to themselves or others
			not exciting, not sleeping/sleeping too much, thoughts of harming yourself
			thoughts that run through my head daily
enjoy time with friends	sad, irritable	on edge don't want to be anywhere other than home	don't see a point in life
doing work, healthy relationship with family and friends	my mindset is mostly positive. Tired		



*Five Ways to Wellbeing*

The next exercise explored the Five Ways to Wellbeing and invited participants to explore how they might map their own activities to the Five Ways. They were then asked to explore what barriers they might face to using these activities.

Five Ways to Wellbeing				
Connect	Be active	Take Notice	Learn	Give
messaging friends and family	walk	when in need to do stuff me	learn about new things	advice to people
Talk to others about your problems	If you stay active, you can help your mind stay clear.	You need to know when you need help.	It's important to know where to get help.	
	Gym with a friend			
Talk to friends & family	Playing games, doing exercise			Share feelings with friends/family
spend time with family or friends	Go for a walk or run			
Sad low mood	Motivation			
talk to others	walking & skipping	Take notice of myself and others		
Talk to family and friends	Work out			
Seek support from family & friends	go on mindful walk	reconnecting when stressed about something and reflect why	new hobby	support family and friends by giving advice when needed
Talk to someone you trust	go out for a walk	making yourself known to your situation	distract yourself and do something new like baking	give advice to someone you know needs help
talk to people	exercise	take in everything around me	learn something new	volunteering
Talk to those around you such as family and friends	go on walks and exercise	help other people	continue learning outside college	volunteering
go socialise with friends	talking the dog on a walk			
seeing my dads parents	going to the gym or on a run		doing assignments	gets mum and boyfriend presents

	Go on walks, play sports meet people.		learn new hobbies or skills	
	go on walks, play sport, meet new people		learn a new skill/hobby	give people another chance
Speak to family or friends	exercise		learn new skills	charity work
Meet friends	Go for a walk or run	friends	go to school/college	give money
Meet friends	Go for a walk or run	friends	to let people in	give money
make new friends	Go for a walk or run	make sure your peers are okay	want to get a deeper understanding of something you enjoy	help and support
opening to someone about how I'm feeling	going to the gym or on a run	realising that I am having a mini panic attack	learn how to let people in	
Do coursework	go to the gym	look at yourself	listen in class	give compliment to a friend
ask for support	Go for a walk or run	look at others and their behaviour	online courses	talk to others
have a day off everything and relax	read a book			
meet people	gym		be nice	charity

**What gets in the way?**

<b>Connect</b>	<b>Be active</b>	<b>Take Notice</b>	<b>Learn</b>	<b>Give</b>
dealing with others stress	low motivation, weather	low motivation and mood	low motivation	people not listening to advice
Social media	self-motivation			
If you have anxiety or believe you don't have anyone there	No time to be active or you don't have the motivation	Your self esteem		
	Motivation/ transport			
Assignments/exams	Motivation/ transport			
	motivation			
Overthinking, being a burden	Stress	Not knowing how to help		
Time	Time and the lack of motivation			
isolating myself due to not being able to hold conversations	unmotivated to go on	can't be bothered to	no motivation	not listening or taking in

		make a change		what has been said
social media	motivation		energy levels	
Not taking the time to help	no motivation	Cannot be bothered to do it	Not being able to do so	struggling with what to say
doing work & bad mental health	no motivation		stress	
anxiety	other things to do	easily distracted	college work	
not wanting to be a burden	overthinking		no time	
mindset	College work			
travel	health problems		protrusions	money
	work and course work			
	busy with work/coursework		not enough free time	last time it ended badly
time and energy	time and energy			money and time
	work calls for extra shifts			
anti social	anxiety	red flags	lazy	no money
don't feel like it	anxiety	red flags	didn't go well last time	no money
you feel isolated, not loved by everyone	you get unwanted plans	you don't want to open up	you lost motivation, don't want to try in case you fail	you don't have the energy
no time	no motivation			
my trust issues	coursework	all the thoughts running my head	was disappointed	
friend calls	no motivation	don't have any time	not understanding	bad mood
social anxiety	busy life	distractions/ forgets to	no access to internet	COVID
social anxiety	motivation	red flags	discouraged because of past	don't have money
called into work	get distracted by phone calls			

*What Supports Your Mental Health – The Map exercise*

The next exercise explored the ‘Map of local services’ which demonstrated the range of services available for supporting good mental health and recovery of mental illness within Staffordshire. The participants were invited to suggest their own ideas based on the mental health continuum. The results below only show instances not suggested by the workshop materials.

Things you can do yourself	First Struggling	Getting Worse	Crisis
5 ways to wellbeing	best friend	Mental health assessment	Hospital
advice searching	Boyfriend	advice pages NHS	111
bath / face mask	Childline	care pathway	999
call 111	college	Charities	A&E
chill and relax	counselling	ChildLine	A&E mental health services
distract myself	dad	Close family	Callers e.g. ChildLine
doing something you enjoy	Family	college	charities
drinking	Friends	Community intervention pathway	crisis intervention
eat something	friends and family	counselling	Doctors
eating	go on walk with friends	Counselling e.g. college	Friends
exercise	GP	Dad's girlfriend	God
find a hobby	Local neighbourhood projects	doctors	GP
Get help if you know you need it	medication	Family	Helpline
go for a walk	mum	floating support	Inpatient care & places of safety
go out with friends	NHS	Friends	mental health charity
going outside	no one	go to uncle's grave	Mental health helpline Samaritans
gym	parents	GP	mental institution
listen to music	partner	local neighbourhood project	mum
meditate	pastoral	medication	Parents
organising	people at work	mental health assessments	partner
party	sister	mental health charities	Samaritans
Put yourself first	Staffordshire wellbeing service	mental health helpline	Sarac (sexual abuse charity)
self-care	Support groups	mental health matters	siblings
sleep all day	Therapist/counsellor	mind	sister
sleep well	Tutor	mum	Someone you trust
Speak to friends		online resources	Suicide Helpline
spend time with family		partner	suicide prevention
Stay active		psychiatrist or psychologist	Trent PTS
take dog on walk		Samaritans	Tutor
take time for myself		School	

Talking and listening to people		social care	
Talking to someone you trust		Someone you trust	
visit family		Support groups	
watch netflix		therapist	
		trusted teacher	
		Tutor	
		website/callers	
		Your family	
		Your friends	

### *Discussing Mental Health*

The last exercise shared a slide which described several steps that can be taken if someone discusses their mental health and what to do. To support this slide, a video was shown explaining the differences in Empathy and Sympathy, expressing that when dealing with people expressing problems with their mental health, often a position of empathy is more useful. 58% of participants engaged positively to the exercise.

### **A Level Students**

The groups were made up of A-Level students as part of enrichment, typically aged between 16 to 18. These students were less responsive to the exercises – there is evidence to suggest that this may be down to sessions only being 60 minutes as opposed to 90 minutes which impacted on the time allowed for exercises to be completed in a meaningful manner.

