

# CoRAY

Covid-19 response: Mental Health  
Resources for and by Young People



Westminster  
Foundation



Medical  
Research  
Council

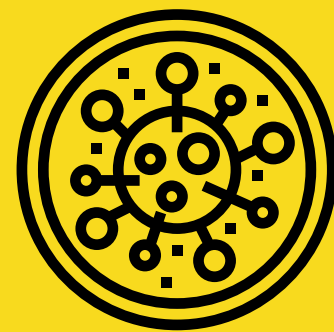


Emerging  
Minds



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH PRIORITIES DURING AND BEYOND COVID-19



COVID-19 RESPONSE: MENTAL HEALTH  
RESOURCES FOR AND BY YOUNG PEOPLE



Cathy Creswell, Becca Watson, Elise Sellars, Emily Lloyd & young  
people from the Co-RAY YPAG & Dyspraxia Foundation

# INTRODUCTION TO CORAY



18 MONTH 'KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION' PROJECT TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH DURING & BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

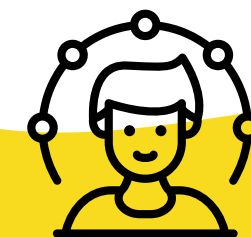
Looking at what the **research evidence** tells us about the impact of the pandemic on **young people's** mental health



Asking **young people** about what they think are the **most important** issues they want help / support with



Working with **young people** to **develop evidence-informed resources** to help them with their mental health



# FIRST ITERATION: WHAT DID YOUNG PEOPLE THINK WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING 11-16 YEAR OLD'S IN THE UK

- **Online activity** for young people across the UK
- Worked with our **Young People's Advisory Group** to decide on the most important areas to focus on when designing mental health resources

Feeling  
bored, flat &  
unmotivated

Managing  
change &  
uncertainty

Feeling  
lonely,  
isolated &  
disconnected

Encouraging  
young people to  
seek help &  
support for their  
mental health

- Worked with experts to **produce evidence-informed recommendations** to support young people with these areas- links in the chat

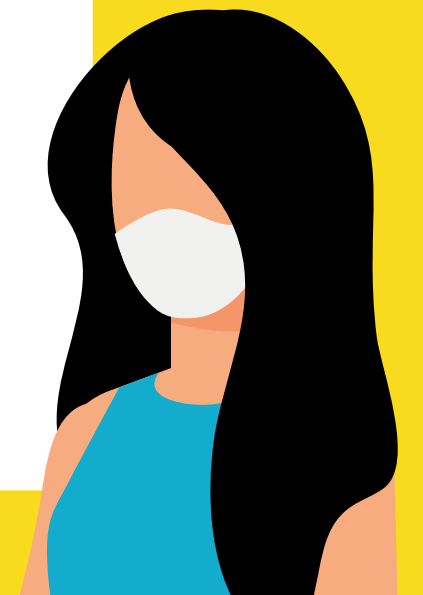
# HOW HAS YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING CHANGED THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC

**Co-SPACE** study  
COVID-19: Supporting Parents, Adolescents  
and Children during Epidemics

The Co-SPACE study has been tracking young people's mental health over time since the 1st national lockdown



- Although many young people have been doing okay, some have found the pandemic challenging for their mental health
- The most difficulties were reported during national lockdowns when restrictions were highest





# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: GENERAL POPULATION

UK National Lockdown

**MARCH -  
JUNE 2020**

## EXPERIENCED A RANGE OF EMOTIONS:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Bored
- Angry
- Worried
- Frustrated
- Stressed
- Hopeless

## MISSED OUT:

- Missing life before the pandemic
- Poor sleep
- Struggling with schoolwork
- Lack of routine
- Missing friends and family

## POSITIVES OF LOCKDOWN:

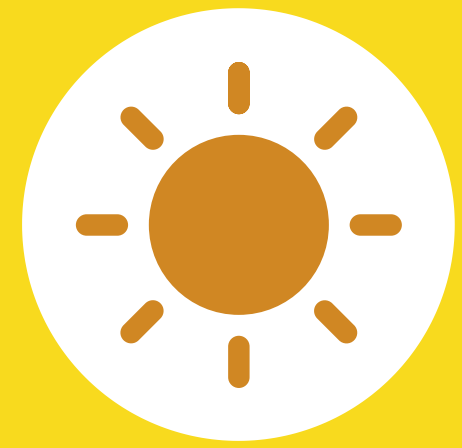
- Better family relationships
- Trying new hobbies/activities
- Break from school pressure



