



#RealMe: Young people's
feelings towards self-worth

October 2018



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Who we are

healthwatch Sheffield

Healthwatch Sheffield are here to help adults, children and young people influence and improve how services are designed and run. Healthwatch Sheffield are completely independent and not part of the NHS or Sheffield City Council. You can tell Healthwatch Sheffield about your experience of:

1. Health services

(GPs, dentists, opticians, pharmacies and hospitals etc.)

2. Social care services

(care at home, residential and nursing homes, personal budgets etc.)

Healthwatch Sheffield collates the feedback you give to provide evidence based recommendations to the organisations that design, pay for, and run our local services.



Young Healthwatch are a group of volunteers that work with Healthwatch Sheffield to make sure children and young people's views of health and social care services are listened to.

Any young person aged 14-25 living in the Sheffield area who is interested in volunteering for Healthwatch Sheffield can be part of Young Healthwatch.

Young Healthwatch designs and creates projects that benefit the work Healthwatch Sheffield does. This report was created by Young Healthwatch volunteers, with support from Healthwatch Sheffield staff.

Introduction



Members of Young Healthwatch considered a range of topics for a new project, and kept returning to the importance of self-worth amongst young people (Under 25s)

The project was designed to provide young people with a platform to be able to talk in a focused way about their sense of self-worth.

The aim of the project was to understand young people in Sheffield's feelings of their own self-worth and wellbeing, to find out the extent to which young people have varying levels of self-worth and what can be done to improve these feelings.

Young Healthwatch focused on self-worth because of their concerns that young people with low self-worth can find it hard to cope with the pressures that the expectations school, family, their peer group, and the media can bring.

The group were particularly concerned that young people have greater access to manufactured images and the narratives of others' lives than ever before, and that this may have a serious impact on the way that they view themselves.

Young Healthwatch thought that those with low self-worth might be more likely to experience mental health issues as they grow up, and may find the ups and downs of life harder to cope with.

Self-worth

Our sense of self-worth is related to the degree of self-esteem and self acceptance of who we are.

It is our evaluation of our self as being a worthwhile person.

¹ Nugent, Pam M.S., "SELF-WORTH," in PsychologyDictionary.org, April 13, 2013, www.psychologydictionary.org/self-worth



Summary

Our project has shown us that a significant majority of young people who Young Healthwatch engaged with have an awareness of their sense of self-worth, and understand which activities they can engage with to begin to feel better about themselves.

The results of our survey show that the average sense of self-worth amongst 14-25s is low; some of the feedback Young Healthwatch received indicates that young people are struggling because of this.

The relationship between sense of self-worth and mental wellbeing is clear. Young Healthwatch encourages service providers working with 14-25s to consider the findings of this project, and incorporate the principles listed on the next page into service design and ongoing service development.



Principles

1

Commissioners and providers should consider ways to raise awareness of the care and support available to help young people with a low sense of self-worth in Sheffield. They should look at options for making this information readily accessible for all young people, parents/carers and professionals.

See Appendix 1 for some useful services operating within Sheffield.

2

Commissioners and providers should explore their role in improving access to the wellbeing activities that young people have identified as having a positive effect on their sense of self-worth. This could be through simple sign-posting of what's already available to increasing access through funding projects and groups.

3

Commissioners and providers should engage frequently and meaningfully with young people when designing services aimed at young people, to recognise the stresses and pressures that they are experiencing.

4

Schools, in particular, have a key role to play in raising awareness and encouraging attention to self-worth and wellbeing to counteract the negative impact of some of the pressures young people face.

5

On an ongoing basis, young people's views need to be heard, to help ensure that services respond in a way that meets young people's needs, particularly if they are not feeling supported at school or college.

Background

National charity Childline said in 2016 that children are 'plagued by low self-esteem and loneliness'.

Childline provided 35,244 counselling sessions for low self-esteem in 2014-15.

