

# **Mental Health Status of Middle Adolescents (Age 12-19)**

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## **Abstract**

Few studies have specifically examined mental suffering or disease, and research on young people's opinions on mental health is still in its infancy. This paper presents the results of a qualitative study that utilized case answers to investigate how the young participants formed their conceptions of what constituted mental illness. The key findings of the study are then discussed concerning how young people classified atypical behavior, their comprehension of the behaviors connected to various mental health issues, and their views toward the persons in question.

## **Introduction**

In 2019, as reported by WHO, 1 in every 8 people in the world had a mental health issue. In 2020, the number of people living with such cases increased significantly because of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

In Nepal, the pandemic magnified the mental health crisis: limitations of existing mental health services in the country and increased mental health care needs, exemplified by a substantial increase in deaths by suicide. According to WHO, though more systematic data collection is needed, there is an indication of a 14% increase in the rates of suicide last year (than the previous year as per the records of Nepal Police). To address this issue, the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) introduced the National Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan 2020. However, it has not been operated on the problem-solving level.

According to the National Mental Health Survey conducted by the Nepal Health Research Council from January 2019 to January 2020, 2.2 million students in the age group 16-40 years are estimated to suffer from some form of mental health issue. While the numbers are large, the challenges are made larger by the unawareness and cultural stigma surrounding mental health. As it is reported that almost all mental health issues start from age 14, this study aims to understand the mental health situation of adolescents and young adults (age 12 to age 22).

This report involves around 500 responses from all over the country. While the survey does not specifically focus on specific stressors and mental issues, we can analyze the physical care habits, educational mindset, quality of social interaction, use of social media, and social stigma and their roles as stressors.

## **Motivation for the Study**

In order to make efforts to combat this mental health crisis in Nepal, much research is needed to assess the situation first and foremost. While various mental health situational assessments are available, they focus on understanding the overall population's condition and the services required. This study aims to understand the new generation by analyzing the general factors that affect mental health.

Furthermore, the findings will be used to build a research-based website and app that will make the process of accessing mental health professionals easier and build a community around mutual understanding for patients.

## **Overview of Our Survey**

The results from the literature survey and focus group analysis led to 52 questions (including demographics) pertaining to daily practices, relational support, controls, and mental health estimators. The complete survey administered to the participants is included in the supplements. Our survey started with a consent question. The questions covered 9 areas (i.e., independent variables) related to mental health. The survey was administered online anonymously, thus, the question on the accuracy of the responses and sample population recall bias. Lastly, the survey included freeform questions for participants to share their experiences and opinions on mental health and how it could be improved.

## **Participants**

In order to find participants, we approached schools and colleges using a convenience sampling technique. Through Google Forms, the whole population of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 19 was polled.

The data was gathered in September 2022. The project was introduced, the survey's goal was explained, and the schools were asked for their consent to participate in the study in a letter written to the school department.

Surveys were either mailed to the institution or retrieved after completion, or they were carried out on-site by a research team at the institution. A piece of information regarding the study was included with each and every questionnaire to tell participants about it. The information sheet included information about the study's objectives, the substance of the questionnaire, confidentiality, option of participation,

and withdrawal. The questionnaire's completion revealed that the student had given their implicit consent. The final analysis included only surveys that were fully completed.

### **Limitations of our survey**

85% of our responses were from students attending private schools. Since the treatment in private schools varies significantly from public schools, the proportion of students in this survey is different than that of the overall student population. The percentage of male vs. female respondents was 49-51%, so there isn't any bias there. However, the survey did not track students who had access to the study but chose not to participate - so there could be a "pre-existing interest" bias, where participants with an interest in mental health issues are more inclined to respond, which can introduce bias in the data.

### **Data Analysis and Visualizations with Survey Questionnaire:**

Out of the 467 participants' sample size, the data was collected from 46 districts that spanned Eastern and Western provinces, including both urban and rural settings.

Some of the interesting findings include:

#### Social Media Usage

- About 45% of participants reported using 2-6 hours of social media per day and about 20% reported using more than 6 hours per day.
- About 70% of participants reported feeling somewhat insecure about seeing other people's seemingly extravagant lives on social media.

So, with these statistics, it can be deduced that the use of excessive use of social media might cause severe mental health issues in middle adolescence as there might be more tendencies to compare the lifestyle factors during this age.

## Mindset and academics

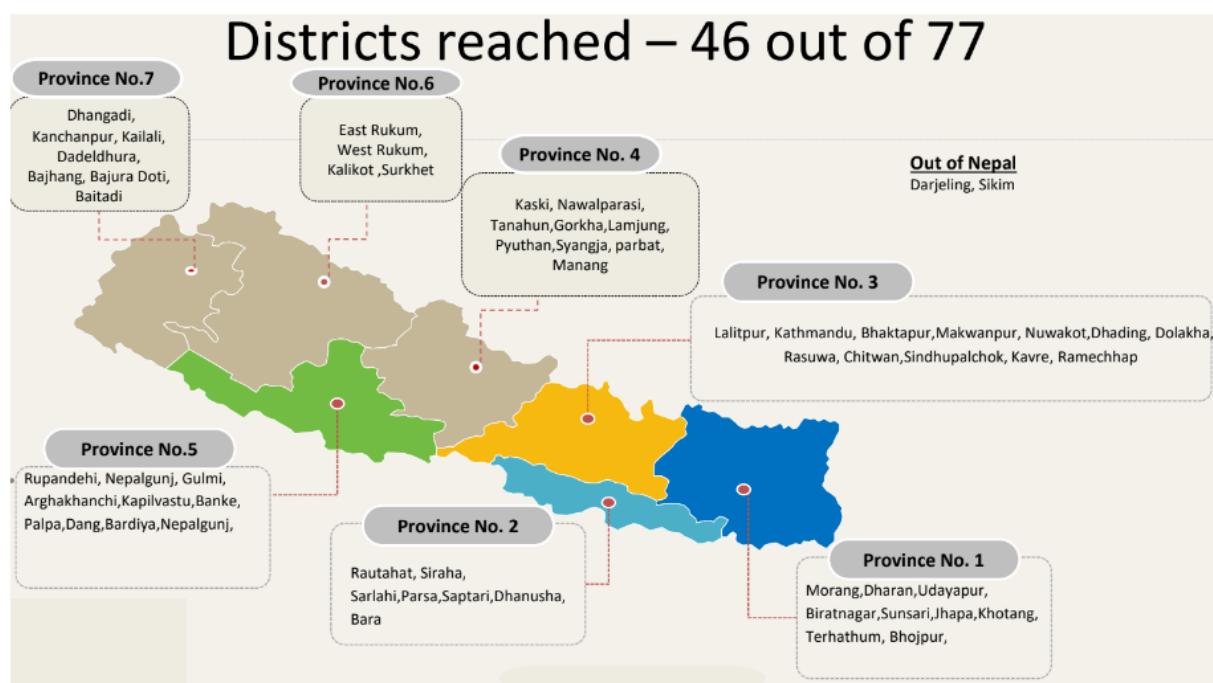
About 40% of participants described starting their studies a week before examinations.