### *Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour: Emotional Wellbeing Vs Mental Health*

The facilitators suggested that all participants focused on the social media related scenario, a separate question was asked about the projected outcome based on the behaviour.

<b>Scenario- Social Media</b>			
<b>Thought</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Why? Just Why?	?	Kick Off	Me
sad	annoyed		
why happening to me	scared	Questioning myself	
That's not nice, why	Sad	Delete and block	
why bother	OK, indifferent	ignore	move past it
Good, getting attention	Good	emo	emo for life
Omg people are mean, no one likes me	depressed, suicidal	kms	funeral - write their names in my suicide letter - revenge!
people are mean, why me	sadness	withdrawn	don't do anything

why	unhappy irritated	remove them, cry, confront	
How come people compare you to others on here?	Sadness/anger	cry	
Betrayed, rude, upset, annoyed	sad	cry, text them back	cry
Wow, these people think they can hurt me.	Apathy, pity	Block the people in question and dispel the rumours in person	
Who are you?	Depends on who it is, angry, most likely frustrated.	Argue back	Wasted time & feeling drained.
Not that bothered, couldn't care less.	Nonchalant	No response/reply with a message about not caring.	Nothing happens.
I'm going to fail	Failure	Stress, sleepless, cry	Failed
Oh	upset	playing up, upset	Ignoring it if stays in the back of my mind
Why is this happening to me?	Anxious, self-conscious, self-loathing	Isolated behaviour	Depression & no self-love
Why?		Kick off	Me
What is making them do this? Have I done something wrong?	Sad, conscious, worried, self-conscious, anxious		
Why are they doing this?	Low self-esteem, low confidence	Cry, stay inside, less socialising	
Sad. Why?	Irritated	Ignore it	Remove
What if I fail? It's going to impact my future if I fail then my life is over.	Anxious, scared. If I fail, everyone will hate me.	Maybe be rude to the people I love because I am struggling.	

### *The Continuum of Mental Health*

As before, the participants were asked to note how aware they are if they are Excelling, Thriving, Surviving, Struggling, or if they were in Distress or Crisis.

<b>Excelling &amp; Thriving</b>	<b>Surviving</b>	<b>Struggling</b>	<b>Distress Crisis</b>
Smiling	Still Smiling but fake	Still Smiling but fake	Still Smiling but fake
Happy. Super productive	good	sad	crying
Happy, calm, performing	anxious, poor appetite	poor sleep, always nervous	damage to self or others self-harm
eating well, feeling energised, good sleep			self-harm, exhausted, lack of appetite
happy joy for life	doing limited day to day		

productive, emotionally available for friends	tired, happy	unimpressed, irritable	
Happy, sociable	withdrawn, smiling	numb, emotionless	overwhelming pain of thoughts in head
Feeling motivated, in a good mood. Looking forward to the future.	Mostly neutral feelings, getting by in life.	Very dissatisfied and unhappy with life, mostly unmotivated, probably stressed and in fear of the future.	It is hard to get out of bed in the morning, life is not worth living and seems pointless. No motivation at all.
Positive at all times. Allow yourself to be sad but know that this is normal. Able to do things without worry.	Still able to complete various necessary tasks. Dreading doing fun things - cancelling.	Not making time to properly care for yourself. Cutting off close people.	Self-hating. Bad with self-care. Self-sabotage.
Wake up & feel productive. Eat a balanced breakfast. Go on a run.			
Wake up looking forward to the day.		See everything with a dim view of the world.	Don't wake me. No motivation for anything.
Happy. Want to live	Still ok to go out	Bad thoughts	Struggle to get up
I don't know	Sad, sleep issues	Anxious, lack of motivation	Wanting to hurt myself, No motivation. Sad. Numb
Having a great day. Everything going smoothly.	Having an average day.	Nervous, worrying about something.	Stressed to the point where it's making me ill
Smiling, lots of energy, laughing, helpful, feeling happy	Doing the bare minimum. No satisfaction with life		Lots of problems that need serious solutions. Possibly depression or deep mental health problems
Smiling	Fake smile	Fake smile	Fake smile
I enjoy spending time with my friends and family regularly.			
Enjoy doing things that make me happy	I am barely doing the basics like schoolwork	Would have days off school	Would ask for help when I think I can't handle it anymore
I am content with myself and others.	I am doing well but not massively well	I am beginning to eat less and withdraw	No effort. Not eating. Writing in my diary

### *Five Ways to Wellbeing*

Again, the next exercise explored the Five Ways to Wellbeing and invited participants to explore how they might map their own activities to the Five Ways together with any barriers they might face.

Five Ways to Wellbeing				
Connect	Be active	Take Notice	Learn	Give
talk to people	walk			
Socially & emotionally.		Focus on my needs, what benefits me. Physically & spiritually		
Reach out to people and talk it out	Going outside			
Keep communicating with friends even if just over text.	Take a break and walk when anger clouds me.	Talk to people and live in the real world around me.		Give something even if it's as simple as a smile, a greeting or compliment.
Make more effort to see family members & message them.	Join the gym. Go on mindful walks.			
House party. Fortnite. Facetime. Meet friends.	Gym, running, shopping.	Take a look at things around you.	Everyday learn something new.	Everything you want to.
Facetime	Walk			My time
Talk to friends	Exercise (swim)	Go outside	School	Time with friends
I talk to my friends	Just dance			
Talk to people	Walk			
Go out with friends and spend time with family.	Go for a walk	Do an activity with people outside		Self-care
Meeting and making new friends.	Going to the gym or running.		In school	

What gets in the way				
Connect	Be active	Take Notice	Learn	Give
being a burden, overthinking, I can do it on my own				
Personal issues. My life!				
The fear of being known, others knowing your struggles and thoughts	Feeling tired or like there's no point in going out			
Few ways to correct, struggling to plan some events.	The feeling that you might not even matter.	Tech in the modern world.	Teach myself something new, even if it's just useless information	Confidence, interruptions.
Pain, hospital	Arthritis, pain	Arthritis, pain	No motivation Hospital appointment	Fatigue



Being a burden, overthinking. Thinking I can do it on my own.	People judge	
Might feel anxious	Might feel tired or down	There might be no time and stressed.
Low confidence		
Don't know how. Don't want to meet new people.	Scared of being judged.	Something else is always on my mind.

Although the other activities were completed – there was too few responses on the worksheets to be useful to this report.

### ***Adults with Learning Disability***

The group was made up of a mix of staff, volunteers and service users. The staff and volunteers understood that their role was supportive and therefore limited contribution to clarity or when asked specifically by facilitators (usually to encourage feedback and participation). The service users were all male with ages ranging from early 20s to over 60s. All participants had been referred to the service by social workers as an intervention for learning disability, although distinct diagnosis was not discussed. Across the entire group around 50% talked about or indicated that they had direct experience of mental health problems.