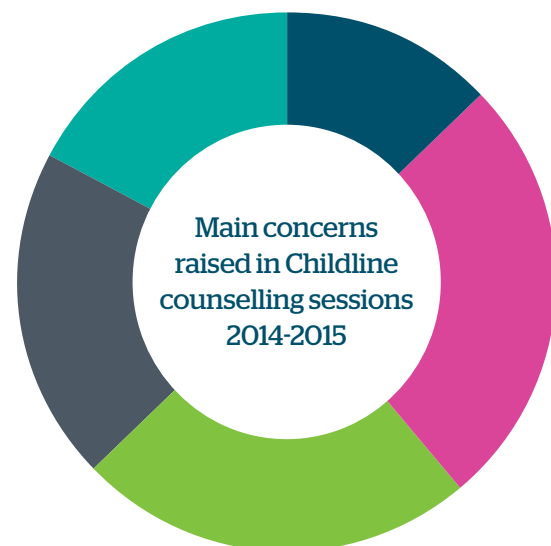
Childline said that the 9% increase in counselling sessions for children with low self-esteem is likely due to a decrease in confidence levels in young people. This could be fuelled by a rise in the use of social media, cyber-bullying and celebrity culture, in which young people "strive to achieve the perfect image"²

Chris Williams, Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow, has discussed the negative impact low self-esteem can have on our everyday lives; "In the short term, avoiding challenging and difficult situations makes you feel a lot safer, however in the longer term, this can backfire because it reinforces your underlying doubts and fears. It teaches you the unhelpful rule that the only way to cope is by avoiding things.

Having low self-esteem isn't a mental health problem in itself, but the two are closely linked. If lots of things are affecting your self-esteem for a long time, this may lead to a mental health problem, such as depression or anxiety."³

² www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/children-plagued-by-low-self-esteem-and-loneliness/

³ www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/raising-low-self-esteem/



- 26% Family relationships
- 24% **Low self-esteem**
- 20% Abuse
- 17% Bullying
- 13% Self-harm

9% increase in counselling sessions for children with low self-esteem.

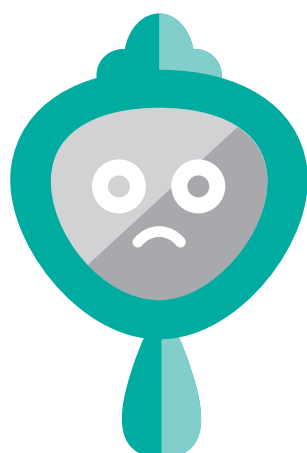
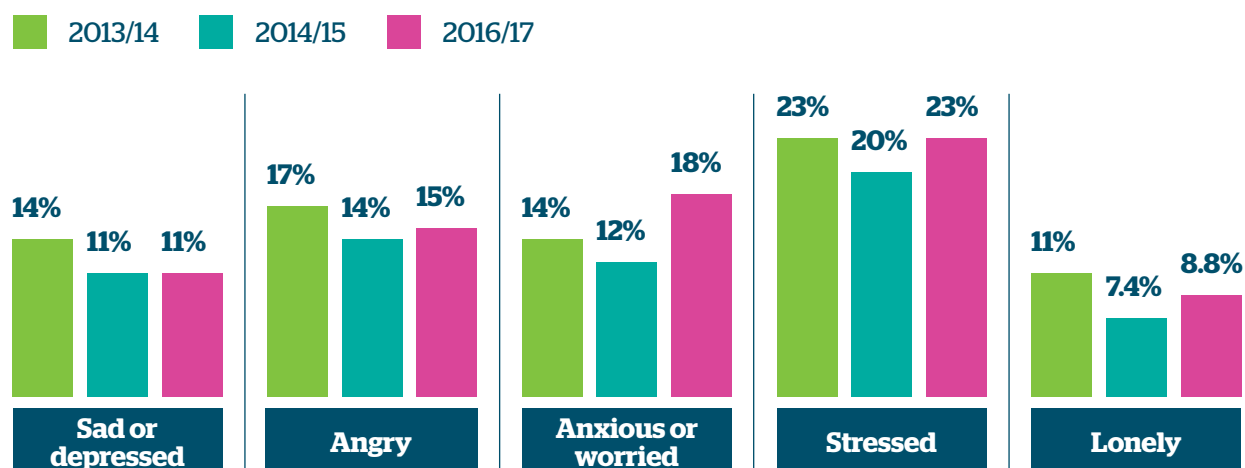
Background continued...