About 75% of participants believed that it is possible to increase their talent regardless of the situation they start from,

This data shows most of the students postpone their studies until the exam is on their hands creating pressure to cover the syllabus and score good marks. This may create long-term exam fear in teenagers.

These statistics show a high level of optimism and self-confidence in this particular group of participants. It is generally seen that self-appreciation is a sign of mental well-being.

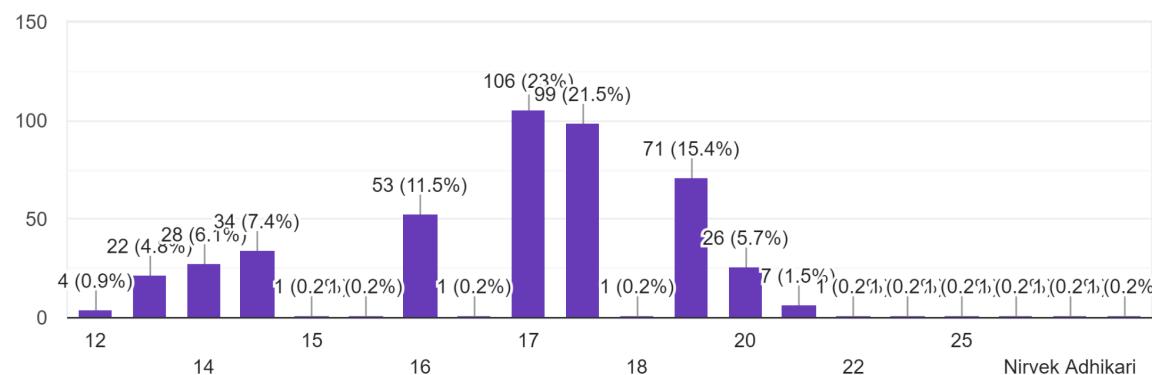
## Demographics Sampled



We were able to cover 46 districts out of 77, including both urban and rural settings. Some of the urban settings samples include Kathmandu, Biratnagar, and Pokhara while some of the rural settings samples include Dadeldhura, Doti, and Siraha.

## Age

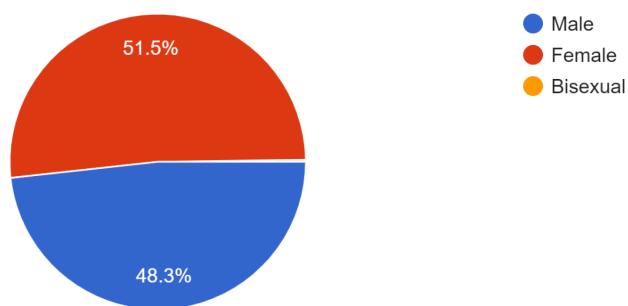
460 responses



We were able to collect the responses from ages ranging from 12-25, with x data points above the age of 20 as outliers.

## Gender

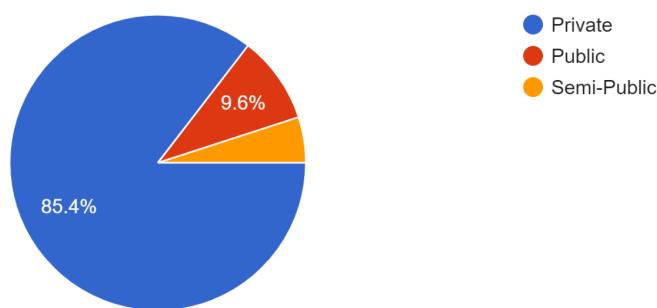
460 responses



We have 51.5% female, 48.3% male, and 1 bisexual participant in our survey.

School type

460 responses

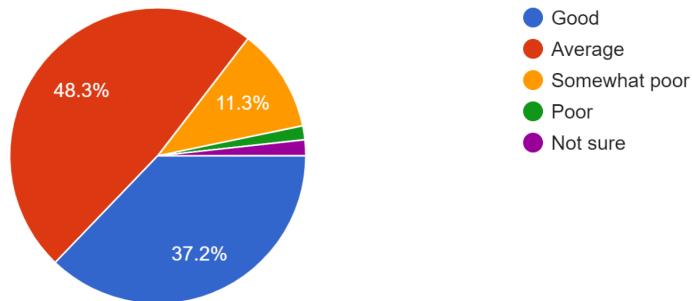


We have 85.4% private schools, 9.6% public schools, and 5% semi-public school participants in our survey.

