

Young people's views on emotional health and wellbeing

A presentation report by:
Dudley Youth Health Researchers
September 2016

How it all started...

Healthwatch Dudley gathers the views and experiences of local people who access health and care services - and has a priority to **champion the voice** of children and young people with decision makers in health and care.

One of the four cornerstones of Youth Work, which underpins the work of Dudley Youth Service, is **empowering young people** to understand and act on the personal, social and political issues which affect lives, the lives of others and the communities of which they are a part.

It made perfect sense to work together!

So, in July 2014, our two organisations teamed up to listen to young people's views about their health and wellbeing experiences, and to enable young people to have an influential say. The piece of work looked at young people's experiences of GP surgeries.

Dudley Youth Council members gave their time to represent the views of other young people. Group members between the ages of 11 - 19 took part in training and were supported to research other young people's experiences of visiting GP surgeries.

In March 2015...

We received an NHS England youth voice grant allowing us to bring a wider group of young people together.

Dudley Youth Health Researchers is a very much a local project but our experiences of how young people have engaged and been supported through the project will be shared across the Midlands and East region.

Introducing Dudley Youth Health Researchers!

The core team has involved 27 young people with a common interest of wanting to make a difference. **Each young person is unique** and the group includes a wide range of life experiences including:

- Disability
- Life limiting illness
- Living in care
- Living in supported accommodation
- Being a young carer
- Being a young person living in Dudley borough

“We are young people...

...we are also individuals”

The group first came together in June 2015 to discuss...

- Why it is important to be involved with reviewing services for young people
- What good services for young people should look and feel like
- How to gather views and who will listen

As part of their journey they:

- Elected a NHS Youth Forum Representative
- Connected, built trust and grew in confidence on a weekend residential
- Shared their own health and wellbeing opinions and experiences

The health and wellbeing issues that mattered most to the group included:

- Mental Health (this was the most popular issue for the group)
- Friendships & relationships
- Substance - Drugs and alcohol (support for young people)
- Safe sex/sexual health
- Knowledge of health services available for young people
- Healthy eating & eating disorders
- How hobbies keep us fit and well
- Homelessness
- A&E Waiting times, waiting areas & experience of hospital visits
- Improved disability awareness
- Effect of social media on health
- Services and support after family crisis
- Trust and confidentiality - who do I talk to and when?
- Smoking
- Cancer treatment for young people

But what did other young people think? To find out Dudley Youth Health Researchers...

- Created an online poll
- Talked to young people in Dudley town centre
- Visited organisations who support young people who are not in education employment or training
- Talked to friends about their list of issues and asked what they thought

From their discussions and poll the group identified three top issues

- 1) Knowledge of health services available to young people
- 2) Mental health - which included:
 - eating disorders
 - effects of social media on health
 - Friendships and relationships
 - Services and support after family crisis
- 3) Cancer treatment for young people

The group then planned their research and created a questionnaire survey to find out more from other young people

They also talked about...

- How all issues were important but how they would have more impact by concentrating on one topic.
- How social media affects mental health, physical health, friendships and relationships.
- Where young people get information from about health - very often the Internet but not always trusted sites with reliable information.

The group piloted their questionnaire with young people from local schools attending the borough's 'Me Festival' led by Dudley CCG



Over 100 completed
surveys were
completed...

...and fun was had on a bicycle
powered smoothie maker!



Healthwatch Dudley @HWDudley · 26 Nov 2015
Cycling to make healthy smoothies at #mefestival



The group then met to plan focus groups
and to discuss how to distribute more
questionnaires



Healthwatch Dudley @HWDudley · 7 Dec 2015

Dudley Youth Health Researchers are discussing things to consider when planning their focus groups @NHSYouthForum

In total Dudley Youth Health Researchers surveyed the views of **1160** young people between the ages of **11** and **19**

Questionnaires were completed by local schools, clubs and with friends of the group.

Surveys were also completed at focus groups with young people at:

- Switch - a drug and alcohol service for young people
- Young carers group
- Training providers for young people not in education, employment or training
- Disability youth club

Top media Tweet earned 986 impressions

Dudley Youth Health Researchers finding out where young people get information about health healthwatchdudley.co.uk/surveys
pic.twitter.com/cNxndzpIVK



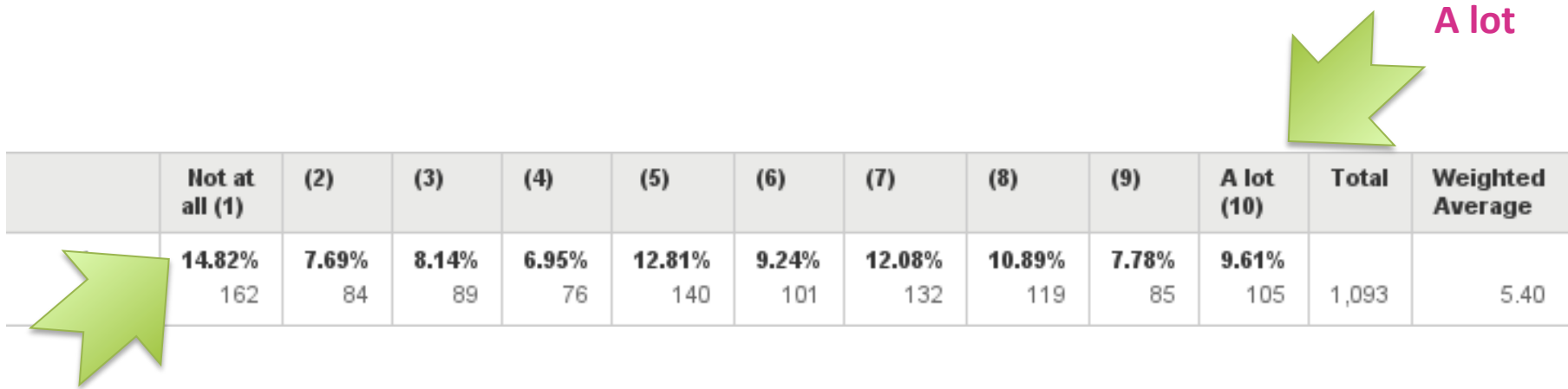
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The
survey
results!