In Sheffield

In Sheffield's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People in 2017⁴, it was estimated that approximately 7,000 children between the ages of 5-15 years have a clinically recognisable mental health disorder.

The table below shows that for young people in school (year 10s, age 14-15) feeling sad or depressed most of the time remains the same as 2014/15, whilst other negative emotions increased from 2014/15.

Feel these emotions most of the time (Y10)



In Sheffield, 53.7% of children reported that they felt their body was 'about the right size', which is similar to the national average of 52.4%.

Young Healthwatch felt that this percentage was low and that having a negative body image is closely linked to feelings of low self-worth.

⁴ Sheffield's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People 2017-18, www.sheffieldccg.nhs.uk/Downloads/Our%20Projects/Childrens/LTP%20Refresh%20201718%20FOR%20SUBMISSION%2031102017%20logos.pdf

How did we investigate?

Sheffield's Young Healthwatch group designed and ran a multi-part project to investigate young people's views of their own self-worth and wellbeing.

There were three strands to the project; a survey, a workshop and an arts competition.

Survey

Members of Young Healthwatch designed a survey that was deliberately short so as to be more accessible. It was aimed at 14-25 year olds living in the Sheffield area and was open from February 2018 until April 2018.

Hard copies and an online link were distributed in schools and youth settings and shared on Healthwatch and Young Healthwatch social media channels. Surveys were also distributed by some of our partner organisations across Sheffield.

The survey asked respondents to mark their feeling of self-worth on a scale, and mark whether activities made them feel positively or negatively about themselves.

The survey comprised of seven questions which included closed and open questions. On average, respondents spent two minutes completing the survey (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the survey).



Workshop

A workshop was delivered at Sheffield College Firvale Centre on the 27th of March 2018.

The aims of this workshop were:

To listen to what young people in Sheffield have to say on self-worth.

To raise awareness on mental health and common mental disorders.

To promote the importance of looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

A group of 30 students attended the workshop, which was facilitated by the Healthwatch Sheffield Engagement Officer along with two Young Healthwatch volunteers.

The majority of the students were ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) gateway learners, and came from Roma-Slovak communities. An interpreter was not present for the session, so there were some barriers to verbal communication.

How did we investigate continued...

Arts competition: #RealMeSheffield

On 5th December 2017, Young Health watch launched an arts competition to capture the views of young people who prefer to express themselves creatively. The brief was to create a piece of art which illustrates feelings of self-worth and wellbeing.

Use of any media was encouraged, for example creative writing, music, film, drawing and painting were welcomed.

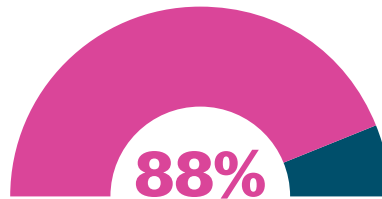
Young Healthwatch designed a flyer and filmed a video to promote the contest. The winner was awarded an Amazon voucher worth £50 and £50 to be donated to a charity of their choice.



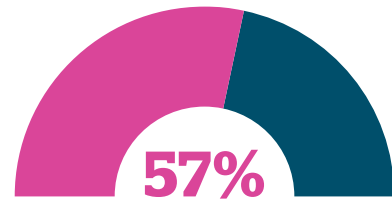
Findings

There were a total of **151** respondents to the survey.