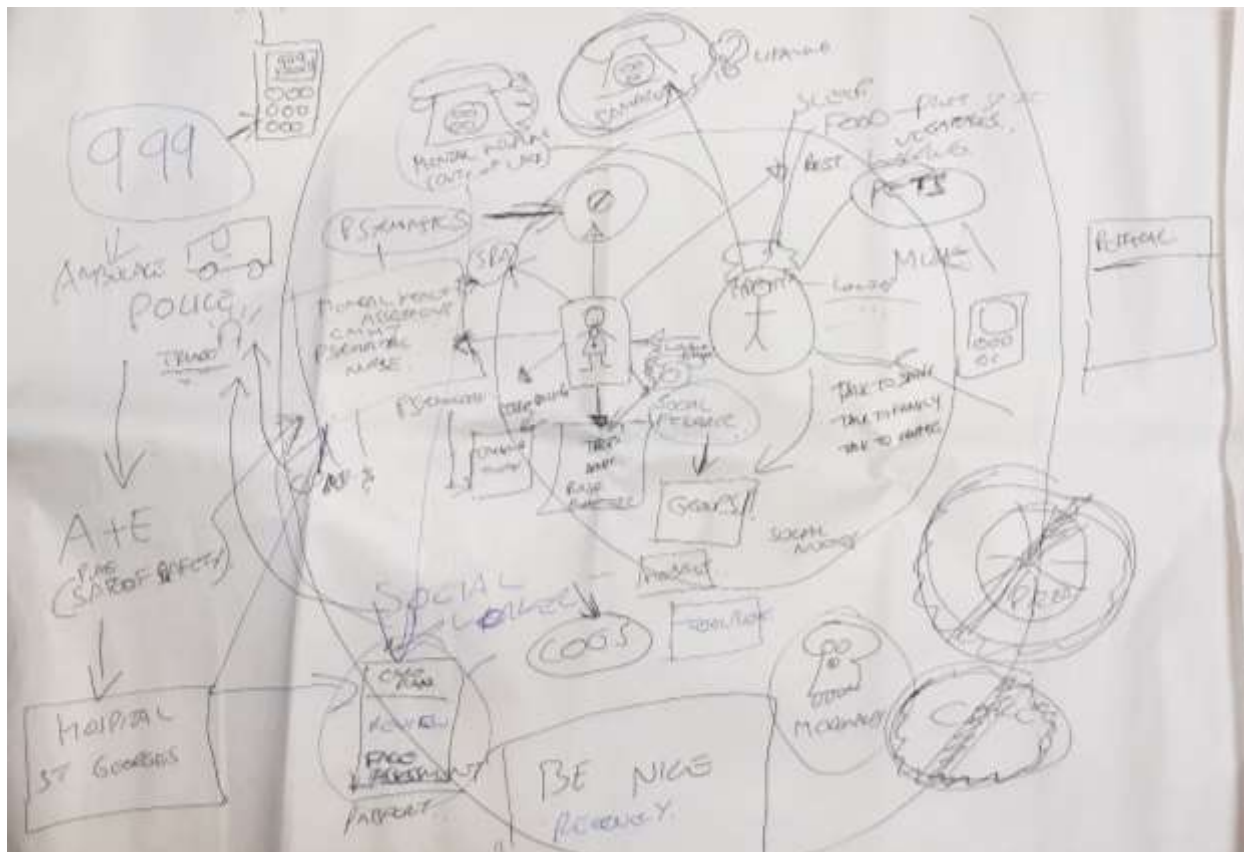
Although these group had significantly more time, the challenges around delivery did impact on the results provided by on worksheets. Challenges included low levels of literacy and low levels of confidence around writing and group participation. Therefore, the published results for this group are limited, but the learning has been incredible.

### *What Supports Your Mental Health – The Map exercise*

The facilitators asked the groups to map out services and interventions that individuals may use to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This was recorded using radial circles, inner for self-help, middle for primary services, outer for secondary and crisis services.

Although it is difficult to make out in these pictures below, the items in black were identified by the group participants and items in black were added by the facilitators. The participants, as a group, had a strong understanding of the various services and interventions provided locally as well as a good understanding of self-care.

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## Outcomes relating to Phase One

1) Understanding of how young people and people with learning disabilities define thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, with insight into positive and negative triggers.

Awareness of the processes between thoughts, feelings and behaviours were generally low; there were a number of participants who struggled with the differences between thoughts and feelings. There was widespread misunderstanding between the difference between emotional wellbeing and mental health. Without insight in these processes, people largely struggled to identify triggers personal to them, although had a general awareness of commonly noted stimuli or determinants of mental health, such as:

- Stress and anxiety around workloads and exams
- worry about the pandemic and the effect on the wellbeing of the household
- money (or lack of)
- having people to share problems with
- feeling connected to friends/family
- social media

2) Insight into how young people and people with learning disabilities engage with varying levels of emotional wellbeing.

Generally, people defined mental health/mental illness as a binary issue (you are either mentally well OR you have mental health problems, assuming crisis). The understanding of the continuum of mental health was only understood when explained during the sessions. However, there was a range of understanding the support mechanisms regarding distress and how this differs from crisis.

3) How young people and people with learning disabilities consider the importance of self-care in their own lives and what actions they take.

The participants demonstrated that they understood and participated in a range of activities that could be considered self-care, although they may not have thought of these activities in this way – activities included:

- Spending time with friends, which declined during the pandemic.
- Spending time with family, which has increased during the pandemic.
- Spending time with hobbies or being outside – with walking being a common suggestion.

4) How young people and people with learning disabilities talk to each other and to adults regarding topics of mental health. How they communicate their needs and what to do if someone talks to them about their needs?

Participants generally noted speaking to friends and close family as the first place to turn regarding mental health, then typically making use of the internet. Some students noted that they would consider their tutor as an important place for support

Despite this, there was an indication that participants would not necessarily know what to do if they were approached by a friend on this matter.

Participants from the learning disability service would turn to staff for support. People who have had experience of using mental health services noted that services continued to be an important part of their support.

5) Greater insight around how young people and people with learning disabilities access information about mental health, if this has changed during the pandemic, and what they know about local service provision.

There was limited knowledge around mental health to understand if matters had changed over the two years of the pandemic at Phase One.

## Phase Two: Focus Groups, summary of data and Outcomes

In phase two, views were collected through open-ended involvement workshops targeting participants with lived experience of mental health problems, or with close experience within their households. Notes of conversations were made during discussions and results were qualitative in nature. There was one focus group per partner, although COGS did repeat the established group pattern and had two groups.

	Health & Social Care Students	A Level Students	People with Learning Disabilities
Number of Participants for focus groups	6	5	17

Responses to questions summarised below.

- 1) What did you do to look after yourself and your wellbeing before the pandemic? Has this changed? Why? How have you coped?

