



# Coping

# Consultation Report

# November 2021

Consultation led by DYC Mental Health Sub-Group

Durham Youth Council

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**Disclaimer: percentages have been rounded to one decimal place for easy of understanding, this does not mean that they have been altered in any way and a results table is given at the bottom of each question that is multiple choice which can be referred to for total accuracy.**

## Background:

### **Durham Youth Council:**

Durham Youth Council are a group of Young People aging from 11-19 based across County Durham.

The Youth Council are supported by our Participation and Engagement Officer within the Education Department of Durham County Council.

Its purpose is to give Children and Young People a 'collective voice' that is listened to and acted upon by the important decision makers. We want Young People to be more involved in making decisions about issues and services that affect Young People and we want to support Young People in making positive changes.

Youth Council members come from a range of different schools, colleges and youth provisions. Our Young People come from a range of different areas and backgrounds and we pride ourselves on being a diverse, accepting group.

Our Council Members are expected to develop different ways of gathering the voices of Young People across the County, exploring the things that matter to them. They're responsible for helping develop new projects, events or campaigns to gather opinions, raise awareness and support with key issues impacting on Children and Young People.

The Youth Council also support the elected members of the Youth Parliament to campaign on issues affecting Young People both locally and nationally.

The Youth Council are also given the opportunity to work with other organisations to explore what's available for Young People to access and how these services could be made better and best work for Young People.

## **Overview:**

Durham Youth Council were approached by Health Watch Co. Durham to carry out both an inhouse and out of house consultation to gather the opinions of Young People with regards to how they cope with stress, anxiety, worries and emotions and what strategies and resources they use to support themselves and others.

## **Goals of the Consultancy:**

- To identify what Young People worry about.
- To identify who Young People go to for support.
- To identify where Young People go to for support.
- To identify what Young People do to support and cope with their worries, emotions and mental health.

### **Process:**

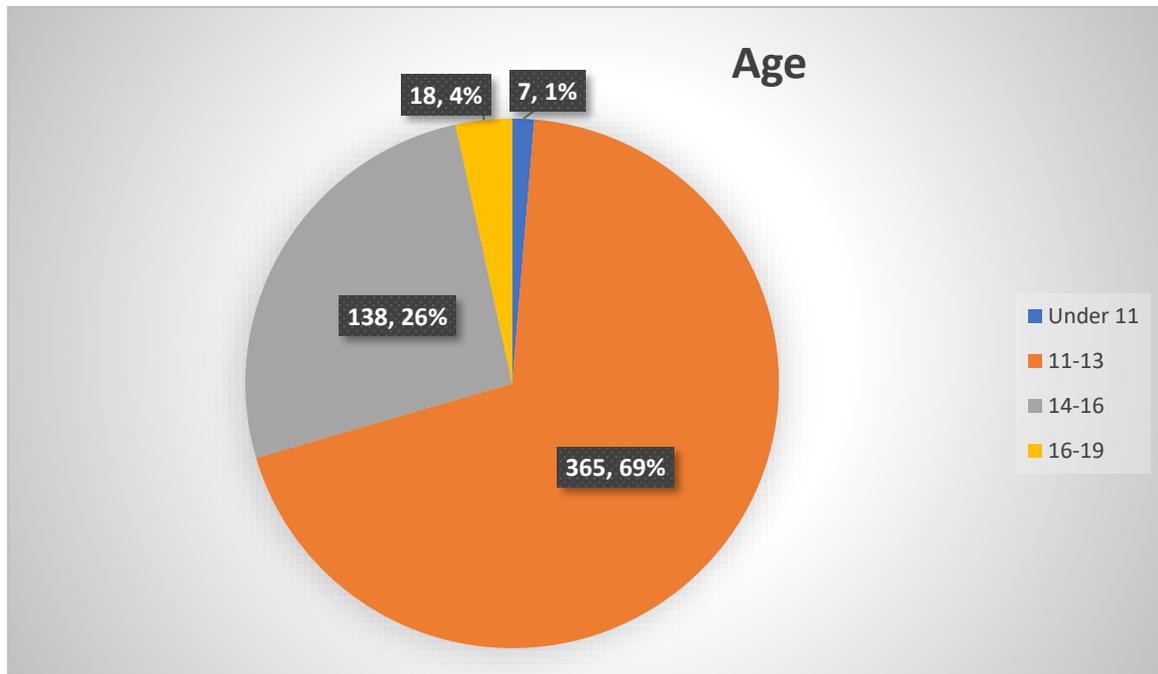
Purpose and aims of the consultation were discussed with Health Watch County Durham. A draft consultation was then created and sent for approval. Amendments were made. This consultation was designed to be sent out both virtually, in the form of a Google Form and made easily adaptable for face-to-face consultation.