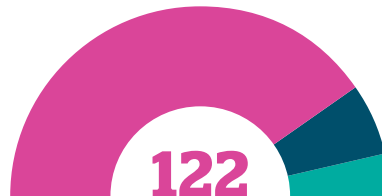
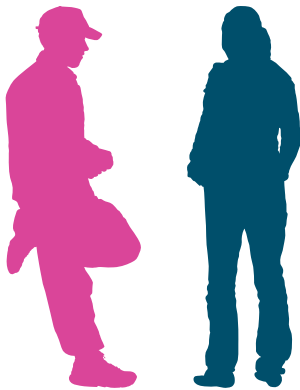
All respondents answered all questions, but some did not leave a response in the open text box at the end of the survey.



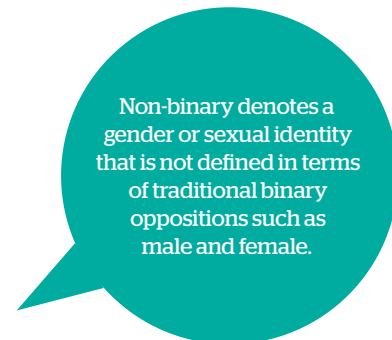
were young people aged 14 - 25. Other responses were from over 25s or under 14s.



of respondents did not have any disabilities or physical health conditions.

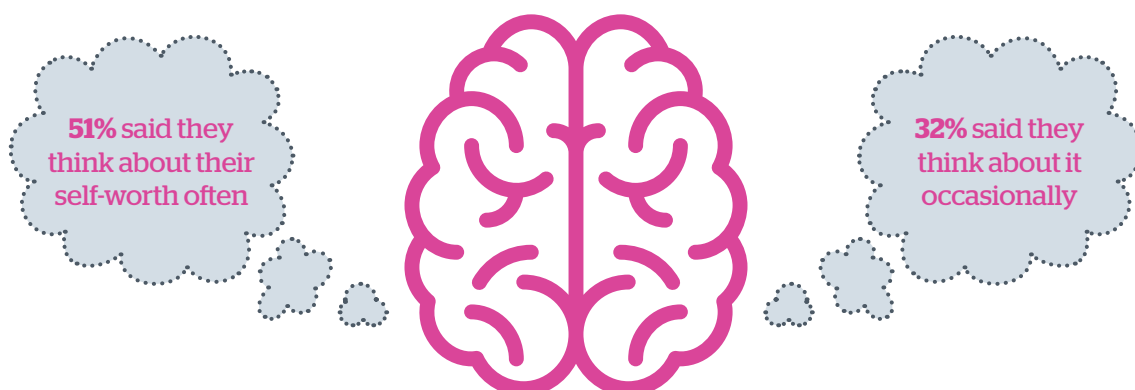


of the respondents were female, 18 were male and 11 were non-binary.



Awareness of Self-worth

The majority of respondents told us that they do think about their self-worth.



Findings continued...

When asked to self-score their sense of self-worth, the average score was 4 out of a possible 9.



14 respondents marked their sense of self-worth at 0.



13 respondents marked their sense of self-worth over 8.

Analysis by gender



Young men scored their sense of self-worth higher at an average of 6.3.



Women and non-binary individuals reported a lower value, averaging 3.7 and 3.6 respectively.



90 females marked their sense of self-worth under 5.

However as previously stated because the majority answering the questions in the survey were female, this is a less than representative sample.

Activities affecting Self-worth

From a list of activities, participants were asked to say whether engaging in those activities affects how they feel about themselves and whether this is positive or negative.



'Listening to music' was reported to affect most participants (84%) positively, followed by 'being with friends' (71%) and 'being outside' (67%).

