



AIM Ideas Lab Youth Survey 2024

Marin County

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AIM Youth Mental Health

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Youth Report Created by AIM Ideas Lab Participants March 17-April 14, 2024

Introduction

AIM Youth Mental Health invited high school student volunteers in Marin County to take part in the AIM Ideas Lab: A Youth Participatory Action Research project focused on mental health advocacy. This program ran from January 7 - April 8, 2024.

Twenty-one AIM Ideas Lab youth researchers from throughout Marin County worked together to conduct youth mental health research and make recommendations to policy makers, researchers, and their community about how to address the youth mental health crisis. Nearly 400 hours of community service was invested by the youth participants in this program.

AIM Ideas Lab Program Objectives:

1. Discuss youth mental health, emerging issues, and brainstorm ways to address the crisis with teens from other high schools
2. Learn about qualitative and quantitative scientific research
3. Conduct peer-to-peer research mentored by youth mental health researchers and professionals
4. Collect, compare, and analyze research with the findings of AIM Ideas Labs across multiple counties
5. Bring the youth voice to the table by presenting ideas, research, and recommendations via identified channels

Research Design: Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is an approach to research and social change that encourages young people to utilize their own perspectives and strengths to identify, study, and address issues that impact them.

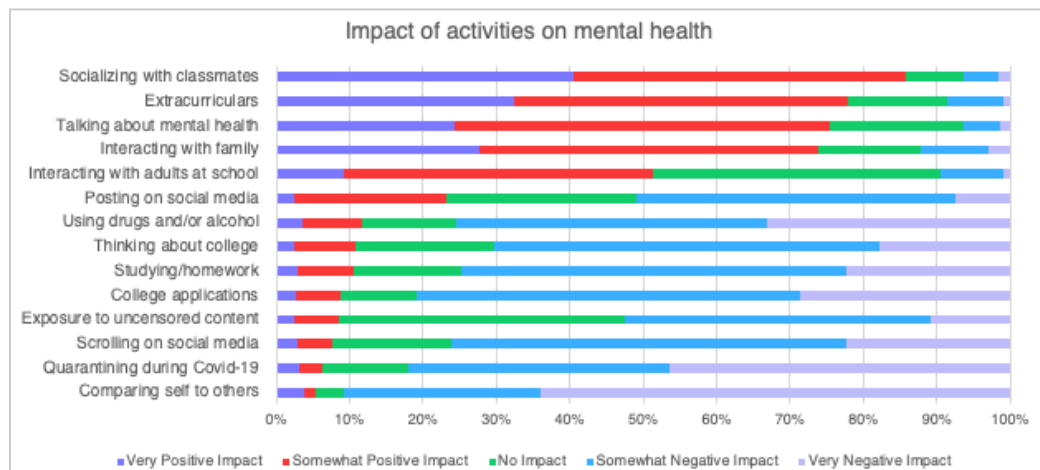
Research Objective: Survey a demographically representative sample of teens in Marin County to explore ways to address mental health challenges youth in the community are facing.

Survey Distribution: The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Questions included demographic information like age, grade, gender identity, and racial/ethnic identity, as well as questions about youth mental health, support services, and social media. The survey was distributed between February 22 - March 13, 2024, via word-of-mouth, text message, social media, and in select schools. 317 youth in Marin County completed the survey.

Mixed-Methods Approach: The survey consisted of 17 quantitative (frequencies, percentages) and 3 qualitative (open ended response) questions and were analyzed by the youth researchers to form conclusions and recommendations for youth and adult stakeholders in the community.

Executive Summary

1. Academic stress and pressure is one of the leading causes of deteriorating mental health in teens. The overwhelming feeling of needing to perform well academically, paired with stress and pressures from teachers, parents, and other sources, leads to burnout and a lack of motivation for teens.



- **Recommendation:** Teens wish parents/teachers/adults understood that they have a lot going on already, especially with school and academic stress. There is too much pressure to “do it all.”
 - Extracurricular activities may improve mental health, but they can become pressures in and of themselves, with pressure from self, parents, coaches, and leaders of the extracurricular activity.
 - **Recommendation:** Look at ways to reduce academic pressures to make room for activities that improve mental health (balance.)
 - **Recommendation:** Teach students how to manage their workload/stress rather than keep adding to their plate.
 - **Recommendation:** Teachers could have more flexibility for deadlines/homework when students have a lot to juggle, and teachers should communicate with each other so there is a more balanced workload each week for all classes.
2. Respondents see the benefit of starting mental health education earlier on to act as preventative education and so teens feel better equipped to manage their stress during high school and onwards.
 - This would have an added benefit for the male-identifying population as they report stigma, lack of mental health education, and not being taught how to express their emotions as barriers to talking about their feelings/mental health.
 - **Recommendation:** Start a mental health education curriculum as early as

elementary school and continue it through 12th grade.

