

People in Partnership



Young Men's
Mental Health

Time to Change 'Time to Talk Day'
8 February 2019



Background

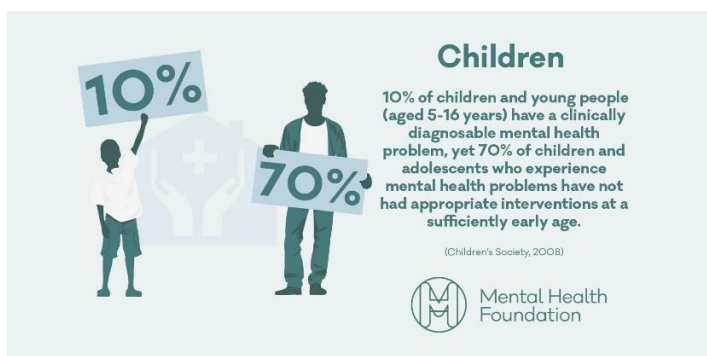
People in Partnership wants everybody with mental health challenges, their families and carers, to have the opportunity to help shape the experience and quality of health support and provision across Hastings, Rother, Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford.

We work alongside the community to involve them in the design and delivery of services (across primary care, secondary care, crisis and acute care)

We also work with mental health providers and organisations, supporting them to engage with their local communities to develop support tailored to the needs of the local area.

In September 2017 we¹ worked alongside Heath Watch and Sussex Coast College to help identify what matters to young people in the local area, particularly around mental health provision.

What came from this was that many young people are reluctant to talk about their own mental health due to fear of judgement and stigma.



Additionally, that many were unaware of local services or reluctant to engage in services due to, what they felt were, negative attachments that came from accessing mental health support.

Following on from this in February 2018, Peers in Partnership, Southdown's East Sussex Mental Health Recovery Services, Health Watch, Sussex Coast College and other local partners hosted a 'Time to Talk' Event at the college's Station Plaza and Ore Valley Campuses.

The aim was to encourage young people to talk about their mental health and to signpost them to relevant services. Peers in Partnership also gathered feedback on learner's perception of mental health.



¹ Formerly Peers in Partnership

Following on from the success of this event, People in Partnership wanted to take this further and in line with the theme of 2018's 'World Mental Health Day', we organised an event which recognised '**Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World**'. Together with community partners and organisations we came together with learners from the college to discuss some of the issues that young people face today

<https://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/mental-health-recovery/people-partnership-east-sussex>

Evaluating this event with the college group and partners, we identified that in particular, a demographic that we needed to reach was young men. With suicide being one of the leading causes of death for young men ²and the reluctance to seek support, we worked with the East Sussex College group to coordinate events at their Ore Valley Campus and their Eastbourne Campus. These sites in particular have a high ratio of male learners.

With '**Time to Change/Time to Talk Day**' approaching we thought it apt that we raise awareness of the importance to talk about your mental health, but in particular have meaningful conversations with young men on that day.



Our information and findings will be fed back to key partners to enable them to evaluate and identify stronger support and provision for young people. Additionally, following this event, we will continue these important conversations breaking down barriers, reducing stigma and raising awareness of key and under-represented groups.

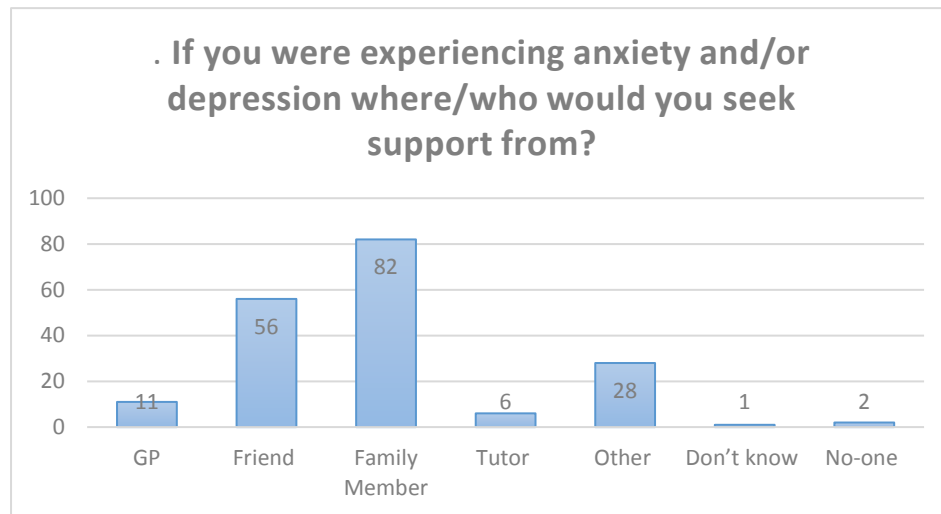
'Mental health problems affect one in four of us, yet people are still afraid to talk about it. Time to Talk Day encourages everyone to talk about mental health.'

