

Emerging themes from the

MY WORLD SURVEY

The *My World Survey* captures the views of almost 14,500 young people, making it the first national and most comprehensive study of youth mental health for those aged 12-25 years in Ireland.

One Good Adult is important to the mental health of young people

One Good Adult is important to the mental well-being of young people. Over 70% of young people reported that they received very high or high support from a special adult. Young people who perceived very low support from a special adult when in need had significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety.

The presence of One Good Adult is a key indicator of how well a young person is connected, self-confident, future looking and can cope with problems.

The absence of One Good Adult is linked to higher levels of distress, anti-social behaviour and an increased risk for suicidal behaviour.

Excessive drinking reported by 58% of over 16 year-olds

Approximately 48% of sixth years at second level and over 60% of young adults reported drinking behaviour outside of the normal range. Excessive drinking has very negative consequences for the mental health and adjustment of young people. For all young people, depression and anxiety were significantly higher when a young person engaged in harmful drinking or was classified as possibly alcohol-dependent. The *My World Survey* provides clear evidence that excessive use of alcohol is associated with poor mental health and well-being. For young adults, strong links were found between excessive drinking and suicidal behaviour.

Not talking about problems is linked to suicidal behaviour

Over a fifth of young adults indicated that they had engaged in self-harm, and 7% reported a suicide attempt. Suicidal thoughts, rates of self-harm and suicide attempt were found to be higher in young adults who did not seek help or talk about their problems.

Those who share their problems enjoy better mental health

About two-thirds of young people reported that, when they had problems, they usually talked about them with someone. Males were less likely to talk about their problems than females. Talking about problems is associated with lower mental distress and more positive well-being. Depression is the experience that young adults are most likely not to talk to anyone about.

Many young people in distress are not seeking help

Nearly 10% of adolescents and 20% of young adults reported significant personal problems which they felt needed professional help but they did not seek it. These young people reported high levels of distress and low levels of personal well-being.

Money is a top stressor

60% of young adults reported being stressed by their financial situation. Perceptions of financial stress are related to lower levels of positive well-being such as optimism and life satisfaction, higher levels of distress, and excessive drinking.



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headstrong

The National Centre for Youth Mental Health