

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Year 7 students in a Bolton High School

A 'snapshot report'

Background

Healthwatch Bolton is holding conversations with various groups within the community to understand knowledge and barriers to having healthy lifestyles and what supports their health and wellbeing.

Healthwatch Bolton wanted to hear and understand the voice of the young person and worked with a local high school who allowed us to spend the morning with their Year 7 students, where we were particularly interested to hear about their emotional health and wellbeing.

Strategic Drivers

The engagement work and ensuing report falls within the priority area of 'Mental Health and Young People' identified as one of Healthwatch Bolton's Priority Workstreams for 2016/17.

The good emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people is vital both to children and young people themselves and society as a whole. Being emotionally healthy is an important end in itself but also linked to a range of positive outcomes later on in life.

The Mental Health Agency "Young Minds" identifies a list of types of behaviour which children and young people who don't have good mental health are at increased risk of. This includes:

Becoming very withdrawn or sad	Anxiety, panic attacks and phobias
Obsessive or addictive behaviour	Sleep problems
Eating problems	Problems focussing or concentrating
Self-harming	Wetting or soiling
Problems with friendships or bullying	Risk-taking behaviour
Drug or alcohol use	School refusing or difficult behaviour in school

The early identification of children suffering with poor emotional wellbeing is vital to ensure that they receive the appropriate help as soon as possible.

Who we spoke to

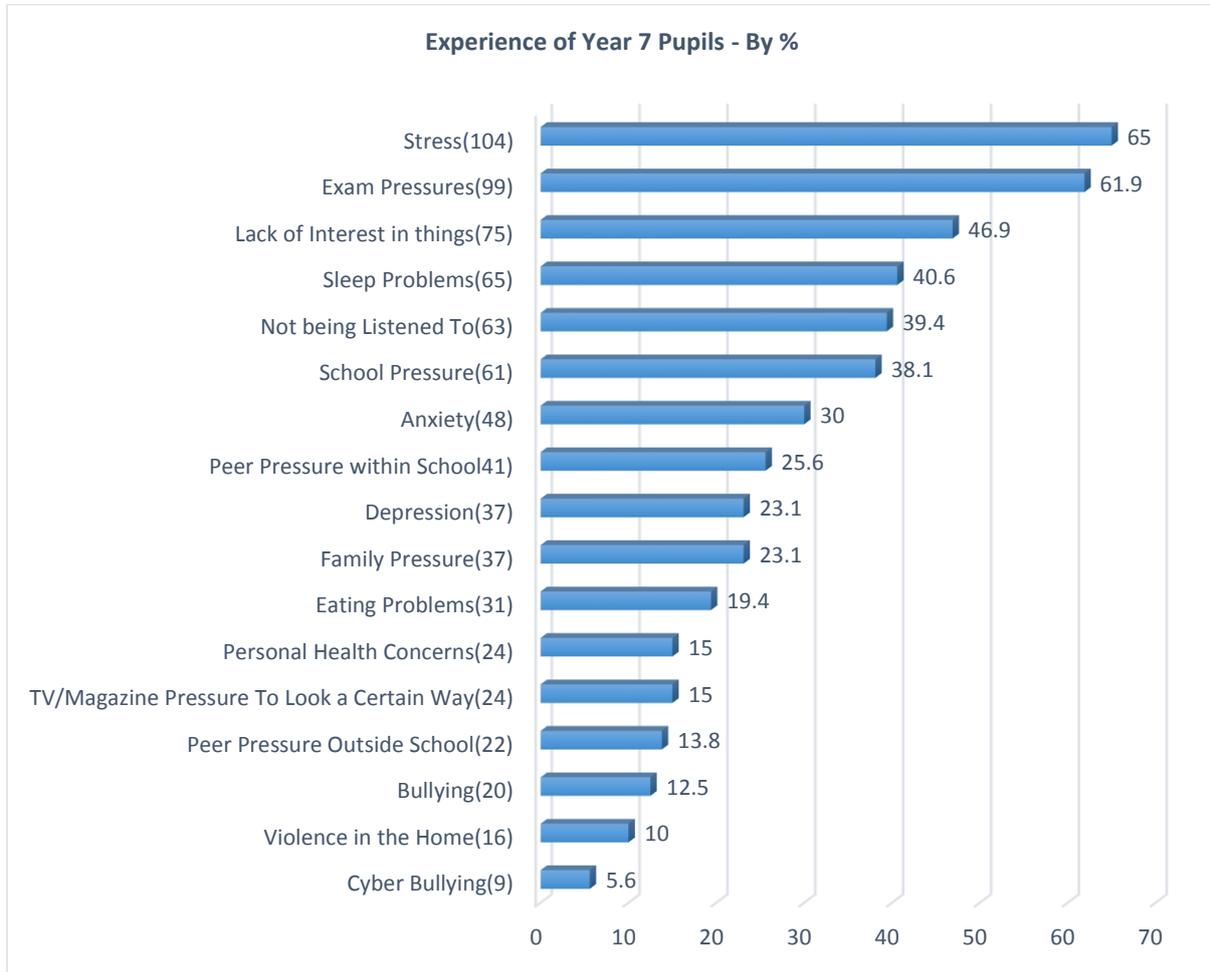
We worked with 160 Year 7 students in the summer term earlier this year. This allowed us to collect a wealth of data which we have collated and correlated.