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/time-talk-day>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/mental-health-research-matters/2017/jan/20/12-statistics-to-get-you-thinking-about-mental-health-in-young-people>

Ore Valley Campus – Questionnaire Results

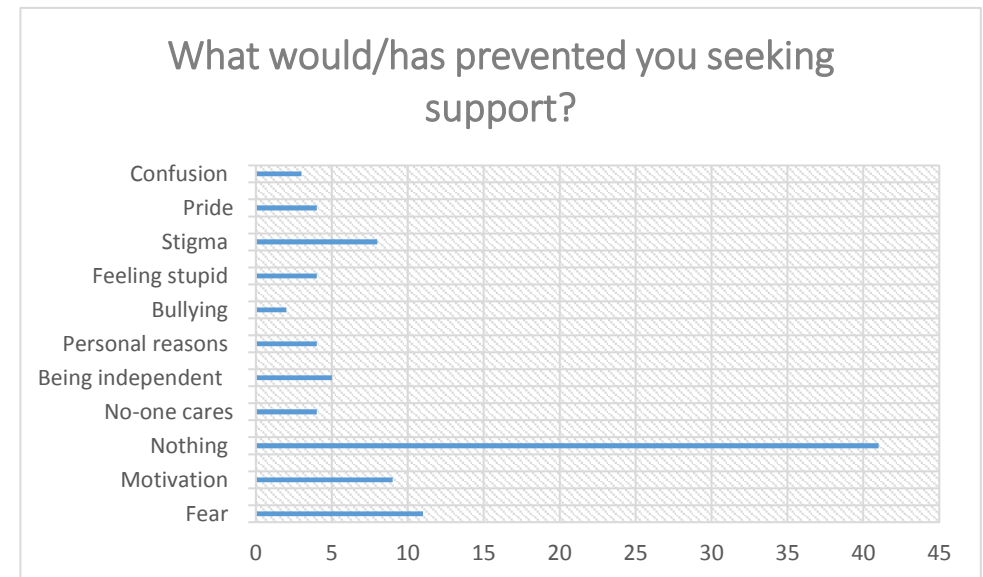
We asked 159 young men to complete questionnaire in relation to support networks, their health and well-being and coping strategies. Below are the results.



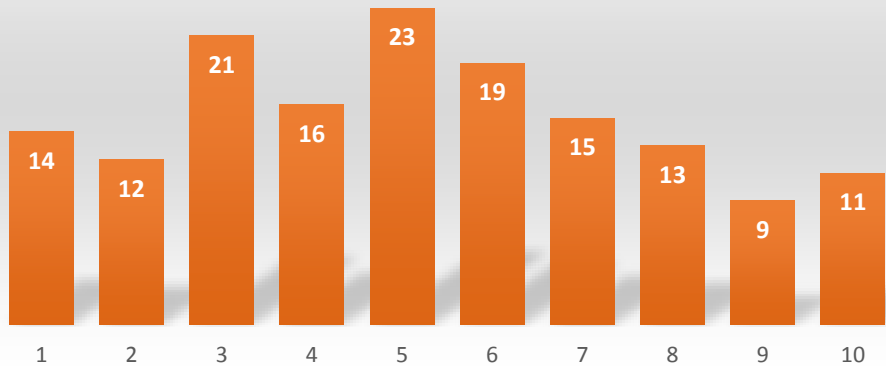
Most of the young men said they would speak to a **family member** or **friend** if they were experiencing anxiety or depression. However, very few indicated that they would speak to their **GP** or a **College tutor**.

Whilst it is encouraging that young men will open up about their mental health, this raises the question – if they were experiencing depression or anxiety, would they seek the relevant professional support and signposting needed and if not, why?

When asked what would/has prevented young male learners from seeking support it was encouraging that many answered that nothing would prevent them from seeking support for their mental health (41). However, the remaining 54 answers mainly indicated that there were barriers for them to seeking support e.g. pride, stigma, fear, motivation.



On a scale of 1-10 - how high would you rate your stress levels?



