

OUTBOUND

YOUTH WORK

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PÄRNU
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**RESEARCH ON THE ONE YEAR
MENTORING PROGRAM**

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

According to the United Nations (2020), 56.3% of the global population live in urban areas. Urbanization affects mental health through the influence of increased stressors and factors such as overcrowded and polluted environment, high levels of violence, and reduced social support. The range of disorders associated with urbanization is enormous and includes psychoses, depression, alcoholism, crime, delinquency, family disintegration, and alienation (Trivedi, Sareen, & Dhyani, 2008). Youth are one of the groups in society that are more prone to suffer from mental health problems due to urbanization and this detachment from nature (Hill, 2007). Statistics by the World Health Organization (2020), state that:

- mental health conditions account for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury in people aged 13–19 years,
- half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age but most cases are undetected and untreated,
- globally, depression is one of the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents,
- suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15–19-year-olds.

Seeing this rise in cases of mental health issues and observing how wilderness therapy can help tackle this, we decided to embark on a project that aims to make use of wilderness therapy to provide youth an alternative strategy to improve their mental health conditions leading to their holistic well-being.

In the first part of the project, we delved deeper into the most common mental health challenges that our young people are facing in today's society and then in the second part, we created tools that could help to tackle these mental health challenges. Both publications can be accessed here: Research and Tools. All the tools that were created make use of the outdoor as a medium of how to work with young people with mental health challenges.

Following the tool creation, our youth workers in Malta, Estonia, and Greece, embarked on a one-year long-term program where they had a group of youth with whom they implemented these tools. The program took the form of group and one-to-one mentoring activities. In the group mentoring activities, the mentors made use of the outdoor activities, while in the one-to-one mentoring activities, the mentors met with the young people and supported them on an individual level on whatever difficulties they were facing while also assisting set in setting short- and long-term goals

In this publication, we will present more in-depth results of how these tools were implemented and the overall impact that this program had on both the young people and the youth workers.



PARTNER INFORMATION

PRISMS MALTA

Prisms is a group of experienced youth workers that in 2008 came together with the aim of creating an NGO that caters for the requirements of young people and those working with young people. Prisms aims to empower people with the skills, tools, information, and values necessary for personal growth and to be active participants within society. Prisms provides to the necessities of the people it works with through innovative non-formal methods of education to reach their needs in a holistic manner. Prisms focuses on coaching and mentoring, online tools, mental wellbeing, inclusion and disability.

Using the context-out approach, Prisms strives to connect with young people in their environment. Our youth workers reach out to the young people to understand their living situation, at which point they are in their lives and their key relationships with others. At the basis of all of our activities lies a person-centered approach that enables us to connect with a purpose. Prisms listens to the young people and their life experiences and together with the young person they identify the needs to be addressed, Prisms believes that every person has potential and through a positive relationship with the young person, it challenges them to set achievable goals for their growth.

Prisms provides also opportunities for the personal and professional development of youth workers. We believe that the general wellbeing of the youth worker is pivotal as they serve as role-models for young people. Developing their intra and interpersonal skills enables the youth worker to engage better with the young people they work with. Prisms provides tools to the youth workers to be more self-reflective and identify areas for growth, Linked with the above, on a professional level, Prisms offers innovative tools and methods on how the youth workers can reach, connect, engage and empower young people.

Prisms always seeks to create meaningful collaborations and we have thus created partnerships with a number of partners both locally and internationally. This ensures that our initiatives are of good quality and that they offer space for youth workers and young people to build their own and their organization capacity whilst also offering good quality youth work practices

RICHMOND FOUNDATION MALTA

Richmond Foundation was founded on 13th May 1993 and is a non-governmental, non-profit making organisation working in the field of mental health and the only one of its kind in Malta. Richmond Foundation provides community services for persons with mental health difficulties, is involved in the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness amongst the general public.

Services offered by the Foundation include: a rehabilitation facility, a programme for children with challenging behaviour, male and female hostels, a female group home, a Supportive Housing Scheme, a Home Support Service, a Staff and Organisation Support Programme, a Psychological Support Service and a Training and Development Unit. The Foundation has also taken on various initiatives such as Self-Help Groups, research and training. All of the programmes and help that Richmond Foundation gives, is centered around the belief that we would like to see people overcome their mental health issue so that they can continue living their life.

As an organization, we believe that a big percentage that comes with mental health problems, comes from the fact that there is a lot of stigma surrounding people suffering from mental health issues. In fact, Richmond Foundation, strives to combat stigma and increase awareness on the subject through the local media and also through the various activities that it carries out on a regular basis within the community. The Foundation actively participates in regional and international events where it has the opportunity to increase its knowledge, expand its network, shares its views and heightens its profile and reputation.

Richmond Foundation is registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (VO/0017) in terms of article 3 of the Voluntary Organisations Act, 2007 and Operates a Quality Management System which complies with the requirements of SM EN ISO 9001 : 2015.

PÄRNU YOUTH RECREATION CENTRE ESTONIA

Pärnu Youth Recreation Centre first opened its doors in the summer of 2008. Since then, we have made it their mission to support young people in their lives and personal growth by creating a safe space for them to be heard without any preconception or judgement and providing them with tools to show initiative, be creative and improve their social skills.

In November 2013 Pärnu Youth Recreation Centre joined the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres which is a guardianship organisation to almost 200 different youth centres in Estonia. Through this collaboration Pärnu Youth Recreation Centre has hosted several large-scale projects aimed primarily at NEET youngsters or at-risk children. Thank to this collaboration our youth workers have also gained a lot of knowledge through the experience sharing through seminars and trainings that we had with fellow Estonian youth workers.

In 2018 Pärnu Youth Recreation Centres started to operate Audru Youth Centres that are located in Pärnu. These two youth centres were the first ones to start developing mobile street-based (detached youth work) in Pärnu City. In three years, this has proved to be a very successful initiative and a very effective method in reaching vulnerable young people and reducing crime in Pärnu City.

The youth work done by our organisation was recognized on a national level in 2019. In fact, in 2019 Pärnu Youth Recreation Centre was named the best youth centre in Estonia by The Ministry of Education and Research. Honored by this recognition Pärnu Youth Recreation center became more motivated than ever to keep up with good quality work with young people.

Within our two-youth center we have a total of 8 full time youth workers working with us and also 2 youth workers working on a part time basis. Together they are working with around 200 young people which makes about 70% of the total amount of young people of our city. Our aim is that in the near future we increase that percentage even more so as to reach more young people with our work.

IASIS GREECE

IASIS is non-governmental, non-profit organization active in the field of Social Inclusion, Mental Health and De-institutionalization, which actively participates in the psychiatric reform promoted by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the European Union. IASIS has an official registration as Private Non-Profit Organization. The organization's main objective is to provide psychosocial support and education to people who either belong into the range of or are at risk of exclusion and to adult professionals in the humanitarian field.

