

Community VISION

# Boys and young men's mental health consultation

All boys school consultation



Aonpreeya Petchatchua – Volunteern Voice Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Officer. June 2024

Introduction:

In line with the boys and young men's mental health survey undertaken at the same time, there were several focus groups held with the young people within an all-boys school to explore what they thought about boys and young men's mental health.

There was a total of 59 participants, divided into 4 separate classes, consulted over a time span of a week with hour long sessions each. The age range consisted of 13-15. The consultation was focused on the personal voices of the boys and young men regarding their own mental health.

Here are their responses:

x(n) = repeated statement

Question:	Response:
1) What do you know about mental health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It can change you into a different person</li><li>- Where your mental health is either good or bad x2</li><li>- Not a lot x5</li><li>- How your brain reacts x2</li><li>- Can affect your physical health x3</li><li>- Can affect your behaviour and actions and how you treat people x2</li><li>- Things you do in life can change mental health</li><li>- Just as important to your wellbeing as your physical health x4</li><li>- If you have good mental health, you can be open minded</li><li>- Can affect people differently</li><li>- Can affect social life/ relationships x3</li><li>- Can get worse</li><li>- Can affect people around you x2</li><li>- Suicide x2</li><li>- It needs to be looked after</li><li>- Can lead to addiction</li><li>- Can cause isolation</li><li>- Becoming more talked about</li><li>- What you feel on the inside x9</li><li>- How you deal with emotions or stress x6</li><li>- Can affect your productiveness</li><li>- Important x5</li><li>- It affects everyone</li><li>- Anxiety x 3</li><li>- Depression x4</li><li>- Emotional wellbeing x2</li><li>- Men often struggle to ask for help x 3</li><li>- A lot of people, younger people, struggle x2</li><li>- People often hide it</li></ul>
2) What do you think could affect your	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Childhood</li></ul>

<p>own mental health?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Substance Addiction/ addiction</li> <li>- Other People x7</li> <li>- Relationships x8 (breakups)</li> <li>- Stress x12</li> <li>- Mood</li> <li>- Events in life x8</li> <li>- ^^^Things that happen to other people</li> <li>- Negative environment</li> <li>- Work/school x3</li> <li>- Bullying x7</li> <li>- Isolation x3</li> <li>- Loneliness x2</li> <li>- Familyx9 (siblingsx2)</li> <li>- Friends x4</li> <li>- Loss of loved ones/ death/ grief x11</li> <li>- Yourself/ insecurities x5</li> <li>- Anxiety x3</li> <li>- Disagreements/ arguments x4</li> <li>- Teachers</li> <li>- Horrible words/ mean words/ comments x 2</li> <li>- Things going wrong x2</li> <li>- Social media</li> <li>- Strong emotions</li> <li>- Lack of sleep</li> <li>- Eating disorders</li> <li>- Losing a match in sports event</li> </ul>
<p>3) How do you manage your own mental health to keep yourself well?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk to people x5</li> <li>- Play football x2</li> <li>- Don't be around people</li> <li>- Talk to family x2</li> <li>- Hang out with friends</li> <li>- Do things I enjoy/ hobbies x10</li> <li>- It seems to regulate itself</li> <li>- Be with people I enjoy being around</li> <li>- Go out with mates and have a talk</li> <li>- Socialise x6</li> <li>- Sleep x4</li> <li>- Play games x4</li> <li>- Watch movies</li> <li>- relax</li> <li>- Play sport x9</li> <li>- Fishing</li> <li>- Avoid conflict</li> <li>- Take a break</li> <li>- Keep to myself</li> <li>- Listen to music x12</li> <li>- Bike ride x2</li> <li>- Build Lego</li> </ul>
<p>4) When you're feeling down or upset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isolate</li> </ul>