The participants from the college and De Ferrers highlighted using social media to stay in contact with friends and social activities. They noted that school closing had an impact on their emotional wellbeing, and interrupted

sleeping patterns. There was an increase in using hobbies such as mediation, walking and horse riding.

There was a consensus that people lost their social skills and struggled to know what to say to each other after the pandemic. There were also many reports of people 'closing down' and not speaking to others, becoming more isolated as a coping mechanism. This was at odds with some others reaching out for mutual support from friends.

**“I reached out to old friends from school; but none of them came back to me – I guess I know who my true friends are now”**

**“I just wanted to hide from the world and hoped it would go away, I didn't to talk to anyone!”**

The participants from COGS highlighted walking, looking after family, and using local amenities (gym, shops, pubs, music events). They also mentioned the GP, family, and church groups. They noted a change to bus services as impacted on their ability to stay well, as well as changes to shops and amenities closing due to lock down. The closure of COGS had a profound effect with participants reporting sadness, loneliness and experiencing 'a loss of feeling needed' by the service. There were reports of developing relationships with family members, and use of virtual/digital platforms to meet up.

## 2) Where would have gone to seek help for mental health problems before the pandemic? Has this changed? Why?

The participants from the college and De Ferrers noted that they would make use of the pastoral teams (Head of Year) and helplines. They noted being more aware of charities such as Mind.

The participants from COGS noted the access to GP services was reduced. They noted that they had to find new ways of keeping busy or making new use of skills developed at COGS, such as gardening and joinery.

**“I built a tree house with my dad.”**

**“I faced-timed my brother a lot. We then stopping doing that, now I see him less”**

Some people felt it was now easier to talk about mental health and emotional issues – that people had more compassion to discuss this. Although it was noted by some that existing mental health problems worsened, with additional feelings of stress, depression, and isolation.

- 3) Has the pandemic changed things within your household which might affect your mental health (e.g. social networks, employment, access to money, food, housing, stigma and discrimination, anti-social behaviour, risk of abuse, successes.)? Has there been any successes or positive things to come out of the pandemic?

The participants from the college and De Ferrers noted that there was a negative impact on their finance within their household, with some noting a drop in income from absent parents who had been furloughed/made redundant. There was mixed reaction to having to spend more time with family – some noted that this had brought the family closer together, others expressed it caused more conflict. Some mentioned that they lost contact with an older relative and that dementia had worsened after the restrictions had lifted. One participant noted that it felt like they had been forced to grow up quicker to support their household.

However, students also noted that they had more time to consider aspirations, take up volunteering and spend more time on university applications. One person noted developing skills around writing lists of activity to provide more structure to the day. Others noted that they spent more time considering their identity and aligning to subcultures. Some noted having more time to spend with absent parents.

At COGS some participants have been affected by bereavement and they felt supported by family and church groups. Some COGS participants noted that they had made personal achievements due to the pandemic using the skills developed at COGS. These achievements centred around hobbies such as garden projects, writing, and development independent living skills. Some also noted new volunteering opportunities emerging from the community response to the pandemic. There was a consensus that there was a slower pace of life, that it was quieter (no planes for instance) and that there was a burst of nature (reports of deer entering people's gardens), and people had an increased sense of gratitude. In the large part, participants from COGS didn't report long term negative effects on the wider determinants of mental health or mental illness.

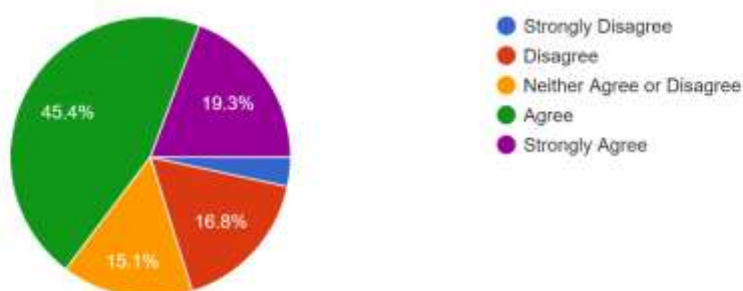
## Involvement Survey

Phase two was supported by an online survey with responses to questions below:

The first questions were designed to explore if participant’s ability to cope had changed between the start of the pandemic and now:

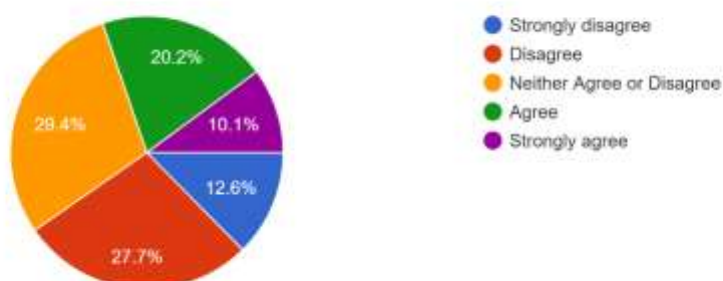
Before the pandemic in 2020, I felt able to deal with day to day matters, such as my education, work or living with my family.

119 responses



I now feel able to deal with day to day matters, such as education, work or living with my family.

119 responses



	Before the pandemic in 2020, I felt able to deal with day to day matters, such as my education, work or living with my family.	I now feel able to deal with day to day matters, such as education, work or living with my family.	Difference
	%	%	
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	19%	10%	-9%
<b>Agree</b>	45%	20%	-25%
<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	15%	29%	14%
<b>Disagree</b>	17%	28%	11%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3%	13%	9%

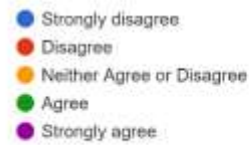
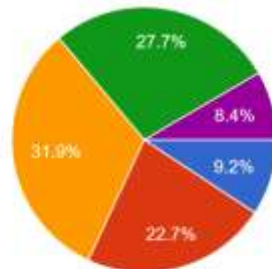
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The second set of questions looked to see if participant's self esteem had changed between the start of the pandemic and now:

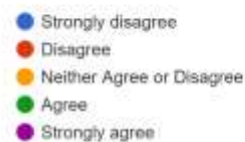
Before the pandemic in 2020, I felt good about myself.