When asked what are the main cause of stress were for young men, the majority answered, **money, expectations and college.**

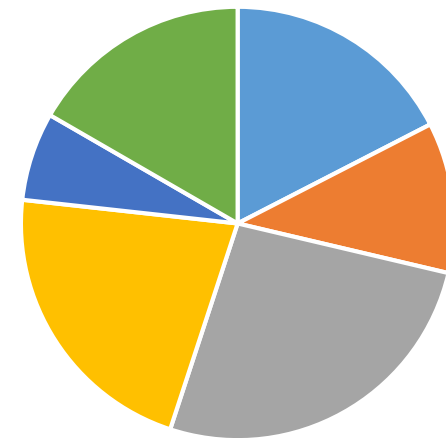
It could be suggested that there is a link there between social expectations for young men and the pressure to find work/earn money, particularly in an area with large pockets of deprivation.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/men-and-mental-health>

The stress levels of the young male learners were varied, with most indicating that they were experiencing moderate levels of stress. This is encouraging as high levels of stress can be linked to poor mental health.

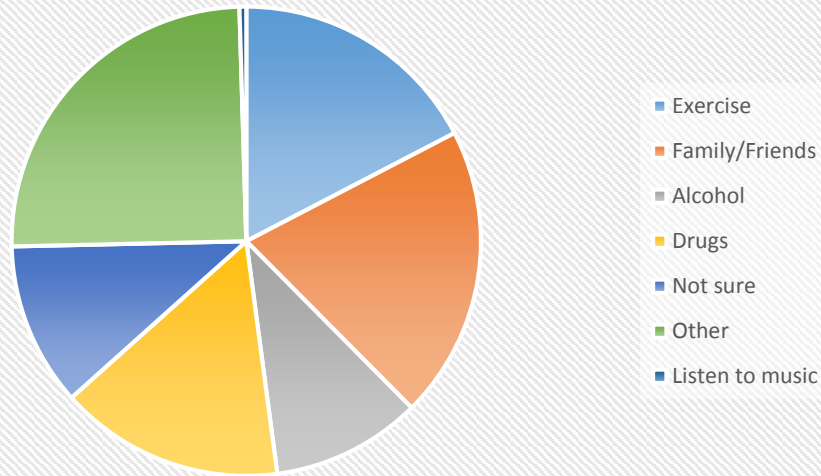
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-45824598>

What do you feel is the main cause of stress for individuals your age?



■ College ■ Family ■ Money ■ Expectations ■ Friends ■ Other

How do you generally cope with/manage stress?



When asked how they would generally manage/cope with stress, a large percentage of male learners indicated that they would use **positive coping strategies** such as exercise and seeking support from friends and family.

However, 22 learners indicated they would **drink alcohol**, and 33 indicated they would use **drugs**.

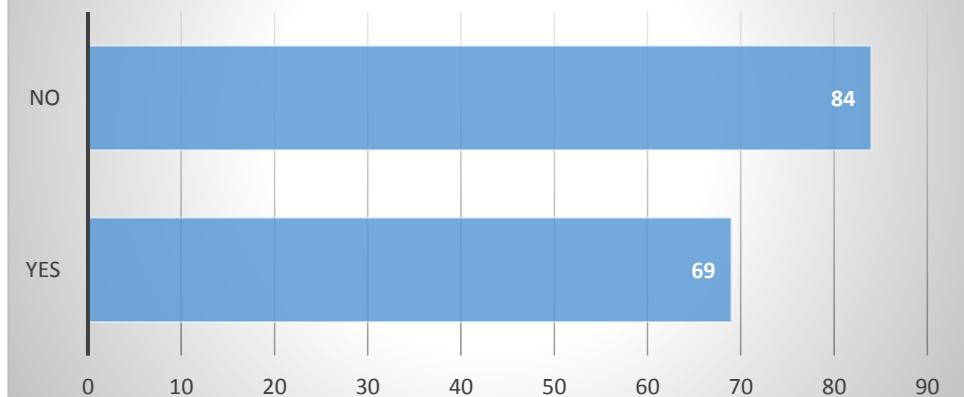
53 learners ticked 'Other', however they did not indicate what this coping mechanism was. It would be useful to explore this question further and identify whether the 'other' strategies were positive/negative.