IASIS began its preparatory actions in 2005. The first housing structure, a boarding house for 15 people with mental disabilities, started to operate in 2006 and a 2nd boarding house with another 15 people started to operate in 2018. In 2008, IASIS NGO's activities in the field of de-institutionalization were extended with a Day Centre for people with psychosocial problems (80 people each year), and 2 Sheltered Apartments hosting 4 tenants each with mental health issues. The organizational cycle of de-institutionalization culminated in 2014 with the creation of Social Cooperative in 7th Psychiatric Sector, named "Archipelagos".

In the following years, IASIS NGO expanded its activities offering services to other vulnerable groups:

- 1.Homeless people (60 protected houses offered for accommodation of homeless people, counselling services and on the job training, with the support of DIKEOMA social enterprise)
- 2.Asylum Seekers/ Refugees (70 families, Host Unit for 350 asylum seekers, Hostel for 20 unaccompanied teenagers, Psychosocial Support Service of 2.500 persons)
- 3.Children at risk (Hostel for 100 children / victims of war)
- 4.Abused Women (Support of 200 women)
- 5.Unemployed people (Support for 90 persons)
- 6.Youngsters at Social Exclusion Risk/Young Offenders (CONNECT YOUR CITY Youth Centres, Anti-bullying Work Group "Ailios").
- 7.Youth suffering from mental health disorders (80 people)

The organization has also developed a strong network across Europe, through which there have been designed and implemented dozens of Research & Educational Programs in the context of European and national frameworks (Erasmus+, Life Long Learning, EAA Grants, EFM etc.).

The last step to establish IASIS NGO as integrated Center for Psychosocial Education & Training is its certification as a VET Centre by the Greek National Accreditation Organization, a process that warrants the organization as an institution for professional development of both beneficiaries and professionals.

Currently IASIS employs around 20 people most of whom are either youth workers or physiologists working with the various groups of people that we cater for. We also have a strong of volunteers that help us during most of the activities that we run, especially large events that are open to the public as well.



MENTORING PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW OF THE MENTORING PHASE

The mentoring phase was the last phase of our Outbound Youth Work project. This phase started in June 2022 and ended in June 2023 and happened simultaneously with three different groups of young people in Malta, Estonia, and Greece. Each group was made up of 6 young people and two youth workers.

The pattern followed was that of having a meeting a week, with one week being dedicated to group activities, where the young people met as a whole group and carried out different outdoor tools, and the following week was dedicated to one-to-one mentoring. In the latter, the youth workers met individually with the young people and helped them in their walk of facing their mental health challenges. It is important to note that each youth worker had three young people assigned to him/her for the one-to-one meetings.

IMPACT OF MENTORING PROGRAMME ON YOUNG PEOPLE

As part of the project, our researchers assessed and measured the impact that the mentoring process had on the mentees. This research was carried out through qualitative and quantitative measures. The qualitative data was recorded through testimonials whilst the quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires

THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING PROGRAMME ON YOUTH

Mentoring young people with mental health challenges is profoundly impactful and it helps both the mentor and mentee in significant ways. At its core, mentoring is about forming a supportive relationship that helps the mentee navigate through life's complexities, especially when compounded by mental health issues. For young people, the journey into adulthood can be fraught with difficulties, and those experiencing mental health challenges often find themselves facing additional barriers, both socially and emotionally (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985). This is where mentoring can play a crucial role.

The importance of mentoring in the context of mental health primarily lies in providing a stable and trusting relationship. For many young individuals struggling with mental health issues, consistent support from a caring adult can offer a sense of security and belonging that might be lacking elsewhere in their lives. Mentors can guide mentees through the process of understanding and managing their conditions, offering advice drawn from their own experiences or knowledge (Metros & Yang, 2006). This relationship doesn't just help in coping with day-to-day challenges but also in building long-term resilience. It empowers young people to develop coping strategies and skills that are essential for navigating both current and future stressors.

Moreover, mentors provide a unique form of social support, crucial for mental well-being. They can help demystify the stigmas associated with mental health, making it easier for young people to seek and receive help. By simply being present and listening, mentors help mentees feel heard and understood, which is incredibly valuable when they might feel isolated or misunderstood by peers or family. This connection often leads to improved self-esteem and self-worth in young people, as they recognize their own potential through the supportive reflection of their mentor (Metros & Yang, 2006).

The educational and career guidance offered by mentors is another facet of its importance. Mentors often help mentees set realistic goals and provide them with the tools and resources to achieve them. This is particularly significant for those whose mental health might affect their motivation or ability to focus on tasks. By setting small, achievable goals, mentors help build a sense of accomplishment and purpose in the lives of these young individuals, which can positively influence their overall mental health (Rhodes, 2005).

Furthermore, mentoring can serve as an early intervention tool. In some cases, mentors might recognize signs of mental health issues before they become more severe. Through their relationship, mentors can encourage and facilitate access to professional mental health services, providing a critical bridge to necessary treatments. This early support can be pivotal in preventing more severe consequences and promoting healthier outcomes.

In conclusion, mentoring young people with mental health challenges is crucial. It offers emotional, social, and practical support that can dramatically alter the course of a young person's life. It's not just about managing mental health conditions but about fostering an environment where young people feel valued, understood, and supported. The ripple effects of such relationships can reach far beyond individual mentees, contributing to a more compassionate and informed society where mental health is openly discussed and appropriately addressed (Rhodes, 2005).



**TESTIMONIALS BY
YOUNG PEOPLE**

The following are testimonials given by our youth on the mentoring program. These are part of the qualitative research carried out by our researchers.

After the one-year mentoring program we asked three of the young people to tell us a bit more about their experience in the project with the youth workers and the other young people. The following are the testimonials of these youth.

YOUTH 1 – PRISMS, MALTA

I chose to join the project because I've had great experiences with similar initiatives in the past, where I created lasting memories and met many people. When the chance arose, I was immediately intrigued. I knew the project would push me, which seemed like a good fit. It allowed me to try new things, meet new people, and really challenge myself. Initially, I had doubts about some of the planned activities, especially those that seemed intimidating like when we did the abseiling but, in the end, I am very grateful that I managed to do everything that we had.

Throughout the project, I connected with several new individuals. At first, I didn't think much of them, but as we engaged in more activities together, our relationships deepened. I found common interests with one person in particular, which was great because it gave me someone to share my thoughts with.

Of all the activities we did, abseiling stands out the most. It was daunting at first, and I almost backed out, thinking, "When will I ever do something like this again? It doesn't hurt to try. If I don't like it, I just won't do it again." Despite my fears, I went through with it and, after the initial shock, found it quite enjoyable. This activity was one of my biggest triumphs, and I'm glad I did it because now I have no regrets about missing out.

I would recommend this project to anyone seeking a challenge, looking to make new friends, or just wanting to leave the house for a new adventure.