Summer /  
Lockdown Eases

JULY -  
AUGUST  
2020

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: GENERAL POPULATION



## SOME

### IMPROVEMENTS:

- Slightly less emotional difficulties

## DIFFICULTIES COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN:

- Worried about their wellbeing
- Feeling depressed or anxious
- Difficulty sleeping

## PREPARING TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL:

- Worried about final grades
- Pressure to catch up on learning
- Worried about the future and getting a job
- Looking forward to seeing friends





# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: GENERAL POPULATION

Autumn /  
Back to  
School /  
Tier System

SEPT -  
OCT  
2020



## RETURNING TO SCHOOL:

- Majority felt **positive**
- Some felt **nervous** i.e. worried about bringing COVID home and changes to their routines

## TYPES OF WORRY:

- Own **health** & health of others
- The **future** – impact on **education**

## CONTINUED NEGATIVE IMPACT:

- Felt **stressed**
- **Lonely**
- **Worried**
- Felt they had '**lost**' things
- **Change felt negative** (sometimes positive)

## BUT SOME IMPROVEMENT TO FIRST LOCKDOWN:

- **Less bored**
- **Less lonely**
- **Better mood & self-confidence**



NOV -  
DEC 2020

Winter / Tier  
System / Short  
Lockdowns

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: GENERAL POPULATION



## YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER PRESSURE:

- For some, mental health got worse
- Uneasy about the unknown / not making plans
- Concerns about future exams & careers

## DIFFICULTIES REPORTED:

- Anxiety
- Feeling irritable or annoyed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Struggling with sleep

## MENTAL HEALTH AT SCHOOL:

- Schools said mental health got worse
- Girls struggling with social skills and managing emotions in school
- School work and exams having big impact on mental health





# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: GENERAL POPULATION



UK  
National  
Lockdown

JAN -  
MARCH  
2021



## RANGE OF FEELINGS & EMOTIONS:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Bored
- Fed up

## WORRIES & CONCERNS:

- Not seeing others – family/friends/teachers
- Catching COVID-19
- School
- Relationships
- Parent's jobs/ money for food
- Missed opportunities for the future
- Impact of pandemic on society

## LEARNING AT HOME:

- Many enjoyed learning at own pace
- Worried about falling behind, losing confidence, motivation



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

QUESTION 1. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE THREE MAIN FEELINGS OR CONCERNS YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE HELP OR SUPPORT WITH AT THE MOMENT?

- Feeling angry
- Feeling worried, afraid or anxious
- Feeling unsafe
- Feeling sad, unhappy or depressed
- Feeling lonely or isolated
- Feeling irritable or annoyed
- Feeling restless or hyperactive
- Feeling tired or low energy levels
- Feeling flat or bored
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- Low motivation
- Low confidence or self-esteem
- Mood swings
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Struggling with change or uncertainty



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

QUESTION 1. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE THREE MAIN FEELINGS OR CONCERNS  
YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE HELP OR SUPPORT WITH AT THE MOMENT?

**Feeling  
worried,  
afraid or  
anxious**

**Feeling sad,  
unhappy or  
depressed**

**Feeling  
stressed or  
overwhelmed  
(unable to  
cope)**

**Feeling  
lonely or  
isolated**

**Low  
confidence  
or self-  
esteem**

**Five response options  
most frequently endorsed**

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

QUESTION 2. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE THREE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVER THE NEXT YEAR?



- Feeling behind with/ pressure to catch up on schoolwork
- Jobs or other opportunities
- The economy and/or how the pandemic will affect society
- Managing friendships or relationships
- Exam stress/pressure
- The possibility of future lockdowns, restrictions or pandemics
- Concerns about friends & family's health and wellbeing
- Managing bereavement or loss
- Managing normal life changes
- Missing out on big or important social events or milestones
- Missing out on big or important academic events or milestones
- Living in an uncertain world and/or changes to future plans
- Developing a sense of identity or managing issues with body image
- Concerns about things in society being unfair or unequal
- Concerns about money, food or housing

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

QUESTION 2. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE THREE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVER THE NEXT YEAR?

