

origen

SUPPORTING STUDENT WELLBEING: UNDERSTANDING THE PRESSURES SHAPING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

A/Prof Kate Filia



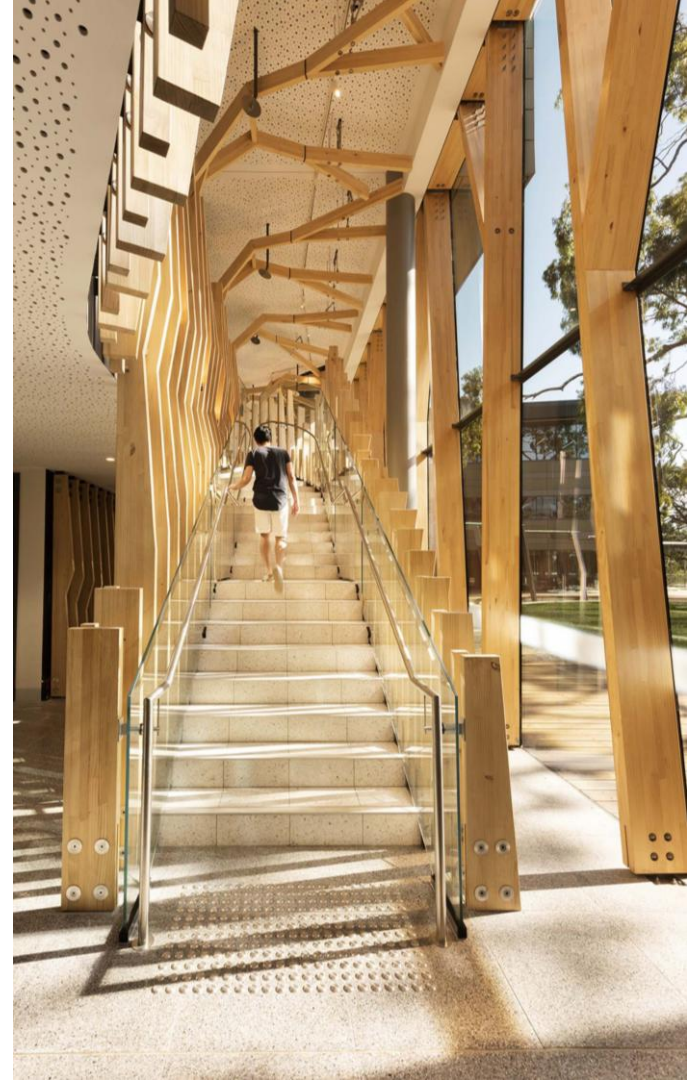
Orygen acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we are on and pays respect to their Elders past and present. Orygen recognises and respects their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationships to Country, which continue to be important to the First Nations people living today.



Artwork by Emrhan Tjapanangka Sultan, Luritja clan of the Western Desert
From the painting 'Honey ants and the rivers of hope to sharing knowledge', 2018

ORYGEN

- Australia's largest youth mental health institute
- Based in Melbourne, Australia – national and international reach
- Youth mental health services, research, education, training, consultancy, policy reform, advocacy
- Youth engagement, partnerships and governance – National Youth Advisory Council



SOCIAL & FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY RESEARCH TEAM



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- Low socioeconomic circumstances, financial instability, poverty
- Reduced access and/or engagement in education, negative school experiences
- Dysfunctional family settings, lack of familial support
- Housing instability, living in unsafe neighbourhoods
- Negative social interactions, poor sense of belonging, reduced opportunities for social participation
- Experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and stigma, lack of equity
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Difficulties in accessing and engaging in mental health care

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

YMH CRISIS: GLOBAL CONTEXT

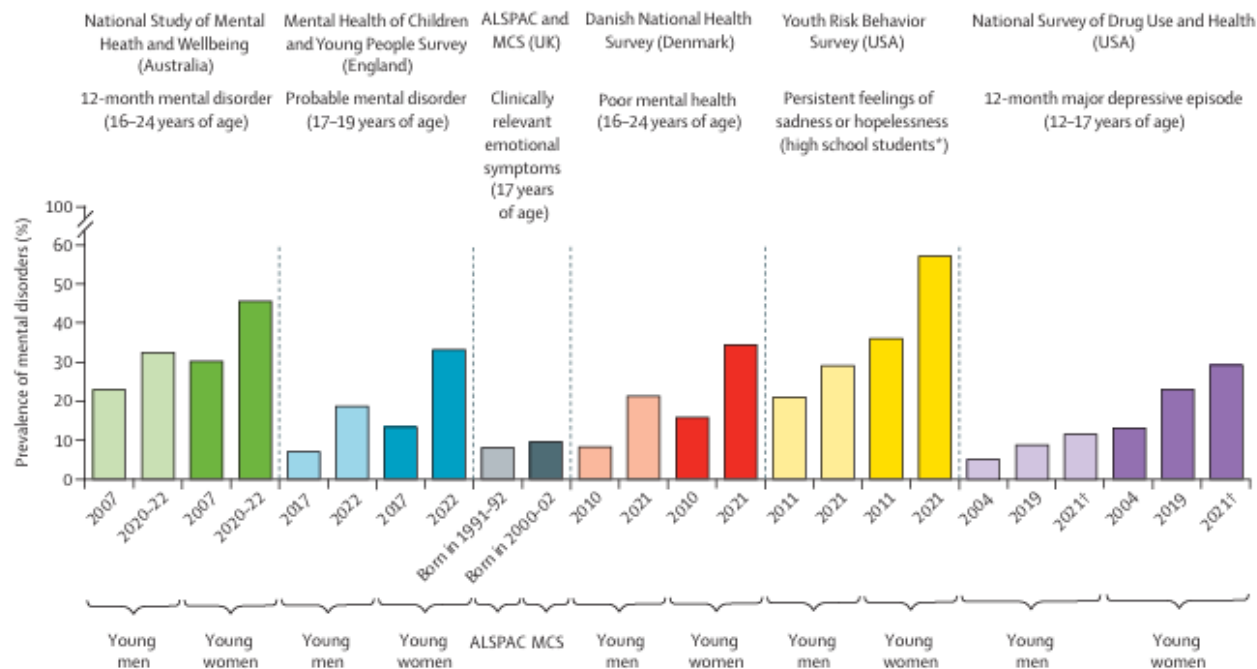
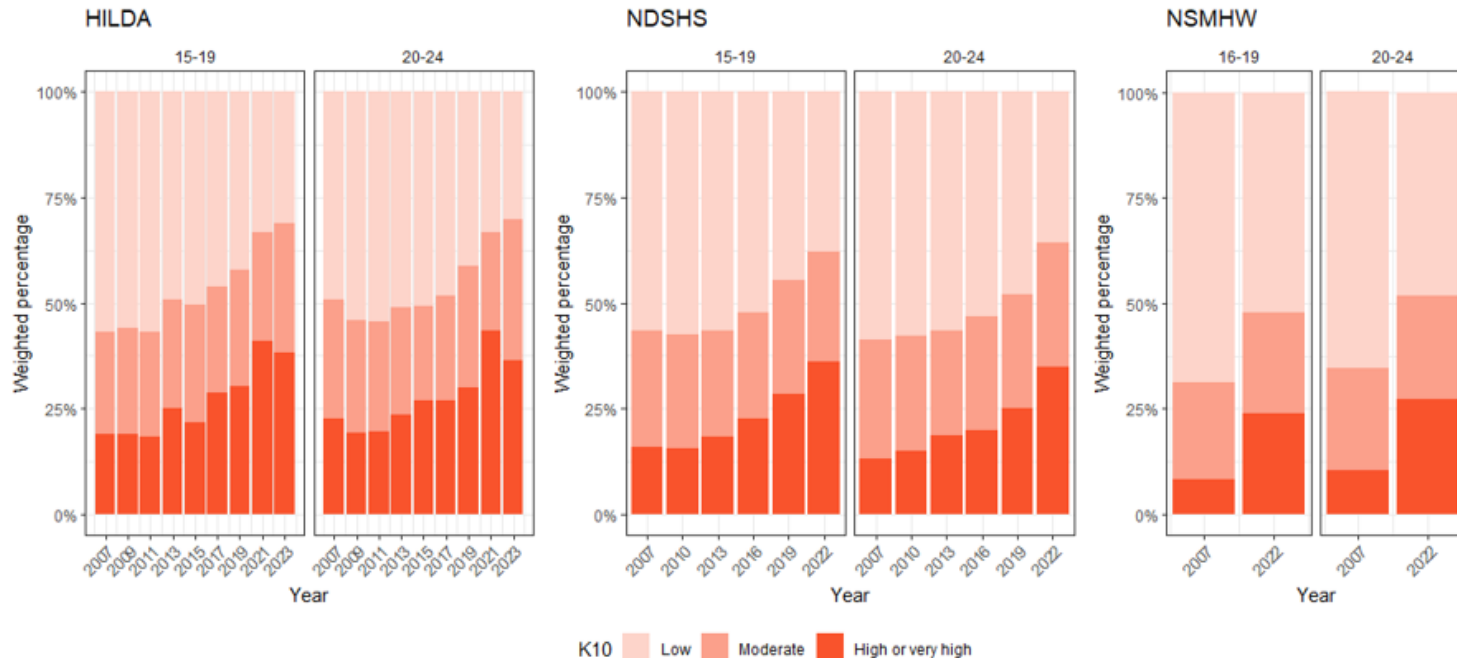