On a scale of one to ten how do your friendships affects your mental health?

Answered: 1,093 Skipped: 67

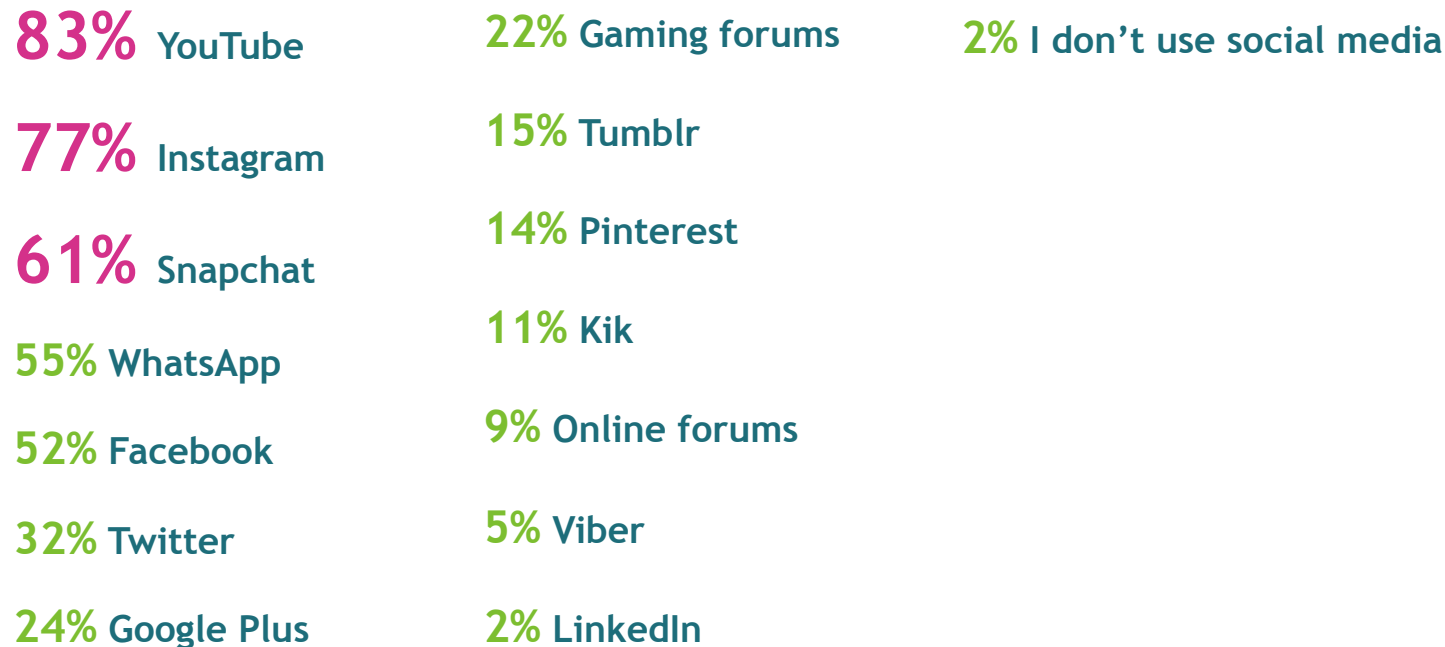


Not at all

A lot

What social media do you use? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,151 Skipped: 9



Why do you use social media? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,142 Skipped: 18



What effect does using social media have on your mood?

I often feel... (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,080 Skipped: 80

62% Happier

49% More included

49% More connected

29% That I can express myself better

23% More popular

20% More motivated

3% I don't use social media

12% Like I have less spare time

11% I exercise less than I should

6% More anxious

6% Jealous

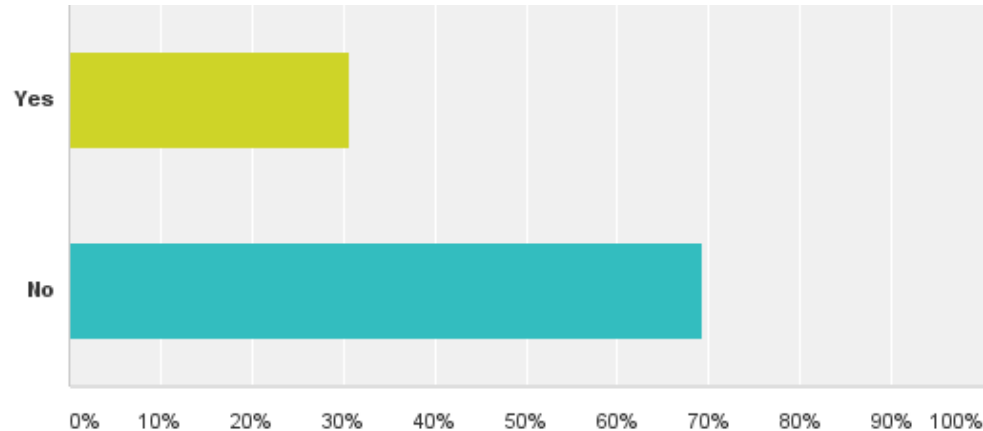
4% More pressured

4% More isolated

1% Less connected

Is the Internet the first place you would go if you were worried about your health?