YOUTH 2 – PÄRNU YOUTH RECREATION CENTRE, ESTONIA

It's a blessing to be part of Outbound and I'm thankful to get the chance to make a difference to my mental health with people who support each other. Every weekend we met in a group of eight to reflect on our week and what changes we could make to improve our spirituality and how to see the environment around us. I learned how to cope with my anxiety by talking to new people and the participants in the beginning, got the chance to enjoy nature and the wonderful animals, tried gardening and went on walks with the most amazing people whose company I really like. I decided to participate mostly because in 2023 I started high school and I wanted to get the chance to take a break from school and reflect on how I am doing with the support of others. I also wanted to try new activities, learn how to time manage and keep myself distracted from two family members passing away. Now I have discovered that I really like gardening. It is a really good way to keep away my stress and I can think about something positive. At first, I thought that a few participants were mean but that opinion changed really quickly. Everyone is really nice and ready to listen to you when needed. I would say that we are kind of in the same boat- wanting to improve ourselves, enjoy new activities and nature together. I also really like how warm and welcoming Margit and Kristina are. In a small group, everyone got the chance to share their experience and opinions about different topics in a safe and judge-free group. The most memorable experience was when we went to Margit`s sister`s home and we got to try gardening. I planted the tomatoes with Hendrik. We bonded a lot because none of us wanted to just do our thing in silence. I really enjoyed it and when I finished planting, I realized that the whole time I didn't think about anything in particular and only focused on one thing- getting the tomatoes planted. Now I like to associate planting tomatoes with school- my dream is to get to University of Tartu, but sometimes I have to take some time off to enjoy life. At the end of the group meeting, we got to enjoy good food and each other's company. My biggest challenge was getting used to taking some time off from school on the weekends because not doing homework and just being bored made me anxious. In the beginning of Outbound, I had trouble showing up to the group meetings, but then I started to realize that I may not see everyone in the future, which helped me appreciate the people around me and the things that I have versus the things I don't have. I would recommend Outbound to peers who live in the city and have trouble appreciating the things around us. In Outbound, you get to spend time in nature a lot which gives you the chance to take some time off to reflect on yourself, find new hobbies and share your experiences in a safe group where everyone is ready to listen and/or help. I had a wonderful experience in Outbound. I learned a lot about myself, how to enjoy new things and overcome difficulties like fear of talking to new people, heights and sharing personal experiences in a group. I will miss everyone, and I am thankful to be a part of this wonderful project.

YOUTH 3 – IASIS, GREECE

My involvement with nature has not been very active. However, I have always walked. It's not unfamiliar to me as where I used to live, we also had greenery. However, here, it is in greater abundance. In my daily life, I experience stressful situations and now I know that a walk in nature is what I need. I like to hear the rustling of leaves, the chirping of birds. And of course, I enjoy learning more and more about animals and natural phenomena. My favourite activity was the one called "BE THE LEADER." We all laughed a lot when we had to close our eyes and follow the instructions of our teammates. The truth is that I had not imagined nature as a means of calm and reorganization. But now I notice some changes in my daily life. For example, I open my window right away to let in the natural light. I walk almost every day, with my endurance having improved. I enjoy sitting in the gazebo and playing board games, especially when the sun starts to set a bit and a light breeze begins, now that summer is approaching. The program helped me learn about the mineral wealth of our planet, about natural phenomena that pose dangers, and how I can protect myself in each case. Also, through my contact with nature, I feel more confident when I need to start a conversation. Nature offers so many beauties to humans, and I am one of those who respects and enjoys them.



**TESTIMONIALS BY YOUTH
WORKERS**

After the one-year mentoring program we asked three of our youth workers to tell us a bit more about the experience that they had during this one year with the youth. The following are the testimonials of these youth workers.

YOUTH WORKER 1: PRISMS, MALTA

This journey that I carried out in the last year has been nothing short of transformative, both for the individuals I've had the privilege to mentor and for myself as well. When I embarked on this experience, I knew it would be challenging, but I could not have anticipated the depth of the impact it would have on me. Witnessing the resilience and determination of these young individuals as they navigated the wilderness, and their inner struggles has been awe-inspiring. Each day brought new challenges, but also moments of breakthrough and growth that affirmed the importance of our work.

One of the most striking aspects of this experience has been the power of nature as a healing force. Surrounded by the beauty and vastness of the wilderness, I watched as walls were broken down and barriers to progress dissolved. Nature has a remarkable ability to quiet the mind and open the heart, creating space for reflection, healing, and connection. Whether it was a quiet moment by the sea or the exhilaration of abseiling, nature provided the backdrop for profound moments of self-discovery and transformation.

As a mentor, my role was not only to guide and support these young individuals but also to learn from them. They taught me the importance of patience, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. In their vulnerability, I saw strength. In their struggles, I saw resilience. And in their triumphs, I saw hope. Each interaction, each shared experience, deepened my understanding of the human spirit and reaffirmed my commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Of course, this journey was not without its challenges. There were moments of frustration, doubt, and heartache. But through it all, there was a shared sense of purpose and a belief in the possibility of transformation. Together, we weathered storms—both literal and metaphorical—and emerged stronger and more resilient.

Looking back on this year, I am filled with a profound sense of pride and accomplishment. I am grateful for the opportunity to have played a small part in the journeys of these remarkable young individuals. And I am humbled by the lessons they have taught me about resilience, courage, and the power of human connection.

YOUTH WORKER 2: PÄRNU YOUTH RECREATION CENTRE, ESTONIA

I was motivated to start mentoring because in my daily work I witness many challenges that young people face today, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of coping mechanisms for stress. We often prioritize academic knowledge, while first we should be giving young people tools to maintain their emotional balance and navigate through challenges.

It had been my dream for quite a while – to do something that would go beyond my work as a social pedagogue and to make a good use of the knowledge and experience I have gained over the years working at school. Taking part in the Prisms Outbound project inspired me and opened new horizons in the field of youth work. The chance to actively contribute to supporting young people truly inspired me and I am sincerely grateful for the trust and readiness with which Margit accepted me as a mentor in this project. This opportunity allowed me to turn my intentions into actions, to widen my experience, to learn and grow, and make a meaningful difference.

At the beginning of the project, I experienced a range of very different emotions. There was joy and excitement, curiosity, all spiced up with a little anxiety about what the group dynamics would be like, whether the youngsters would get along, how engaged they would be in our proposed activities, and so on. One important thought that I brought out for myself during this process is that when the mind is anxious, the best thing is to breathe and take time, because many things fall into their right place on their own.

The more meetings we had, the more our youngsters started opening. The ice melted, their personalities and talents started to shine brighter, and I could see the trust and warmth growing. It's incredible, how being united by a common purpose can create a strong and genuine connection between group members.

I am looking forward to more similar experiences like this to help more young people in our community.