**Feeling behind  
with/pressure  
to catch up on  
school work**

**Managing  
friendships or  
relationships**

**Exam  
stress /  
pressure**

**Living in an  
uncertain  
world /  
changes to  
future plans**

**Jobs or other  
opportunities**

**Five response options  
most frequently endorsed**

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

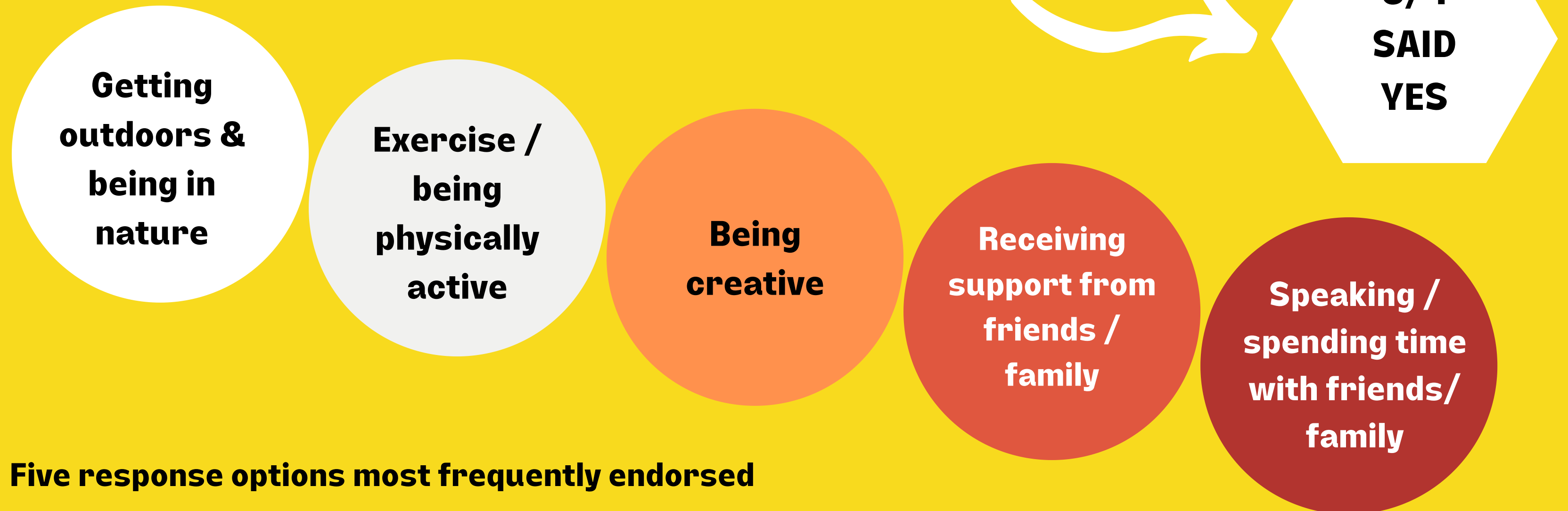
QUESTION 3. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HELPS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING THE PANDEMIC?



- Learning a new hobby or skill
- Learning / doing school work at own pace
- Spending more time at home
- Receiving support from school, teachers or youth workers
- Receiving support from mental health professionals
- Receiving support from friends or family
- Speaking to or spending time with family and friends
- Watching TV, films and videos
- Spending time on social media
- Spending time online
- Being creative (e.g., art, music, cooking, gardening)
- Getting outdoors and being in nature
- Extracurricular groups or activities
- Exercise/ doing something physically active
- Spending less time travelling to / from school