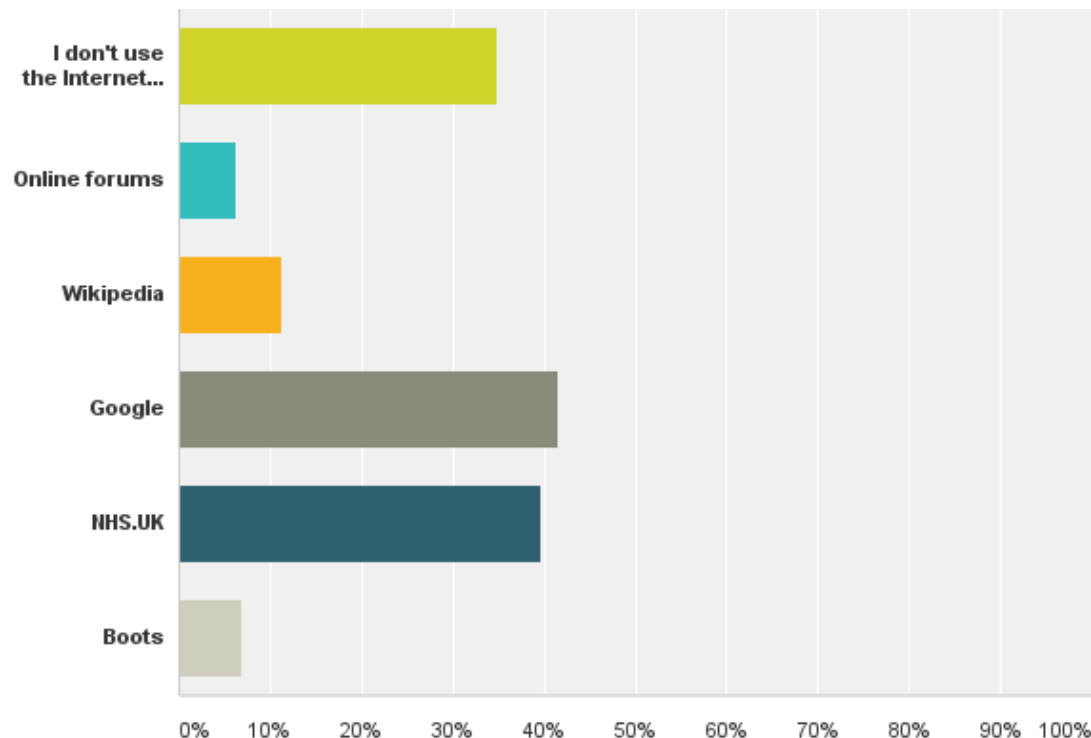
Answered: 1,113 Skipped: 47



31% Yes
69% No

What websites do you use to find out about health? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,108 Skipped: 52



35% said: I don't use the Internet for this

6% said Online Forums

11% said Wikipedia

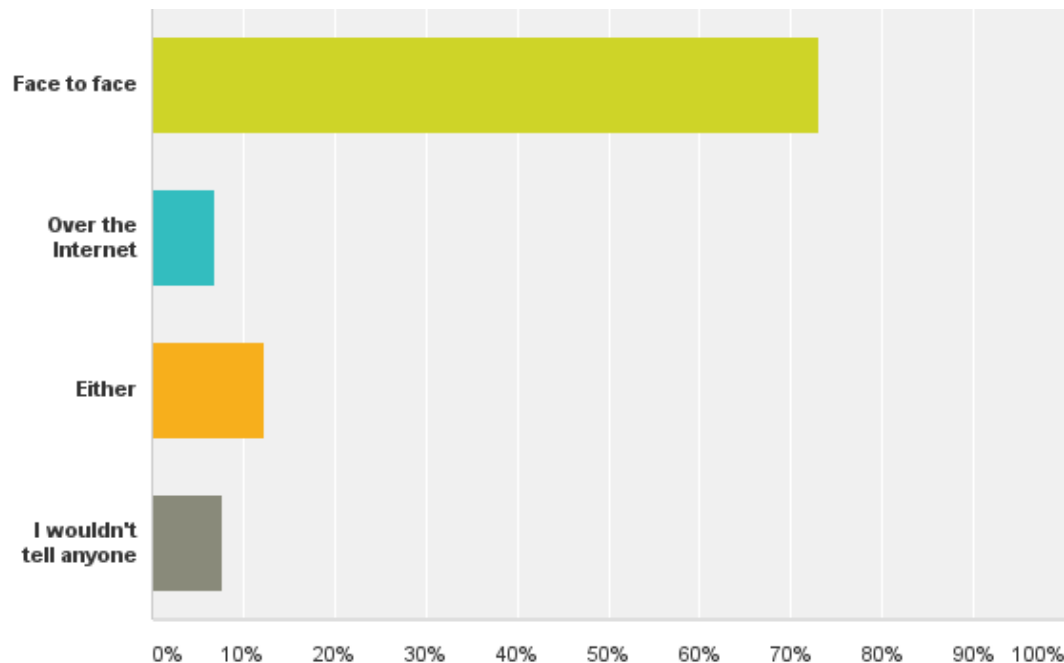
41% said Google

40% said NHS.UK

7% said Boots

If I was worried about my **general health** I would prefer to talk to someone:

Answered: 1,136 Skipped: 24



73% Face to face

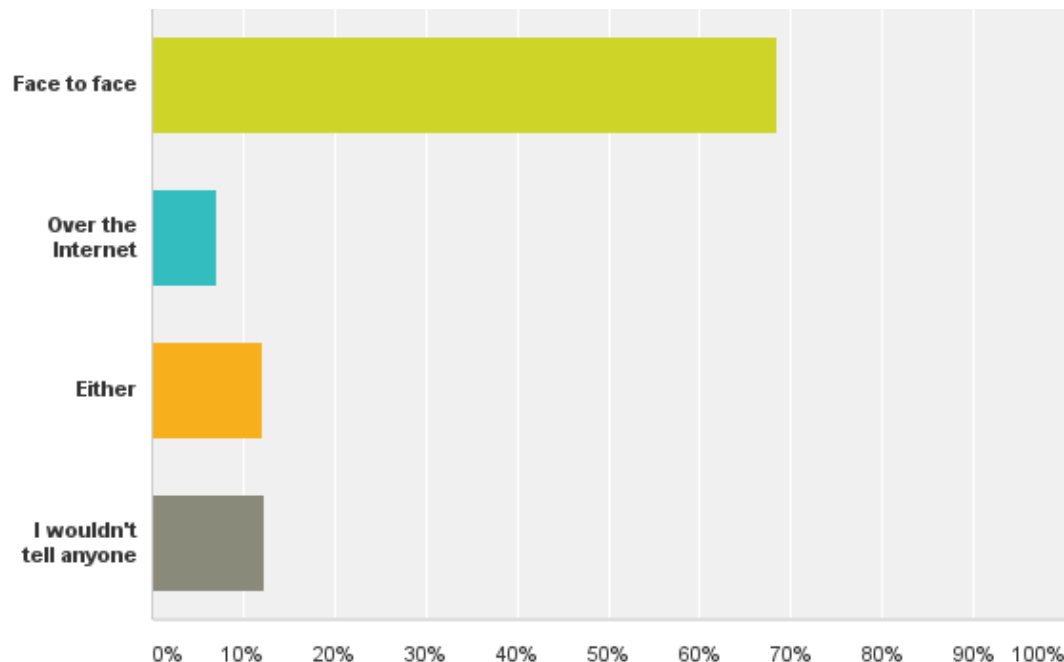
7% Over the Internet

12% Either

8% I wouldn't tell anyone

If I was worried about my **mental health** I would prefer to talk to someone:

Answered: 1,122 Skipped: 38



69% Face to face

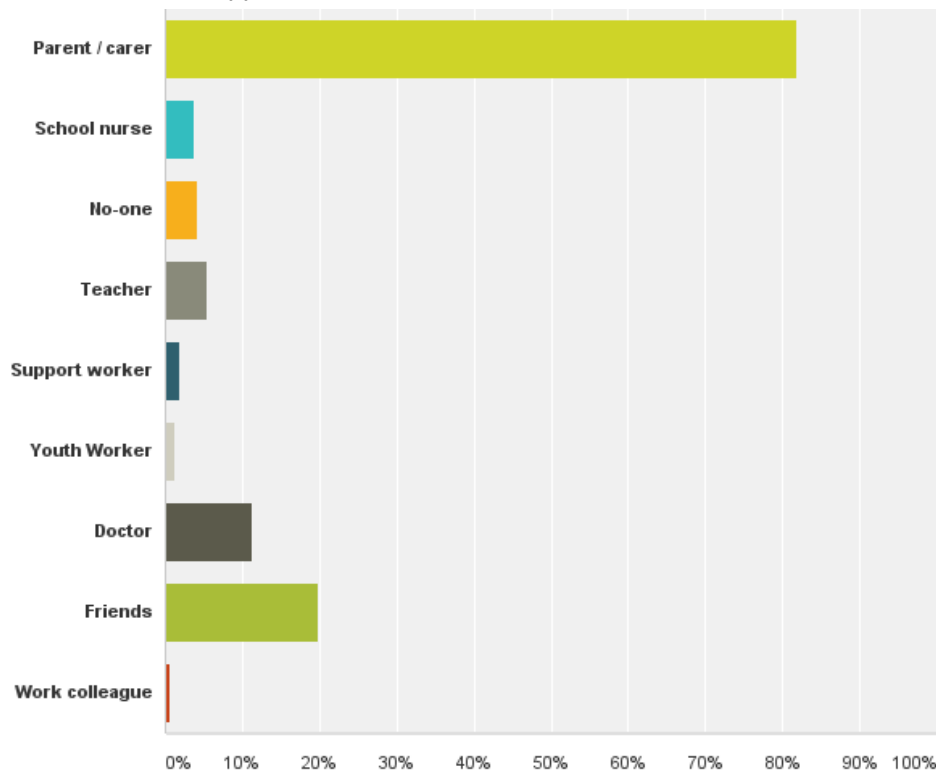
7% Over the Internet

12% Either

12% I wouldn't tell anyone

Who would be the first person you would go to if you were worried about your health? (Multi-choice)

Answered: 1,117 Skipped: 43



82% said **Parent / carer**

4% said **School nurse**

4% said **No-one**

5% said **Teacher**

2% said **Support Worker**

1% said **Youth Worker**

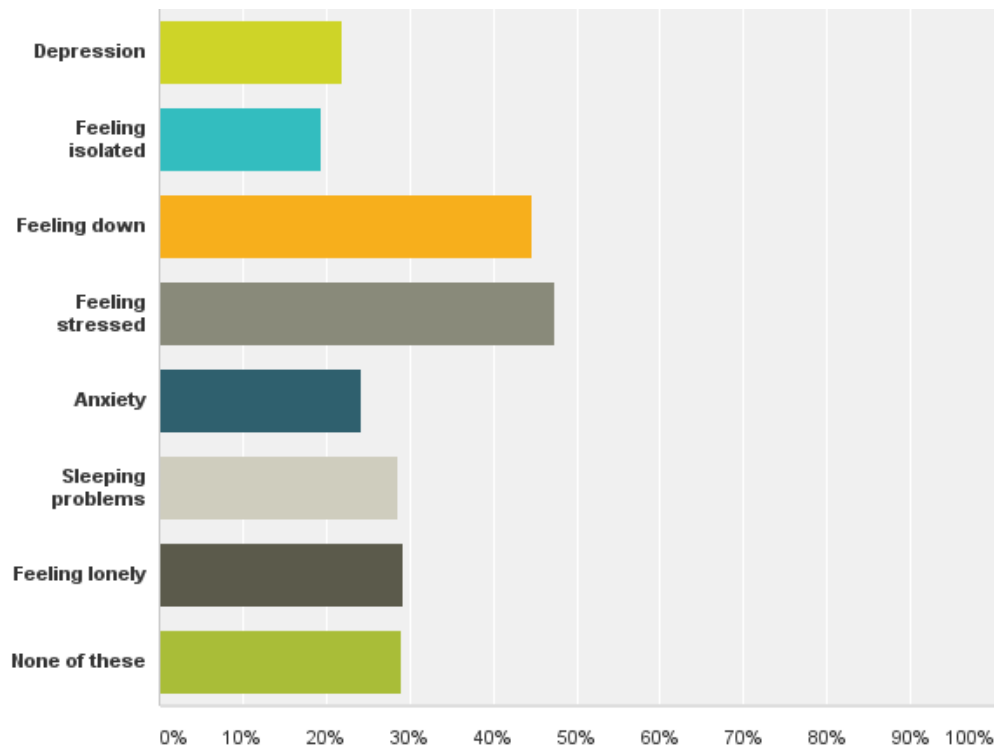
11% said **Doctor**

20% said **Friends**

1% said **Work colleague**

Have you ever been affected by any of the following? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,108 Skipped: 52