YOUTH WORKER 3: IASIS, GREECE

I took on this particular European program while it was already in progress. I have always been a lover of nature and the magic it offers. Therefore, I was eager to present to the teenagers of CONNECT INN all that nature provides to humans. The theme of OUTBOUND perfectly aligns with the natural beauty surrounding the Youth Hostel. The teenagers being hosted have experienced stressful situations in the past, and the main goal for all of us caring for these children is to ensure a calm and mentally healthy environment so they can unfold their abilities and talents. Engagement with nature and, more broadly, with the way it is organized and evolves has been found to be an aid to our purpose. Throughout these months that I have been involved with the program, my main concern has been to help the young people understand that the environment offers humans not only oxygen for life and food but also peace and tranquillity while teaching respect for every person and animal. Initially, I observed a small participation from the young people, as it should be noted that the Hostel deals with crises and refusal to participate in group activities. We started with gentle rhythms and thematic focuses to ensure the young people's curiosity about the wonders of nature. Walking through vast expanses of land and having discussions helped in the active participation of the children, resulting in them not missing OUTBOUND training sessions. The significant change in their lifestyle and their turn to nature to calm down during crises within the Hostel confirmed all the above. The young people now take care of the animals we host daily, cultivate their own plants and vegetables, and constantly ask to schedule long walks during which they thoroughly observe the plants and insects they encounter while absorbing positive energy, recharging their batteries for whatever each child has to face in their daily lives. The effort they put in is touching, and I am very happy that they have now found a way to vent and calm down. They have learned to protect themselves from potential natural dangers and to inform others about coping methods. They have discovered the art of photography, admiring the beauties of nature, and they constantly find new games to play outside their home.

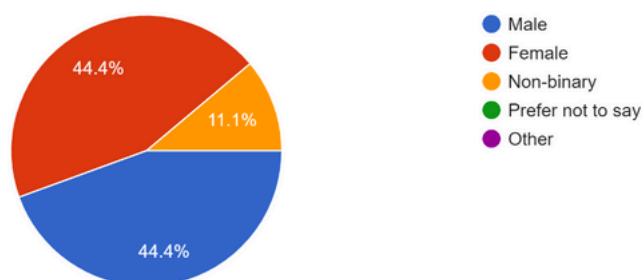


**IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF
LIFE OF THE YOUTH**

The following are the results of the quantitative research carried out. It is important to note that the questions asked to the young people were created by a team of researchers from all three countries.

In the one-year long-term mentoring period that we had, we had 18 young people between the ages of 13 to 30 taking part in the activity. 44.4% of the participants were female, 44.4% were male and 11.1% were non-binary.

What is your gender?
18 responses



All of them answered the questionnaires before and after the one year. The same questions were asked to the young people at the beginning and at the end of the experience.

The following are the questions asked and a comparison between before and after the mentoring programme:

QUESTION 1: CURRENT LIFE STATUS

When asked about their current life status 100% of the participants said that they were students studying. This result stayed the same after the one-year mentoring programme where the young people continued with their studies.

What is your current status in life?
18 responses

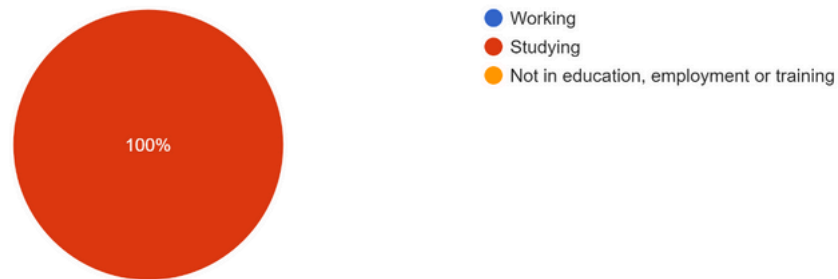


Fig1.1 Life status before the mentoring programme

What is your current status in life?
18 responses

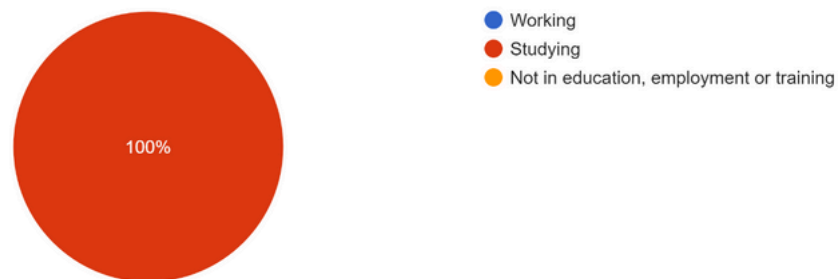


Fig1.2 Life status after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 2: DO YOU FEEL YOU GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED FROM THOSE AROUND YOU?

When asked if they feel that they get the support that they need there were different results, however, no one mentioned that they had the complete support that they needed from those around them. When the same question was asked one year later, one can see a shift in the answers, with more than half of the group giving it a high score of getting the support needed completely or most of the time. This comes from the fact that the young people received the support of the youth workers who acted as mentors and were receiving support from the community through the friendship they had formed during the mentoring programme.

Do you feel you get the support you need from those around you?

18 responses

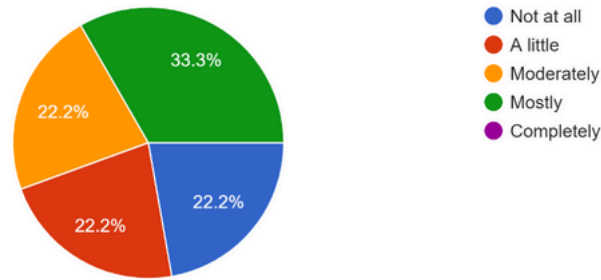


Fig 2.1 Support by those around you before the mentoring programme

Do you feel you get the support you need from those around you?

18 responses

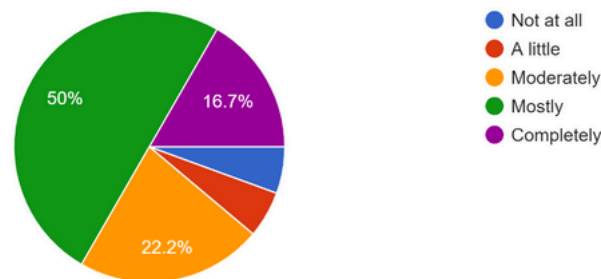


Fig 2.2 Support by those around you after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 3: RATING OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

When asked to rate their quality of life, there was a staggering improvement, with those saying that they had a good quality of life exploding from 33.35 to 73.7% after the experience.

How would you rate your quality of life (quality of life is the standard of health, comfort, and happiness that you are currently experiencing in your life)

18 responses

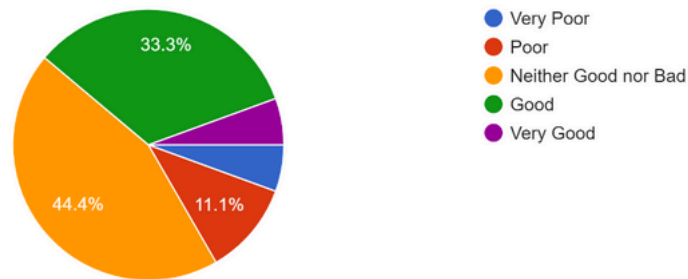


Fig 3.1 Quality of Life before the mentoring programme

How would you rate your quality of life (quality of life is the standard of health, comfort, and happiness that you are currently experiencing in your life)

18 responses

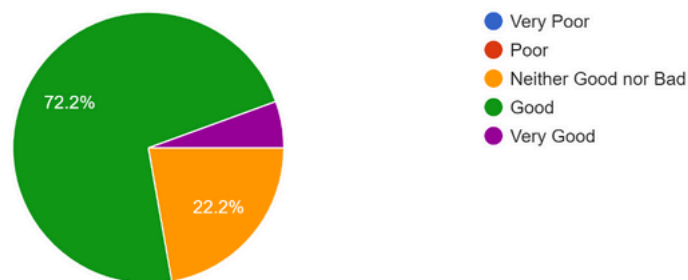


Fig 3.2: Quality of Life after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 4: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR HEALTH?