**Rating of physical and mental health, along with sleep and diet factors:**

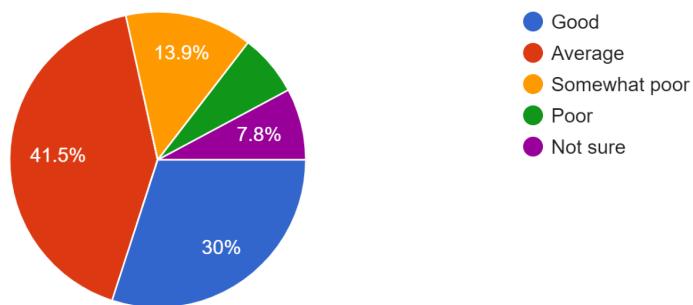
Overall, how would you rate your physical health?

460 responses



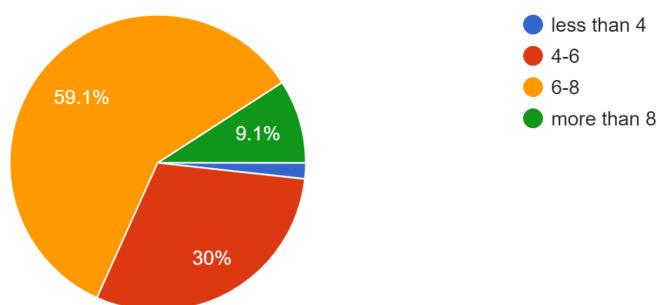
Overall, how would you rate your mental health?

460 responses

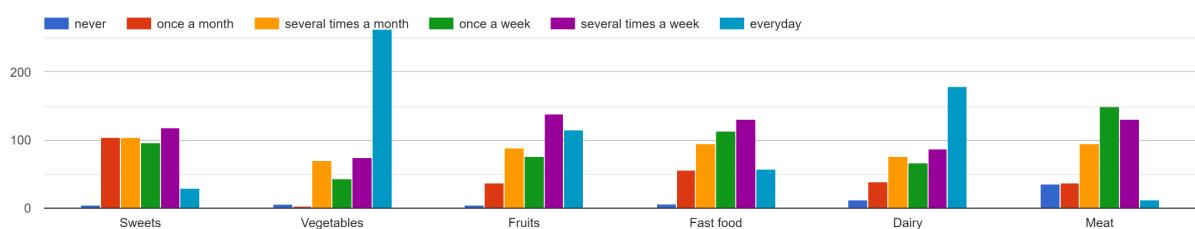


How many hours do you sleep?

460 responses

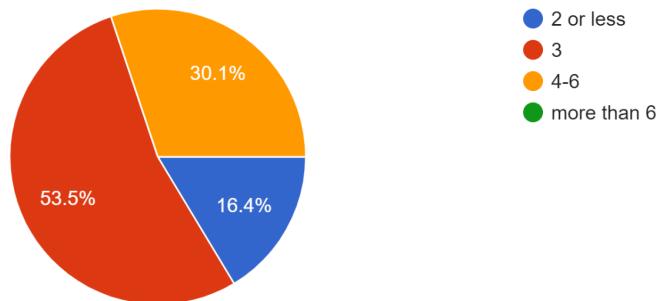


How often do you usually eat:



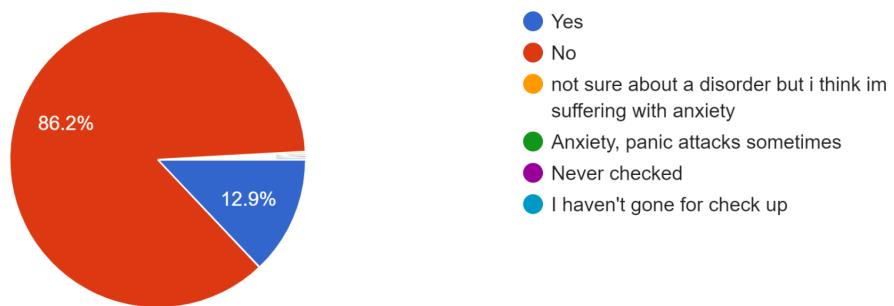
How many meals do you have in a day?

458 responses



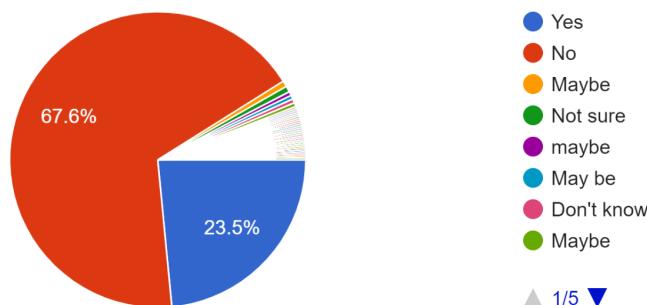
Have you been diagnosed by a professional with any mental health disorder? (example: Anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, etc)

456 responses



Do you think you are suffering from any mental health disorder?

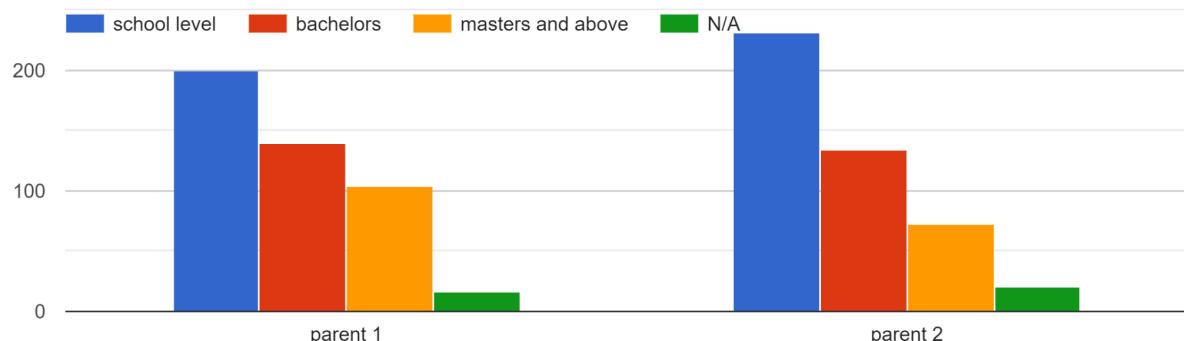
460 responses



▲ 1/5 ▼

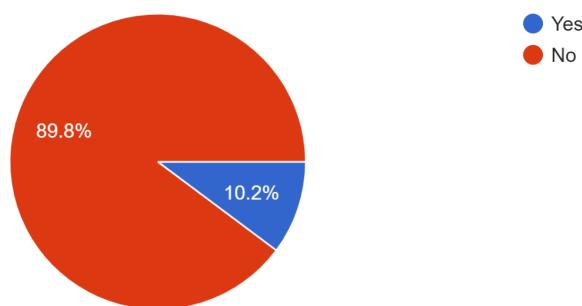
## Role of Parenting and Relationship in Mental Health:

What is the highest level of education received by your parents?