Figure 1: Youth mental health trends by country and sex

YMH CRISIS: AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Figure 1: K10 trend, weighted percentage of K10 categories among young people.



LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE



“I have no future to look forward to. I fear the collapse of civilisation. I fear natural disasters like those seen increasing in frequency and severity already. This is the reality we have been told is coming, and yet nobody seems to care.” Young person

BIG SHIFTS SHAPING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH (MEGATRENDS)



Rising psychological distress



Social and economic pressures



Technology and the digital world



Climate change and global uncertainty



Equity and inclusion

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**YOUTH
SURVEY**

ORYGEN & MISSION AUSTRALIA PARTNERSHIP

- Breaking down siloes between organisations with shared strategic priorities
- Share knowledge and expertise across our shared strategic priorities related to service provision and social justice, support for vulnerable communities, engaged research and education, and public impact; and
- Use this knowledge to inform policy decisions & best-practice service provision through evidence-based research

The word 'orygen' is written in a stylized, handwritten font in orange. The letters are connected and have a casual, sketchy feel.The logo for Mission Australia. The word 'MISSION' is in bold black uppercase letters. Below it, the word 'AUSTRALIA' is in bold black uppercase letters, with the 'U' highlighted in pink.

YOUTH SURVEY

- Conducted annually since 2002, of ~20,000 young people each year aged 15-19 years old from around the country
- Valuable resource, covering a range of topics including mental health and wellbeing, but also many related to the social determinants of health
- Provides an opportunity to understand how young people are faring at each point in time, their perspectives on current issues, and how they'd like them addressed
- Can identify different groups in need of additional or more targeted supports

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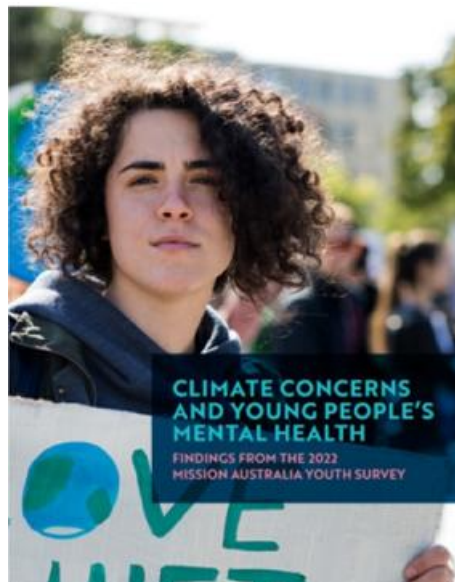
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MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA OVER THE YEARS ACCORDING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

	#1	#2	#3	#4
2024	Cost of living	Climate change & the environment	Violence, safety & crime	Mental health
2023	Climate change & the environment	Equity & discrimination	Cost of living	Mental health
2022	Climate change & the environment	Equity & discrimination	Mental health	COVID-19
2021	COVID-19	Climate change & the environment	Equity & discrimination	Mental health
2020	Equity & discrimination	COVID-19	Mental health	Climate change & the environment
2019	Mental health	Climate change & the environment	Equity & discrimination	Alcohol and drugs

LOOKING INTO THE CHALLENGES & ISSUES

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CURRENT CHALLENGES & ISSUES

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2026 REPORTS

- Continuing to address challenges & issues raised by young people &
- Topics of importance identified by analyses
 - Preparing for the future
 - Gender diverse young people

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STRENGTHS & POSITIVES

 **Education engagement:** 81% studying full time, 95% plan to finish Year 12

 **Future aspirations:** 61% plan for university, many plan jobs, travel, gap year

 **Employment:** 52% already in paid work, building skills & independence

 **Social connectedness:** 64% report friends (64%) and parents (59%) as main sources of support, 86% take part in extracurricular activities

 **Community engagement:** 51% proud of community, 39% volunteering

 **Wellbeing outlook:** 57% happy with life, 56% feel in control.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION & YMH (N=18,800)

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SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

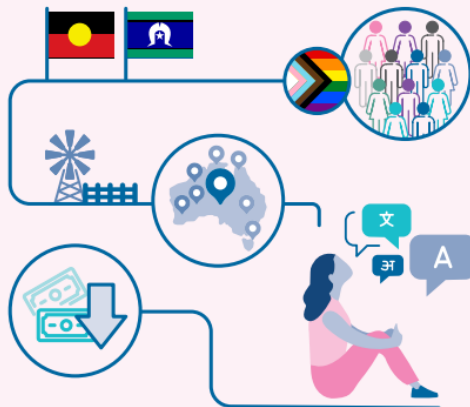


60% of young people experienced social exclusion in at least one domain

25% experienced social exclusion in multiple domains

Who is more likely to experience social exclusion?

- Gender diverse young people
- Indigenous young people
- Those living in regional or remote areas
- Young people who speak a language other than English
- Those living in locations of lower socioeconomic conditions



Four domains of social exclusion



39%
Edu-employment issues



23%
Financial hardships



18%
Relational difficulties



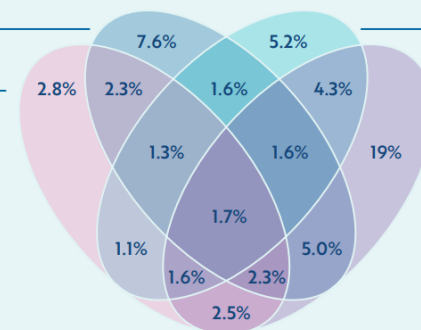
16%
Housing challenges

Financial hardships

Housing challenges

Relational difficulties

Edu-employment issues

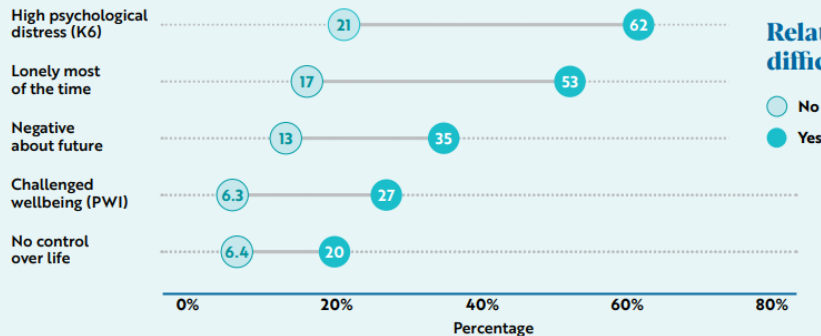


40%
Did not experience any social exclusion

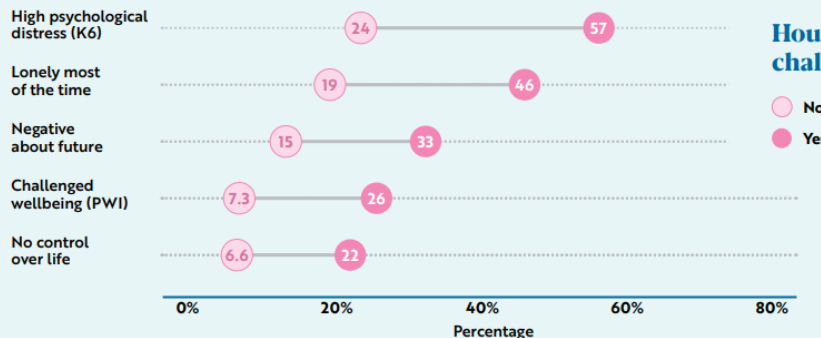
The proportions in the overlapping segments indicate young people experience social exclusion across all possible combinations of domains.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