Once approved, the survey was shared with secondary schools across Co. Durham. It was also shared with youth organisations and on social media platforms. Some face-to-face consultation was carried out during the consultation period, feedback from these sessions were also added to results from online consultation.

The consultation was carried out over the period of 6 weeks, starting from 30.09.2021. During this time the consultation was completed by 535 young people across Co. Durham.

Consultation was closed on the 11.11.2021 and a report of findings was created by NYC following this.

What is your age?



528 young people answered this question. As you can see from the chart, the majority of children and young people that took part were secondary school aged 11-13years with 69%.

## *What does Mental Health mean to you? Thinking about what you think it means?*

523 young people answered this question. The most common answers were:

- How you feel / thoughts / emotions
- Your mental wellbeing / a person's wellbeing
- Your mental state / being mentally stable

There were common references to mental health being a negative thing. Young People commented on feeling alone, being worried or stressed.

### **Comments from Young People:**

*"Being happy or sad or angry, feeling all these things and recognising that those are normal things."*

*"How people look after their mental health. People's attitudes towards other people."*

*"Depression or anxiety. People with ADHD or Autism."*

*"mental health is the person conditions with regard of their psychological and emotional well being. mental health is also our physical and social well being. there is different types of mental health and some of these can affect how we act think and feel."*

*"mental health is really important to me and I feel like it isn't considered enough when it comes to students. as someone who struggles with it, school is always draining to me and when all you hear is tests, revise, assessment it does not help, and then outside of school, the place where you are suppose to be able to breathe, you don't get a chance to do that because then you have personal issues"*

*"It's about your mental state, you can have a good and bad mental health, it's how you think and feel at any given time. It's about self care and how you look after yourself. It can be about a diagnosis or how your mind is different to others. Everyone's mental health is different. Some people need medication to help support their mental health."*

*"How your mental state is, it is not a state of being unwell as it is commonly believed to be, but instead it is exactly like physical health in that it can be good and bad, and can fluctuate. Furthermore, physical and mental health are dependent on each other, mental health can be affected by many different things."*

*"Mental Health is a main part of having a healthy life, mental health is as important as physical health, as it needs to be looked after and cared for. If you do not care for it, it is likely that you will have problems trying to do things in everyday life."*

*"mental health means a lot to me it can really affect you and the people around. mental health to me means being mentally drained having no energy and feeling so alone whether you have a good friend group or not."*

*"mental health means like where you overthink things and worry about stuff. It also could mean like when your stressing and having anxiety. Finally its you having problems in your head."*

## *What things do you worry about?*

516 young people answered this question. The most common answers were:

- School / homework / tests
- Family / friends / social situations
- What people think about them / other's opinions / fitting in or being accepted
- Appearance / weight / body image
- Being safe / Crime / being robbed or attacked
- Money
- Dying
- Losing phone / no WiFi or internet access
- The future / careers
- Mental Health / diagnosis'