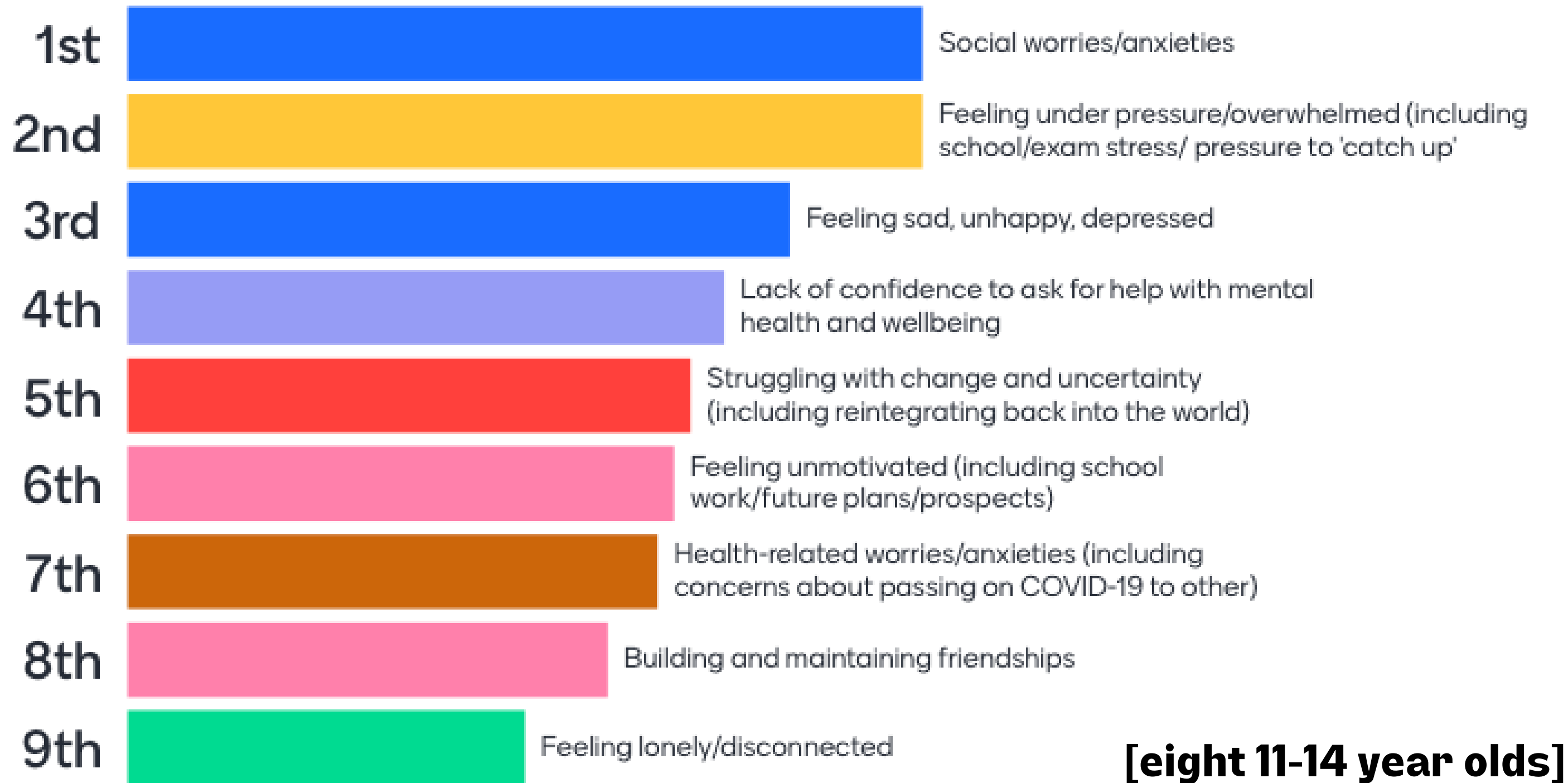
# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

QUESTION 3. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HELPS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING THE PANDEMIC?



Five response options most frequently endorsed

# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR YPAG MEMBERS



**[eight 11-14 year olds]**



# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR YPAG MEMBERS



**[three 16-35 year olds]**

# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR YPAG MEMBERS

'I think that **people felt that they could have done better than they did** [with school work] and may have felt as though they were **behind in their work** and that when they go back to school **they will be unable to keep up**'

'those who do not have a wide social circle - with the message to open up again, **that makes those who were isolated before the pandemic feel even more lonely**'

'I put social worries and anxiety [as the biggest priority] because **we hadn't been out for so long** and so it could have been **quite a big step** for some people'

'**uncertainty has just become integrated into what we call normal...**I think people are still in **panic mode** and this obviously will feed down into young people and their overall anxieties'

# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR YPAG MEMBERS

# ORGANISATIONS

WORKSHOPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM...