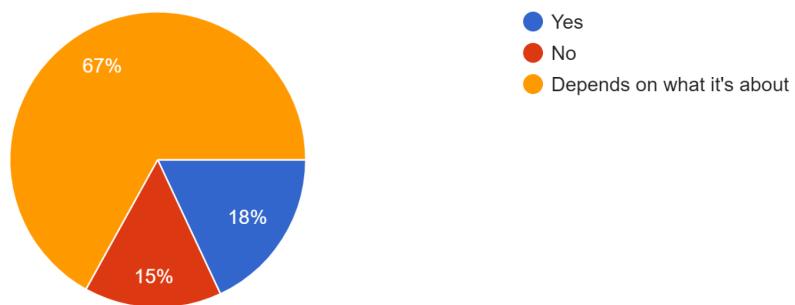
Does your family have a history of mental health disorders?

460 responses



Are you comfortable sharing your feelings with your parents?

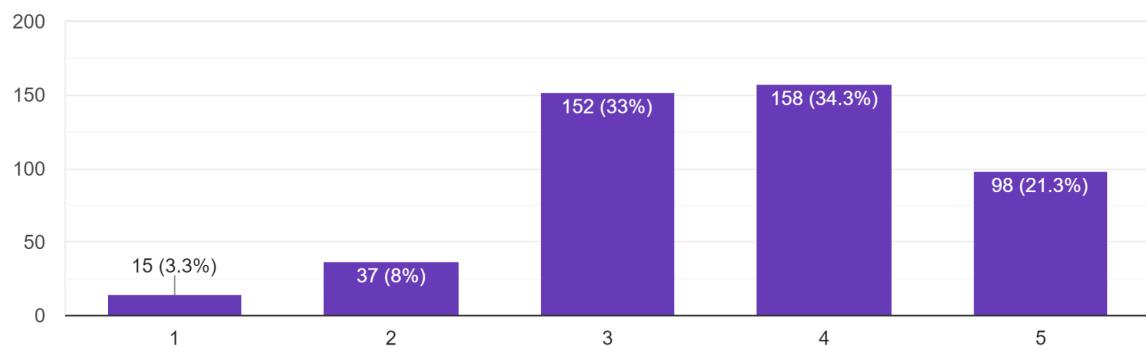
460 responses



Parents want to see their children flourish, so they place their expectations on their children.

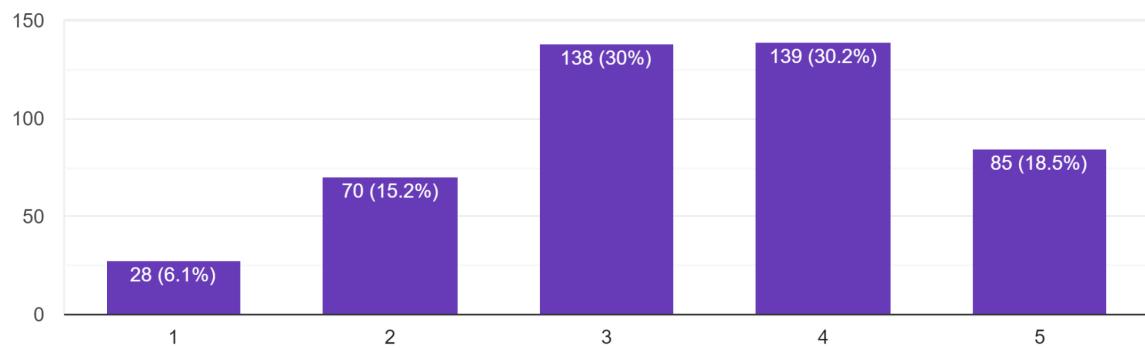
However, it's not always in the children's best interests...es your parents' expectations shape your priorities?

460 responses



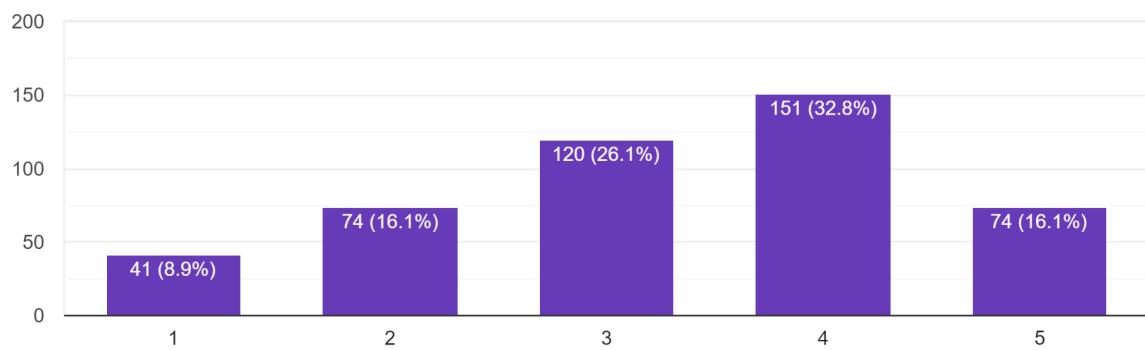
On a scale from 1-5, how often do you receive emotional support from your relationships? (this includes all relationships- with parents, friends, partners, etc)