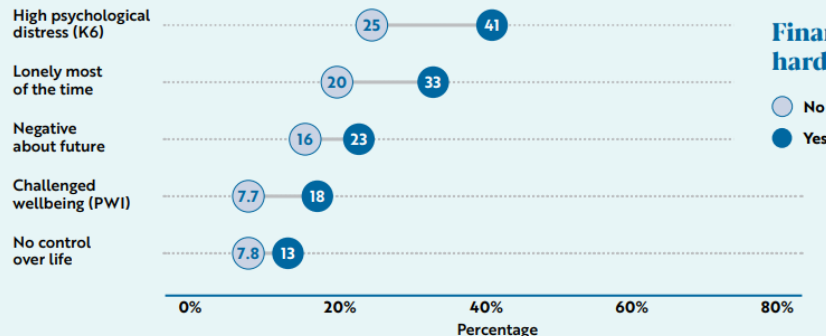
Relational difficulties



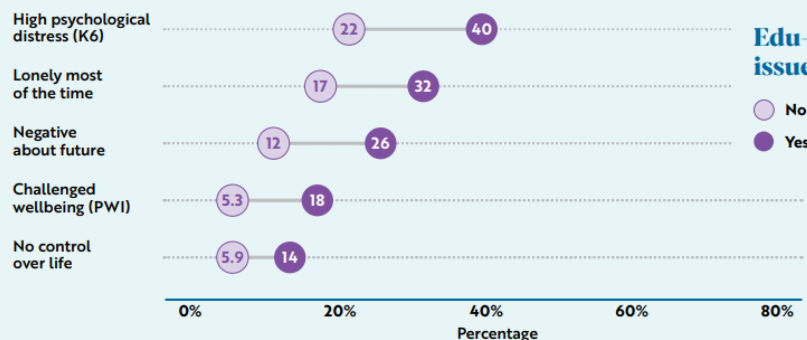
Housing challenges



Financial hardships



Edu-employment issues



HELP-SEEKING (N=9,743)

	Overall	Edu-employment issues	Financial hardships	Relational difficulties	Housing challenges
Needed support	53%	59%	65%	78%	78%
Sought support (of those who felt they needed it)	58%	54%	58%	52%	60%
Top 4 supports					
Health professionals	68%	69%	69%	77%	72%
Family	55%	50%	49%	45%	55%
Friends	47%	46%	47%	42%	47%
School	37%	36%	40%	42%	37%

- Differences in needing & receiving supports
- Slight differences in where supports were accessed (formal and informal sources)
- Less than one-fifth reported accessing MH supports online or via apps

BARRIERS TO MH SERVICES

	Overall	Edu-employment issues	Financial hardships	Relational difficulties	Housing challenges
Top 4 barriers to mental health services					
Stigma/shame	36%	37%	39%	49%	36%
Confidentiality concerns	34%	38%	40%	47%	34%
Cost	24%	27%	39%	34%	24%
Not knowing where to go	24%	27%	26%	33%	24%

PREFERENCES

	Overall	Edu-employment issues	Financial hardships	Relational difficulties	Housing challenges
Preferences for mental health supports					
Online	12%	13%	14%	15%	12%
Face-to-face	70%	69%	71%	71%	70%
Phone	7.5%	7.7%	9.2%	8.5%	7.5%

ADDRESSING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- Developing a toolkit to support social *inclusion* focused mental health care
- Number of new resources + reviews of evidence and expert insights into what programs work for young people and what services need to support social inclusion as a goal of mental health care
- Will aim to adapt this for school and community settings

FILIA SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURE (F-SIM16)

- Input from consumers, caregivers and family members
- Validated in younger and older populations
- Chinese, Turkish, Italian versions
- Research and clinical settings
- Inform policy recommendations
- Identify issues of health inequity

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD	
1. Do you have a stable place to live? As in, do you feel confident that you won't suddenly lose your housing or accommodation for any reason?	☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Is there something about your housing or accommodation that makes living there difficult?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Would you prefer to be living in a different area?	☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Do you feel that your neighbourhood has all the things that you might want or need? E.g., transport options, shops, community services like doctors, gyms or sporting clubs.	☐ Yes ☐ No
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICIPATION AND LIMITATIONS	
5. Do you have close friends who you talk to or see often - friends you feel like you can share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences with?	☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Have you often avoided activities that you might enjoy because you don't feel like socialising?	☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Has it been so long since you've taken part in anything socially that you wouldn't know where to start?	☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Have you avoided doing things with others because you often feel like you're being judged or treated unfairly?	☐ Yes ☐ No
EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION	
9. In the last two weeks, have you been working or studying? e.g., studying at school, TAFE or university OR working in a paid or unpaid role (like being a stay-at-home parent or caring for someone)? IF NO please skip Question 10.	☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Would you say that your overall work and/or school conditions are good? E.g., do you feel supported and free from bullying or harassment?	☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Do you find it hard to get or keep a job, or stay in school because of discrimination related to your mental or physical health?	☐ Yes ☐ No
12. Do you have a physical or mental health problem that makes it hard to do your job, get a job or complete your education or training?	☐ Yes ☐ No
FINANCES	
13. Do you (or your family if you still live at home) have enough money to pay for the basic things you need each day (such as food, healthcare, clothing, transportation, electricity)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
14. Do you have enough money to join any social activities that you want to?	☐ Yes ☐ No
15. Do you have enough money to go to any important events like weddings, funerals, or birthday celebrations that you want to?	☐ Yes ☐ No
16. Do you (or your family) have extra money saved to use in an emergency or when something unexpected happens (like getting sick, your car breaking down, or important home repairs)?	☐ Yes ☐ No

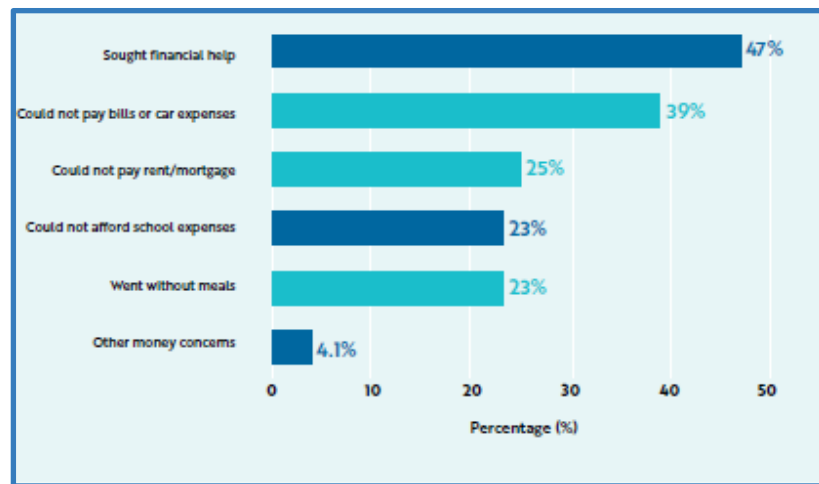
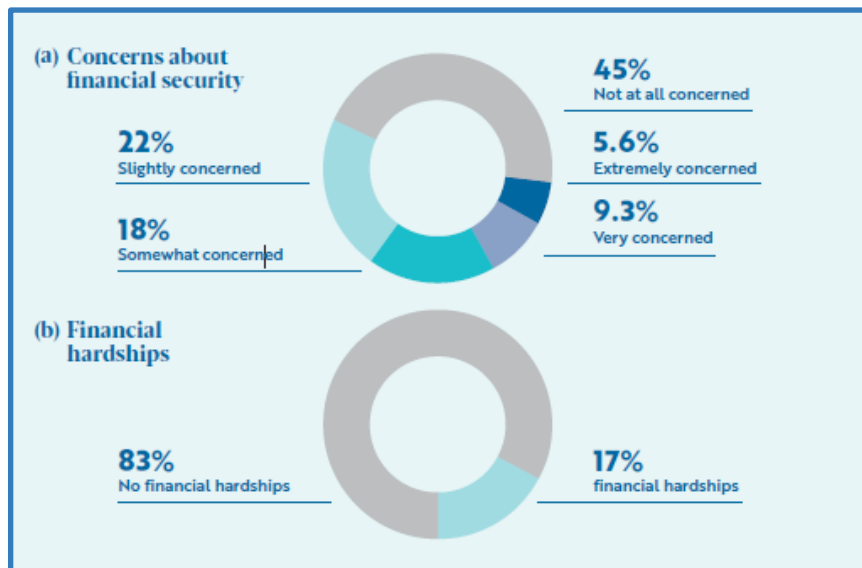
COST OF LIVING PRESSURES (N=19,501)