119 responses



I now feel good about myself

119 responses



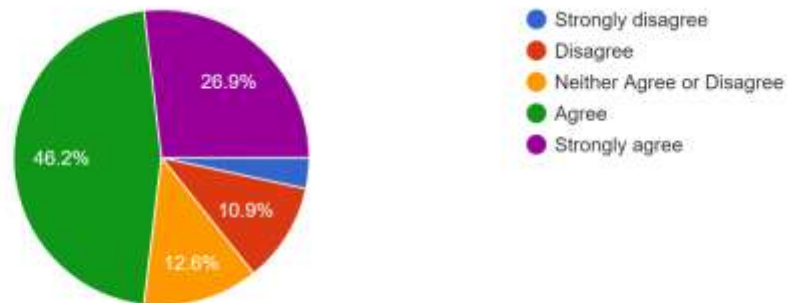
	Before the pandemic in 2020, I felt good about myself	I now feel good about myself	Difference
	%	%	
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	8%	8%	-1%
<b>Agree</b>	28%	18%	-10%
<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	32%	24%	-8%
<b>Disagree</b>	23%	34%	12%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	9%	16%	7%

The third set of questions looked to see if participant's social connection had changed between the start of the pandemic and now:



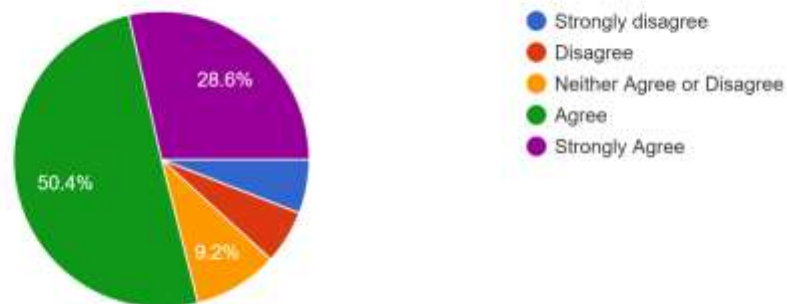
Before the pandemic in 2020, there was one or more people I could talk to about an important decision in my life.

119 responses



There is one or more people I could talk to about an important decision in my life now.

119 responses



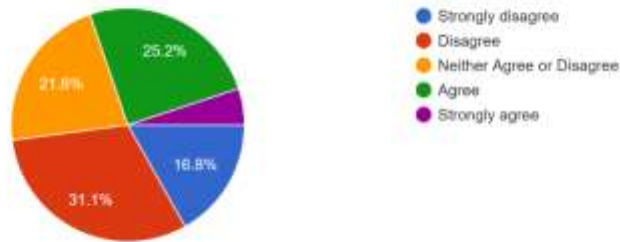
	Before the pandemic in 2020, there was one or more people I could talk to about an important decision in my life	There is one or more people I could talk to about an important decision in my life now	Difference
	%	%	
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	27%	29%	2%
<b>Agree</b>	46%	50%	4%
<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	13%	9%	-3%
<b>Disagree</b>	11%	6%	-5%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3%	6%	3%

The next set of questions explored what support participants would make use of.

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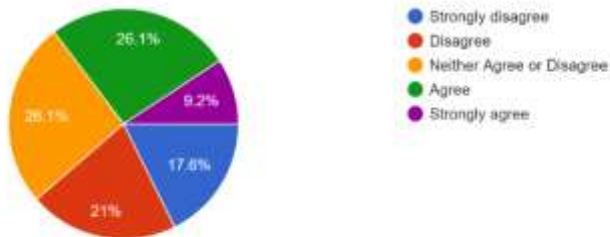
I wouldn't know if I have an mental health problem.

119 responses



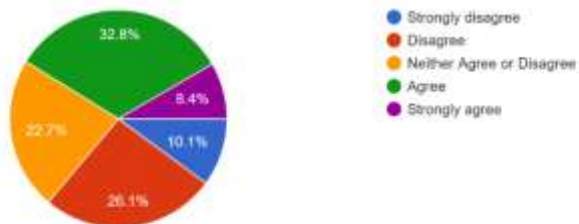
If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would talk to my parents about it.

119 responses



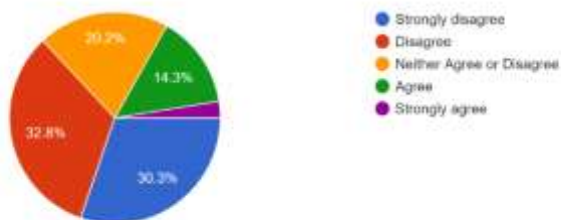
If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would talk to my friends about it.

119 responses



If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would talk to someone in my school/college or workplace about it.

119 responses

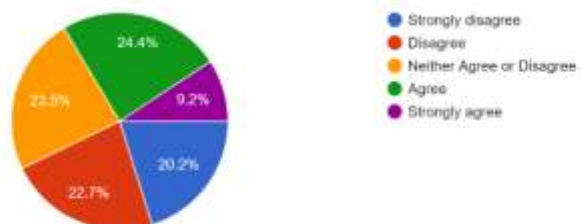


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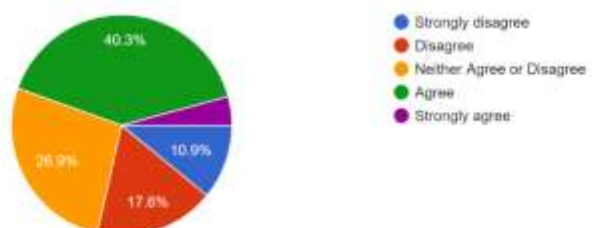
If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would talk to a GP or other health professional about it.

119 responses



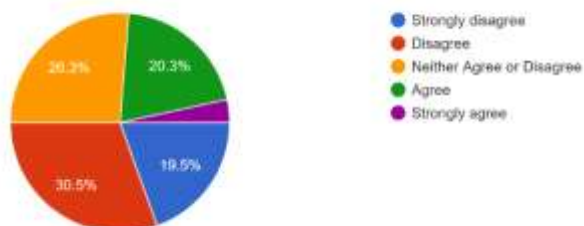
If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would find support from information websites.

119 responses



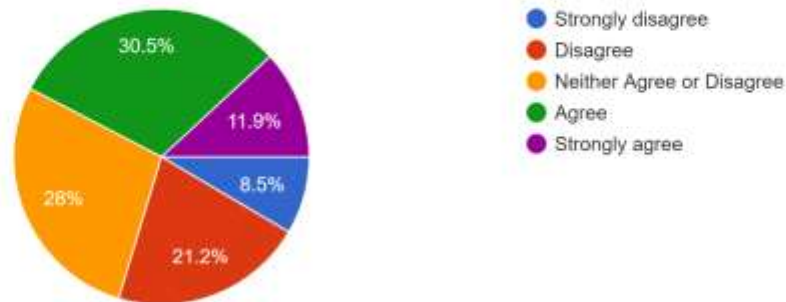
If I suspected or have had a mental health problem I would find support from social media sites.