460 responses



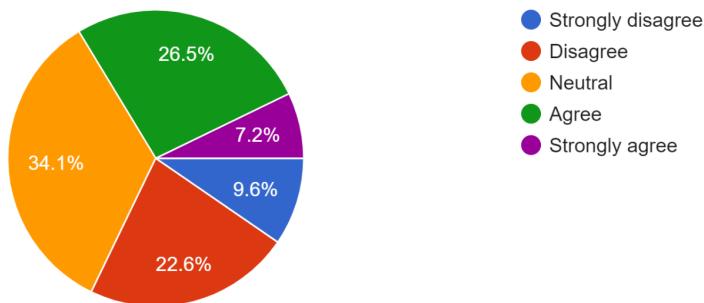
On a scale from 1-5, how often do you receive practical support from your relationships? (Practical support includes actions that help you with your tasks, activities, plans, and daily needs)

460 responses

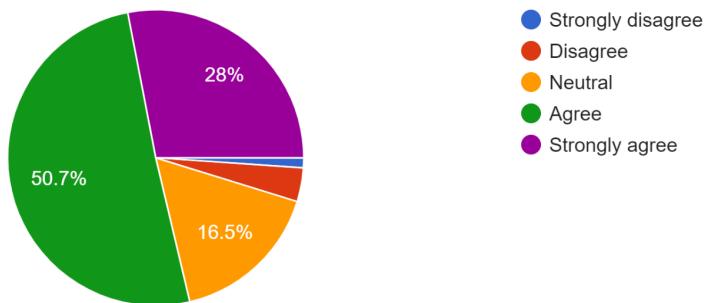


## Mindset and Academics:

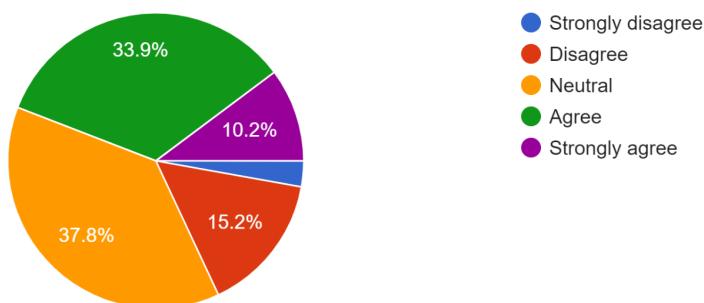
Agree/Disagree questions: Read the statements and select the best option for your opinion on the statement. Note: There is no right or wrong answer....things, but you can't change how smart you are."  
460 responses



"You can always increase your talent and perfect a craft, no matter where you start."  
460 responses

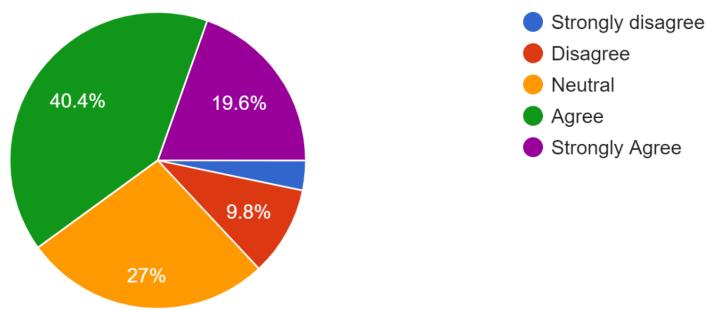


"I stick to what I can do perfectly almost all the time."  
460 responses



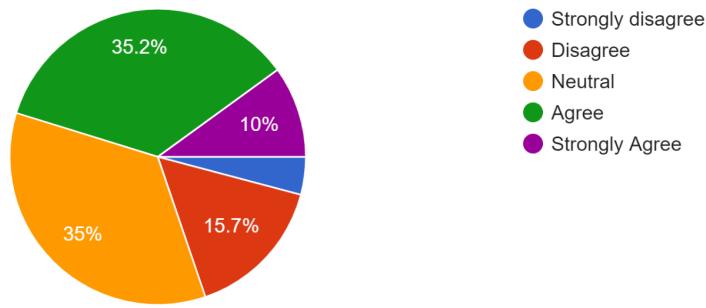
"I like work the most when I can perform well effortlessly"

460 responses



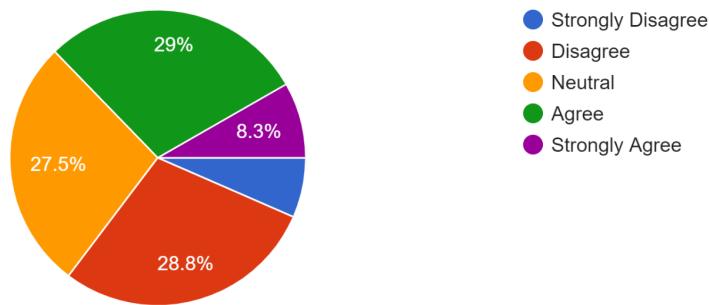
"I like work the most when it requires me to think very hard."

460 responses



"I feel demotivated when I have to put in more effort than my peers"

459 responses



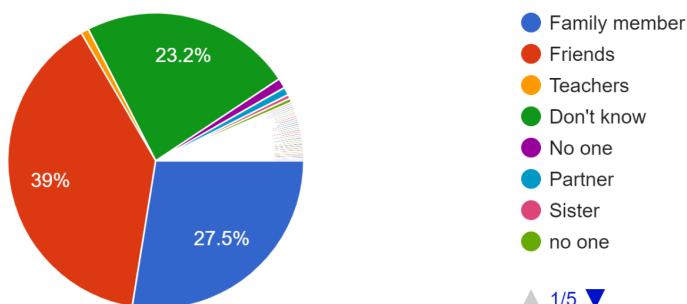
(Different brains have different preferences. Some work in consistent and structured environment, some work in bursts of energy, and some work best...llowing describes your approach to your studies?  
460 responses