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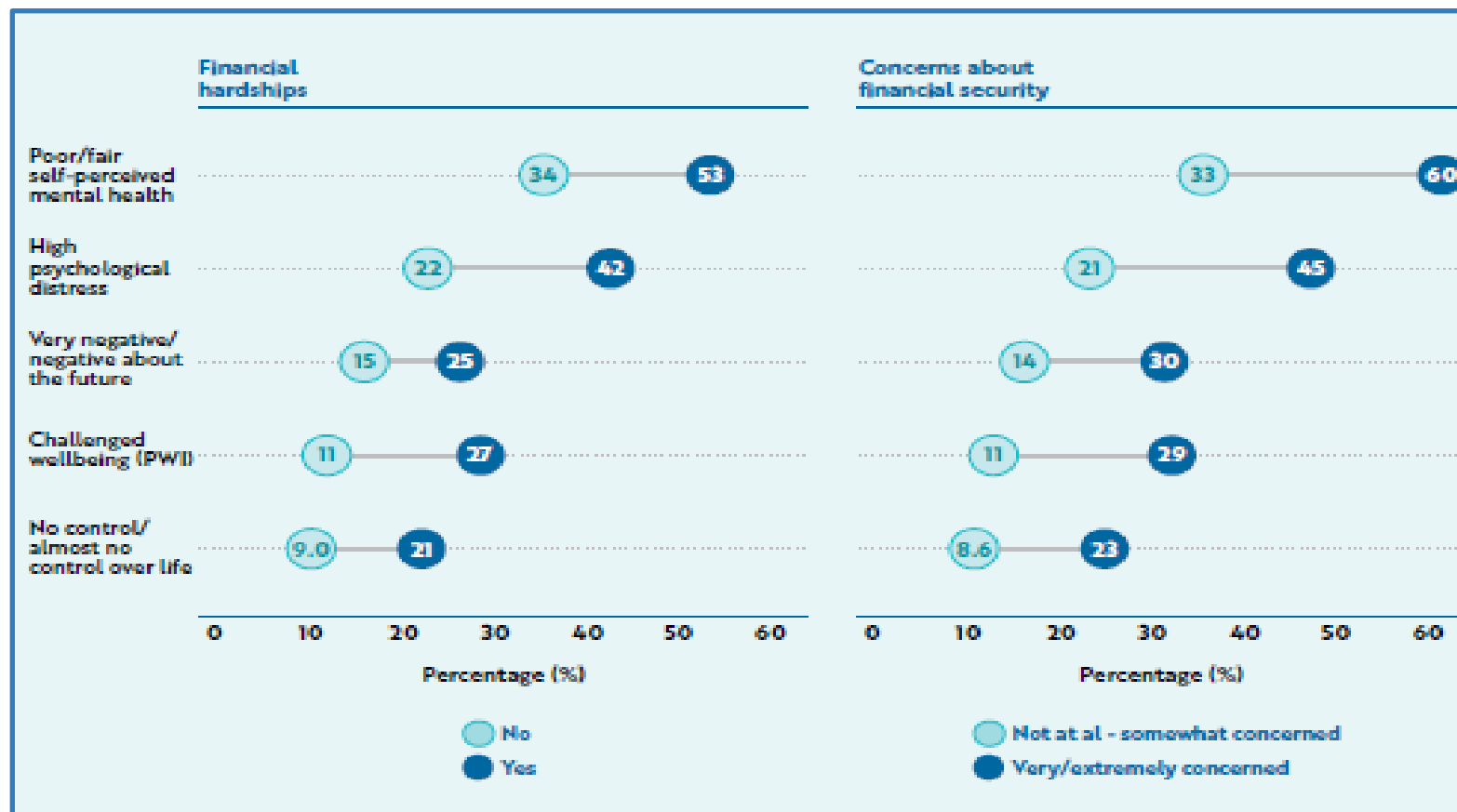


FINANCIAL STRESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

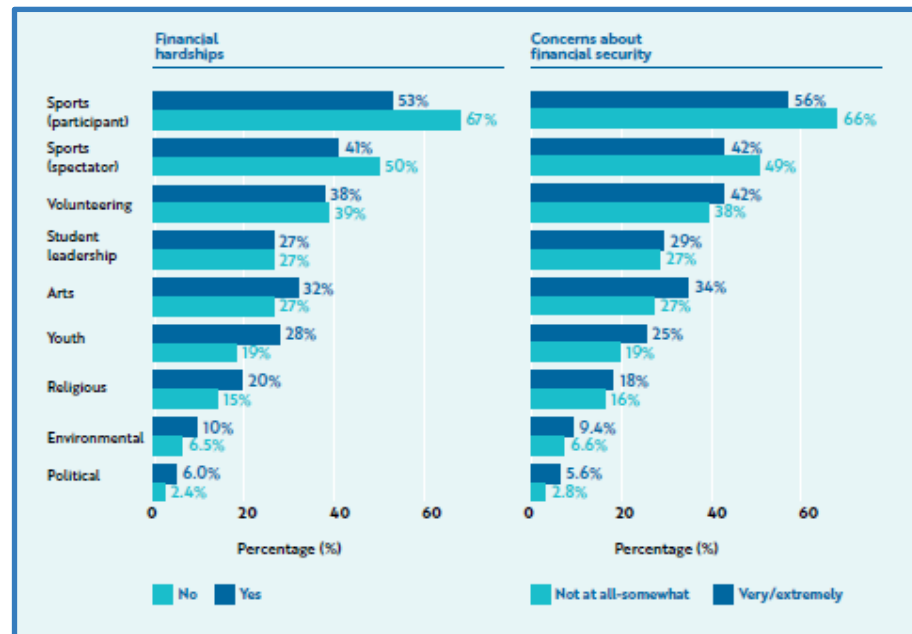
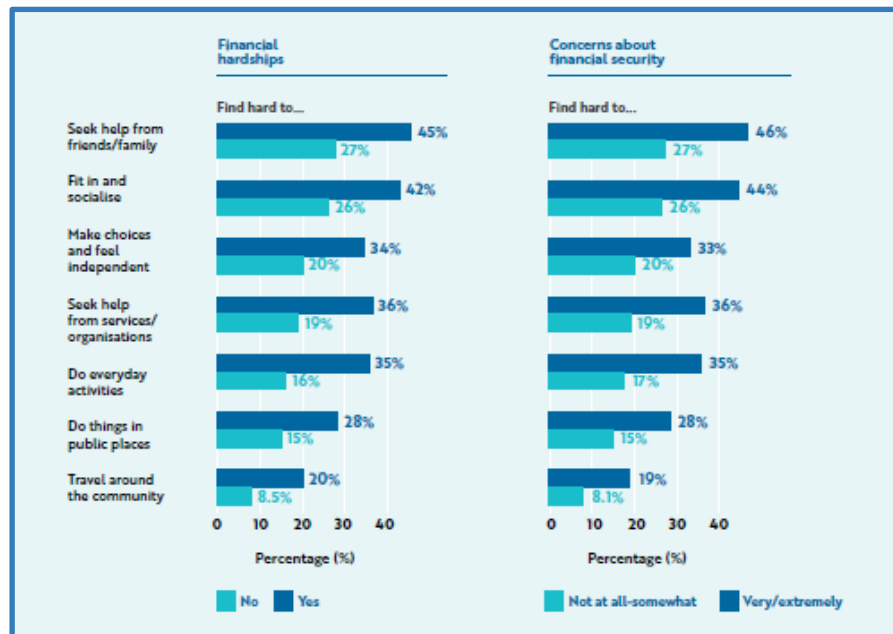