### **Comments from Young People:**

*"I worry about most things that occur in my day to day life and i think too much over little things and i am aware of that. Schoolwork and homework is often very stressful even in small amounts and i have awful time management as i lack the motivation to do anything until the last minute. I tend to worry about my future a lot and if i am really going to amount to anything. Sometimes i dont see a future for myself at all. In any case i have plans for a job in the future if i could get to that, so its fine. I also worry about my peers a lot. The people in my life are also stressed and it is sometimes down to me to help them cope with that. That also has an affect on my mental health but i dont mind all that much. Having to get up every morning can be very difficult for me and then having to walk to school and sit in a classroom with people talking constantly is very draining. I have nothing to distract myself throughout the school day and everything feels like a blur. With the time that i do have when i am home, people want me to waste that time on schoolwork and homework. All of this makes me stay up later because all i can tell myself is that when i sleep i will have school. The staying up has impacted my sleeping schedule a lot and i dont get much sleep anymore. This, when combined with the long school days, is not a great mix and makes me feel burnt out."*

*"school work, homework, old toxic relationships, being apart of the lgbtqui+ community, being laughed at for looking different from the norm, going to any lessons (specifically maths and science), being called on in class to answer a question, ordering food at a restaurant or a fast-food place, buying things from the shop, asking for anything from anyone, telling people no when unreasonable, being alone at night, being bullied/made fun of because of my hobbies, meeting new people, talking to teachers or other people, sleeping at night."*

*"Friends and having someone to talk to. I worry about being isolated and not having help when I need it. I worry about people being unkind and mean to me or bullied and not having friends to make*

*me feel safe. I am really worried about my work being too hard. I worry about missing deadlines for homework: I also worry about my mum as she is not well."*

*"I dont really worry, thats more when you dont know whats going to happen and worry about outcomes. I care about others, and how well they are coping and I often wonder how I can help to support them, trying to be proactive over worrying"*

*"I used to worry about in the six weeks holidays and this one kid brayed me up and I worried incase he found out where I live and did something really bad but I also worry about my sister playing out incase something bad happens."*

*"Losing my phone, Not always getting the right answers at certain things, Not being good at something first try, Me or someone close to me getting hurt. I worry about that people around me or in my family may get hurt."*

*"i worry about everything i worry about my friends if they say they are okay but you know they aren't okay i worry about going out on a daily basis and im worried about walking home on my own"*

*"My dad as well as my future career with others that constantly disturbs learning. I want to learn to get a decent job or even my dream which will take 4 times as long to do."*

*"I worry about things in school like handing in homework on time and at cheerleading, I stress about getting moves on the right count and getting a tumble right."*

*"I meanly worry about my grandad because he is coming up 80 and is very clumsy so he falls a lot and once he has hit his head so I worry a lot about my grandad."*

*"A little bit of anything and everything - my physical health, grades at school, relationships with friends, relationships with family, how I use my time, etc."*

*"College work, failure, my parents, money. Not having enough time. Travelling to places I don't know. Changes in my routine. My autism."*

*"I worry about getting older and having to do work. I also worry about having to deal with money and stuff when im older."*

*"What others think of me. My physical appearence. If i'm smart enough. GCSE's and small tests. Going to restraunts/shops."*

## *When you have a worry, what do you do to help yourself feel better?*

519 young people answered this question. The most common answers were:

- Sleep / rest / be alone / take a bath or shower
- Read / write / paint / draw
- Video games
- Sport (football, running, swimming) / go to the gym / go for a walk
- Listen to music / watch TV / watch videos on social media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) / listen to podcasts
- Talk to parent / sibling / friend / trusted adult
- Socialise / go out (with friends)
- Count to 10 / Breathe
- Spend time with pets
- Eat / drink a warm drink

There were a number of young people that advised they hadn't come up with any coping strategies yet. There was also one reference made to self-harm.