▲ 1/3 ▼

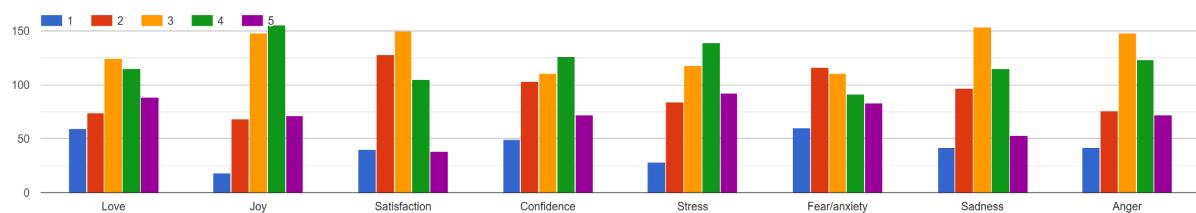
## Emotional State

Who is the first person that comes to mind when you want to share your feelings?  
461 responses



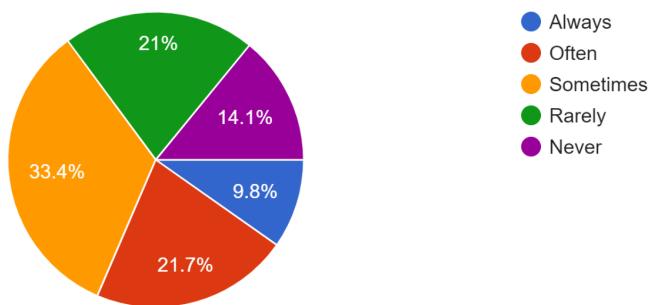
▲ 1/5 ▼

Over the past month, how often did you feel the following emotions? Note: 1= almost never 2= rarely 3= sometimes 4= often 5= almost always



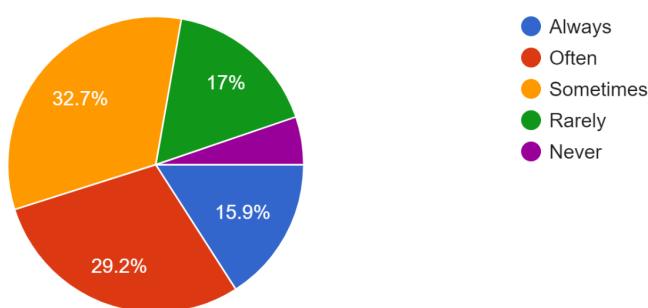
Do you feel lonely even when you are with someone?

461 responses



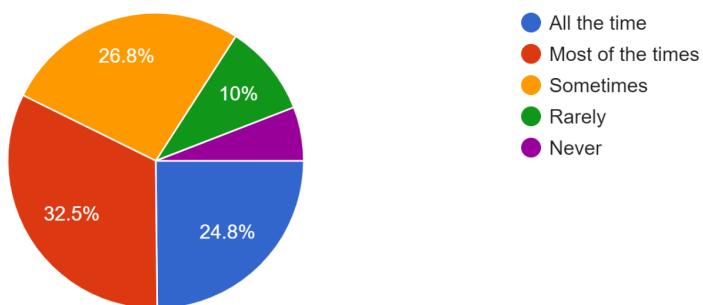
How often do you find yourself unable to do your tasks because of how strong your emotions are? (example: not being able to focus on your as...ing match that you can't focus at the present task)

459 responses



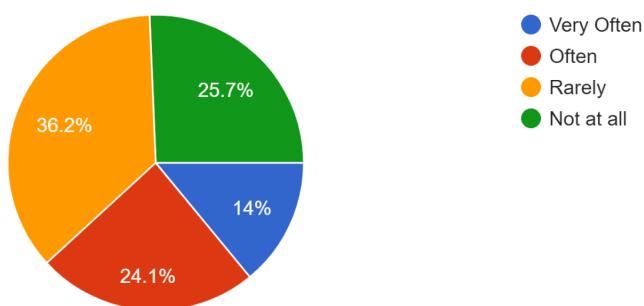
Do you feel like you're being watched and judged by the people around you?

459 responses



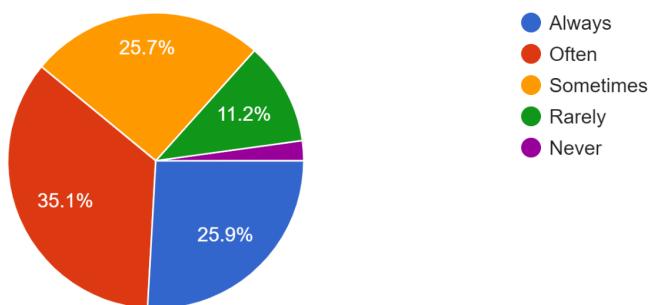
Over the past one month, how often has your mental health affected your relationships?

456 responses



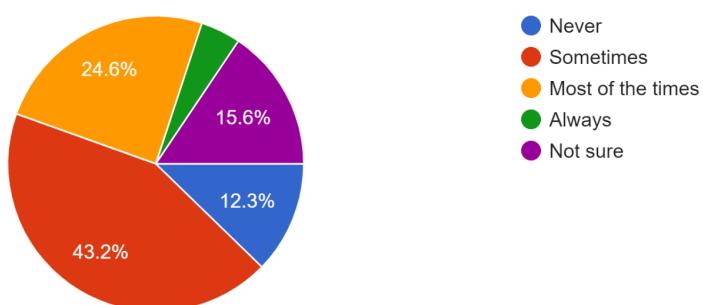
How often do you feel positive about life?