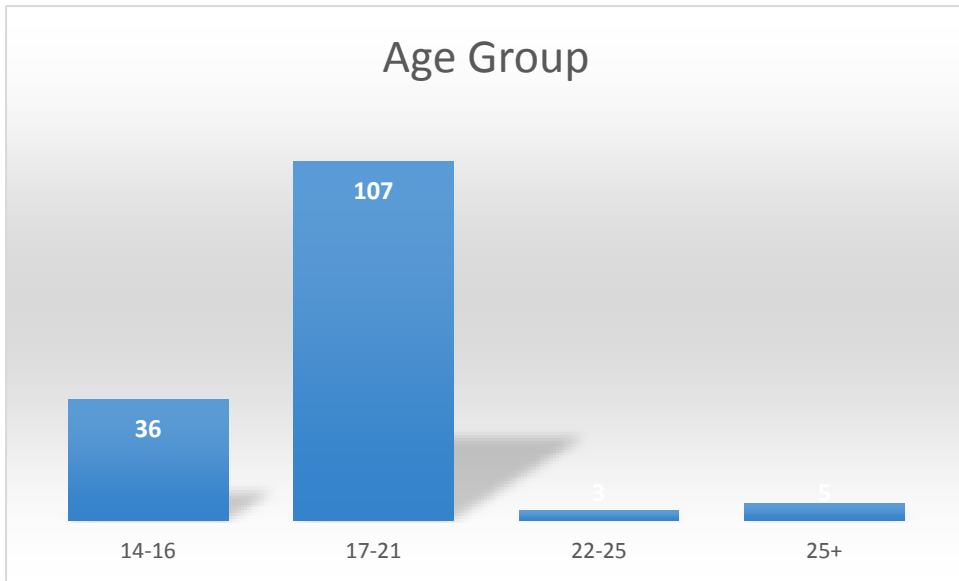
When asked if they cared for a family member with mental health challenges, **69 male learners said YES**.

Of the 153 learners that answered this, the response indicates that just under half are potentially young carers. This therefore poses the questions – do they identify as Young Carers and are they accessing support?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/young-carers-uk-numbers-rise-figures-support-family-social-care-benefits-community-a8177806.html>

Do you care for a family member who has mental health challenges?



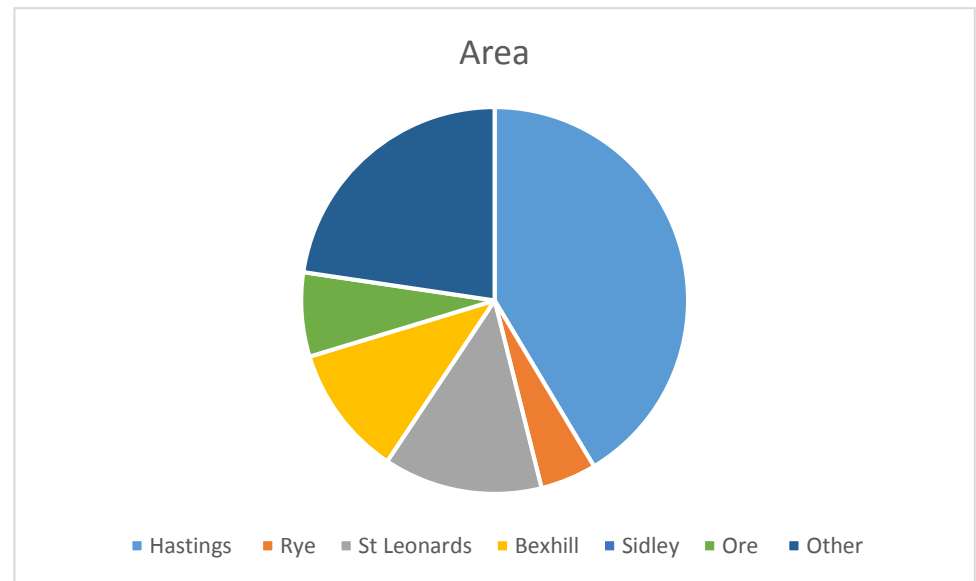


The young male learners involved in this research were mainly aged between **17-21 years old** and were from Hastings and surrounding areas.

Hastings is an area with high levels of social/economic disadvantage as well as high levels of mental health and substance misuse.