22% said Depression

19% said Feeling isolated

45% said Feeling down

47% said Feeling stressed

24% said Anxiety

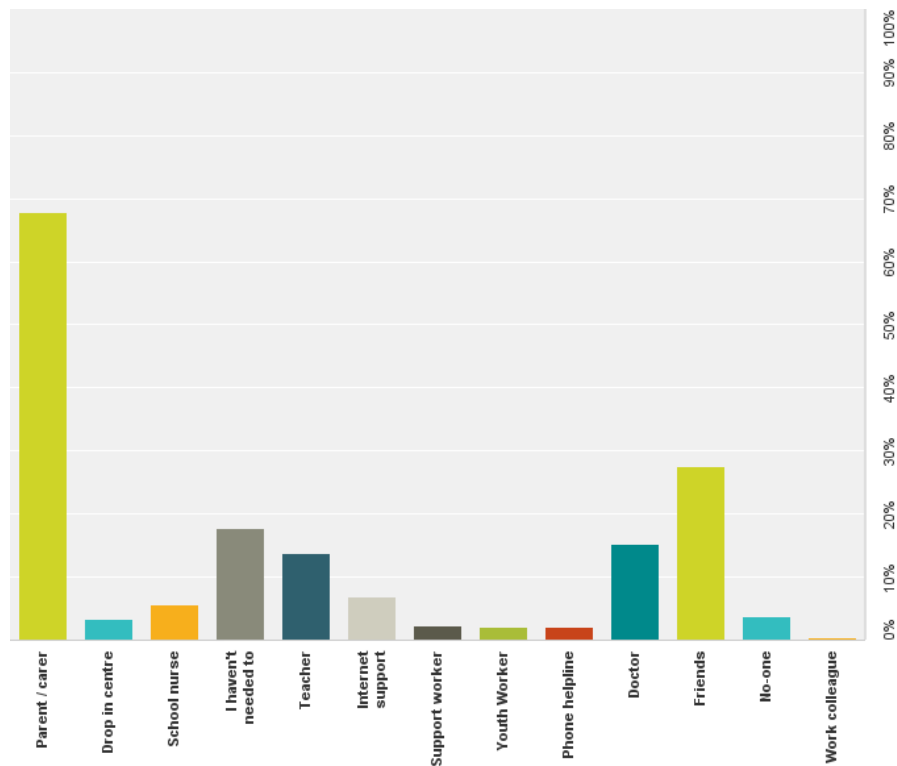
29% said Sleeping problems

29% said Feeling lonely

29% said None of these

If you talked to someone, where did you go for support? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,085 Skipped: 75



68% Parent or Carer

3% Drop in centre

2% Youth worker

6% School nurse

2% Phone helpline

18% I haven't needed to

15% Doctor

14% Teacher

28% Friends

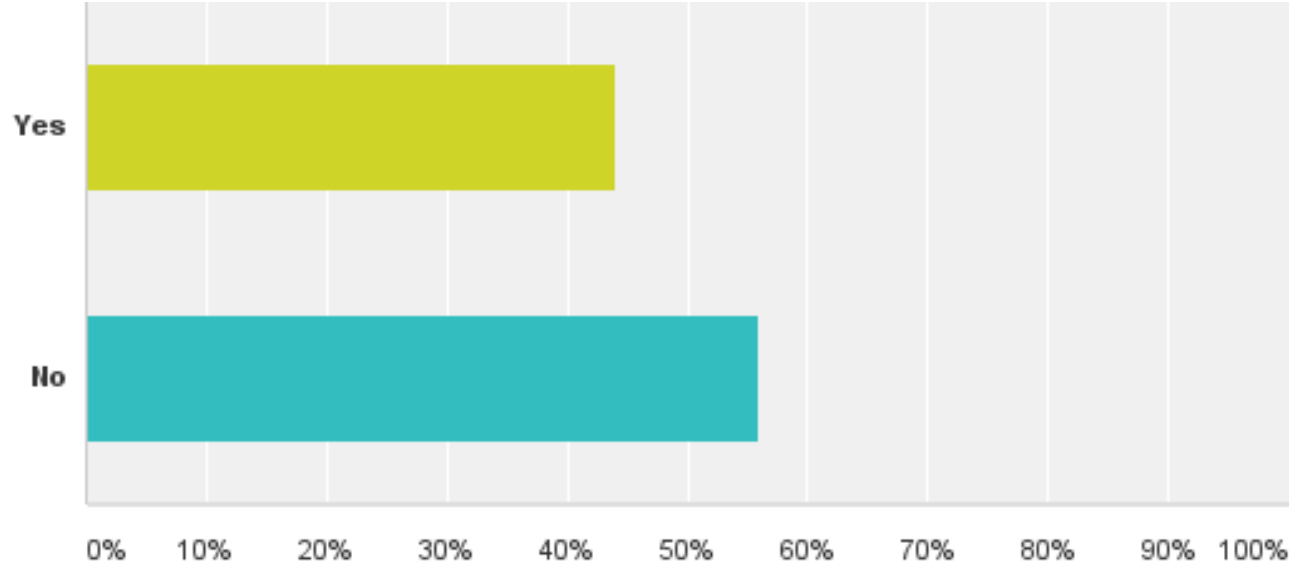
7% Internet support

4% No one

2% Support worker

Have you or someone who you know ever been affected by self harm?