### **Comments from Young People:**

*"Use a physical movement or create a vivid mental image of me doing the movement to dismiss the thought if it is unnecessary, and otherwise I may speak to some people about some issues. I would maybe reason with myself or attempt to distract myself."*

*"There's literally nothing I can do. Haven't found a coping mechanism for it yet when I'm by myself but there is one person who always helps no matter what mood they're in and a hug from them can brighten my whole week"*

*"When I'm in the moment I try to breath or if its really bad i will leave the room the other thing when trying to calm down i will read, draw or start talking a lot more than I normally do."*

*"I will get a warm drink and read or watch a movie to help calm me down if i'm at school I will just walk away from the situation and tell a suitable adult for the situation"*

*"When I feel a bit overwhelmed I take time to get balance back. Im very lucky in that I have great people I talk with and rarely, if ever worry."*

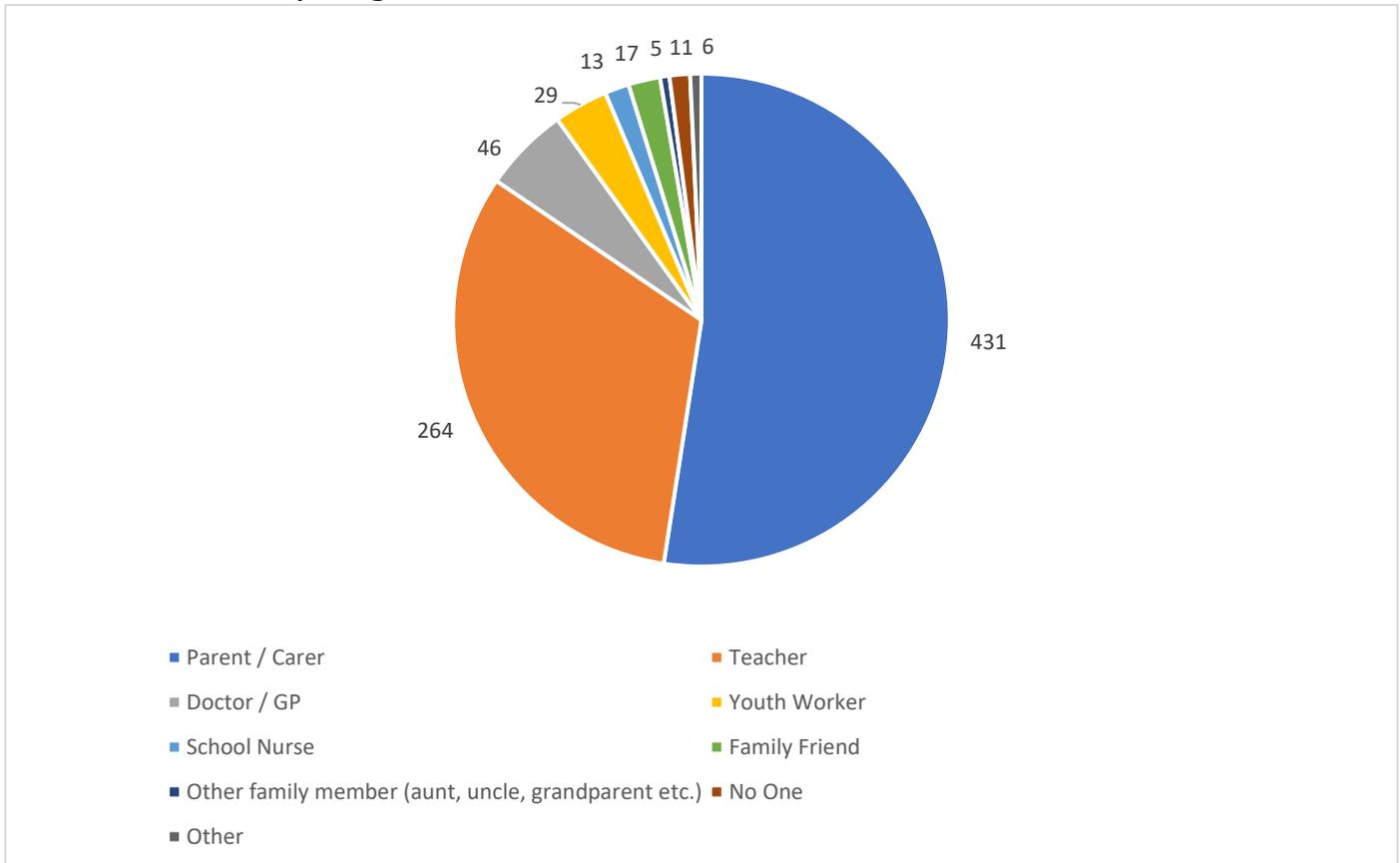
*"I just do anything else just to keep my mind from being stuck in one place so playing games talking to friends about whatever comes to mind."*