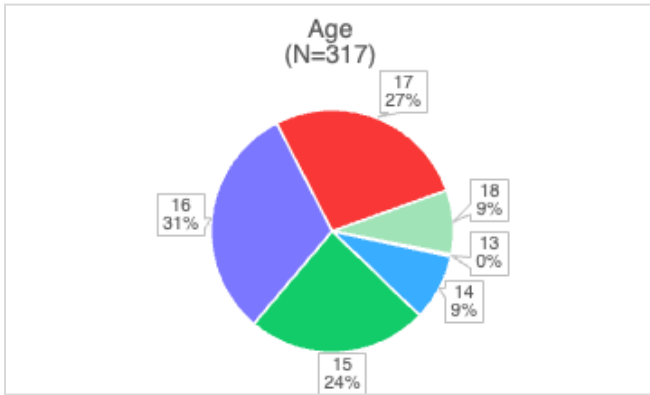
3. Teens would like more guidance on when to reach out for help, how to utilize resources, and how to support themselves and others.
 - **Recommendation:** Guidance on how to respond effectively to someone facing a mental health challenge, such as mental health support training, should be standard practice and commonly available for youth.
 - **Recommendation:** Properly explain available resources to youth so students can make informed decisions about how and with whom to obtain help and support.
 - **Recommendation:** Encourage students to self reflect on their mental state so that they can assess what they need and what resources they may want to utilize. Offer specific spaces and times for regular self check-ins.

4. There is a discrepancy between genders' comfort levels and general feelings and awareness surrounding mental health. Restructuring and actually having conversations about mental health to better reach male populations will help male's struggling with mental health feel seen and supported.
 - **Recommendations:** "... there could be more male role models that were open and candid about mental health,"
 - **Recommendations:** create more spaces that are specific to males, where it is safe to speak about challenges and to destigmatize mental health.
 - **Recommendations:** "... educate young males about emotional expression, teach it to them young. So many males struggle with mental health but struggle to communicate it and they need to be taught how it's okay and manageable.

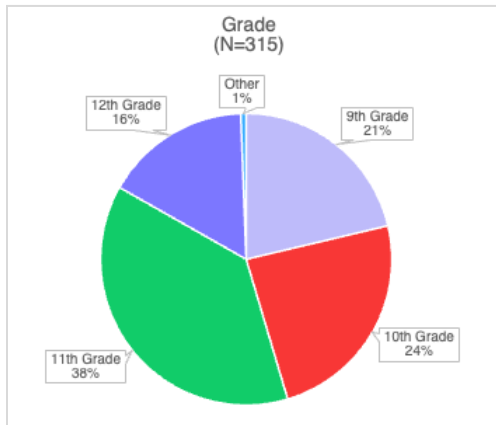
5. Students often don't feel comfortable asking for support from adults due to fears of judgment, lack of trust, and feeling like their issues are not valid enough to receive support. Placing the blame on teens for struggling with their mental health is invalidating and inaccurate—poor mental health is most likely to stem from external factors and stressors or a chemical imbalance.
 - **Recommendation:** Adults should listen and trust teens when they speak about their struggles.
 - **Recommendation:** Adults should check in on teens regardless of whether they notice there is something going on or not. It is also important that adults listen non-judgmentally.
 - **Recommendation:** Create and share presentations to educate adults on youth mental health, including learning what is helpful and unhelpful. Communities could hold events that offer education on youth mental health.

Respondent Demographics

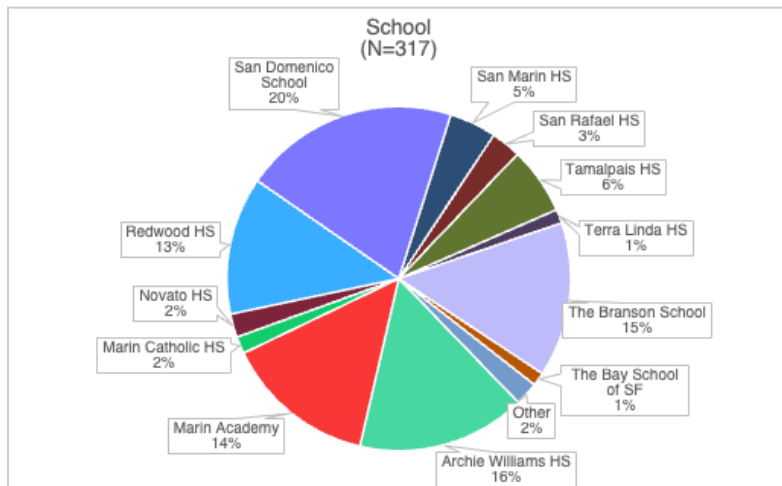
What is your age?