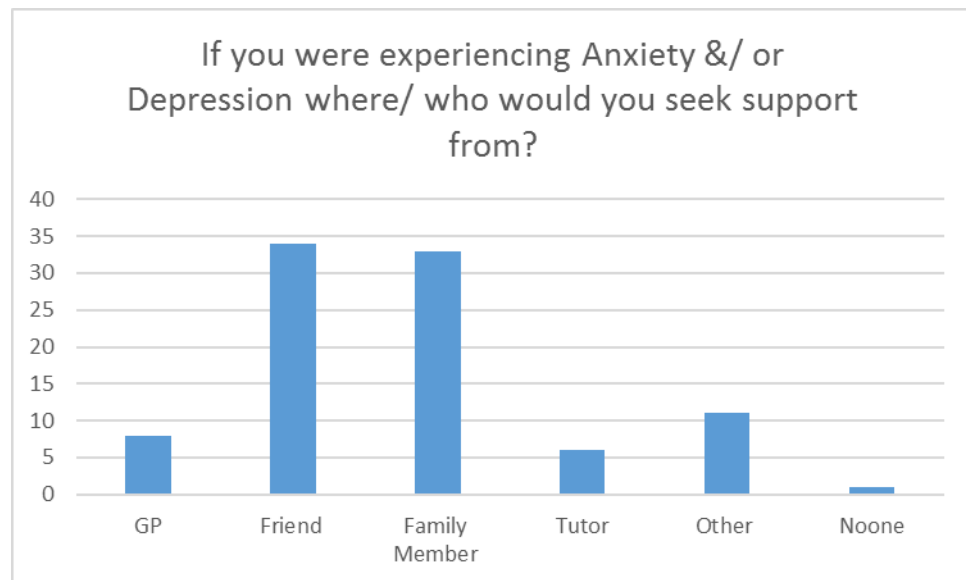
Reflecting on the answers for 'causes of stress' (money and expectations), and the barriers preventing young men seeking support, it could be suggested that that more focus needs to be placed on young men's perception of mental health but also on their goals/aspirations and how they can be supported to achieve them.

(Hastings Health Profile 2018)



Eastbourne Campus

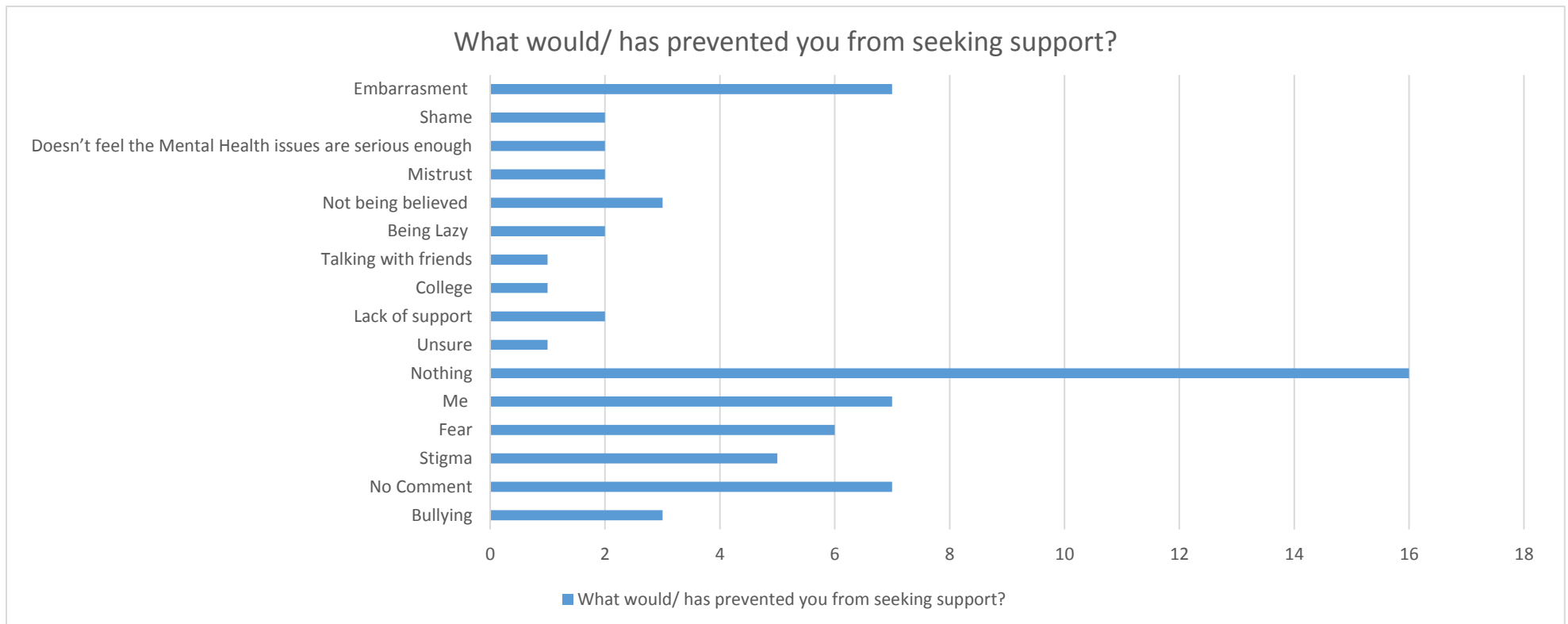
At the Eastbourne campus we asked 68 young people³ to complete our questionnaire in relation to support networks, their health and well-being and coping strategies. Below are the results.