When asked about their satisfaction with their health, a big percentage were okay with their health, however, satisfaction about health also took a push upward after the project. When young people were asked more about it, many opened about the fact that thanks to the mentoring programme, they were carrying out more activities outside, and thus they felt that their physical health improved thanks to that.

How would you rate your quality of life (quality of life is the standard of health, comfort, and happiness that you are currently experiencing in your life)
18 responses

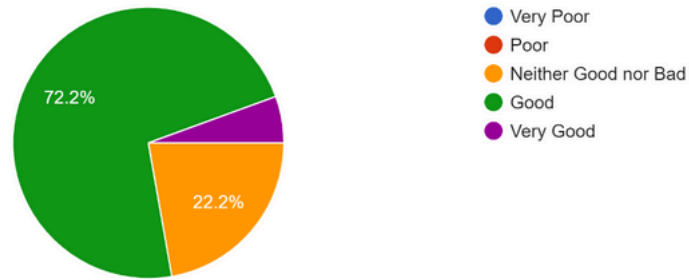


Fig 4.1: Overall satisfaction with health before the mentoring programme

How satisfied are you with your health?
18 responses

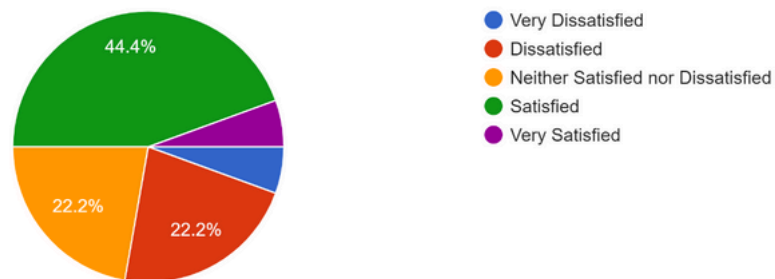


Fig 4.2 Overall satisfaction with health after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 5: HOW MUCH DO YOU ENJOY LIFE?

When asked about how much they enjoy life and about the life satisfaction, the majority gave a score of three. This saw a shift to a score of 4 after the programme which means a slight increase towards a higher life satisfaction.

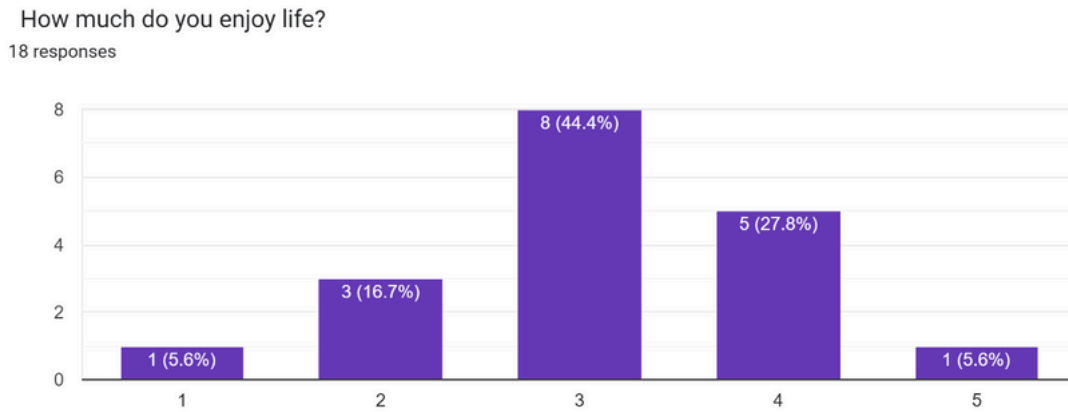


Fig 5.1: Life Enjoyment before the mentoring programme

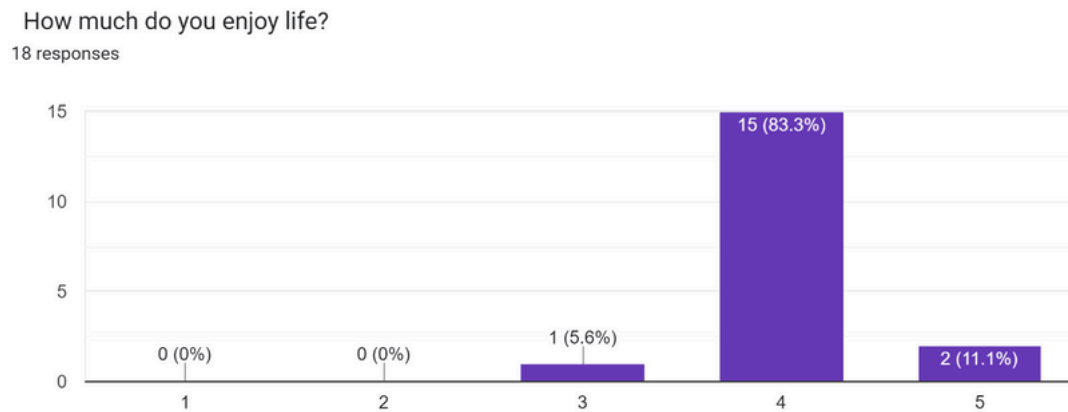


Fig 5.2: Life Enjoyment after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 6: HOW WELL ARE YOU ABLE TO CONCENTRATE?

One of the questions asked the participants on how much were they capable of concentrating. Results showed that while before the one-year experience answers varied with scores recorded all over the board, once the mentoring year was over, the concentration levels were much higher as can be seen in figure 6.2. A direct effect of wilderness therapy has been the effect that hands-on learning and experiential education, that is 'learning by doing' along with reflection has (Gass, 1993). The participants are put in real-life situations where they have to deal with problem-solving leading them to be more focused.

. How well are you able to concentrate?

18 responses

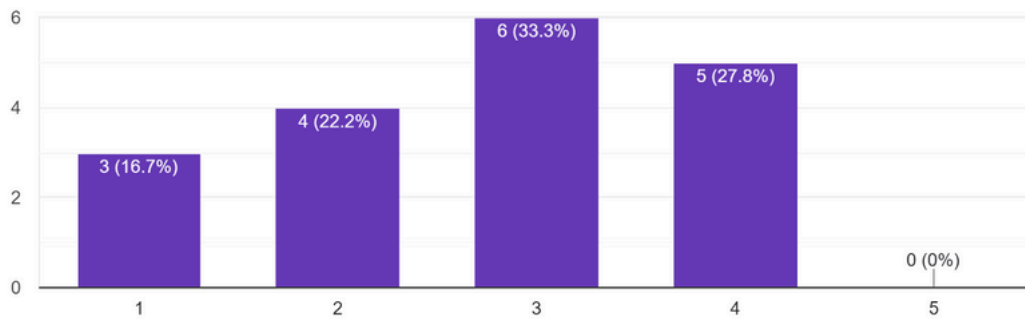


Fig 6.1 Concentration capabilities before the mentoring programme

To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?