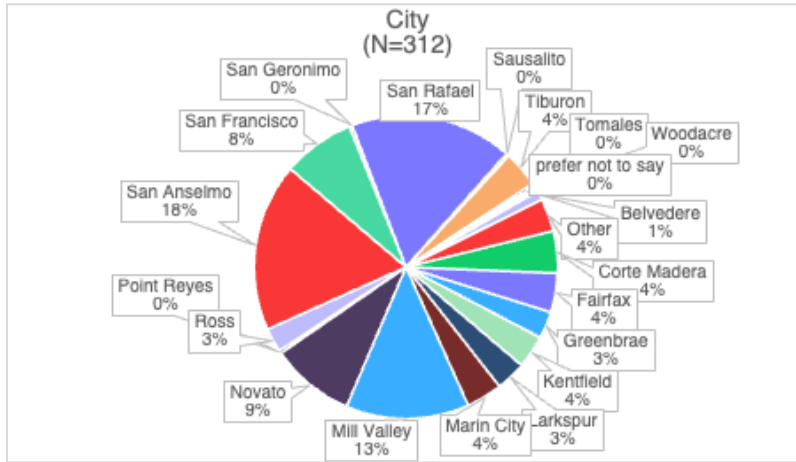
What grade are you in school?



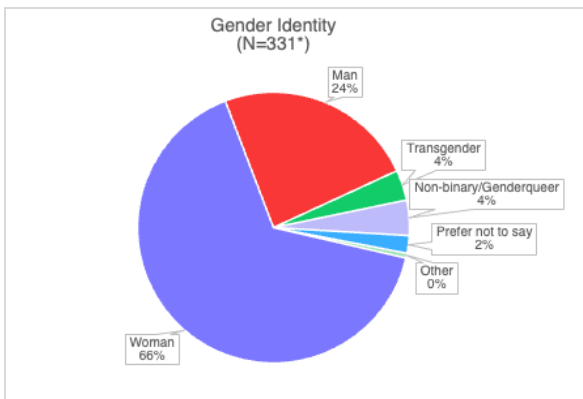
Which school do you go to?



What city do you live in?

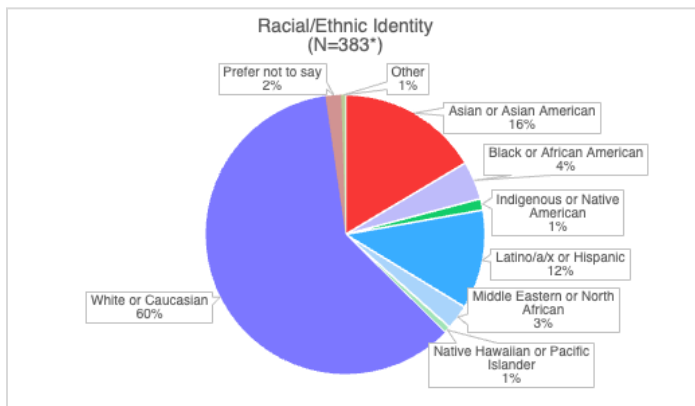


What is your gender identity?



*Includes 14 respondents who selected more than 1 gender identity

What racial/ethnic group do you belong to?



*Includes 69 respondents who selected more than 1 racial/ethnic identity

Demographic Insights

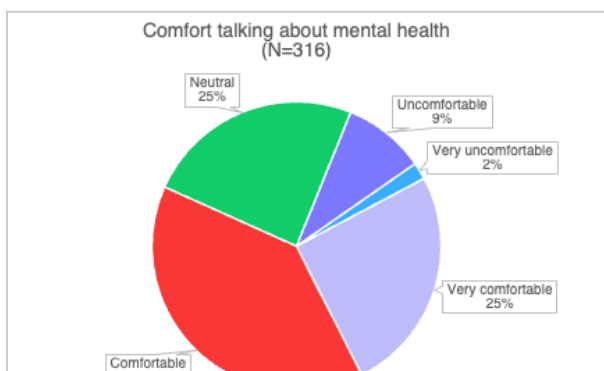
- 317 survey respondents represent 2.3% of the high school population of Marin County.
- Age and grade distribution are representative of the population.
- The distribution of responses mostly reflects the composition of the Ideas Lab researchers:
 - Good distribution of both public (46%) and private schools (51%), but is not representative of the student population of Marin county.
 - More female (66%) than male (24%) respondents, which is somewhat reflective of the researcher population, and not representative of the Marin community.
- The demographic distribution of racial/ethnic group identity on the survey generally reflects that of Marin county teens. There are three areas in which the racial/ethnic background of those surveyed deviates somewhat from the racial/ethnic background of Marin County teens (source: Kids Data 2021):
 - There was a higher percentage of Asian identifying survey participants than the Asian teen population of Marin (16%, compared to approx 6.2%)
 - There was a lower percentage of Latinx identifying survey participants than the Latinx teen population of Marin (12%, compared to 25.5%)
 - There was a higher percentage of multiracial survey participants than the multiracial teen population of Marin County (18%, compared to 5.6%)