- Almost 1 in 4 young people reported financial strain of some sort

FINANCIAL STRESS, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



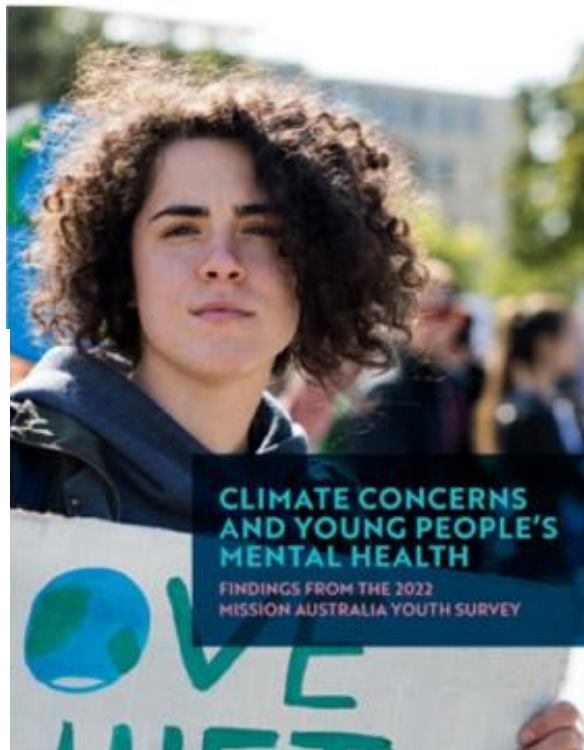
COMMUNITY SUPPORT & ACTIVITIES



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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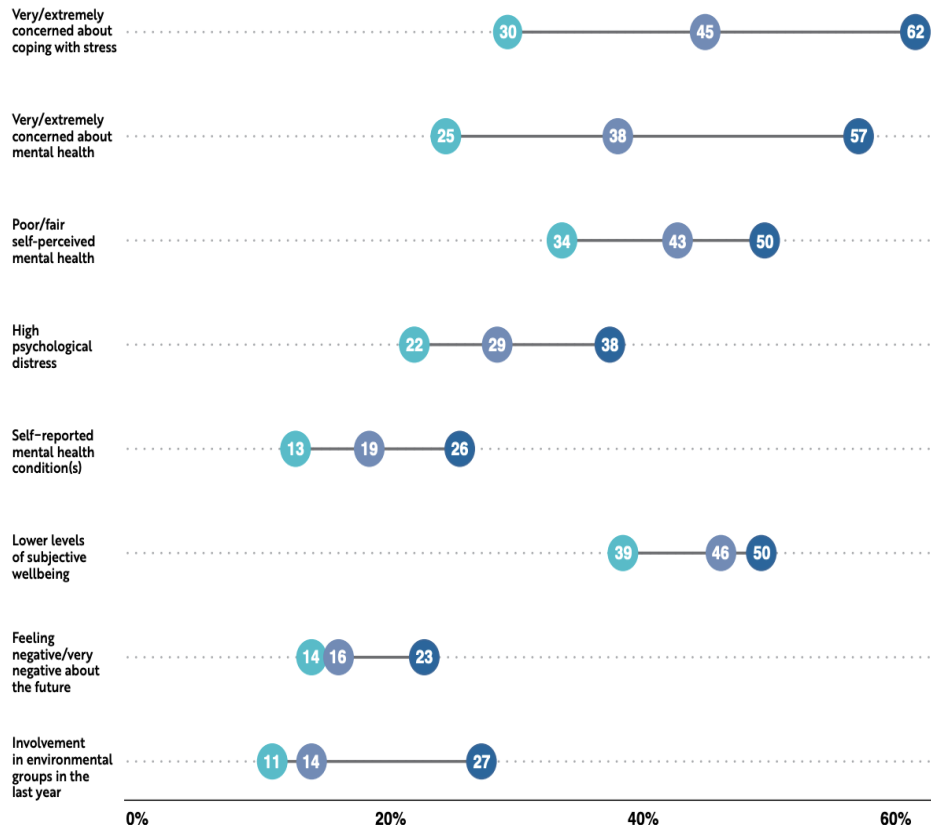


CLIMATE CONCERNS

Concerns about climate change

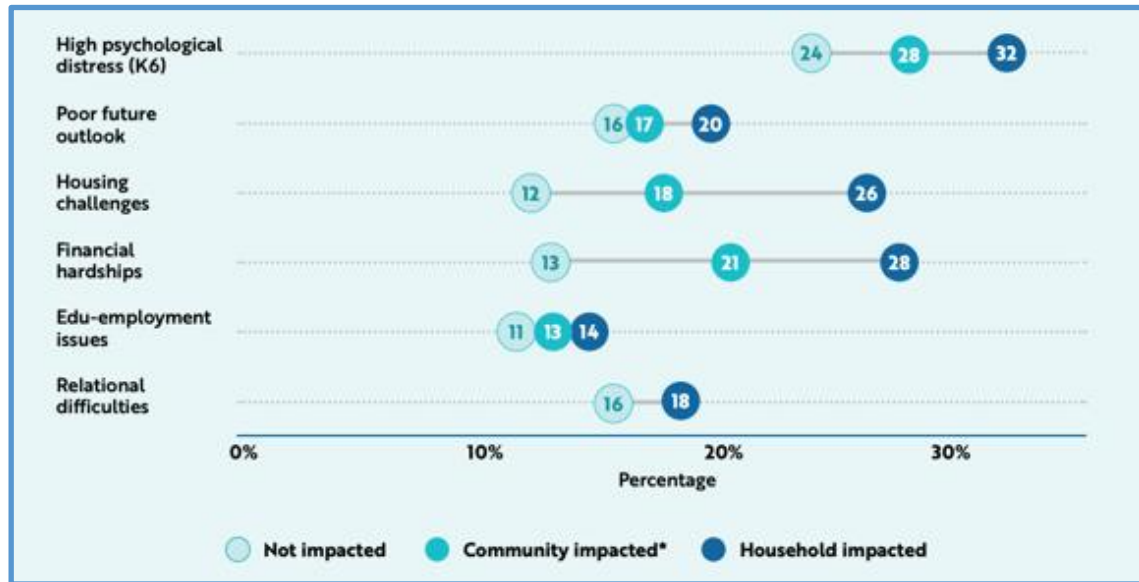
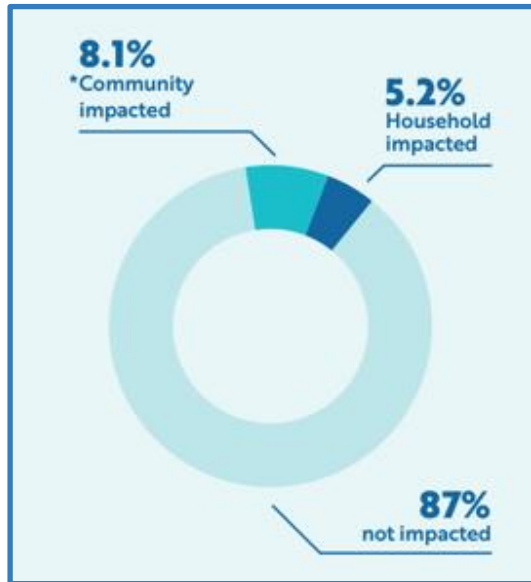


% young people who reported feeling very or extremely concerned about climate change