Answered: 1,105 Skipped: 55

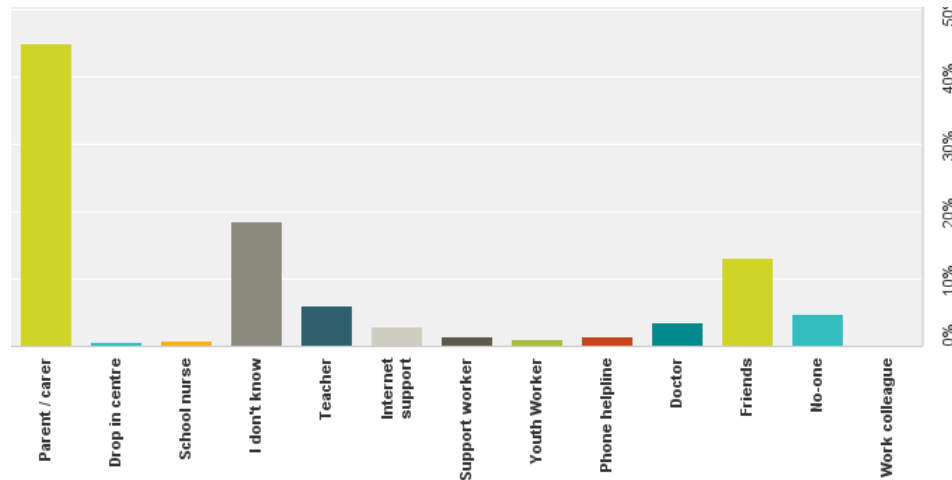


44% Yes

55% No

If you or someone you know had been affected by self harm, where would be the first place you would go for information or support?

Answered: 967 Skipped: 193



45% said: Parent or Carer

1% Drop in centre

1% Youth worker

1% School nurse

2% Phone helpline

19% I don't know

4% Doctor

6% Teacher

13% Friends

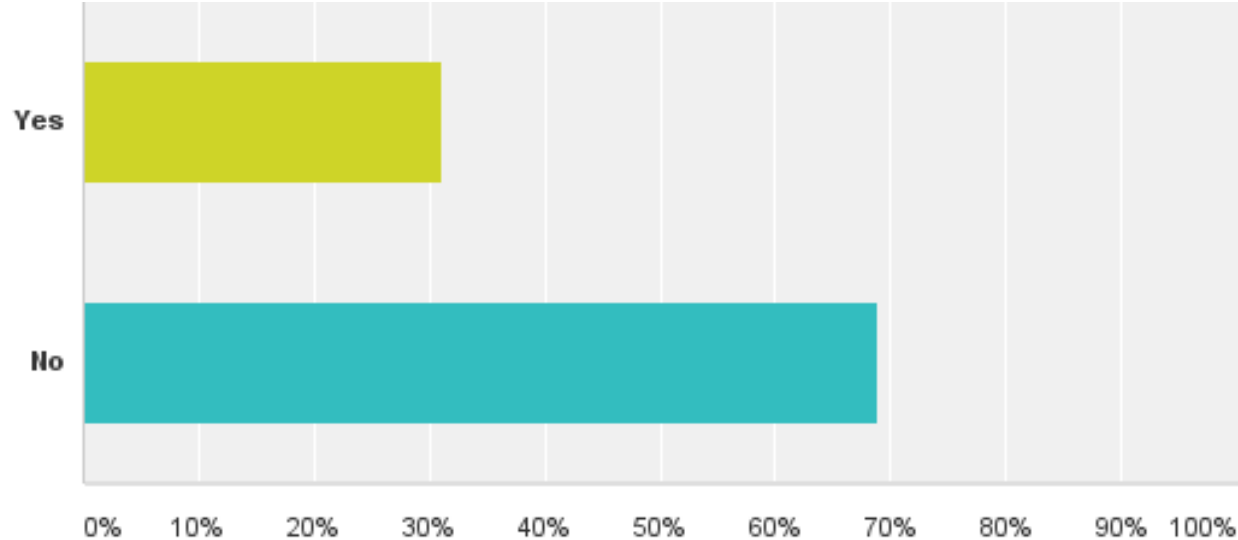
3% Internet support

5% No one

1% Support worker

Have you or someone who you know ever been affected by an eating disorder?

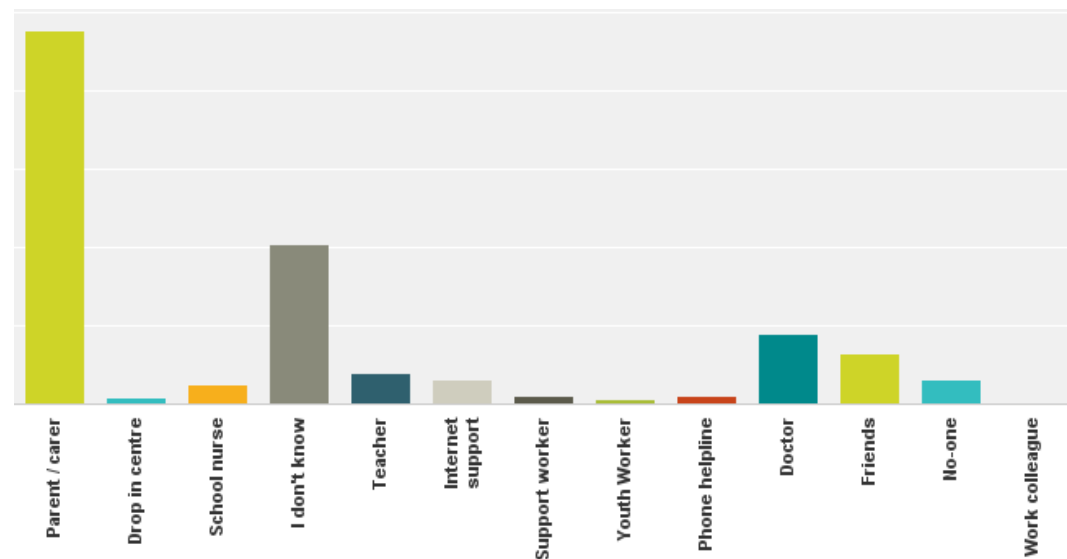
Answered: 1,080 Skipped: 80



31% Yes
69% No

If you or someone you know had been affected by an eating disorder, where would be the first place you would go for information or support?