*"I like to read and write, but normally when I'm stressed I kind of just zone off and neglect things and I tend to reorganize things to cope"*

*"I try and ignore the feeling by listening to Spotify, talk to family or friends to put my mind as far away as I possibly can"*

*"to make my self feel better i would just go to sleep say if i was crying about something i would just try to go to sleep"*

*Who are your trusted adults? If you were worried about something, who would you go to? You can select more than one answer.*



525 young people answered this question. They were given the opportunity to select more than one of the options given. It is clear most young people felt that their trusted adult were their parents/carers, followed by a teacher or member of staff in school. When asked, young people advised this was because these are the people they spend the most time with / see the most.

431 young people said that their parent/carer were their trusted adult (52%)

264 young people said that their teacher was their trusted adult (32%)

46 young people said that their doctor / GP was their trusted adult (6%)

29 young people said that their youth worker was their trusted adult (4%)

13 young people said that their school nurse were their trusted adult (2%)

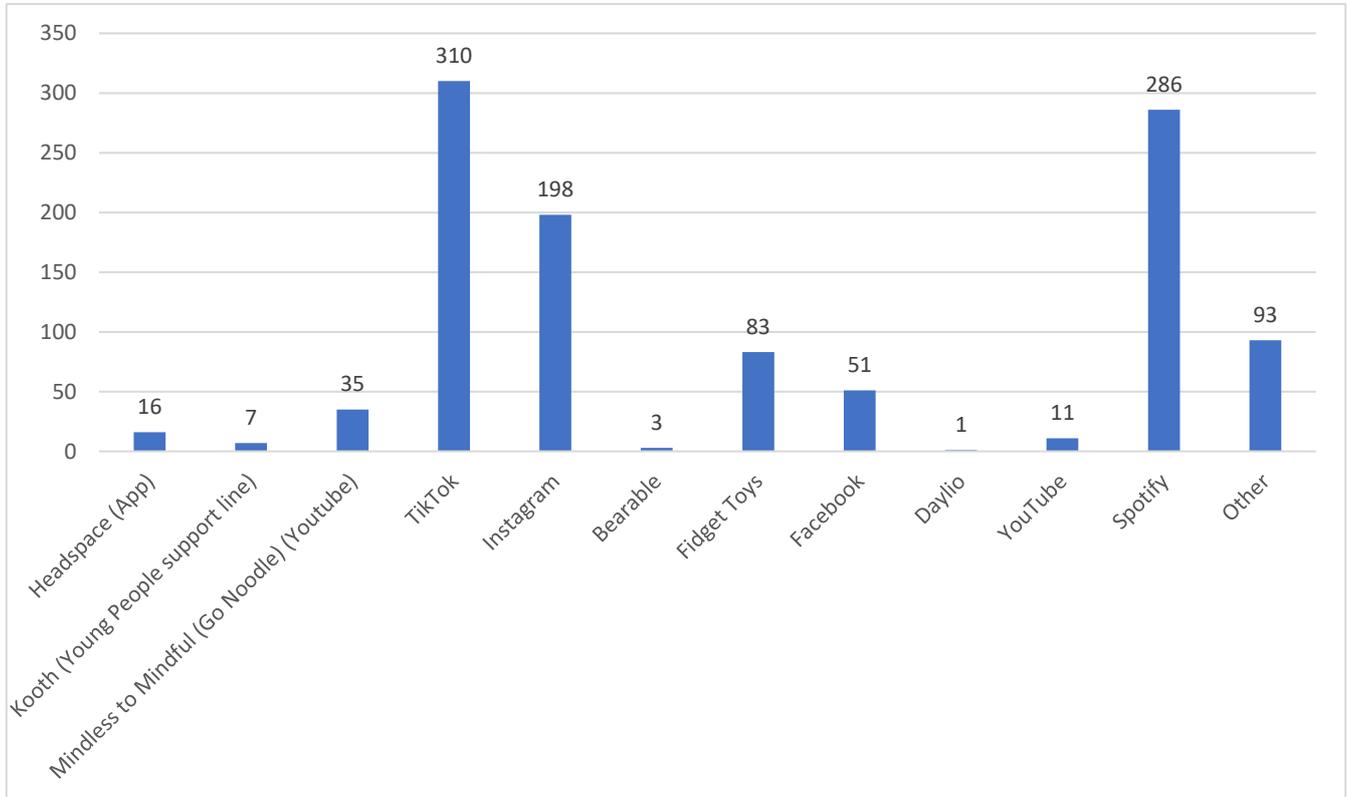
17 young people said that a family friend was their trusted adult (2%)