Recommendations:

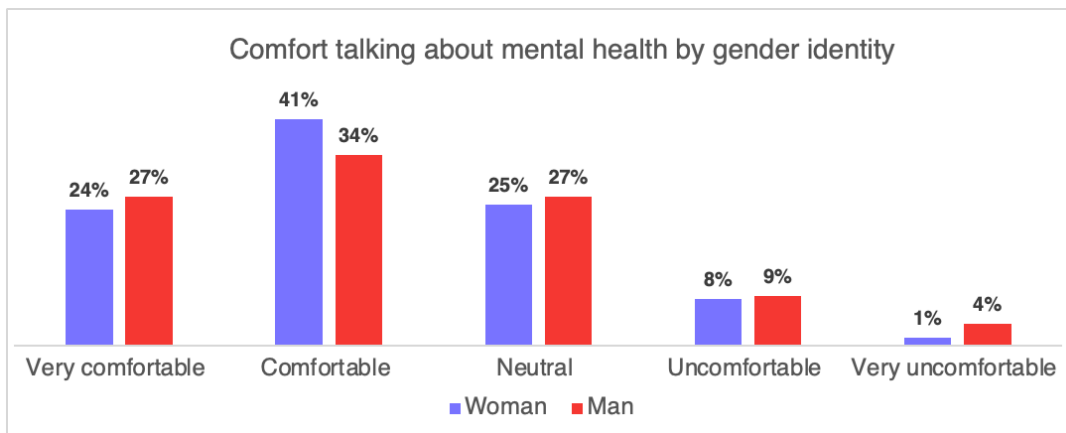
- Implement strategies to gain school approval to increase opportunities to field the survey in schools, especially in public schools.
- Expand the Ideas Lab researcher contingent to come from more schools, all grade levels, to have a greater number of respondents and a more representative public/private school survey respondent pool.
- Encourage more male researchers to join the AIM Ideas Lab to get a more representative male/female survey respondent pool.

Survey Results

Q1: How comfortable are you with having conversations about mental health with your friends?



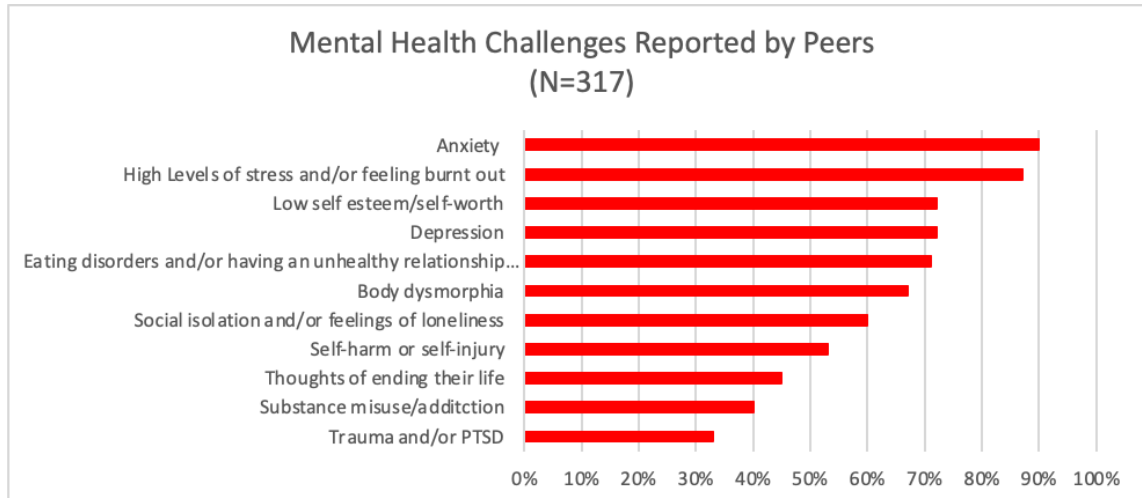
- More respondents are comfortable (64%) talking about mental health than uncomfortable (11%)
 - Insights: There appears to be progress in becoming more comfortable talking about mental health; Ideas Lab Researchers had lower expectations based on their personal observations/interactions
- **Recommendation:** Create an environment and further communication skills that encourage teens to speak more comfortably with one another about mental health; ideally everybody should be at least somewhat comfortable talking about mental health. Aim to get to a place where there is no stigma around mental health (eg. the same lack of stigma as wearing eyeglasses).