18 responses

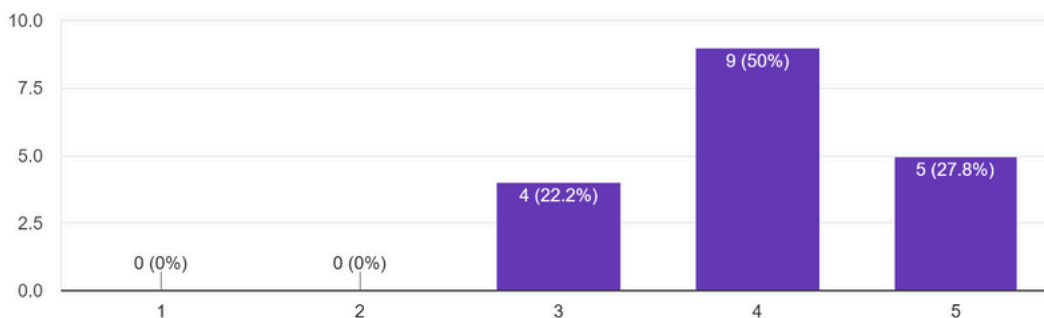


Fig 6.2 Concentration capabilities after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 7: DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE?

When asked if they have energy for everyday life, there was a shift from more paced-out results to a shift towards more energy after the mentoring year. Research by Lee, Zaslowski, Yeung, Rosenthal, Larkey, & Back (2017), shows that when people spend time out in nature they have a tendency to increase their energy levels. Apart from that a study by Lin & Okyere (2020), shows that when people take care of their mental health and well-being, and they feel better they also experience an increase in energy levels.

Do you have enough energy for everyday life?

18 responses

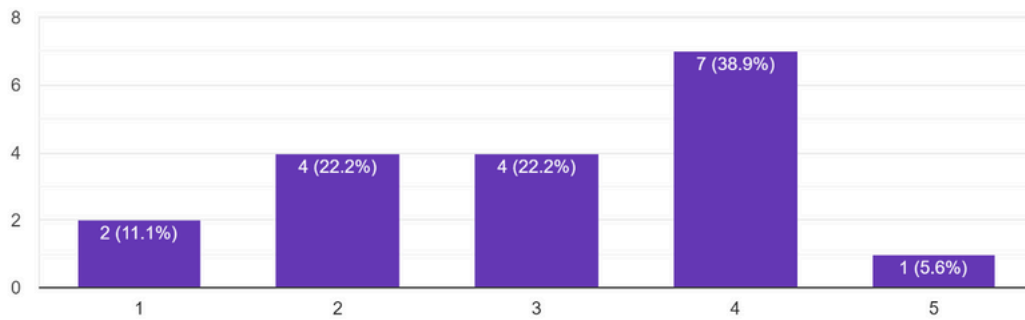


Fig 7.1 Energy levels for everyday activities before the mentoring programme

Do you have enough energy for everyday life?

18 responses

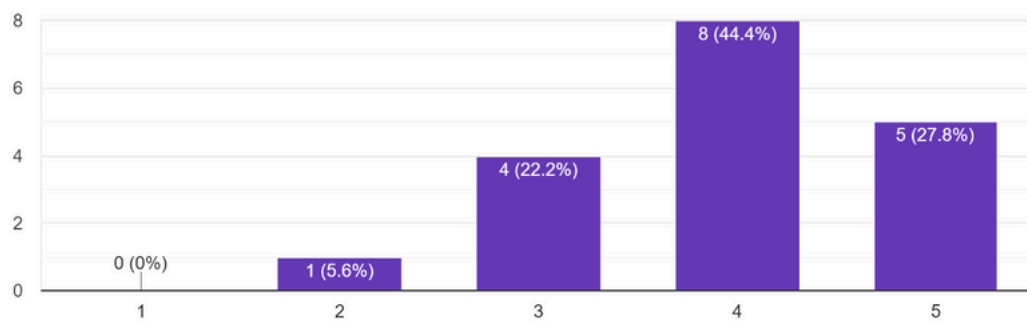


Fig 7.2 Energy levels for everyday activities post mentoring programme

QUESTION 8: ARE YOU ABLE TO ACCEPT YOUR BODILY APPEARANCE?

Participants were asked how they view themselves and their bodily appearances and if they feel that they can accept the way that they look. After the one-year mentoring one can also see a shift towards a more positive outlook of how the youth actually look at themselves.

Research by Dittmar (2007), shows that the way that one feels about himself/herself affects a lot the mental well-being of a person and thus as the participants had a positive shift in how they look at themselves, this also leaves a positive shift on their mental wellbeing as well.

Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?

18 responses

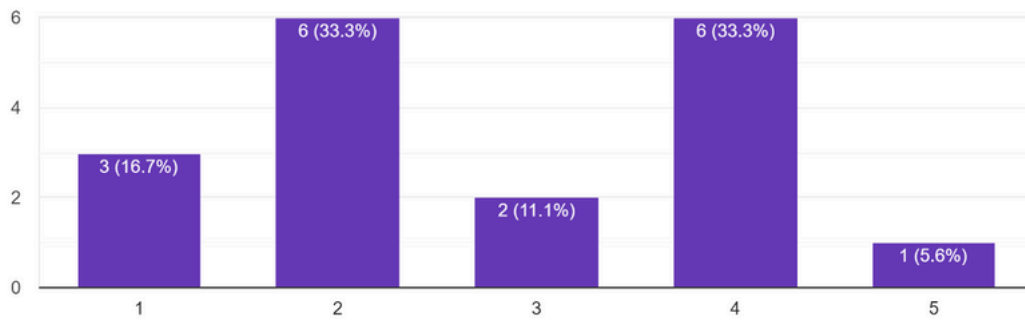


Fig 8.1 Acceptance of body appearance before the mentoring programme

Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?

18 responses

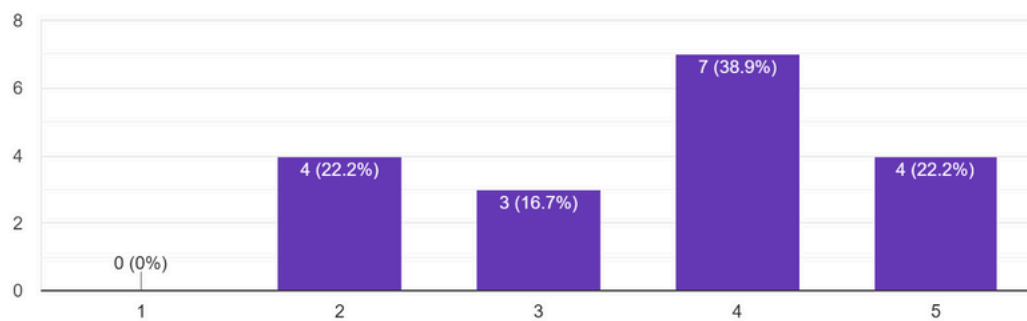


Fig 8.2 Acceptance of body appearance after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 9: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR ABILITY TO PERFORM YOUR DAILY LIVING ACTIVITIES

These questions focused on the abilities of the participants to be able to do their daily activities, from studying to sleeping and other activities of daily living. After the one-year activities there was a shift in being able to perform these activities better. One of the reasons why there was this increase in motivation is the consistency in meetings with the mentors. The mentees met weekly either in a group setting or one-to-one. This routine could have assisted the young people in other aspects of their life and could helped them to replicate this schedule in sleeping time and studying amongst others.