5 young people said that another family member were their trusted adult (1%)

11 young people said that they didn't have a trusted adult (1%)

6 young people said that they had another / other trusted adult (1%) comments regarding this were mostly therapist or councillor.

*Are there any apps, games and websites that you use to help you feel better? What are they? You can select more than one answer.*



510 young people answered this question. They were given the opportunity to select more than one of the options given. It is clear that TikTok and Spotify are favoured by young people. Closely followed by Instagram. Which would suggest that the majority of young people access social media apps as a way of coping or distracting from their worries or stresses. Some of the 'other' responses included play stations or video games such as Roblox, Xbox, Minecraft and Fortnite, young people also mentioned streaming channels for example; Netflix, Prime and Disney+.

16 young people said they used Headspace

7 young people said they used Kooth

35 young people said they used Mindless to Mindful

310 young people said they used TikTok

198 young people said they used Instagram

3 young people said they used Bearable

83 young people said they used Fidget Toys

51 young people said they used Facebook

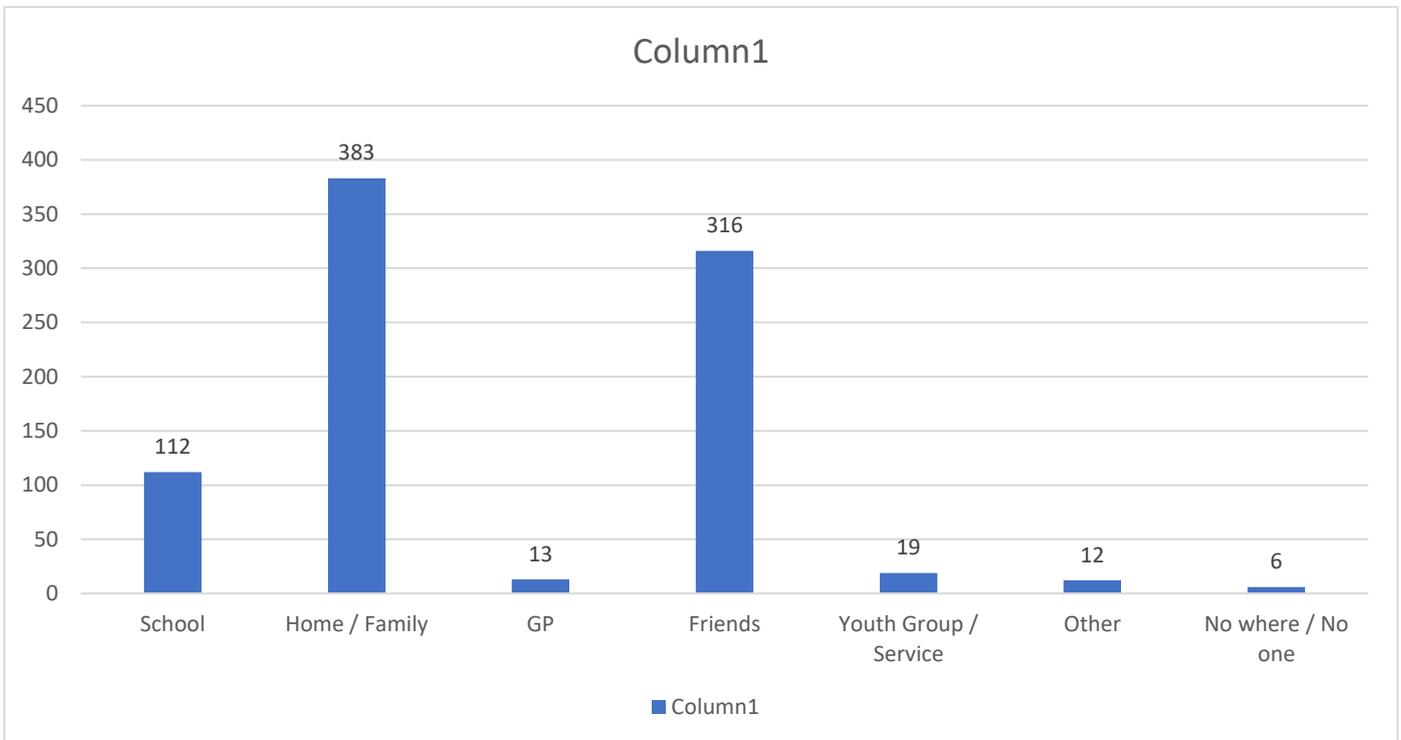
1 young person said they used Daylio

11 young people said they used YouTube

286 young people said they used Spotify

93 young people said they used 'other'

*Where do you go to get support when you are worried or feel unhappy? You can select more than one answer.*



525 young people answered this question. They were given the opportunity to select more than one of the options given. It is clear that the majority of young people would opt to go to a family member or friend for support. Some of the 'other' responses online message boards, Church, to play sports, or sports clubs, such as football and to spend time with pets.

112 young people said they'd go to someone in school

383 young people said they'd go to a family member or someone at home (examples given include Aunt, Uncle, Mam, Dad, Sister, Brother / Sibling, Cousins, Grandparents)

13 young people said they'd go to their GP

316 young people said they'd go to a friend