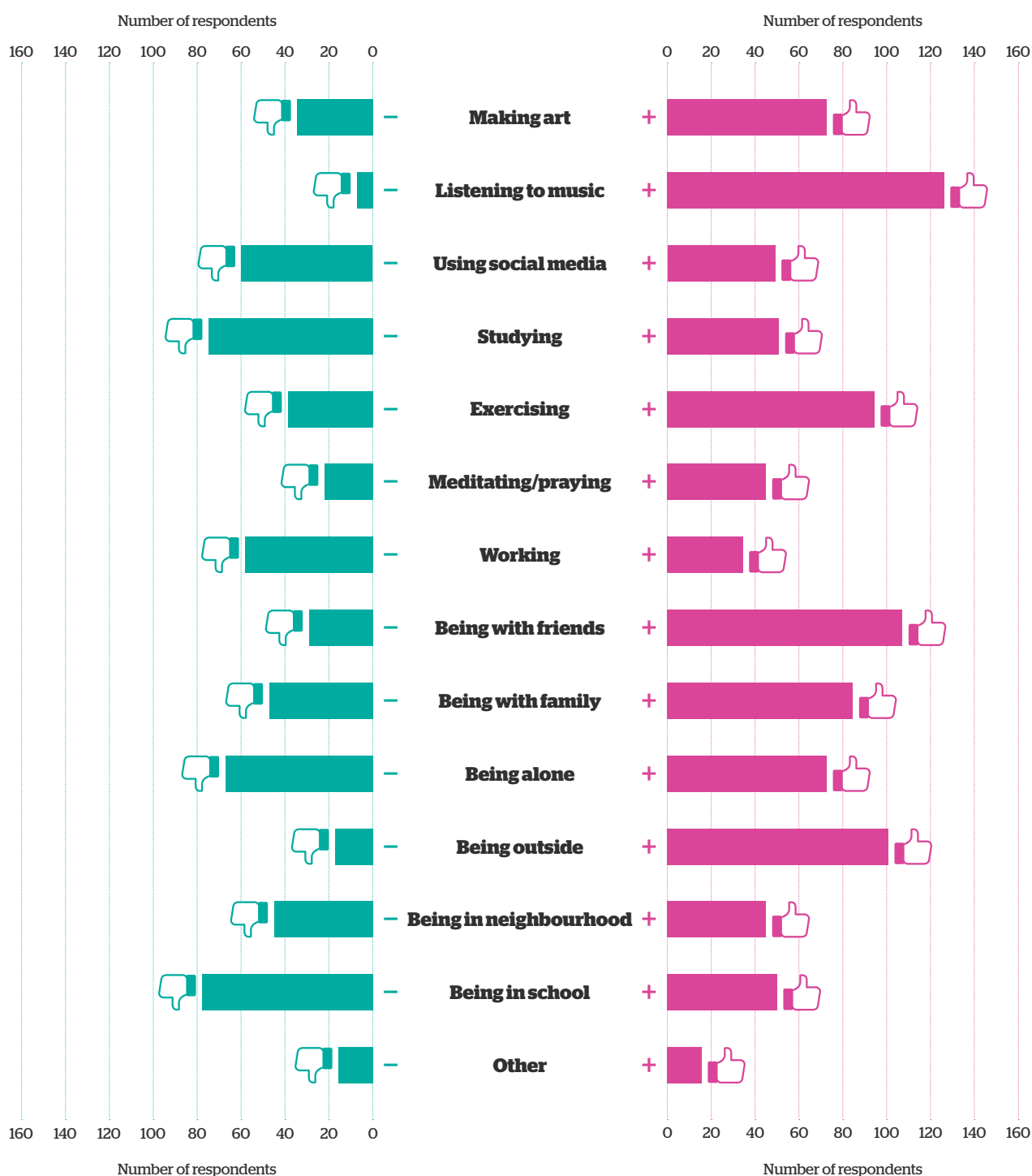


Young people told us that 'being in school' and 'studying' affects their sense of self-worth negatively (52% and 51% respectively).

These results are consistent with Healthwatch Sheffield's Community Mental Health report⁵, where 'time with friends,' 'listening to music' and 'time in nature' were found to be "very helpful" for maintaining good mental health.

⁵ Mental Health in the Community, Healthwatch Sheffield, 2018, www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Healthwatch-Report-Digital.pdf

Do these activities make you feel positively or negatively about yourself?



Please note. Participants rated some activities as both positive and negative or 'not sure'. Not all responded to every activity.