<p>what do you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sleep x8</li> <li>- Talk to someone about it x12</li> <li>- Just try and stay happy x2</li> <li>- Go on my phone</li> <li>- Play video games x7</li> <li>- Deflect/ avoid emotions</li> <li>- Do things I enjoy x5</li> <li>- Relax/ do something relaxing x3</li> <li>- Hang out with friends x7</li> <li>- Hang out with family x3</li> <li>- Play football x3</li> <li>- Think through the problem</li> <li>- Listen to music x7</li> <li>- Do an enjoyable exercise</li> <li>- Nothing</li> <li>- Play sport x5</li> <li>- Socialise</li> <li>- Get more active</li> <li>- Distract myself</li> <li>- Build lego</li> </ul>
<p>5) What do you do if you're worried about your mental health?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would think about it</li> <li>- Speak to friends x6</li> <li>- Talk to trusted person x8</li> <li>- Sleep x3</li> <li>- Tell family x8</li> <li>- Tell my mum x5</li> <li>- Tell my brother</li> <li>- Talk to someone x20</li> <li>- Seek help</li> <li>- Think about how to fix it</li> <li>- Never have x3</li> <li>- Don't tell anyone</li> <li>- nothing x4</li> <li>- worry about it later</li> </ul>
<p>6) Do you think boys and young men are comfortable sharing their emotions? If not, why do you think that is?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No because their confidence about speaking is very low</li> <li>- Sometimes</li> <li>- No because there is a stigma x7</li> <li>- No, you have to be struggling</li> <li>- No, they'll get made fun of x2</li> <li>- Depends on the person x3</li> <li>- No x10</li> <li>- Yes x2</li> <li>- Maybe</li> <li>- Mostly</li> <li>- Men need to be strong and can't cry about it x4</li> <li>- Embarrassing to talk about x5</li> </ul>
<p>7) How do you feel you are supported to look after your mental health?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My parents are here to support me x2</li> <li>- I don't know x2</li> <li>- I'm not</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being brought up to be emotionally intelligent</li> <li>- Family x6</li> <li>- Friends x4</li> <li>- There are resources in place and people to talk to</li> <li>- School x2</li> <li>- Idk where to go if you're feeling rubbish</li> <li>- I see that there is lots of places you can fall back on when you're struggling</li> <li>- Yes x4</li> <li>- Don't need support</li> </ul>
8) Have you had support with your mental health? If so, what did it look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not really</li> <li>- Support from family x3</li> <li>- ADHD test</li> <li>- Yes, support from school every week</li> <li>- Anger management</li> <li>- Counselling x2</li> <li>- No x14</li> <li>- I haven't needed it</li> <li>- Talk to school x2</li> <li>- Yes x3</li> </ul>
9) How do you interact with your friends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking x13</li> <li>- Play dnd watch starwars</li> <li>- By having fun together</li> <li>- Taking walks</li> <li>- Hanging out in school</li> <li>- Texting x3</li> <li>- In person or on the phone x2</li> <li>- Go play outdoors</li> <li>- Playing football</li> <li>- Banter/jokes/humour x2</li> <li>- Video games x2</li> <li>- Mess about</li> <li>- Playfight x2</li> <li>- With respect</li> </ul>
10) Do you feel like there is a stigma around boys and young men's mental health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes and no</li> <li>- Yes x21</li> <li>- No x3</li> <li>- A bit</li> </ul>
11) Do you feel that boys and young men's mental health is talked about enough in schools and other youth settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I don't know</li> <li>- Not sure</li> <li>- Not being talked about enough, due to lack of confidence</li> <li>- Excessively, but unhelpful</li> <li>- Yes x11</li> <li>- Yes, but only in school</li> <li>- It depends</li> <li>- It's talked about</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No x4</li><li>- Like a 50/50</li></ul>
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What the boys and young men came up with to improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing:

- Change exam approaches/ revision styles – as there was a collective agreement of there being too much pressure being placed on them during exam times
- Normalise speaking about mental health and emotional wellbeing
- More talks and events over summer, where someone could come talk (an older man) about his life experiences and struggles about mental health
- More walk in sessions with Dave
- Meet with people, and have group support sessions for boys
- Have more short videos
- Have more simple posters in more public spaces
- Have more assemblies with professionals/ sponsors
- More drop down days – yoga, fun activities for regulating emotions and mental health
- More advertising through typical media and social media

Conclusion:

Ultimately, the boys were very interactive and engaged with the written questions, however during discussions they were more withdrawn. It may be important to note that there are many repeated statements throughout different answer sheets, which may allude to the boys bouncing answers off each other. The boys were interested in change, improvements and progress regarding their mental health and the resources surrounding it. However, some carry a mindset of men are not allowed to feel emotions, and a majority use avoidance techniques and ignore their emotions to feel something better altogether.