19 young people said they'd go to someone in their youth group or a service (examples given include youth worker, CAMHS workers, councillors / therapists)

12 young people said they'd go somewhere else. (examples given include Church, football or spending time with pets)

6 young people said they have nowhere to go, or no one to go to.

*What one thing do you think you need to be able to support your own mental health?*

494 young people answered this question. The most common answers were:

- Family / friends
- Music / TV
- Alone time / Rest / sleep
- Sport / hobbies
- Phone / digital devices
- Therapy / advice / support services
- Confidence / willpower / motivation
- Respect / people who understand
- Positive thoughts
- Comfort eating

There were a number of young people who said they weren't sure, didn't know or didn't care.

**Comments from Young People:**

*Access to a professional to talk to for peace of mind, both for physical and mental health. I would appreciate being able to talk to someone confidentially, or maybe just being allowed aids to help with everyday life, like earplugs that block out some sound, or silent fidget toys, or even just an adult there that you could talk about getting this stuff with (in school preferably) that could help discuss and research these things with you. Other than that, it's hard to say. Everyone needs different things, but personally just having a constant support there, easily accessible, could be helpful.*

*a peaceful place, and time, to not rush - to not be under pressure Stress is something we give ourselves, I prefer to give myself peace, so time out to take a moment is very important to get and have this, as kids, we need respect - not to have our space invaded, so we can focus, think, and mentally relax so we can rebuild*

*sometimes i just cant come into school because i struggle with mental illness (not just bad mental health) which causes you to struggle even getting up and i know the school has to hassle you about attendance because it is the law but it does just make it worse getting letters about it which stresses me out 10x more*

*Have time to myself and not have to worry about school exams or grades for GCSE, not have to worry about the expectations that people think about me, I just want to be able to have my own space where I can calm down and think things through all this is hard with the mock exams in December and GCSE's in may/June*