Thoughts and feelings

A number of respondents made comments about their sense of self-worth in addition to completing the survey. Many responses touched on how feelings of self-worth can change, dependent on different influences.

“There can be times where I feel I’m unique and valuable as well as times where I feel useless and like nothing.”

Young people told us their self-worth can be greatly affected by close relationships.

“A break up makes me lack self-worth”

“I have spent the last year and a half regaining my sense of self-worth after being in a relationship for five years which was emotionally abusive. I was told on a daily basis I was ugly, stupid, useless and a variety of other things. I’m getting better now.”

Other people told us that when their self-worth was low, impacting on their emotional wellbeing, they found it difficult to get help to feel better.

“I don’t like saying I feel ill or am in pain as I don’t want to be a bother.”

Family relationships were mentioned as being particularly important.

“I am strongly influenced by my family’s varying levels of acceptance of my gender, which is much more consistent (and better) at work and in particular spaces online and on social media.”

The school setting was mentioned by respondents as sometimes having a negative impact on feelings of self-worth.

“The school system tries their best not to make kids feel worthless if they’re not getting the top grades, but they end up making you feel so useless.”

The impact of comparing yourself to others was mentioned several times, with self-worth being damaged by measuring personal value against the achievements of others.

“I’ll never be good enough.”

“I measure my successes against others.”

“School and work are both measured on how successful you are, not on individual self-worth.”

Some respondents shared with us the activities that create a greater sense of self-worth. Getting outside and contributing to society were considered to be particularly beneficial.

“Going out and meeting new people and learning new skills. A positive attitude returns as well as confidence. They both mirror each other.”

“I found a lot of my self-worth through volunteering, creating things and helping other people.”

Appendix 1 has a list of services operating within Sheffield and helpful online resources for young people struggling with their self-worth.

Firvale Centre, Sheffield College workshop

The students at the Firvale Centre generally had positive attitudes, which were reflected in their answers to the questions asked throughout the workshop.

For example, when asked to list adjectives to describe themselves, almost all wrote 'happy', followed by other traits such as 'funny', 'strong', and 'confident'.

However, it should be noted that in the classroom setting students may have been less likely to say if they were experiencing negative feelings.

Some students had an understanding of self-worth. Expressions such as 'good health' and 'thinking about you' were used.

During the workshop, we talked about common mental health disorders affecting young people, such as depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). In this setting, awareness of these conditions was low.

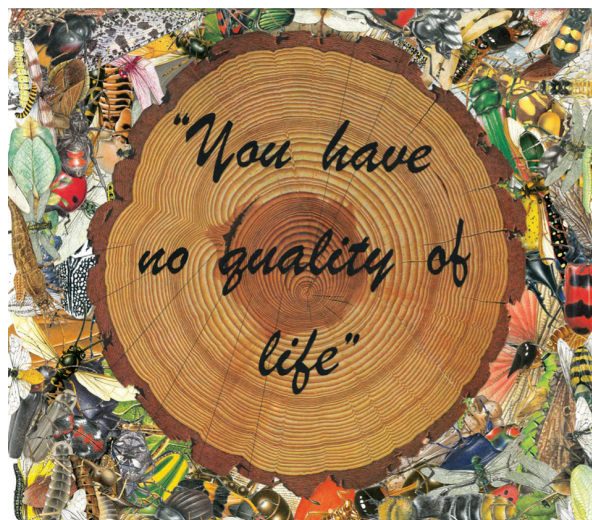
Depression was referred to in vague terms such as 'sad' and 'angry'. Anxiety was described as 'stress', and there were no responses when asked to define OCD.



Arts competition: #RealMeSheffield

The winner of the Young Healthwatch competition was Emery Buck, a student at Sheffield Hallam University, with their analogue collage series entitled 'First Encounters'. Emery chose to donate £50 to the local LGBTQ Mental Health charity SAYiT and also won a £50 Amazon voucher for their submission. You can find out more about SAYiT in Appendix 1.