456 responses



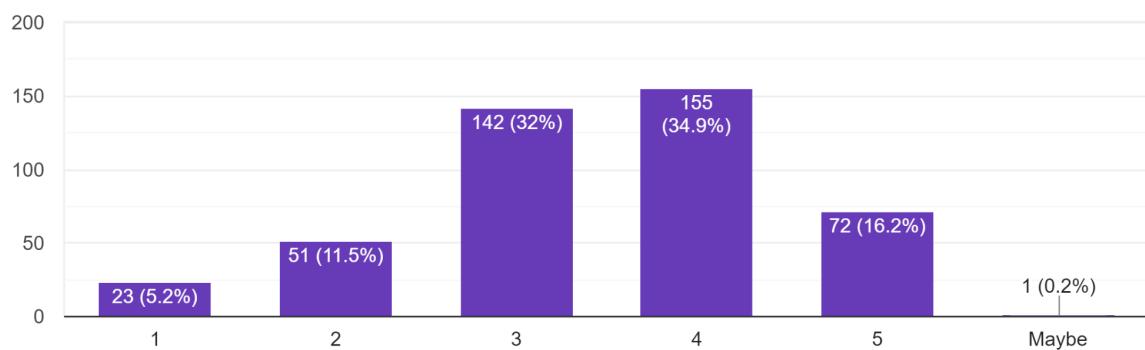
Over the last four weeks, how often have you felt isolated from others?

456 responses



How would you rate your self-image? (self image is the idea you have of your abilities, appearance, and personality.)

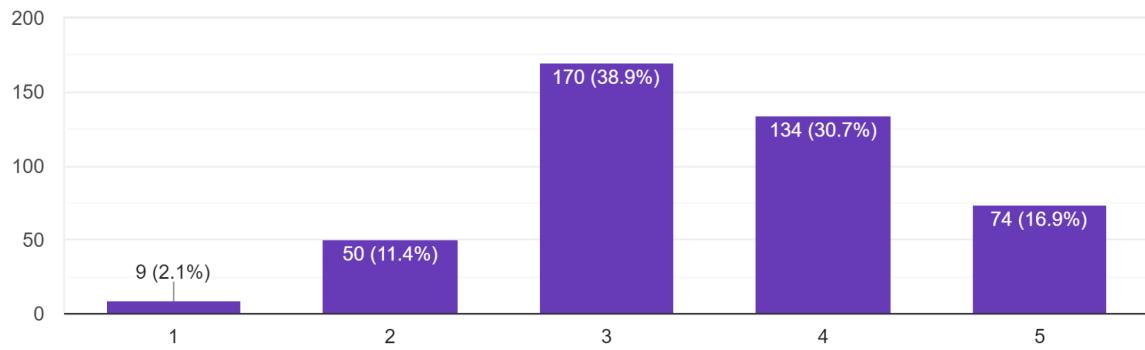
444 responses



## Emotional State

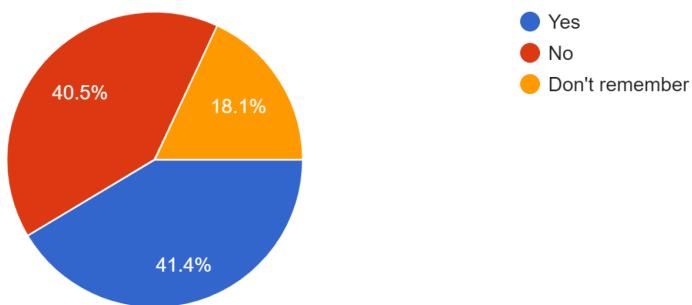
Right now, while taking this survey, how would you rate your mood?

437 responses



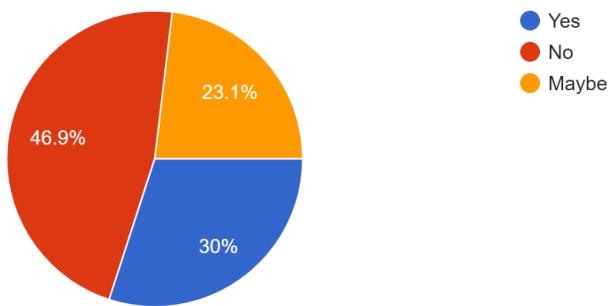
Do you joke about not wanting to live?

437 responses



Have you actually felt like not wanting to live?

437 responses



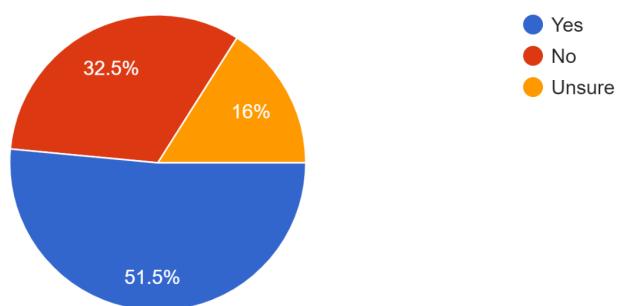
Do you believe your life has a purpose?

437 responses

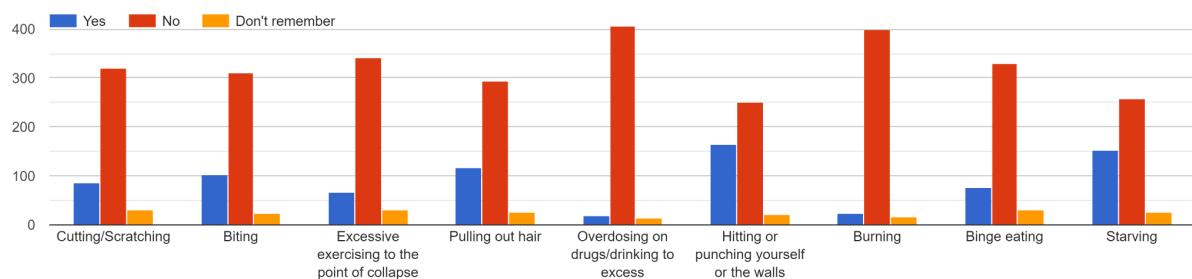


Do you believe you need a purpose to enjoy life?