The majority of learners who participated at the Eastbourne site stated that they would primarily turn to a **family member** or a **friend** if they were experiencing Anxiety and/ or Depression. This matches the findings of those captured from the Ore Valley Campus. It would be interesting to explore why many students choose not to seek medical support from their GP when experiencing mental health issues.

Some students stated that they would seek support from more than one source; we have accounted for this in our data collection.

³ A small percentage of the results we received were from girls.



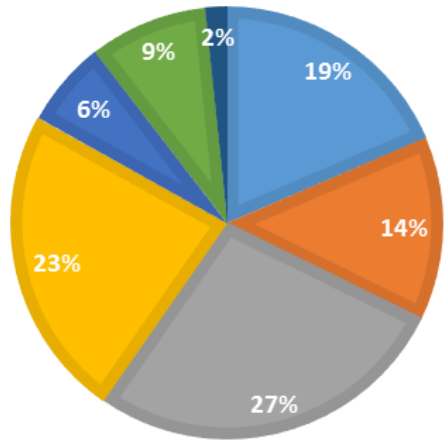
A high volume of respondents at the Eastbourne campus stated that **nothing** would prevent them from seeking support if they were or had ever experience mental health issues.

It could be argued that a large number of students were reluctant to seek support as a result of their personal understanding of how others perceived mental health (as being a minor issue or related to undesirable behaviors/ individuals). The results would suggest that there is still progress to be made in terms of dispelling the negative stigma relating to ill mental health because young people feel embarrassment and shame as barriers to receiving support. In addition some students made comments related to the question above;

- 'I don't talk about my emotions'
- '[I] can't talk openly about what's wrong'
- '[I] didn't want to admit something was wrong'

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF STRESS FOR INDIVIDUALS YOUR AGE?

■ College ■ Family ■ Money ■ Expectations ■ Friends ■ Other ■ All



In addition to the responses given, pictured to the left; one learner stated that they felt 'everything is changing, new and unknown'.

Money and expectations were identified as the predominant causes of stress for young people. This may reflect the statistics on those aged 16- 24 receiving Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) & Universal Credit (2017-19) which are higher in number in Eastbourne compared to Lewes, Rother & Wealden (East Sussex in Figures, 2019) but lower than in Hastings⁴. In addition it could be argued that young men particularly feel pressure to earn and support a family as a result of historic social values depicting the male being the primary breadwinner of the household.

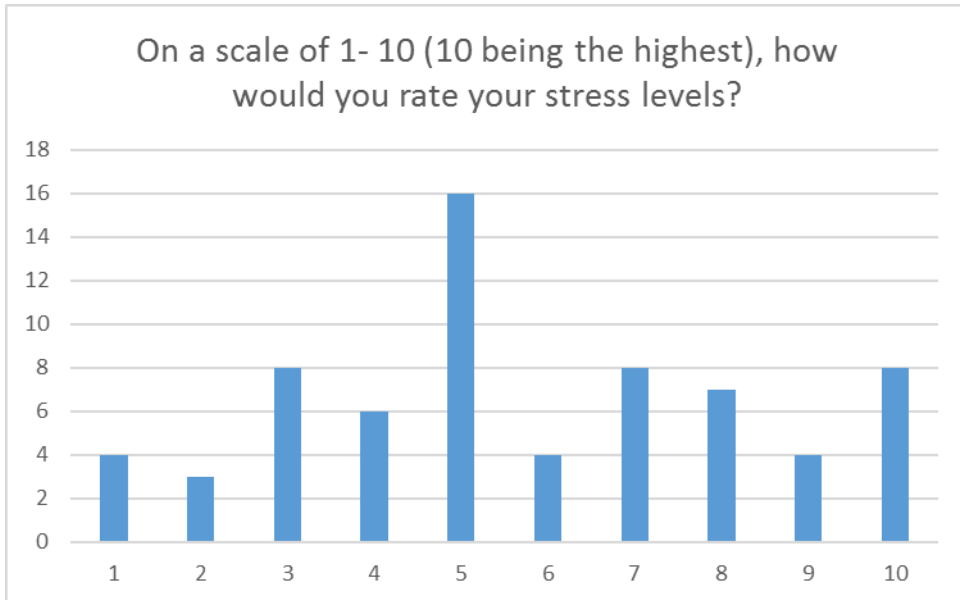
There may also be a correlation between young people identifying primary causes of stress as a result of financial concerns and their role as a Carer.