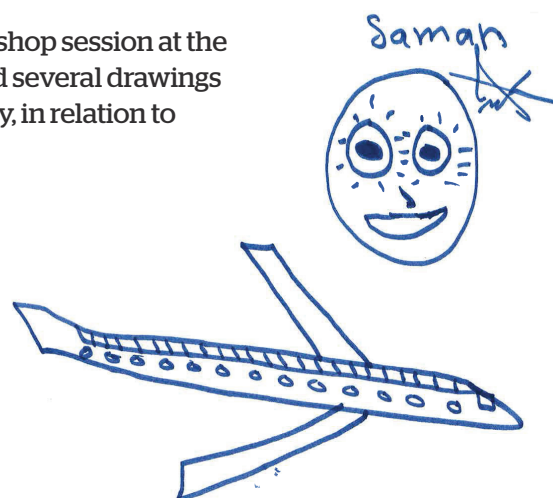
Young Healthwatch felt that Emery's work was an honest and interesting approach to the competition theme of expressing self-worth, and liked the way images of nature took on new meaning.



Artwork from Engagement

We also received a number of drawings from our workshop session at the Firvale centre, with Sheffield College. We have included several drawings here, some which reflected the findings from the survey, in relation to activities which make young people feel good.

I want to go back
to my contry that is
what make my happy



When I dont feel good make me
good music.



When I have some thing in my
heart ~~like~~ I need to talk with
my friends, or mum.

Broken
heart



Whe I sad or unhappy I want
my baby with me. ~~my~~ ~~dad~~



I Like make up arlest



Acknowledgements

Young Healthwatch would like to thank everyone who took part in our self-worth survey and all of our partnering organisations across Sheffield for promoting it.

Young Healthwatch would also like to thank the Firvale Centre at Sheffield College, for hosting our workshop.

This report was created by Young Healthwatch volunteers with help from Healthwatch staff. Special thanks go to:

- **Danial Hakim, YHW Volunteer**
- **Lucy Fox, YHW Volunteer**
- **Hannah Cox, YHW Volunteer**

Appendices

Appendix 1: Useful services and resources

Sheffield Mental Health Guide

This website is to help the people of Sheffield easily find accurate information about mental health and service provision in the city. It's designed to help people navigate the highs and lows of life, whether they have a diagnosis or are just having a difficult day.

www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk

E: mhguide@sheffieldflourish.co.uk

T: 0114 273 7009

 @SheffMHG

Spirit of the Rainbow Heron

Spirit of the Rainbow Heron is a charity that inspires and funds creative activities by and for young people to promote mental wellbeing and challenge perceptions of mental health. They host a monthly Arts Café; The purpose of the Café is to promote wellbeing for young people through providing a regular safe space, with peer support and creative activities for relaxation, fun, self-expression, exploration, healing and sharing; a crisis prevention model for young people experiencing mental health problems.

www.spirit-of-the-rainbow-heron.com

E: charly.rainbowheron@gmail.com

 @Rainbow_Heron

Sheffield Mind

Sheffield Mind has a wide choice of services available to anyone in Sheffield. These range from counselling and psychotherapy, one to one support, bespoke training and informal peer support. Mind recognises the close link between physical and mental health and offers a range of services and support to enable people to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. They believe that everyone can do a lot to improve their mental health and promote self-help and empowerment as a route to prevention and recovery.

www.sheffieldmind.co.uk

E: info@sheffieldmind.co.uk

T: 0114 258 4489

 @SheffieldMind

SAYiT

SAYiT works with young people and professionals to make real lives better. They provide practical support around LGBT+ life, sexual health, HIV and mental wellbeing, while the training they provide helps organisations improve knowledge and address discrimination.

www.sayit.org.uk

E: info@sayit.org.uk

T: 0114 241 2728

 SayiTSheffield

Together Women Project: VIBE

VIBE is a project for and led by young women and girls 12-19 to have a say on issues affecting them and make changes locally, regionally and nationally. They host a range of events from film nights to craft sessions to cookery classes.