118 responses

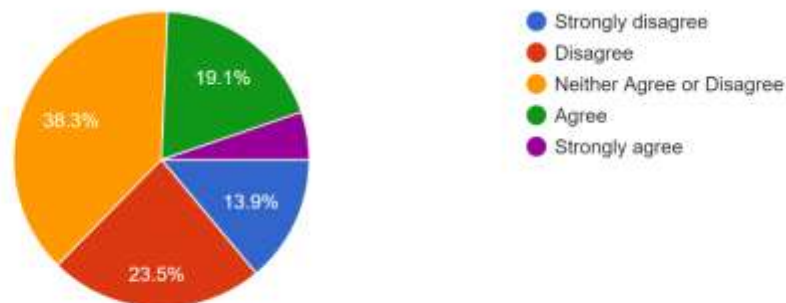


If I suspected or have had a mental health problem...	I wouldn't know if I have a mental health problem	I would talk to my parents about it	I would talk to my friends about it	I would talk to someone in my school/college or workplace about it	I would talk to a GP or other health professional about it	I would find support from information websites	I would find support from social media sites
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5%	9%	8%	3%	9%	4%	3%
<b>Agree</b>	25%	26%	33%	14%	24%	40%	20%
<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	22%	26%	23%	20%	24%	27%	26%
<b>Disagree</b>	31%	21%	26%	33%	23%	18%	31%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	17%	18%	10%	30%	20%	11%	19%

Where I would turn to find help has NOT changed since the start of the pandemic (2020).  
 118 responses



I have been able to find help for my mental health within Staffordshire since the pandemic (2020) in order to stay well.  
 115 responses



The remaining questions asked for qualitative information on activities participants engage with to stay well, activities that are missing and the three things that have changed due to the pandemic that has made things easier or harder.

**The three main things I do to treat myself or to stay well are:**

organising myself, positive affirmations, positive mindset.

eat

get my nails done, get my hair done; have a bath

Watch movies, Walk, Eat

Eat , sleep and speak to friends

Sleep read and listen to music

Have a bath, go out with my boyfriend and do something with my mum

Read, Listen to music, Talk to someone

Spend time with family, Play games, Read books
I keep an obsessive routine to feel normal that if broken causes me to mentally spiral
Draw, play games, chat, etc
Play games, talk to friends, write stories.
Reading, Play video games, Self care nights
Watch a film, have a relaxed day and do some exercise
Go out with friends, PlayStation, watch series
sleep, play games, watch shows i like
Staying occupied, fit and up to date
Going shopping
Spend money , being with friends
Eat, sleep, repeat.
meditate, go for a walk, buy myself something i want
Listen to music, Isolate myself, Talk and spend time with friend
Football, designing, DIY
talk to family, spend time with friends, hobbies
breathing techniques, medication, being with family
I don't know
Exercise, Relax, Talk
Be with friends, run, play music
Play video games, watch tv and talk to my closest friend
Tv video games
Sleep, Cry, Keep busy
Read, listen to music, cook
Look at memes, listen to music, watch TV
Walking, Playing football, Meeting friends
Working out, video games, friends
dressing up, gardening and drawing
Watch films, go for meal with boyfriend, go out with boyfriend
Exercise, gaming, helping others
I go charity shopping, I have baths, I have downtime, I go in nature
Sleep, watch Netflix, talk to my significant other
go on dog walks, exercise, and spend time with my friends
Recognise and deconstruct thought processes, speak to someone i trust, step away from things that cause me stress until I have a better mindset about them
wash my hair. put on mascara. drink coffee.
walk my dog, listen to music, read
Sleep, rest and eat well
Listen to music, Write about my day, Talk to that one friend :)
Nothing.
Buying new things, reading, and watching tv, movies or videos
Drink lots of water, write in my diary, see family and friends
Nothing
Speak to a therapist, Spend time with family, Go outside for walks
Ignore the things causing me problems, watch videos to chill out, sleep

Play the sims4, Watch a movie I loved from my childhood, Talk to friends and family
Play sports , spend time with family more,
Sleep, have a bath, bake a cake
Skin/hair care, Sleeping, Walks
Not have problems
Extra curricular (ballet), reading, watching anime
nothing really
Girlfriend, writing, video games
Reorganise myself, have a bath, watch TV
Sleeping more, retail, consuming the souls of the damned <3
do what I want to do and like, not get bored, not think about stressful things
Talking with friends, Reading, Playing games
Go in the garden, Walk, Organise things
Sit in the garden, listen to music, go to the gym (exercise in general)
Think positively, eat healthy and stay relaxed
Going on walks, reading, gaming
Exercise, Sleep Meditation, take my dog on a walk
Routine
I have a clear schedule, I sleep a healthy amount, i talk to friends
talk to/spend time with partner, go outside, have a long bath
<b>The three main things I am missing to stay well are:</b>
physical activity, eating well, sleeping well.
help
friends, eating the correct food, activity
Get healthy, Be active, Talk
Not sure
Friends, support motivation
Time, hope, future goals
Social interaction
Long periods of calm, Rest days, Interaction with friends
good time management
The correct Brain chemistry
Good self-esteem,
No school, no homework, better brain chemistry
Motivation, energy
clarification, support from professionals, help in school with exams
Staying occupied motivation and being up to date
Loosing friends. Hating myself
Money, a big house, living in England
don't actually know
Getting advice on how to solve my issues, Old friends, Ex
although School is helping I feel that there is more they could do to recognise mental struggles in School, time away from School
evidence of being ok, don't know
Eating properly, sleeping more and caring about my emotional well-being

Consistency, Meditation/self reflection, Mindset
Talking to people more, therapy
A lack of ability to find people I can trust to talk to who actually care about me, lack of freedom to do the things I want and lack of motivation to the things I want to do in.
Emotions
Support from school, A break, Motivation
Rest, support from school, motivation
Ability to cope with stress in a healthy way, real connections with people, social skills
Positive self-opinions, Free time from school to do other hobbies
I'm not really sure how to answer this one
exercise
My ideal body, having understanding teachers, free time to myself.
Concentration skills, patience
Understanding from school and their high expectations, less stress on me being the therapist friend and schools help in taking responsibility as well, love care and appreciation
mental support, understanding of my own mental health issues, anything to make me feel better
confidence, contentment in my own company, and a healthy mindset regarding my appearance/diet
Nothing much, unless you count the Lego Star Wars tantive IV set which I desperately require to survive
sleep. nutrition. sleep.
time for myself
Not feeling stressed, being able to relax without feeling guilty
A mental health professional, Someone who can understand
Reasons. Effort. The will
Knowing more about mental health as a whole, having extra time to do calm things for me that would be reading, and maybe having a few days off of social platforms like social media just to have a clear head space.
Sleeping enough, eating well, balancing sixth form, work and my social life
People to speak to
Eating properly, Talking to people outside of therapy, Sleeping
Self-esteem, enjoying day to day life, success
I am unsure of this.
Organisation, being productive
Time management, Bigger support system, Eat healthier
The certainty of knowing what will happen in the near future, not seeing my friends as often, being motivated to eat healthy and exercise
healthy home life, support at home, a group of friends i could talk to and spend time with
Far too much work, an unpleasant and overly formal working environment. Other than that all is well.
Money, time
An absence of mood swings, workload, and the little laughing skull that floats behind me and mocks my life choices
Proper thinking, Planning
Time, Money, Insomnia
finding the time and effort to exercise regularly, meeting up regularly with friends, having time to myself

Motivation, ability to praise myself and ability to not worry about the consequences of my actions constantly

Motivation, not procrastinating, Stable relationships

More time with family

Freedom, healthy lifestyle, the ability to open up to people

Good mindset

A sleep schedule, regularly drinking water, staying on top of stress

being away from school

**The three main things that have changed since 2020 that have made things easier or harder for my life and my mental wellbeing.**

1) I am not as close to a friend as I was before, 2) My Grandad health has got worse over lockdown and I only just saw him in person for the first time in nearly a year. 3) I have started a new school and made a good friend

Added exam stress, but I'm handling it through my hobbies and not overloading myself

after I had an incident which changed my perspective

anxiety, relationship with food

Be positive and share my feelings more to keep calm and positive

Breaking up of friendships, less opportunities to go out, things being more expensive

cancer (two people), there's not really anything else

Catching up on education, fears of the world, isolation

Change in diet, Friend group, Motivation

Coming to sixth form. I don't know anything else.