Any students experiencing any of the problems or issues raised by the selectable list presented to them were encouraged to speak to their Form Teacher or Manager of Learning and were informed that they can talk, in confidence, to the School Nurse.

Young People’s recent experiences of various emotions

We asked the young people, via a selectable list, if they had experienced any of the following over the last month.

- 160 pupils said that they had experienced one or more of the issues. The graph above shows descending percentage order by issue.

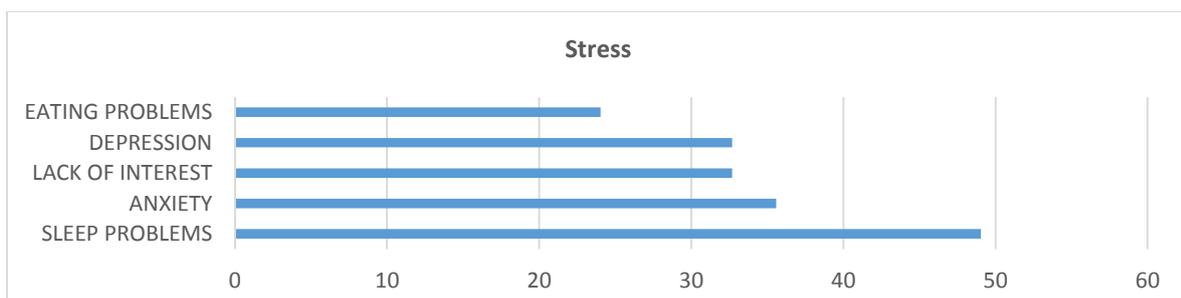


Effects on Emotional Wellbeing

We split the data from the overall responses in to 2 distinct groups. Group 1 being the data collected on the number of students experiencing anxiety, stress and depression; Group 2 being the possible triggers for possible changes in their emotional wellbeing.