- Not a huge difference between female and male respondents (4%)
 - Very comfortable and comfortable
 - 65% of female respondents, 61% of male respondents
 - Uncomfortable & very uncomfortable
 - 9% of female respondents, 13% of male respondents

Insight: The self-reported comfortable/discomfortable levels are very similar (4% difference) in women and men respondents, which contradicts the responses in question 10.

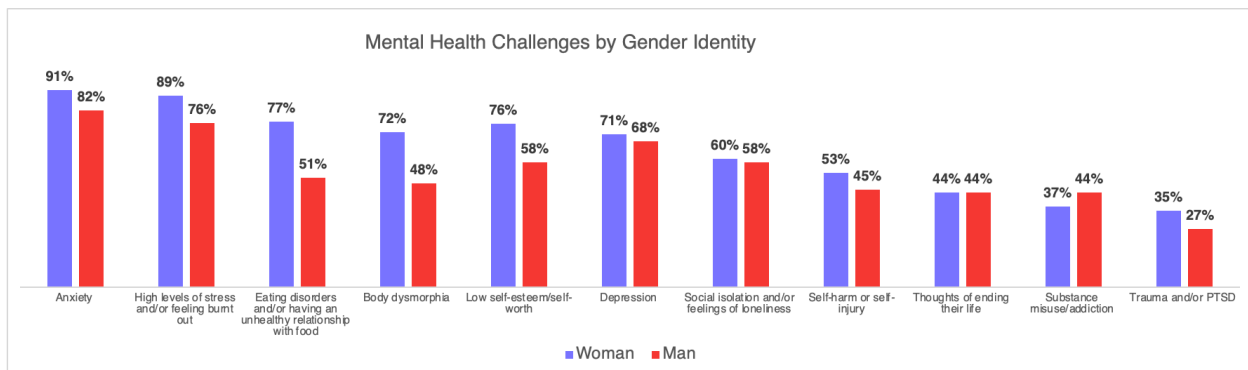
Q2: Have any of your friends shared with you that they have experienced any of the following?



Note: This does NOT represent the percentage of teens facing mental health challenges, but the percentage who say their friends shared having experienced these challenges.

- Anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, depression, food related are the top 5 mental health challenges reported by peers -
 - Very similar to 2023 Ideas Lab survey results. Insights: Might be somewhat reflective of what people are comfortable talking about - anxiety and stress.
- Insight: Low self esteem and self worth (3rd highest mental health challenge reported), is a challenge that many teens face and needs more attention.

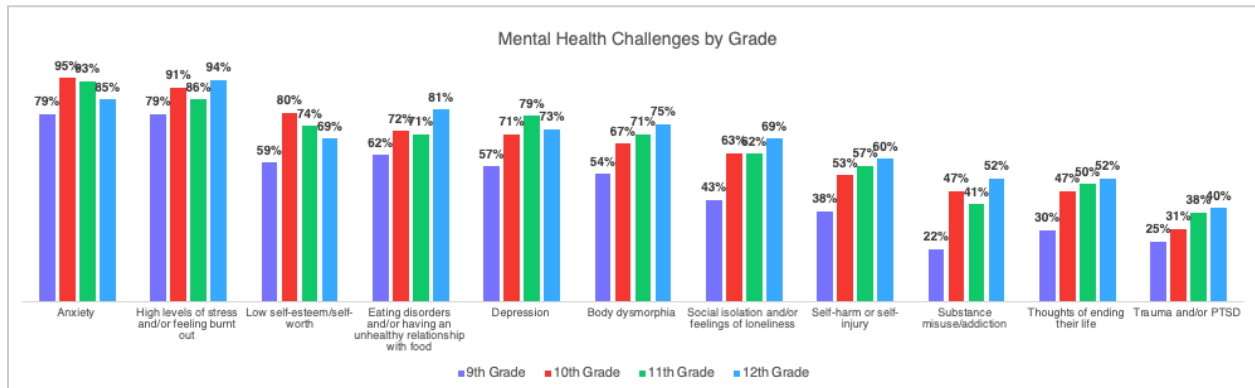
Recommendations: Acknowledge and validate the feelings and experiences that teens are facing.



- Eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and low self esteem are more commonly reported by women than men (in regard to their friends sharing they have experienced these issues)
 - Stigma may cause male identifiers to be less likely to say they struggle with these.
 - Eating disorders may be passed off as something else, when eating is truly

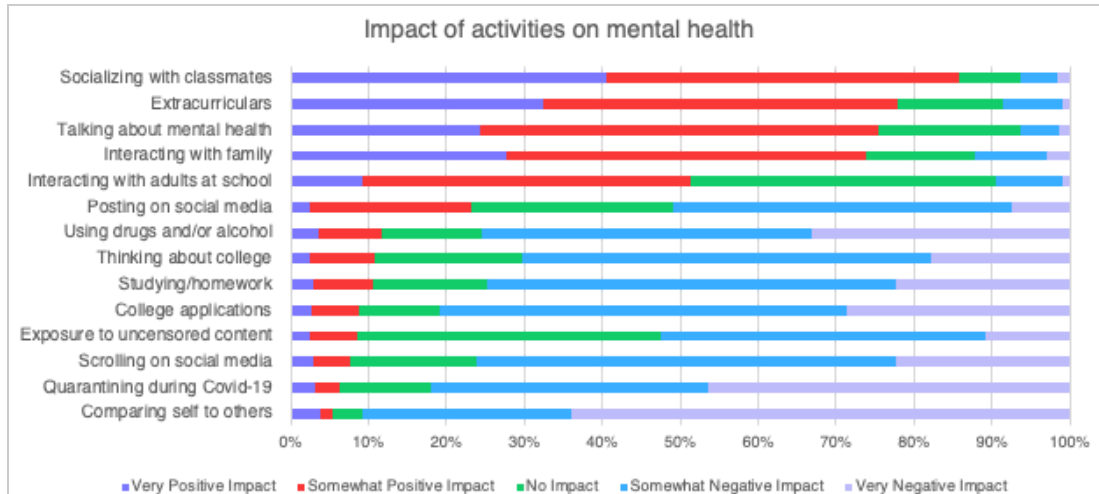
the problem.

- Substance abuse/misuse among peers is reported commonly by men.
 - Note: this is not necessarily reflective of the respondents: it's reflective of their peers



- More mental health challenges with grade progression (9th grade → 12th grade)
- Low self-esteem and anxiety were lowest in grade 9, highest in grade 10, and taper down a little from 10th to 12th grade..
 - Why is 9th grade lowest in nearly every category?
- **Recommendation:** try to warn students of trends they may expect AND make sure they have a good support system around them
- **Recommendation:** Preventative education so that when youth are going through challenges they have a toolkit/education to manage stress and hopefully decrease the severity of mental health struggles
 - Why are we educating people on mental health once something happens, rather than beforehand?

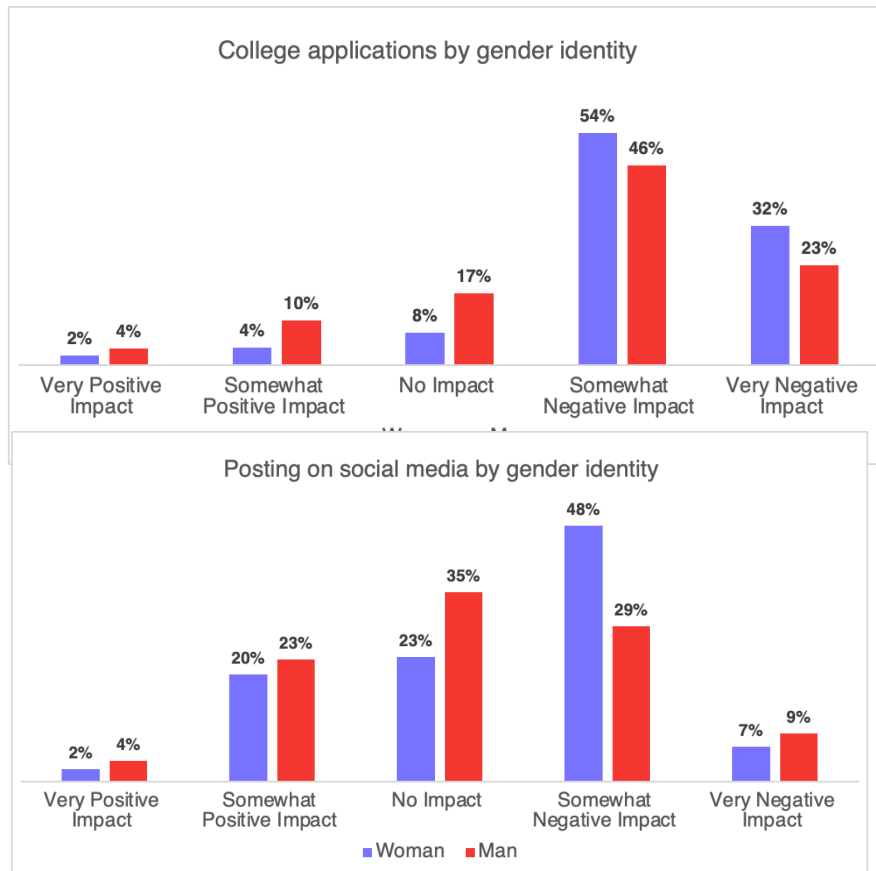
Q3: How do you think the following activities impact the mental health of youth in Marin County?