*I think it would be good if mental health was spoken about in a way that doesn't alienate those who are dealing with certain things. I would also like it if people treated mental health in the same way that they did physical health.*

*Be yourself, and be appreciative of who you are, success, focus on the good other than bad. Also, keep busy on things you enjoy doing, advices & therapies and God, etc.*

*I think to support my own mental health I would need my parents to realise how I act and think is not normal for a teenager and not blame it on 'hormones'*

*I feel like I need to be reassured a lot so if I think I don't look nice I will constantly ask people if I look nice. I also need to be reassured a lot.*

*I think somewhere to go sometimes. People who understand what we go through as young people. Better mental health services that are easier to access.*

*I need to be surrounded by people I trust or know, I also need to have a person that understands that I have moments of bad anxiety.*

*The majority of the time it is good but when it's bad I take my dog on a walk to clear my head and then I feel better*

*Being able to talk to other children about having worries without being scared of being judged or laughed at.*

*I think one thing I need to support my mental health is to speak to someone about whatever I'm worrying about.*

*you could do activities or go out and have some exercise this can lower your stress levels and anxiety*

*Keep Calm in a stressful situation and Use fidget toys to help my other mental health thing .*

*rest a good d\y talking to my friends eating being happy laughing with my mam and dad*

*The willpower to try and do things so you feel happier/ to improve if you want to.*

*I need help talking to people and with my autism (I struggle with this a lot)*

*I need confidence and apps to keep me calm like spotify or reading a book.*

*People to have better understanding. Adults to take us seriously. Somewhere nice to go, not the doctors. Faster appointments, a choice of appointments – app, online, telephone, face to face. Prefer not to talk to people, prefer to type.*

## **Conclusion**

Feedback from this consultation clearly shows that young people think that mental health relates to how 'stable' a person is emotionally. Young people seem to associate mental health as a negative thing and when we talk about mental health, we are referring to people that don't have 'good' mental health.

In discussion, a key point that came out of this consultation was that young people mostly worry about school, relationships and communicating. This includes things like exam results, attendance, making good progress, meeting deadlines and getting things completed. They worry about family members and friends, specifically, they worry about the health, wellbeing and safety of their loved ones. There were a few references made with regards to young people worrying about their loved ones dying or becoming very ill. Covid was rarely mentioned in any of the young people's comments. Young people were also particularly worried about falling out with friends or losing friends to their peers. Young people were worried about how they are perceived by others and how this is communicated, they worried about opinions of others and how these impacts on how people view them or behave and react around them. More so, young people were worried about how people judge them based on their appearance, how they dress, their weight and physical features.

Feedback from young people suggested that the most common ways they cope with stress, anxiety and emotions is through distraction, usually from social media sources such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. They use these platforms with watch videos, talk to others, get advice and information or play games. Young people also favour video games that they access through consoles or apps of devices such as; Roblox, Fortnite and Minecraft. Young people seem to favour those games with an online communication feature where they can play and talk online with other players. It was also evident that the majority of young people said they need 'space' and 'alone time' in order to work through their problems and worries.

It was also apparent that the majority of young people would go to a parent/carer, family member or friend if they needed support, advise or wanted to talk about their worries, anxiety or feelings. There was also a high percentage of young people that would approach someone in school, for example a teacher or member of staff. When discussed, young people said this is because these are the people they spend most of their time with and they know them the best which means they have a more 'trustful' relationship. Doctors, therapists and nurses were seen as being 'strangers'.

Young people also talked about the lack of understanding from others, they advised that more people being more knowledgeable about young person's mental health would mean better support for young people. There were a lot of references made that would suggest young people feel 'undermined' or aren't 'taken seriously' when it comes to their thoughts, feelings and mental health. With reference to young people being 'dramatic' or 'hormonal' and that issues and problems relating to young people aren't necessarily 'important'.

## Contact information

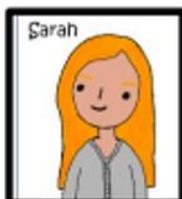


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