Cut off toxic friendships, found a healthy relationship with someone I really love, focusing more on schoolwork

Depression started in lockdown, lost social skills and friends - now impossible to form a real connection, became very sensitive to sounds

Easier = picking up reading again (I have set myself a 100 book goal by the end of the year and I'm already 25 books in), harder = spending too much time on social media, harder = getting too stressed about things like school and making myself not have any or much free time when I should have a break.

everything has stayed pretty much the same for me except from the fact that since we have been back at school, I have become a bit stressed out because of workload and exams

Exam stress but I have found someone to talk to

Family, Friends, Mental health

Finishing CBT, leaving the harsh confines of the closet, straight up vibing

Food, The way I see myself, School

Friends, school work and stress levels (harder)

friendships, family, stopping my hobby

Girlfriend, More and better friends, Living up to my expectations

Going out more, talking to new people more often, travelling more

Gone to sixth form – harder, Applying to university – harder, Going to therapy for a mental health condition - easier

Had a huge effect on my social anxiety as well as how I view myself and how secure I feel with my friends

Having less people



Higher levels of stress due to the pandemic, feeling isolated, Going to crowded places cause major stress

I have become more self-aware, I have the right friends around me now, I have learnt how to be more comfortable spending time by myself

I don't know

I got into Star Trek, good side: fun space ideas - bad side: Star Trek brain rot, Got a cat, that single-handedly cured my depression, Stopped biting my nails, now I look like a human being (ish)

I have made new friends that I can talk to

I think I have anxiety

Isolation, anxiety, exams, keeping others healthy,

Less time to socialise, More work, More/better friends

Life idk

Life in general

Life in general

Lockdown / no routine

Lost friends, distant with family, no one to talk to

Make sure I keep on going by never giving up. I think about the positive instead of negative.

Medical issues

Mental illness mental illness mental illness

Met my closest friend that has actually helped me realise who I am, had a job that has negatively and positively affected me and found my passion for photography.

more anxiety, going School has become harder and more stressful, restrictions easing has helped

More friends, no school, more homework

My weight has increased; therefore my mental health and overall happiness has decreased but overall I am okay.

Never finishing high school and having to abruptly stop seeing people I saw every day, Not doing a full year of learning since 2019, not being able to do recreational things until end of 2021

No motivation anymore (like permanent burnout) , no social confidence, trust issues with people now

Not being able to get help from GP, More stress with exams, The way we're treated after the 2 years

Not being able to go out as much

Not being able to see friends and family - made things harder

Nothing has made it easier

Now looking at uni, less friends, a levels

Parent attitudes have changed , state of mind and my attitude has changed ,my priorities towards school work and socialising means I feel more prone to low episodes

people who i hang around with, time spent on social media

reading. podcasts. the amount of coffee i drink - aids my anxiety.

Reduced time in sixth form due to lockdowns(harder), less PPE practice (harder), increased working hours due to lack of staff increasing wages (easier)

routine (not helped)

School, Family, Lack of friends

School, Amount I see family, Amount I see friends

school, tests, socialising

Schools, seeing friends less, seeing family less

Seeing friends/family, resources being limited, not feeling pressure to go out

slapped on a waiting list for counselling, general well-being has decreased, exams

Social life back to normal

speaking to a mental health practitioner (easier), becoming much closer to one of my friends who I can always talk to (easier), isolating myself from everyone during the lockdowns and losing some of my social skills (harder)

The disconnect between sixth formers and staff as opposed to secondary school students and staff, 2 years of being alone and being expected to function academically the same, free periods

There's more awareness but there's still barriers when going to see a gp alone and not self-diagnosing but knowing you need help

Understanding sexuality, uni courses and exams

Work drive

A final question asked if there was anything the participant wished to add.

**Is there anything else you would like to add to your responses above?**

There needs to be more professional mental health counselling available through the NHS

I see CAMHS but I don't know if they're a primary or community mental health service??? I saw a GP before I saw them, but I don't know if I was supposed to tick the box about the GP - sorry if I ticked the wrong things

I have on and off episodes of depression and extreme social anxiety but that's about it really

Processing difficulties

I would not label myself as having a mental health problem as such, but socialising has become increasingly difficult since the lockdowns as I feel more anxious and less confident

sexual orientation - i like who i like (labels are unnecessary for me)

Hormone imbalance and an under active thyroid which I take medication for but I find it hard to do exercise for a long period of time and makes me feel self-conscious about myself and my body image which doesn't help my mental health.

There aren't enough facilities that support young people with mental health issues, schools aren't frequently checking on students and their mental health on a personal level (especially during high level stress times e.g. exam periods)

I have a medical condition called Turners Syndrome

A side of effect of my anxiety is depressive episode that can last from days to months which I don't think is spoke about enough as a side effect of an anxiety disorder

For the above question on health conditions - ADHD

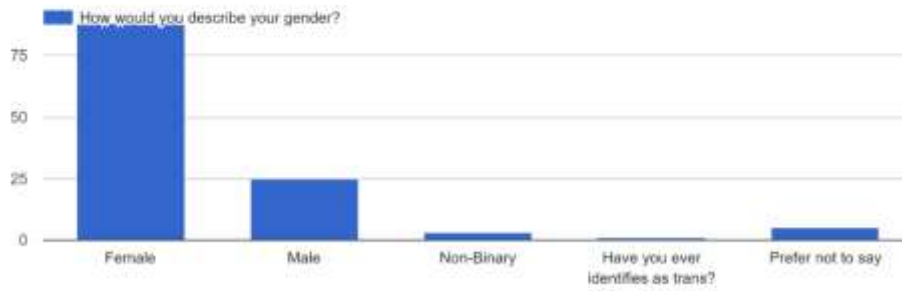
Live slug reaction to all (I am queer)

## Demographics

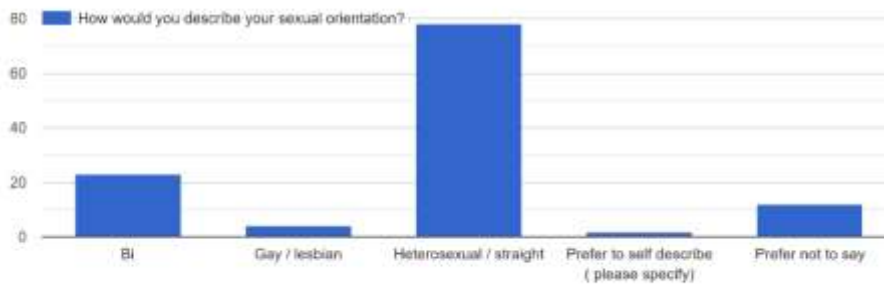
The last section of the survey requested information on demographics, which are roughly in line with expectations.