437 responses



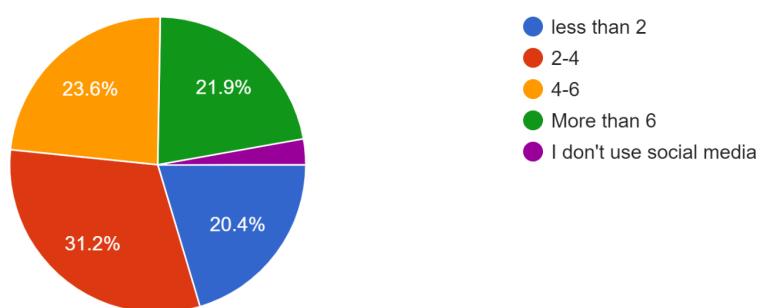
Have you intentionally harmed yourself by the following ways? (note: teenagers do these acts for various reasons, boredom being one. We're not putting a label on anyone so freely give your honest answers.)



## Social Media:

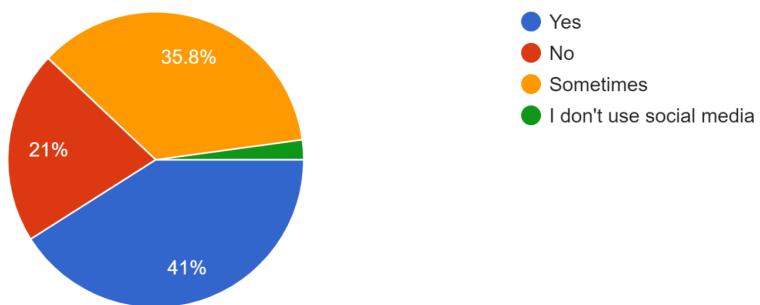
On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media?

461 responses



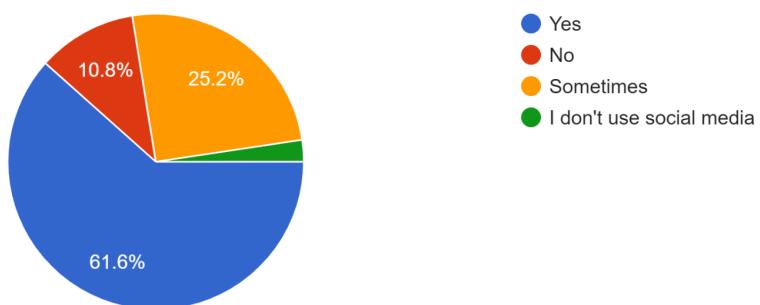
Do you check social media first thing in the morning?

461 responses



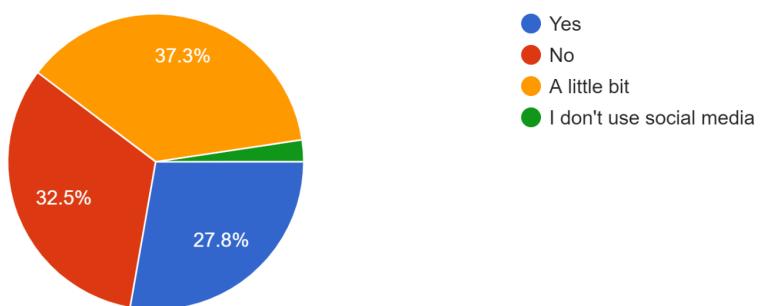
Do you also check social media last thing at night?

461 responses



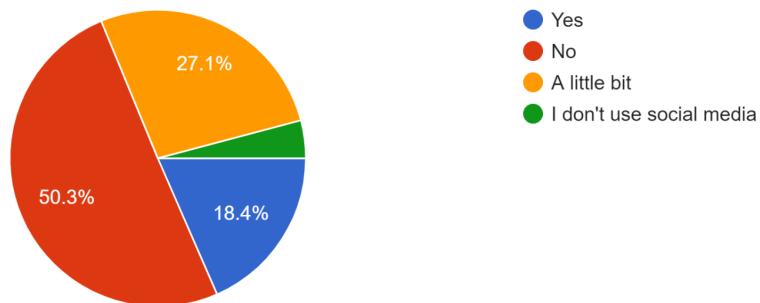
Do you ever feel insecure seeing other people's seemingly extravagant lives on social media?

461 responses



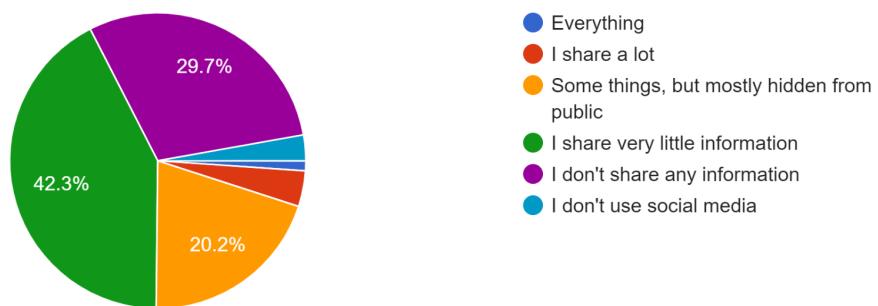
Do you feel like the number of likes you get on photos or posts makes you feel better about yourself?

461 responses



How much personal information/activities do you share on social media?

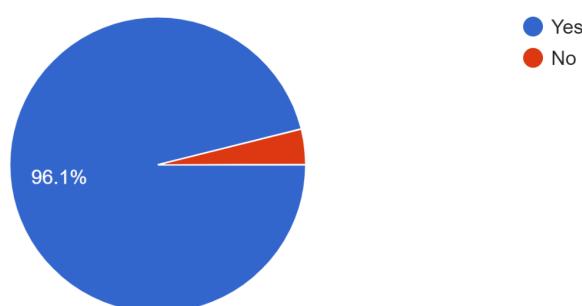
461 responses



### **The interest of mental health curriculum in schools:**

Do you think mental health curriculum and assistance should be added in schools?

461 responses



Do you feel comfortable reaching out to your teachers/counselors for help?

461 responses