Answered: 955 Skipped: 205



48% Parent / Carer

1% Drop in centre

1% Youth worker

3% School nurse

1% Phone helpline

20% I don't know

9% Doctor

4% Teacher

6% Friends

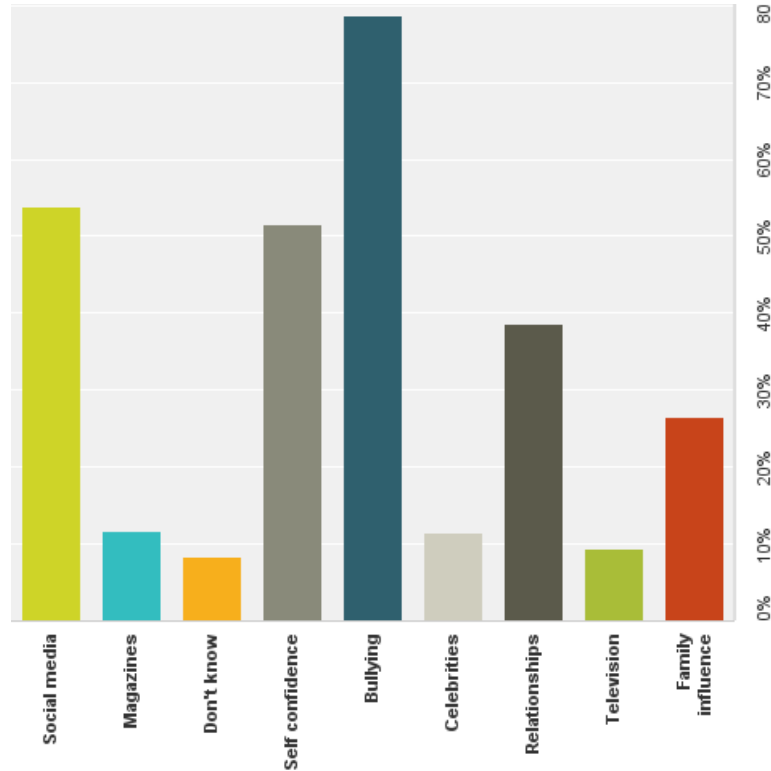
3% Internet support

3% No one

1% Support worker

What do you think the main issues that cause young people to self harm? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,093 Skipped: 67



54% Social media

11% Celebrities

12% Magazines

39% Relationships

8% Don't know

9% Television

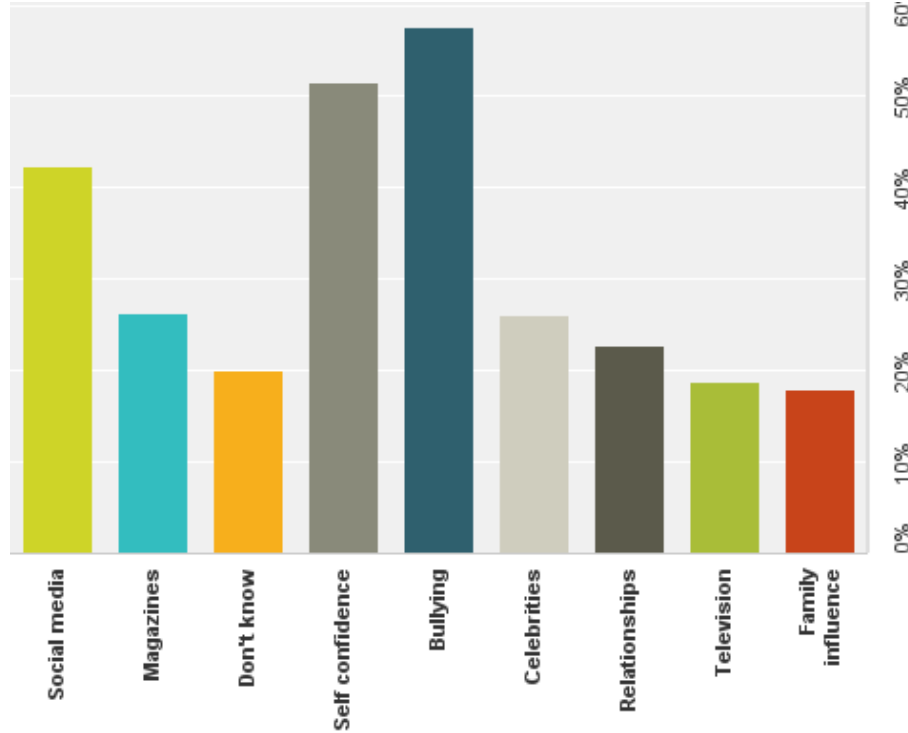
52% Self confidence

26% Family influence

79% Bullying

What do you think the main issues that cause young people to have eating disorders? (multi-choice)