How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities
18 responses

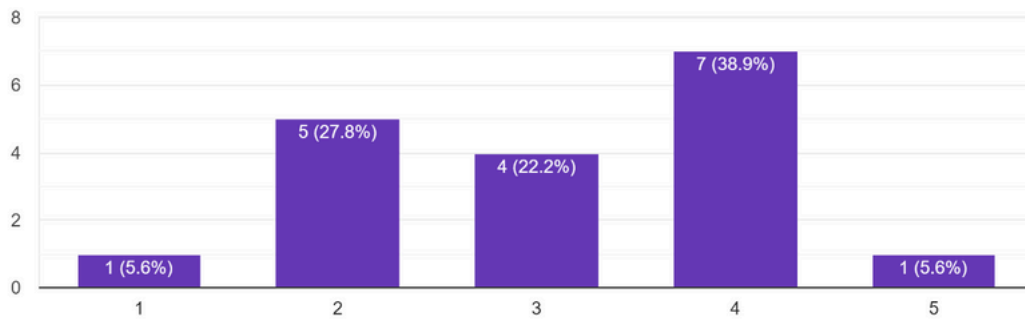


Fig 9.1: Satisfaction with regards to daily living activities before the mentoring programme

How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities
18 responses

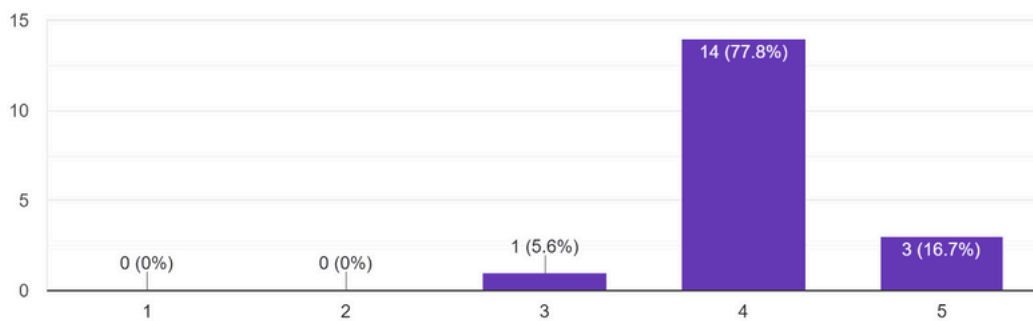


Fig 9.2: Satisfaction with regards to daily living activities after the mentoring programme

QUESTION 10: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOURSELF?

This research question focused on how satisfied people were feeling with themselves and one can see a shift towards higher satisfaction after the one-year mentoring program. Being able to overcome challenges, doing activities out of the comfort zone, focusing on short- and long-term goals contribute to more self-worth. **Wilderness therapy has been a net contributor in this regard to as it provides space for reflection and for the mentors to reconnect with themselves.**

How satisfied are you with yourself?

18 responses

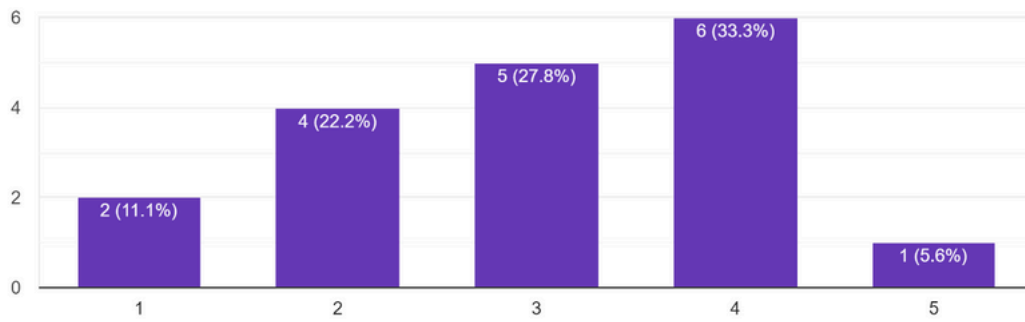


Fig 10.1 Results of how you satisfied are you with yourself? before the mentoring programme

How satisfied are you with yourself?

18 responses

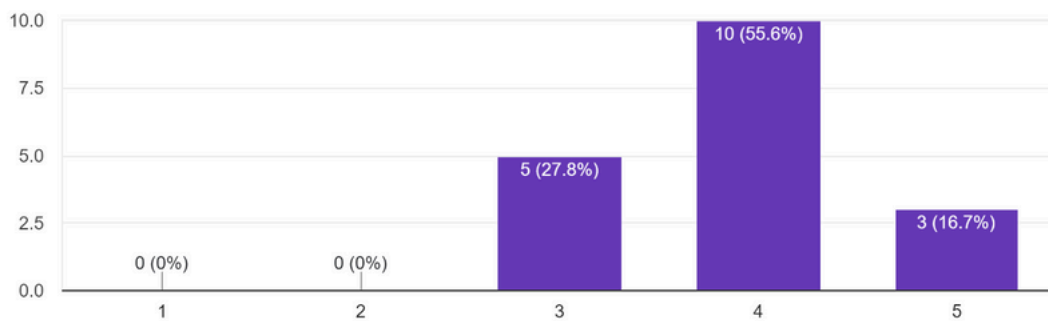


Fig 10.2 Results of how satisfied are you with yourself? after the mentoring programme?

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS?

From the research, it came out that before the program, the participants did not feel fully satisfied with the support that they received from their friends. This however changed and people felt more supported at the end of the mentoring process.

Evans (2007), in his studies, found out that people feel more supported when they are in communities, and this is what was actually created through the group activities that we had during this one-year program. People had the opportunity to form a group of friends and be part of a community and feel supported by that community.