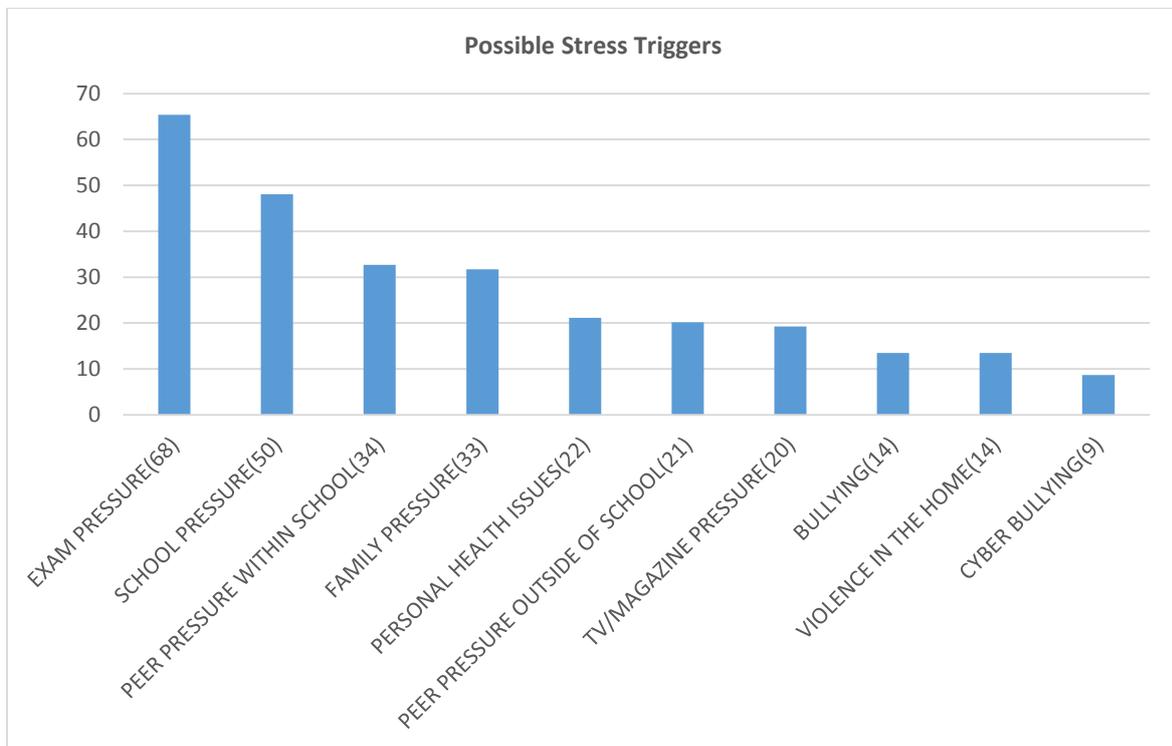
Stress

The highest percentage of experiences by the students was stress and we highlight below what students experiencing stress also said they have issues with. We can also see from the data, what those students raised as possible triggers for the changes in their emotions.



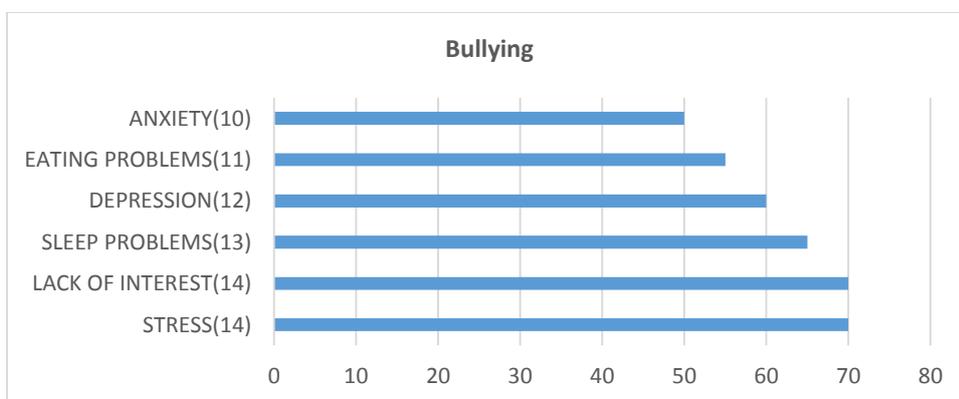
Looking at the data in the same way for those students stating that they have experienced anxiety and/or depression within the last month we can see that the top 4 triggers are :

- Exam pressures
- School pressure
- Peer pressure within school
- Family pressures



Bullying

We can note from the data that 12.5% of the 160 students in Year 7 have experienced bullying within the month previous to the July session, which equates to approximately 3 students per form so we looked at the correlation between that experience and the effects on emotional wellbeing.



Earlier this year *Ditch the Label*, the largest anti-bullying charity stated in its Annual Report that they consistently find that 1 in 2 young people have at some point experienced bullying, with 1 in 4 being bullied at least once within the past year. This year, for the first time, they explored the relationship between bullying and physical health and found that 27% of those who are bullied daily feel constantly ill, versus 8% on average.

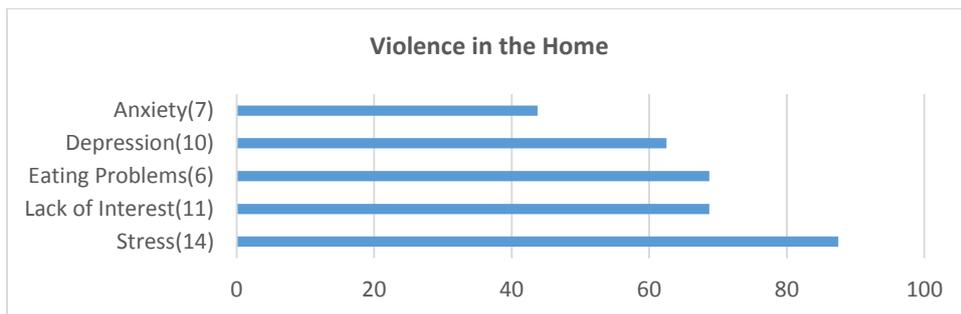
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We can clearly see from this local high school that the incidence of bullying is below average and that by promoting the school bullying statement and anti-bullying policy to students, parents and staff they are also indirectly promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of their students.

Violence in the Home

10% of students stated that they have experienced violence in the home within the last month so we looked at the correlation of the effects of this on their emotional health and wellbeing.

We can see the correlation below of the effects of violence in the home on the emotional health and wellbeing of the young people who have experienced it.



Moving Forward

We could not have put this report together without the co-operation of the high school, its staff and Year 7 students who took part, so thank you for making your voice count.

A full data set is available showing correlations between experiences and possible triggers and Healthwatch Bolton would like to work with this year group through to Year 11 to see how life changes for them through their school journey and how they manage the changes on their emotional health and wellbeing.

We would also encourage the school to use the information collated to plan future PHSE lesson and Respect Days to cover those issues and experiences which affect young people.