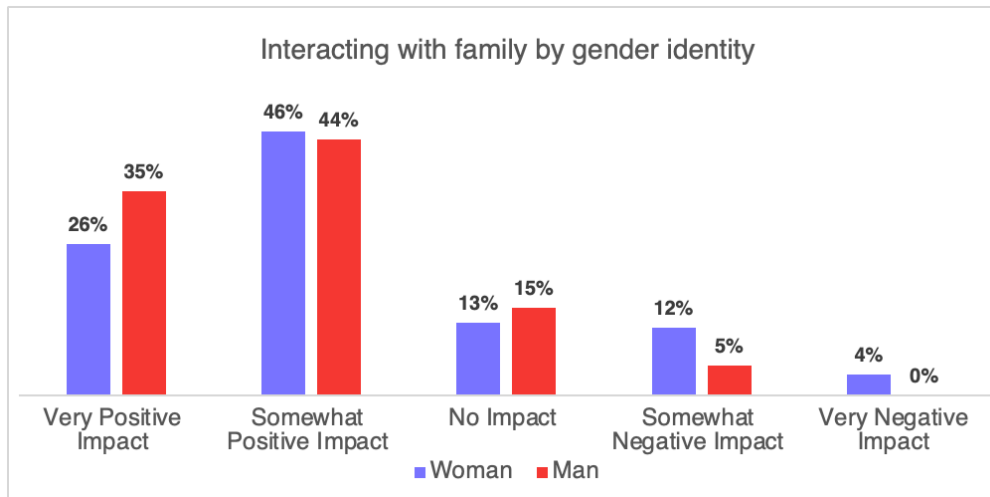
- Interactive activities tend to have a more positive impact, and individual activities tend to have a more negative impact.
- Posting on social media has a significant negative impact (over 50% of respondents indicated this), though for many (approx. 23%) think it has a positive impact.
 - There is a general bias toward social media as negative, whereas the results show there is also a positive impact.
- Using drugs/alcohol, academics, scrolling on social media, quarantining, and comparing self to others show significant negative impact.
- School (academics) homework, college applications, thinking about college all have a negative impact.
 - College applications have a more negative impact than drugs and alcohol according to the survey.
- **Recommendation:** Provide more to support students as they are thinking about college and as they are going through the college application process.
- **Recommendation:** Allow more leniency with deadlines and make homework more of a place to learn and exercise what you've learned in class, as an aid/tool to learning.

Statements by gender identity (datasets with significant differences):

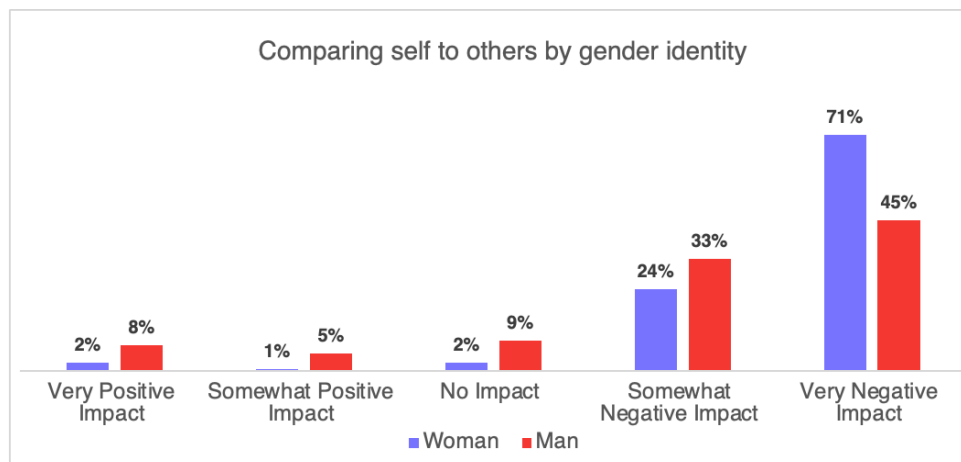
- Greater number of women than men find posting on social media to have a negative impact
- **Recommendations:** Women should learn to use social media in a way that is less negative. To follow up on: why do men seem to have healthier relationships with social media? What is the difference between how men and women interact with social media?