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS (FEELINGS/CONCERNS)

Feeling worried, afraid or anxious	13
Feeling stressed or overwhelmed (unable to cope)	12
Feeling lonely or isolated	8
Low confidence or self-esteem	8
Struggling with change or uncertainty	5
Low motivation	3
Difficulty sleeping	3
Feeling sad, unhappy or depressed	2
Feeling tired or low energy levels	2
How to ask for help	2
Communicating with friends again face to face	2
Worrying about welfare of the elderly	2

**Most frequently endorsed**

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS- FEELINGS/CONCERNS

*"Everything seems so much bigger than it was, **you wouldn't think walking to school would feel so overwhelming**"*

YP Diabetes UK

*"...struggling with all the changes going on with the world... It makes me feel **worried and confused**"* YP

Dyspraxia Foundation

*"social anxiety...Now that [lockdown] is getting lifted ... **when you go to speak you don't really know.**"*

YP FBB

*"you need to be comfortable enough to tell people what you are going through... **to try and get help rather than keeping it to yourself.**"* YP

FBB

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS (CHALLENGES OVER THE NEXT YEAR)

Feeling behind with/ pressure to catch up on schoolwork	19
Exam stress/pressure	15
Reintegrating into the world- socialising etc. inc. big social events	14
Concerns about friends & family's health and wellbeing	7
The possibility of future lockdowns, restrictions or pandemics	6
Living in an uncertain world and/or changes to future plans	5
Missing out on big or important <u>social</u> events or milestones	4
Keeping covid- safe whilst socialising	4
Managing friendships or relationships	3
Missing out on big or important <u>academic</u> events or milestones	3
Developing a sense of identity or managing issues with body image	3
Lack of time/space for social life	3

**Most frequently endorsed**

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS- MAIN CHALLENGES

*"we have to **get to grips with exams...**because we didn't do them this year, so **we are just behind on normal experiences**"* YP  
Dyspraxia Foundation

*"and going back to school they **expect you to pick up right where you left off, you feel lost** and now we are trying to catchup."* YP  
FBB

*"... a lot of people haven't been outside and it can **feel quite alien to go back out into the world.**"*  
YP FBB



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS (THINGS THAT HELPED MENTAL HEALTH)

Speaking to or spending time with family and friends	13
Exercise/ doing something physically active	8
Receiving support from friends or family	4
Getting outdoors and being in nature	4
Self-discovery- extra time to learn about yourself [learn in context of Type1 diabetes]	4
Online support groups	3
Learning a new hobby or skill	2
Being creative (e.g., art, music, cooking, gardening)	2
Pets	2
Spending time on social media	1

**Most frequently endorsed**

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES

## PRIORITY SETTING WORKSHOPS- POSITIVES

*“Staying fit and exercising, doing basketball, I **used it as a distraction to not stay in my room** and focus on things that were upsetting or stressing me out” YP FBB*

*“I made some **new friends online** through the Dyspraxia facebook page and **we shared our own struggles...we helped each other.**” YP Dyspraxia UK*

*“When people bring up lockdown...you do realise that **you did get one or two things out of it, there was the extra time and learning about yourself.**” YP Diabetes UK*

# REFLECTIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE DYSPRAXIA FOUNDATION



**DYSPRAXIA  
FOUNDATION**

Incorporating Developmental  
Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)

# EMERGING PRIORITY AREAS

## Emerging priorities:

- Social worries/anxieties
- Feeling under pressure/overwhelmed (including school/exam stress/ pressure to 'catch up')
- Feeling sad, unhappy, depressed
- Lack of confidence to ask for help with mental health and wellbeing
- Struggling with change and uncertainty (including reintegrating back into the world)

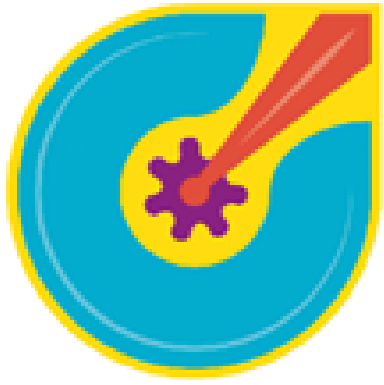


# CORAY RESOURCES

## WHAT HAS BEEN PRODUCED/UPCOMING RELEASES

- **Evidence informed briefings** on how to support young people with key areas of mental health and wellbeing. Find these resources (and more) at <https://emergingminds.org.uk/resources-for-young-people/>
- **BBC Bitesize boredom film** - tips for what to do when feeling bored, flat and unmotivated. Find it here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/ztrx7yc>
- **Headliners- ArtSteps virtual art exhibition**
- **Next round of resource production**





# CoRAY

Covid-19 response: Mental Health  
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## Q&A



# PROJECT PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Centre for  
Mental Health



Medical  
Research  
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University  
Prifysgol  
Abertawe



TRIUMPH

YOUNGMINDS