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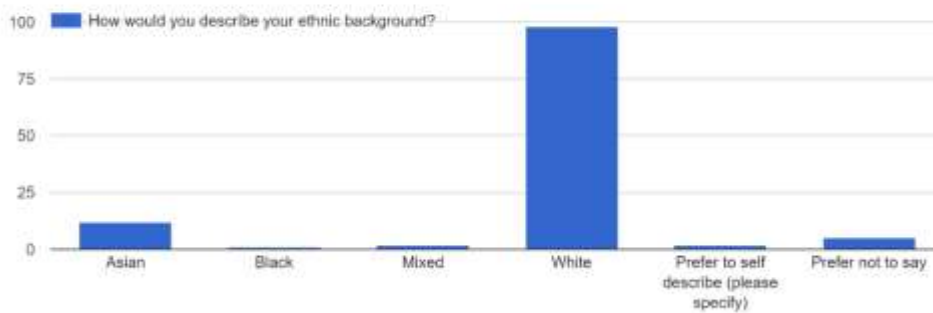
How would you describe your gender?



How would you describe your sexual orientation?



How would you describe your ethnic background?



## Discussion Points & Recommendations

### General points

The Mind report “The Mental Health Emergency: How has the coronavirus pandemic impacted our mental health” published June 2020, makes some observations and findings that are worth comparing our findings with.

“...over two thirds of young people said that their mental health has gotten worse during the period of lockdown restrictions”

Our data reports one third (34%) of participants feeling less able to deal with day to day matters, such as education, work or being part of a family. In addition, our findings report a decrease of 11% of people less inclined to feel good about themselves. 50% of our participants would disagree that they feel good about themselves!

“Restrictions on seeing people, being able to go outside and worries about the health of family and friends are the key factors driving poor mental health”

Our report agrees that worries about the health of family has been a negative impact on wellbeing. However, many of our participants reported having benefit from having more time or more impetus to make use of the outside, through walks, meeting up with friends (post lockdown) or gardening.

“Feelings of loneliness have made nearly two thirds of people’s mental health worse during the past month, with 18–24-year-olds the most likely to see loneliness affect their mental health”

Our results have not reflected this to this proportion, although our findings demonstrate the pandemic has affected people’s social skills and ability to interact. Also, some participants had restricted contact with key people in their lives, which affected their wellbeing.

However, some participants reflected that the pandemic had brought their families together, despite some of the issues this has also caused. There has been a 6% increase in participants reporting that they have a person that they can talk to about an important decision in their life.

“Over half of adults and young people are over or under eating to cope.”

Our findings do not reflect this, although the questions have not been asked in the same manner. Food does appear to be an important part of some participations’ wellbeing (pizza was mentioned a lot at COGS!), hobbies such as reading, and exercise seem more prevalent in responses.

The top five most popular sources of information and advice for young people were Friends and family (54%) Official government guidance, (33% of 18–24 year olds) Social media (36%) Charities e.g. Mind (25%), Internet searches (25% of under-18s)

This roughly is in line with our findings (however, the Mind question related to information about the pandemic rather than mental health):

35% would engage with family, 41% would engage with friends, 17% would speak to school/college, 33% would approach a GP or other healthcare professional, 44% would use the internet and 23% would use social media.

Both audiences have provided a strong sense of humour despite the nature of this project – this should be seen as a really positive way of engaging people, lifting mood and bringing hope!

**“What can help? Nothing much, unless you count the Lego Star Wars Tantive IV set which I desperately require to survive.”**

**“Things to stay well? Sleeping more, retail, consuming the souls of the damned <3”**

AND... If left to it when asked to ‘draw the weather in your head’, young people may draw, in addition to the request, either:

- Beach scenes
- Unicorns
- Very detailed and artistic interpretations of clouds

## **Burton and District Mind**

The focus groups may have benefitted from several sessions in order to further build trust and encourage participation. We also question if we had the most appropriate facilitators demographically in the room (i.e. middle aged, white males!). To support any future work of this nature, we need to recruit and train a younger volunteer team.

We had an outstanding response to the online form, together with the evidence that 44% of young people would use the internet for mental health support (11% more than would turn to a GP!) does demonstrate some need for digital resources.

The team were overwhelmed with data coming from this project due to participants being honest, open and willing to share on many occasions. This was further exasperated by delays in phase one due to covid-19 risks in January 2022.

We believe there is further insight to be gathered from the data provided, such as potential correlation between some of the statistics and demographics, or if there's correlation between those reporting exam/workload stress and self esteem for instance. We recommend more ring-fenced resource to further explore the data to support more detailed recommendations.

## **Schools and Colleges**

The information gathered and the net promotor score are clear – 60-minute sessions were not long enough to support the workshops as designed. We recommend a minimum of 90 minutes, or a re-worked programme to delivered where 60 minutes is all that's available which will result in less information being shared.

Our findings demonstrate that despite very strong effects on the part of pastoral teams, participants would benefit from stronger relationships with the pastoral teams -particularly at exam times.

The confidence and self esteem of many participants is concerning and has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. However, it is clear that they depend on one another for support in extremely useful ways and therefore psycho-education is extremely important and should be integrated into their schemes of work on a regular basis with the following emphasis:

- The difference between emotional wellbeing and mental health
- How to communicate your concerns about your own mental health
- Self-care and services to support
- What to do if someone discusses their mental health

This is in line with the workshops provide by this project.

## **Learning Disability Services**

Psycho-education workshops need to at around 45 minutes. However, there must be available learning resources and data capture resources that do not depend on the written word. Each session must start with a period of recap and summary of previous sessions. The learning styles of learners must be assessed, and continuous evaluation of learning must take place in a non-intrusive and informal style.

Some individuals would benefit from a longer period of closer working – in small groups or in one to one, particularly where mental illness is suspected or diagnosed. This work could also be done in collaboration with members of the household. The aim of this work would be to support the insight of behaviour and how thoughts and feelings contribute to this.

The group as a collective is far stronger than the sum of its parts! There is a very strong bond between individuals and their willingness to support one another.