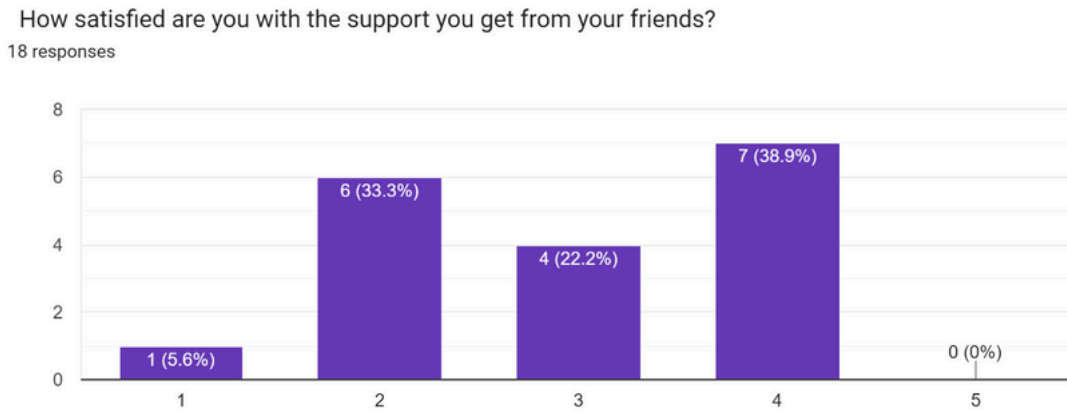


Fig 11.1: Satisfaction with the support from friends before the one-year programme

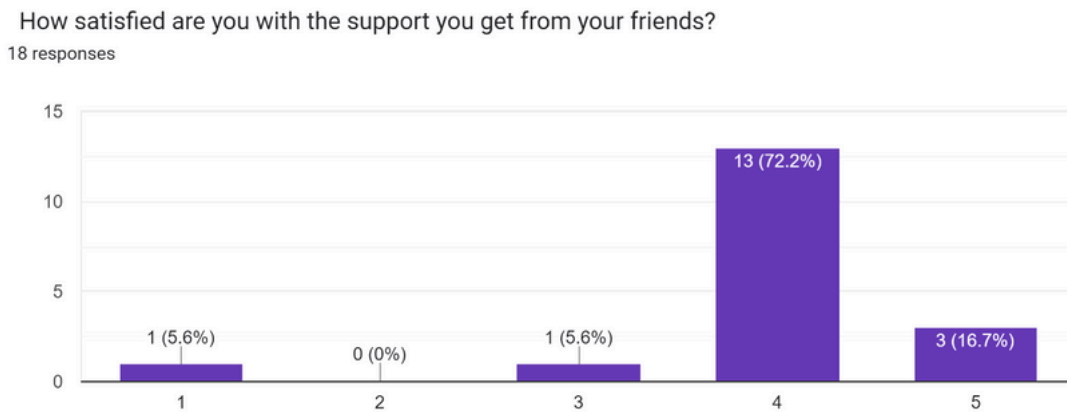


Fig 11.1: Satisfaction with the support from friends after the one-year programme

QUESTION 12: HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE NEGATIVE FEELINGS, SUCH AS BLUE MOOD, DESPAIR, ANXIETY, OR DEPRESSION?

The last question focused on the feelings and the regularity of negative feelings. Data collected showed that the frequency of such negative feelings decreased after the mentoring program.

How often do you have negative feelings, such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?

18 responses

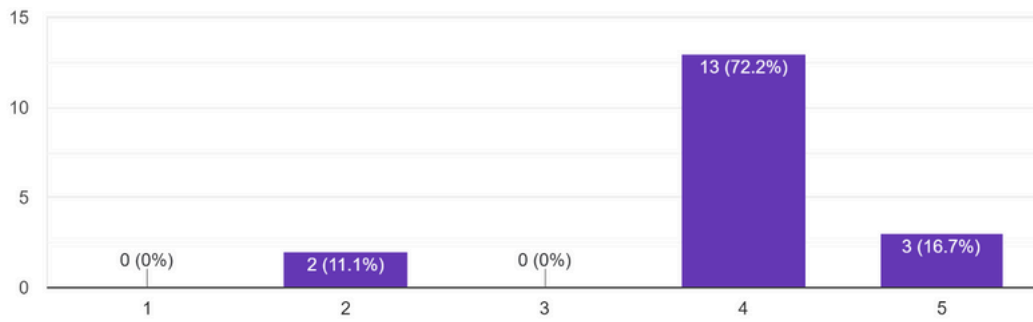


Fig 12.1 Showing how regular negative feelings were before the one-year programme

How often do you have negative feelings, such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?

18 responses

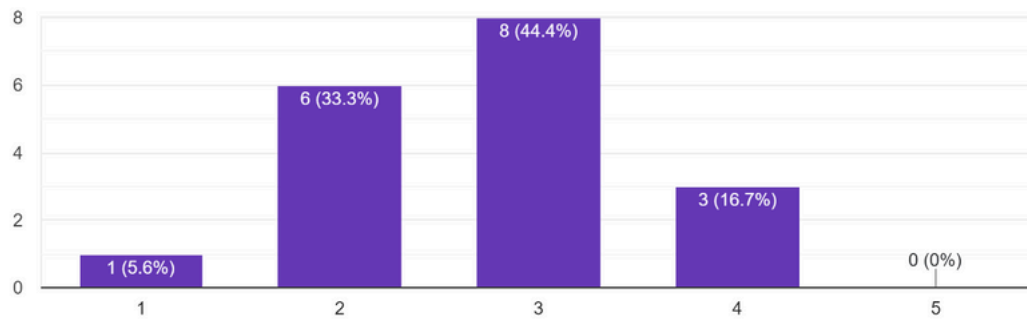


Fig 12.1 Showing how regular negative feelings were after the one-year programme



**THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AS A
MENTOR**

Following the one-year mentoring experience, our other youth workers convened and identified several essential considerations for youth workers to keep in mind. The following are the tips about mentorship that the youth workers came up with:

- **Empathy and Understanding:** Always approach your mentee with empathy. Try to understand their feelings and perspectives without judgment. This builds trust and openness in the relationship.
- **Active Listening:** Practice active listening, which involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and then remembering what is being said. This makes the mentee feel valued and heard.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain confidentiality to create a safe space for your mentee to share their thoughts and feelings. This is crucial for developing trust.
- **Patience:** Progress in mentoring relationships can be slow and non-linear. Patience is key as your mentee navigates their mental health challenges. One must find the way to open up communication with the mentee.
- **Consistency and presence:** Be consistent in your availability and the support you offer. Regular meetings can provide a stable structure that might be lacking elsewhere in your mentee's life. It is also important to be present for the mentees when you are with them.
- **Encouragement and positive reinforcement:** Celebrate small victories and provide positive reinforcement to boost the mentee's self-esteem and motivation.
- **Boundaries:** Set clear boundaries regarding the relationship and professional limits. This protects both you and your mentee and clarifies the nature of your support.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be aware of cultural, social, and personal backgrounds that can affect your mentee's experiences and perspectives. Respect these differences and incorporate this understanding into your approach.
- **Resource Awareness:** Familiarize yourself with local resources such as therapists, support groups, and crisis centers that you can recommend if your mentee needs additional support.
- **Self-Care:** As a mentor, it's also important to look after your own mental health. Engage in self-care practices to ensure you are well-prepared to support others.

- **Training and Education:** Continuously seek training and stay informed about mental health issues and mentoring techniques to enhance your ability to support your mentee effectively.
- **Feedback and Reflection:** Be open to receiving feedback from your mentee and reflect on your mentoring approach regularly to adapt and improve.
- **Respect for Autonomy:** Encourage your mentee to make their own decisions and support them in becoming more self-reliant. It's important to foster independence rather than dependency.
- **Realistic Expectations:** Set realistic expectations about what the mentoring relationship can achieve. Recognize that you are there to guide and support, not to fix all the mentee's problems.

Adhering to these principles can make a significant difference in the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship and the well-being of both mentor and mentee.



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