Climate change ● Not at all concerned ● Slightly/somewhat concerned ● Very/extremely concerned

IMPACT OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS



Young people are more likely to be impacted if they:

- Have a disability
- Are Indigenous
- Are culturally/linguistically diverse
- Live in low socioeconomic areas
- Live in non-metro areas
- Identify as gender diverse



PLATFORM FOR RESEARCH AND INTERVENTIONS IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT ---

- Emerging area of research, so many interventions developed but not yet evaluated
- Funded by the NHMRC, PRIME is facilitating the design, implementation and evaluation of multiple interventions



Green social
prescribing



Peer-support
program



Self-guided
care



School-based
interventions



Climate-aware
practitioner



Climate café
models

AVAILABLE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

- Your Climate Superpowers:
<https://climatesuperpowers.org/>
- Stay Tuned To Our Planet (STOPP) free education program: <https://sttop2030.com/education>
- Ecomind: <https://www.ecomind.au/>
- Blue Minds Youth Ocean Leadership:
<https://blueminds.org.au/>

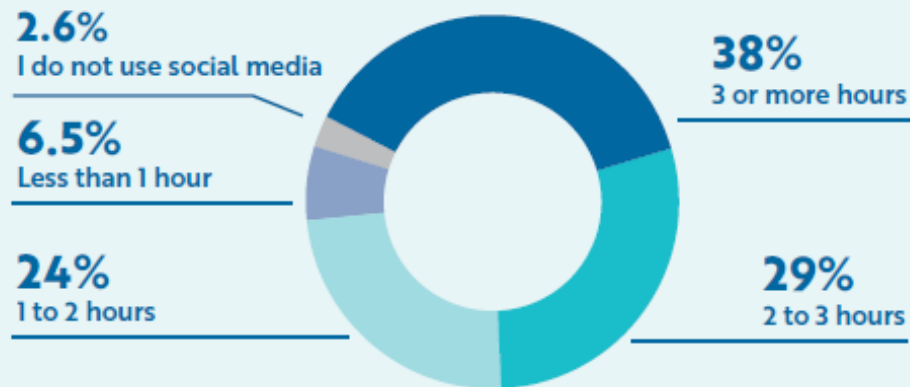
SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUNG PEOPLE (N=17,480)

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SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE



In this report, social media usage has been reported as:

LOW Less than one hour per day **MODERATE** One – three hours per day **HIGH** Three or more hours per day

High social media use was most commonly reported by gender diverse (48%) and female (42%) young people, compared to males (35%).



There are **gender-based differences** in online behaviours, preferences for social media features, and the outcomes of social media use.

Gender diverse young people often use social media in uniquely meaningful ways, including as a space for identity exploration, community support, and connection with peers who share similar lived experiences (13,14).



However, this group also faces heightened exposure to online harassment, negative content, and platform-based discrimination (15).

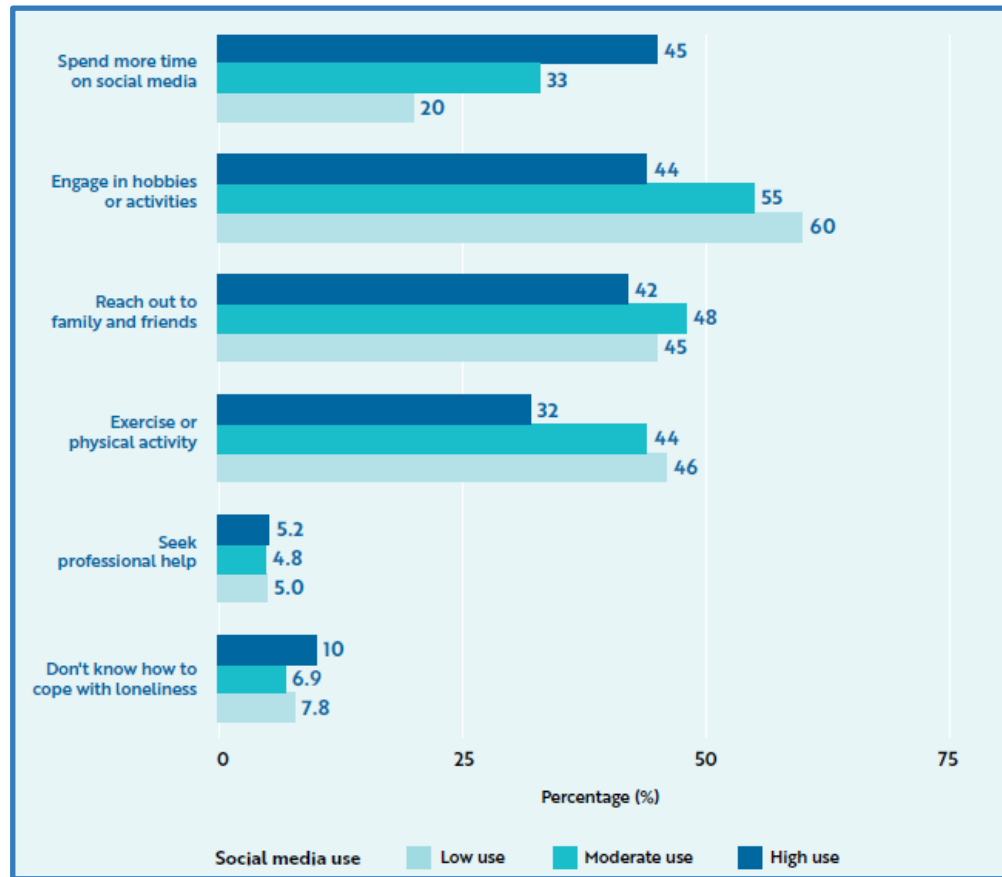


A higher proportion of CALD youth (41%) reported *high* social media use compared to non-CALD youth (38%).



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported a higher proportion of high social media use (50%) compared to young people who did not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (38%).

SOCIAL MEDIA & LONELINESS



The 2024 Youth Survey showed that over three quarters of young people reported some feelings of loneliness over the past four weeks (79%),

with **1 in 5** young people (21%) reporting feeling lonely all or most of the time.

Of the young people who reported feelings of loneliness in the past four weeks:

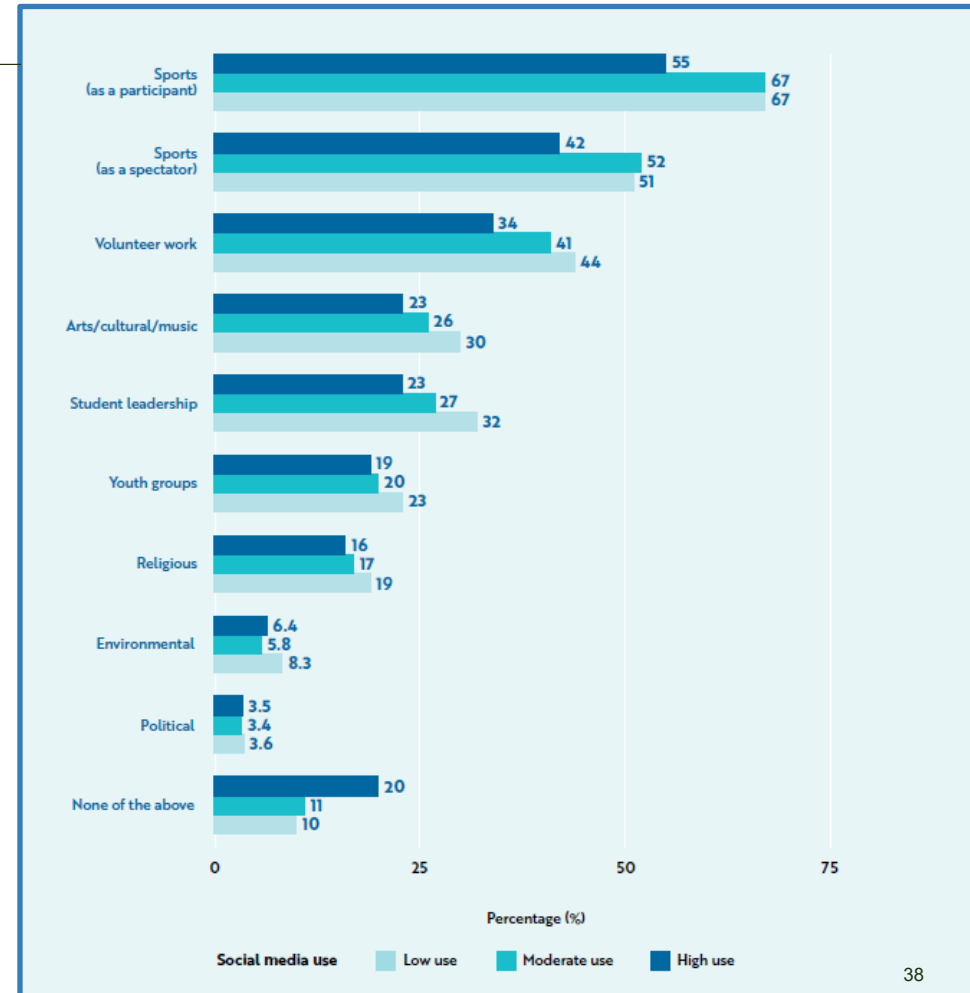


PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

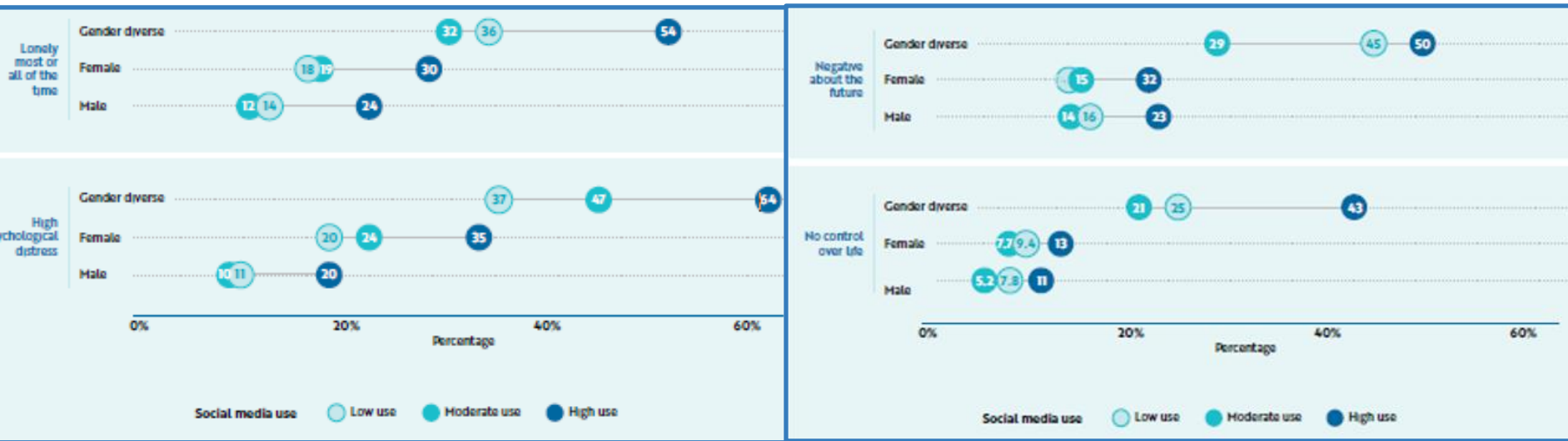
Significant amount of young people taking part in activities, regardless of social media use

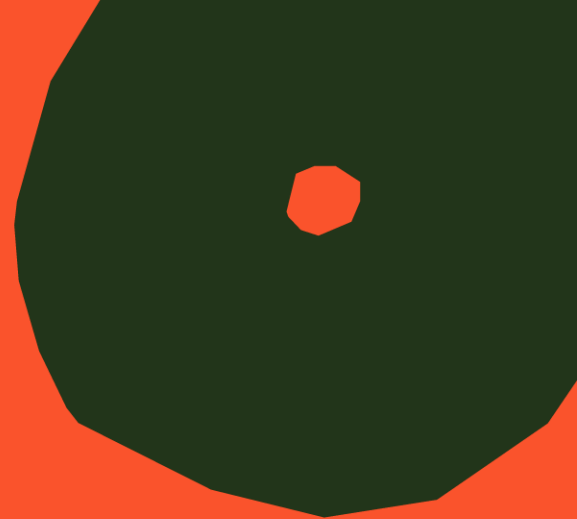
Displacement hypothesis suggests that social media use replaces other activities

- Not everyone has access to opportunities for other activities
- Look at reasons for high social media use



SOCIAL MEDIA, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING





ORYGEN RESOURCE HUB

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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To cultivate a youth mental health workforce that is inclusive, evidence informed and responsive to the needs and context of young people, families and communities

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

- Partnerships and co-design with young people, families, community, clinical, and other experts
- Resources including clinical practice points, training packages and online modules
- Training and education, implementation support, secondary consultations and communities of practice
- Evaluation and research



MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- What are mental health prevention programs?
- Why implement mental health prevention programs in schools?
- Considerations for your school before implementing a MH prevention program
- Needs of school community
- Research evidence
- Program delivery, including who should facilitate the program
- Tailoring the program to diverse student needs

TOOLKIT

IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION PROGRAMS

FOR
MENTAL HEALTH
EDUCATION,
TRAINING
AND POLICY
PROFESSIONALS



This toolkit provides information and practical tips about implementing youth mental health programs in schools. It has been designed with school leaders and school-based mental health professionals in mind, though other education and wellbeing professionals may find it useful.

Implementation considerations in this toolkit are based on research evidence and the experiences of young people, researchers, clinicians and program implementation and evaluation professionals with expertise in school settings. A summary of the current evidence for secondary school-based mental health prevention programs can be found in the Orygen evidence summary. [A review of secondary school-based mental health prevention programs.](#)

WHY IMPLEMENT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS?

Schools are a natural environment for supporting the wellbeing of young people. Young people spend more time in school than in any other formal institution. For some, school may provide a more supportive place than home for developing resilience and coping skills. Many schools also have the opportunity to reach large numbers of young people, including those from marginalised communities who may not readily access mainstream mental health support.

As well as supporting the mental health of students, school-based mental health programs can provide benefits to the whole school community. Implementing a school-based mental health program can help support positive academic outcomes for schools, improve community mental health literacy and early identification of mental ill-health, and support care pathways into the health system.

Cultural and language barriers to accessing mainstream mental health services make schools an ideal setting for engaging diverse groups of young people in wellbeing support.



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Understand different school attendance challenges
- Different factors associated with school attendance: barriers & facilitators
- Identify early warning signs, intermediate warning signs, & young people at risk of non-attendance
- Identify what can be done to increase school belonging and support



FOR
SCHOOL
STAFF

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

A GUIDE FOR SUPPORTING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This resource is for school staff who work both directly and indirectly with young people to support their school attendance. For example, teachers, leadership and administration staff, and wellbeing team members.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU:

1. Understand different school attendance challenges
2. Identify early warning signs and young people at risk of school attendance challenges
3. Identify what can be done to increase school belonging and support young people experiencing school attendance challenges

...

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The number of young people experiencing school attendance challenges has been increasing. In 2021, Year seven to 10 school attendance rates dropped from 91.2 per cent to 87.0 per cent.(1) Importantly this data includes all forms of school absenteeism including those explained by illness.(2) There are however clear links between school non-attendance and poor student outcomes. (3) Non-attendance has significant short and long-term impacts across the young person's social, emotional, educational, and occupational domains.(4-8)

There are different types of challenges that young people can experience with their school attendance. Each type is defined by a set of key characteristics and initiators, as outlined in Table one below.