In Eastbourne we identified that 35% of participants were Carers of those with mental health issues. You cannot claim for Carers Allowance until you are aged 16+, out of full time education and earning less than £120 per week (after deductions); potentially this means that the 24 students who participated in our survey (Eastbourne), identifying themselves as Carers do not receive financial support for their Caring role (Carers UK, 2014⁵).

Some participants could not identify one single main issue for the levels of stress they themselves and their peers experienced. We have recognised this in the collection of our data and accounted for multiple answer responses.

⁴ [East Sussex in Figures](#)

⁵ [Carers Allowance](#)



As at the Ore Valley campus, we found that the majority of students at Eastbourne would rate their stress levels at a 5.

More students rated their stress levels at a 10 rather than a 1. Stress levels could fluctuate over time so it would be interesting to explore whether students are less stressed during the Summer where they have time off in which to work/ relax.

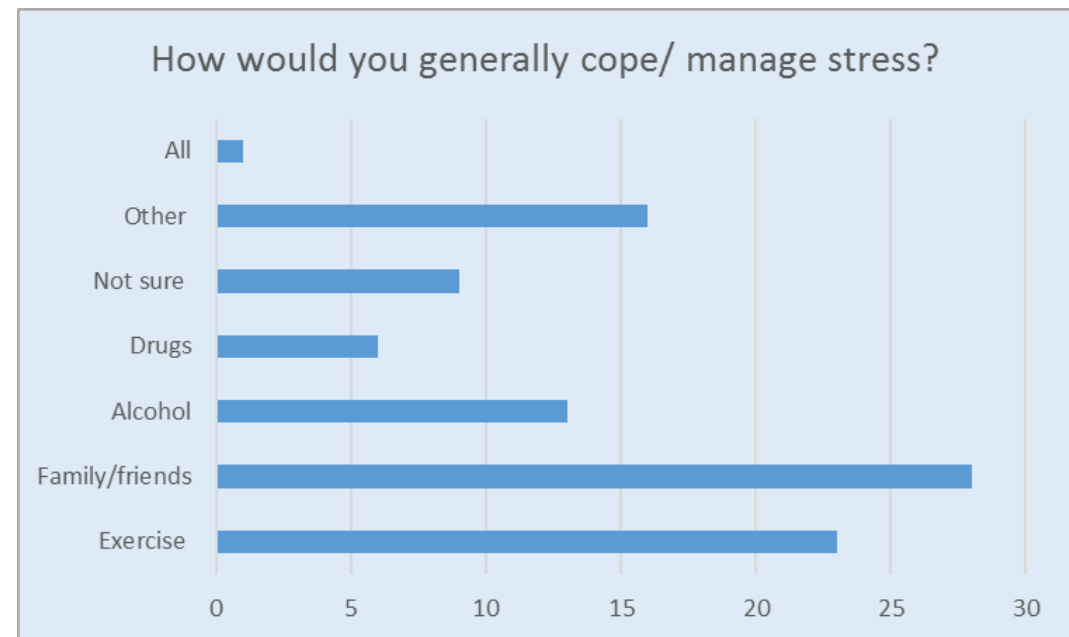
Some learners identified that they would use multiple sources of support to manage and cope with stress which we have accounted for in our data.

The majority of learners would turn to their **family/ friends** for support followed by exercise. It is encouraging that young people are calling upon positive and healthy coping mechanisms.

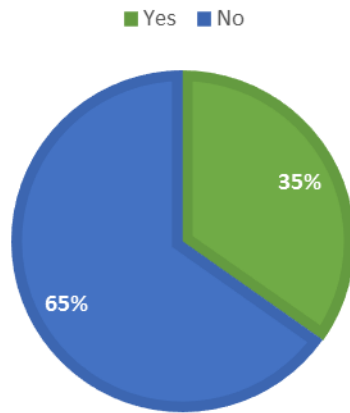
There was, however an indication that young male learners are also using drugs/alcohol to help manage stress, which in turn could have a negative impact on their health, well-being and achievement.

‘One in four adults will experience a mental illness at some point each year in the UK. This ranges from anxiety and depression to alcohol dependence, substance misuse and psychosis.’