www.togetherwomen.org/vibe

E: twpvibe@togetherwomen.org

T: 0114 275 8282

 @twpvibe

Sheffield Music Hub

Sheffield Music Hub believes that every child, regardless of race; gender; where they live; their levels of musical talent; parental income; whether they have special educational needs or disabilities; and whether they are looked-after children; deserve the very best music education.

www.sheffieldmusic.org

E: musicservice@sheffield.gov.uk

T: 0114 2506860

 @SheffMusicHub

Sage Sheffield

SAGE is a social therapeutic horticulture (STH) and an arts project for people aged 18+ experiencing mental health difficulties. Its STH activities take place on 3 allotments on the City Council's Grimesthorpe site in Burngreave. Its arts activities take place in various venues.

www.sagesheffield.org.uk

E: enquiries@sagesheffield.org.uk

T: 0114 273 7718

 @SAGE_Sheffield

Chilypep

The Children & Young People's Empowerment Project (Chilypep) works to involve young people aged 8-25 in the policy and decision making of services and organisations which affect them. For example, they helped to influence the Sheffield Young Carer's Strategy and Sheffield Young People's Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Strategy. They can provide one-off consultations and more long-term participation projects and campaigns, including peer education initiatives. They also provide advice, evaluation and assessment to organisations who wish to improve their services to be more inclusive of young people.

www.chilypep.org.uk

E: info@chilypep.org.uk

T: 0114 234 8846

 @Chilypep

Door 43

Door 43 offers support to 13-25 year olds on a range of emotional wellbeing issues in a young person centred environment. The service focuses on early intervention and low level support and is not a specialist mental health service. The staff at Door43 are not able to conduct mental health assessments or provide intensive one-to-one sessions or clinical treatment, but they will refer young people to appropriate services if required.

www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk/i-need-help/door43

E: Door43@sheffieldfutures.org.uk

T: 0114 201 2774

Inside Out - Burton Street Foundation

Inside Out provides creative day time activities for adults with mild, moderate and severe learning disabilities to assist with the development of self-confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem in a stimulating, fun and comfortable atmosphere where clients feel safe, respected and relaxed.

The Inside Out staff team are made up of very skilled, creative and caring individuals. The majority of Inside Out sessions take place at Burton Street.

www.burtonstreet.co.uk

E: danielle.wibberley@burtonstreet.org.uk

T: 0114 233 2908

 @burtonst

Resources

Information from Mind on self-esteem:

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-esteem/#.WOMOLJUm6P8

Factsheet from the Mental Health Foundation about Friendship:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/f/friendship-and-mental-health

Young Minds parents' guide to encouraging good self-esteem:

www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-self-esteem/

Accepting yourself:

www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/i-accepted-myself-for-who-i-am-and-it-s-changed-my-whole-life

Appendices continued...

Appendix 2: Survey

SELF-WORTH: “Our self-worth is related to the degree of self-esteem and self-acceptance of who we are. It is our evaluation of our self as being a worthwhile person.”

Please mark the boxes that you agree with. If you don't want to answer a question, leave it blank.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Age:

Under 15

☐

15 to 18

☐

19 to 25

☐

Over 25

☐

Gender:

Female

☐

Male

☐

Non-Binary

☐

Trans

☐

Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health condition?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Prefer not to say

☐

1. Do you actively think about your self-worth?

Never

☐

Occasionally

☐

Often

☐

Not sure

☐

2. Please mark your sense of self-worth on this scale.

I feel worthless

I feel worthy

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. Do these activities make you feel positively or negatively about yourself? Please tick the boxes you agree with.

	Positively	Negatively	Not sure
Time with friends			
Making art			
Meditation/Prayer			
Time with family			
Exercising			
Listening to Music			
Using Social Media			
Time alone			
Time in school			
Studying			
Time outside			
Time in your neighbourhood			
Time in work			
Other			

4. Do you have anything else you would like to say about your sense of self-worth?



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