Orygen would like to acknowledge that the term school attendance problems is used widely in the literature and within the community working directly with young people experiencing school attendance problems. However, in this guide, the term school attendance challenges is used in line with Orygen's strength-based, early intervention approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

This guide will explore the spectrum of school attendance challenges. When working with young people experiencing challenges attending school, it is important that there is a collaborative approach. This should focus on building the capacity of young people, families and carers, to understand and address these challenges. This document provides examples from a multi-tiered, strengths-based approach to support young people and their families that schools can draw on in developing their whole of school approach.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

- Value of including young people in the design and implementation of school-based MH programs
- How to include diverse representation of students
- Including young people across the development and implementation of the program

TOOLKIT

INCLUDING STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

FOR
MENTAL HEALTH,
EDUCATION,
TRAINING,
AND POLICY
PROFESSIONALS

"Young people are a powerful source for change, and they are the experts of their own experience. Involving them directly is the best way to create programs that will really work."

KATE KNUDSEN, YOUNG PERSON

Young people should be active participants in making decisions about their mental health, including at school. Growing evidence suggests that student receptiveness to school-based mental health programs may be a key part of supporting positive program outcomes.(2)

This toolkit provides an overview of why including student voice in school-based mental health programs is important and what to consider for meaningful involvement in program design and rollout. It is aimed at professionals who have a role in supporting the mental health of young people in secondary school, including health or mental health professionals, educators, school leaders, policymakers, funders, commissioners and researchers. Students thinking about getting involved in their school mental health program might also find this toolkit useful.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Acknowledging the importance of relationships for young people
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Warning signs of unhealthy relationships
- How to talk to young people about unhealthy relationships
- Supports for young people from diverse communities
- Consent, age of consent and the law
- Online relationships

FACT SHEET

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

FOR
MENTAL HEALTH
CLINICIANS

AT A GLANCE

1. Intimate relationships play an important role in young peoples' lives and can impact their mental health and wellbeing.
2. Unhealthy or abusive relationships can negatively impact a young person in numerous ways.
3. Early intervention is important to reduce the negative impact of unhealthy relationships on young people.
4. Mental health clinicians should be aware of the signs of unhealthy relationships and what they can do to support young people.

...

WHY ARE RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT

Relationships are an important part of life, providing a sense of connection, belonging and understanding, as well as feeling loved and cared for. Adolescence and early adulthood are significant times of change and development. For many young people this means exploring intimate and romantic connections. These relationships can at times be intense, challenging and difficult for young people to navigate, sometimes perpetuating or precipitating mental ill-health. Adults, including mental health clinicians, should not minimise the significance of romantic or intimate relationships, especially if there has been a rupture or end to a relationship. For example, a relationship break-up can be a strong predictor for a young person to experience a first episode of depression.⁽¹⁾

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

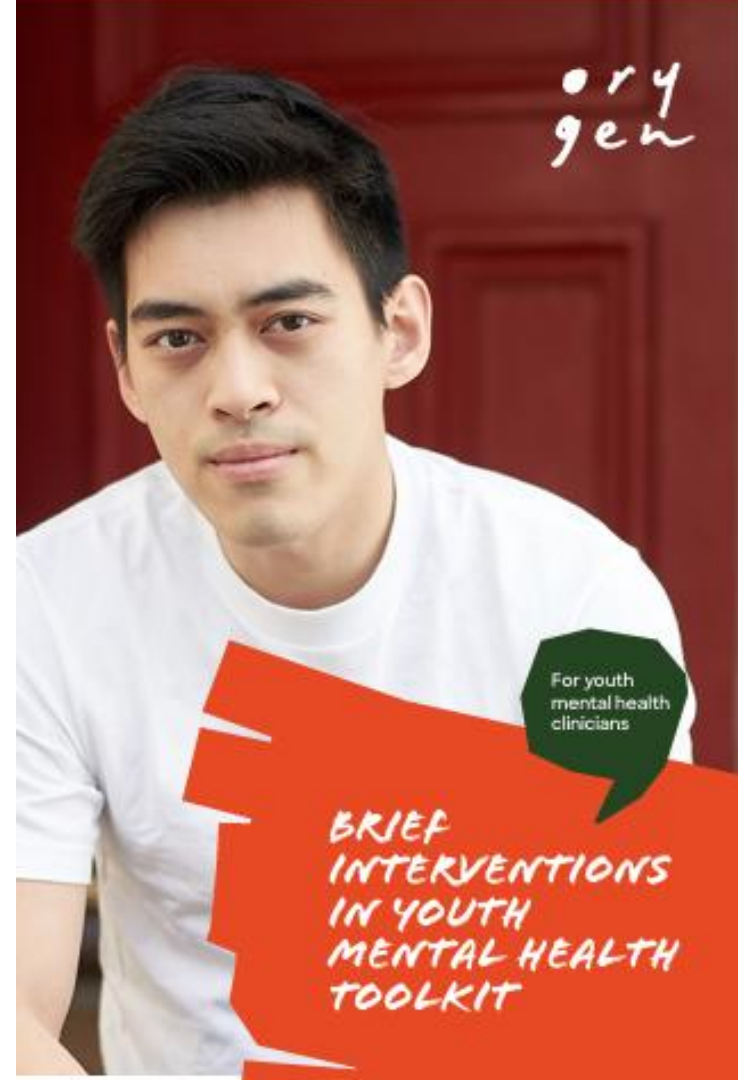
Intimate relationships can play an important role in a young person's day-to-day life. The quality of intimate relationships can have a significant impact on their mental health, ongoing social and emotional development, sense of self, self-esteem, and intimate relationships into the future.⁽²⁾



BRIEF INTERVENTION TOOLKIT

Range of modules

- Problem-solving skills
- Exercise for wellbeing
- Understanding my anger
- Communicating with confidence
- Understanding my moods and anxiety
- Mindfulness and relaxation
- Understanding and accepting myself
- Sleeping well
- Nutrition for wellbeing



TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

A training program can be built from the follow modules:

- Introduction to trauma and young people
 - What is trauma-informed care?
 - Safely screening for trauma and its effects
 - Managing safety when talking about trauma
 - Safe assessment of post-traumatic-stress disorder and dissociation
 - Providing trauma psycho-education
 - Case conceptualisation and formulation from a trauma perspective
 - Trauma and psychosis
 - Vicarious trauma and self-care for workers.
- For organisations and clinicians
 - Delivered remotely or in person
 - Contact training@orygen.org.au

CHATS SAFE GUIDELINES



How to talk safely online about self- harm and suicide

Evidence-backed advice for young people, their
supporters and communities

[Download now](#)



EVIDENCE FINDER

Do you want to find the latest evidence concerning mental ill-health in young people?

The Evidence Finder tool allows you to search published studies of treatment and prevention strategies for mental health and substance use issues in young people. You can use the filters to refine your search or browse by category.

The database includes research published from 1980 to 30 June 2023, with new research added annually. *Last update October 2024.*

1. Mental health or substance use problem

Please select



2. Stage of illness

Please select



3. Treatment / Intervention

Please select



4. Publication Date

From

Please select



To

Please select



DIGITAL SUPPORTS

- Example: VR4VR – Virtual Reality for Vocational Recovery
- Designed to support young people with mental ill-health to prepare for work by practising and learning in a safe, controlled environment
- Simulates real world scenarios
 - Approaching potential employers
 - Managing difficult situations
 - Reasonable adjustments
- Complements support from employment specialists



HOW CAN SCHOOLS GET INVOLVED IN CREATING SOLUTIONS WITH US?

- Engage with us for youth and/or teacher consultations
- Co-design solutions and strategies to addressing the YMH crisis
- Partner with us to develop and take part in research



TAKE PART IN THE YOUTH SURVEY



- **Actionable insights:** Gain data-driven understanding of *your* student population's wellbeing, concerns, and aspirations, moving beyond general assumptions.
- **Evidence-based programs:** Develop and refine *your school's* wellbeing programs & student support services based on concrete data.
- **Advocacy for systemic change:** Contribute to a national movement advocating for policies that benefit *all* students, including those in your school.

HOW TO TAKE PART?

- **Easy administration:** The Youth Survey is available online and is designed for efficient school implementation.
- **Data confidentiality:** Highest ethical standards and data security protocols are rigorously maintained.
- **Dedicated support:** Mission Australia provides comprehensive support and resources to participating schools.

CONNECT WITH US

Kirra Greaves Education
sector lead @ Orygen



To Learn More and Register
Your School's Interest:

Get involved here!



**REVOLUTION
IN MIND** *ory
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THANK YOU