Answered: 1,083 Skipped: 77



42% Social media

26% Magazines

20% Don't know

52% Self confidence

58% Bullying

26% Celebrities

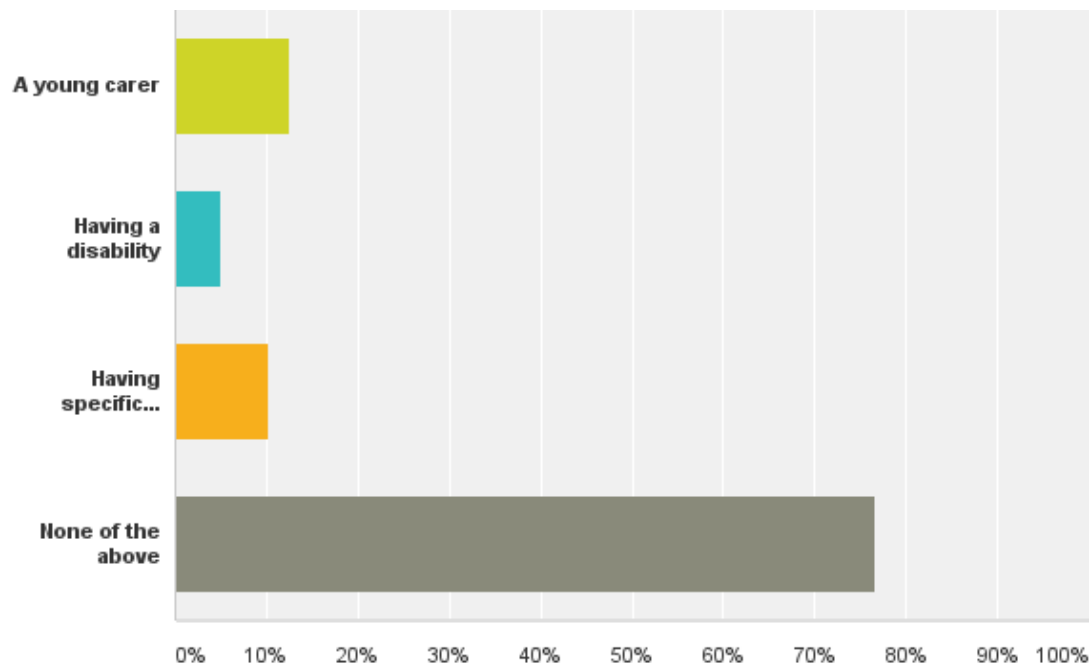
23% Relationships

19% Television

18% Family influence

I would describe myself as....

Answered: 1,082 Skipped: 78



13% A young carer

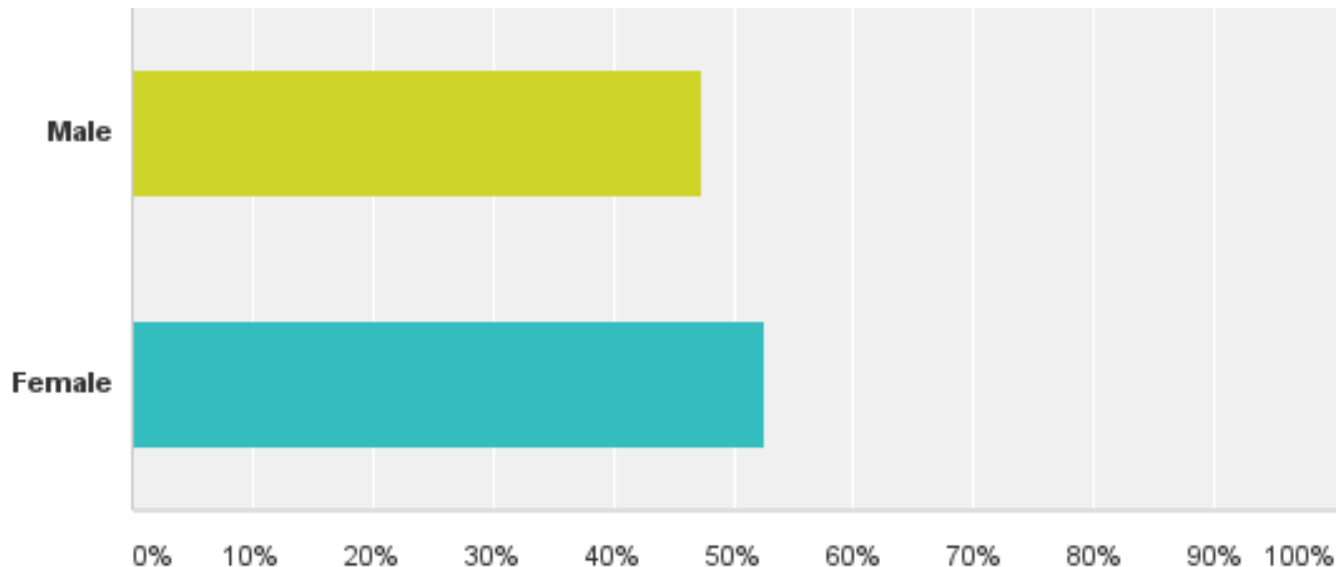
5% Having a disability

10% Having specific knowledge of a serious illness or health condition

77% None of these

47% male and 53% female took part

Answered: 1,087 Skipped: 73



Young people's #DearNHS tweets:

[#DearNHS](#) please reduce the stigma and stop people being scared of the words 'mental health' [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) not all young people use Facebook and Twitter [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) if we're worried about other young people in school we don't always know who to go to [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) did you know that some young people get information about their health from Wikipedia! -not a good idea.. [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) most young people would prefer to talk to someone face to face about their mental and general health [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) young people need help to understand their own emotions and mental health [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) 1 in 5 young people don't know who to talk to about eating disorders or self harm [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) 80% of young people think that bullying leads to self harm [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) bullying and social media lead more young people to have eating disorders than celebrities and magazines [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) Young people go to parents and carers for support - Where do parents and carers get their information from? [#youthvoicedudley](#)

[#DearNHS](#) There are lots of services to help but young people don't know what they are or how to use them [#youthvoicedudley](#)

“I think that the skills and information I have developed throughout both the NHS Youth Forum and Youth Health Researchers will really help me in the future. Whether I want to go into the healthcare industry or I want to be a brain surgeon, the skills such as commitment, communication and confidence will stay with me for the rest of my life and will have a huge positive impact on my future.”

Megan: Dudley Youth Health Researcher

An award winning project...

In 2016 the project was twice nationally recognised with:

- A diversity and Inclusion award at Healthwatch England's Network awards
- An innovation award at the British Youth Council 'Youth on Board' awards

What are the *secret ingredients to successful youth involvement... (*they're not so secret)

Genuinely listen to young people

Give them the power to steer and make decisions

Believe in them, trust them and be honest about what they can and can't influence

Team up with organisations with expert skills and knowledge

Feed their hungry minds and bellies!

Involve staff who are passionate about youth voice (young people know when officers don't want to be there)

Give them real meaningful experiences and opportunities to grow

It takes time to build trusted individual relationships and to support this kind of project properly

Be creative and think on your feet - projects evolve and young people's circumstances change

Identify enablers to open doors

Invest financially but if you can't - don't let it stop you!

Don't expect instant outcomes but do expect beautiful and sometimes unexpected things to happen along the journey!

What young people think, feel and believe now is all part of their life journey. Remember your teenage diary? Would you want it to be online now? It is important Protect their digital footprints.

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