<https://www.theguardian.com/mental-health-research-matters/2017/jan/20/12-statistics-to-get-you-thinking-about-mental-health-in-young-people>



DO YOU CARE FOR A FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES?

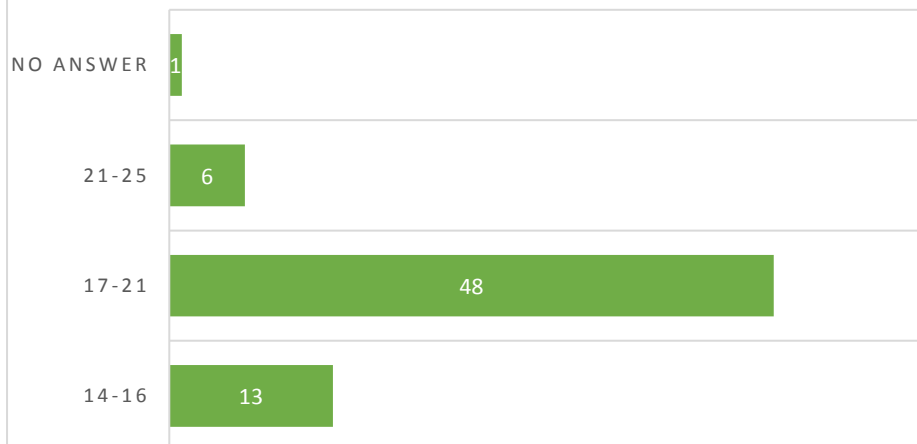


35% of the 68 students who participated in our survey at Eastbourne identified themselves as Carers; of this 35%, over half lived in Eastbourne (others resided in Hailsham, Willingdon, Lewes, Bexhill and Other).

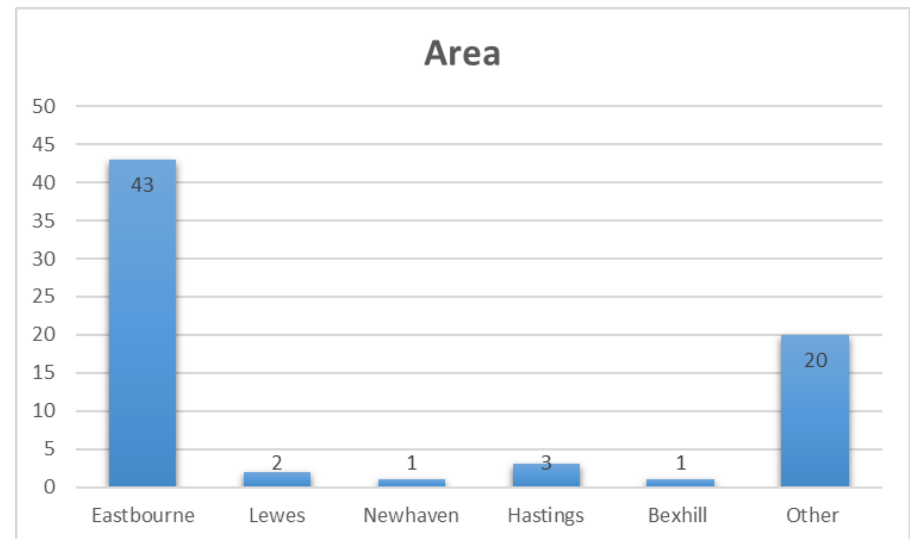
It's important to note that we were only asking students if they cared for someone with a mental health challenge and not if they identified themselves as a Carer. There may well be more students who are carers but don't identify themselves as so or those who care for someone with other issues aside from mental health challenges.

48 of the 68 participants we asked were aged between 17 & 21 years. A large percentage of those asked were from Eastbourne.

AGE GROUP



Area



Moving forward

People in Partnership would like to build on the Time to Talk Event, working with partners to build a strong Network for young people, professionals and parents/carers with local communities.

Feedback from the event will be reported back to Commissioners, partners and stakeholders to ensure key themes, information and recommendations are noted.

Southdown would like to continue its relationship with the East Sussex College group and work together to provide more support, pathway and links with external agencies so they can continue to support young people's mental health and ensure better outcomes and brighter futures.

We would also like to continue working with all the partners involved, particularly around key events/dates to continue to raise awareness around young people's mental health and to encourage open conversations with young people around their experiences and needs.



People in Partnership/Southdown would like to thank all those involved in the Time to Talk Day Event for their time and commitment. Particularly learners and young people from the college who provided us with honest and relevant feedback that will help to create positive change.

People in Partnership

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