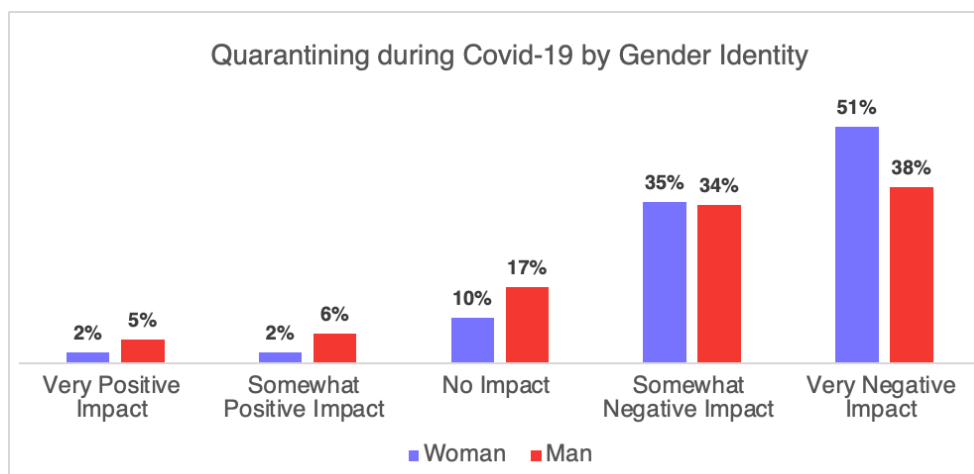
- Women find college applications to have a more negative impact than men, though college applications also have a negative impact on male respondents.



- Male teens find interacting with family provides has a positive impact on mental health (79%), even more so than females (72%)

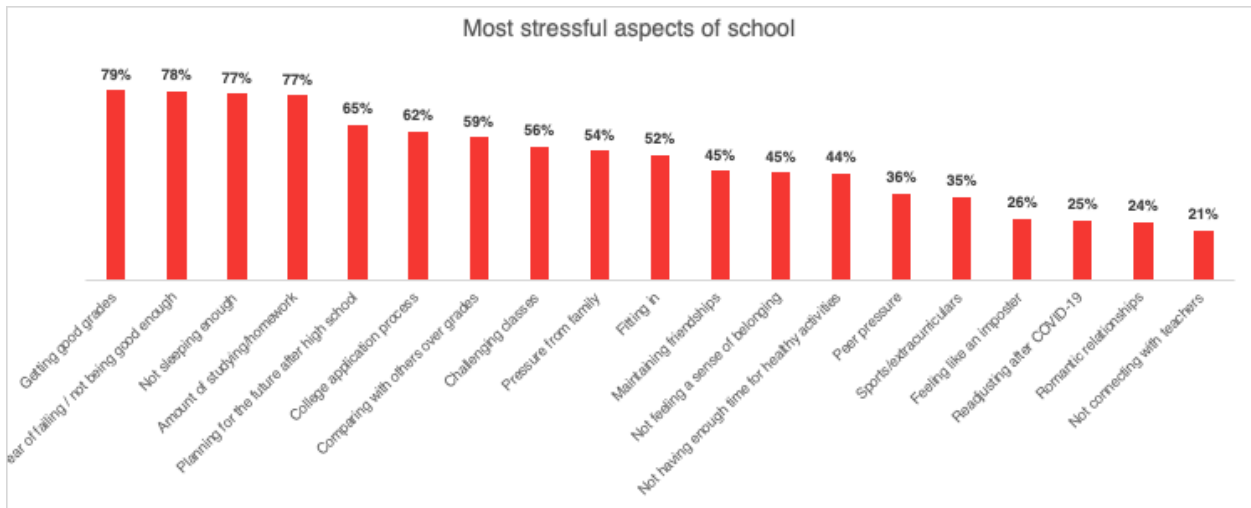


- Comparison has a far greater negative impact on women (95%) than male respondents (78%)
 - To follow up: is this related to social media?

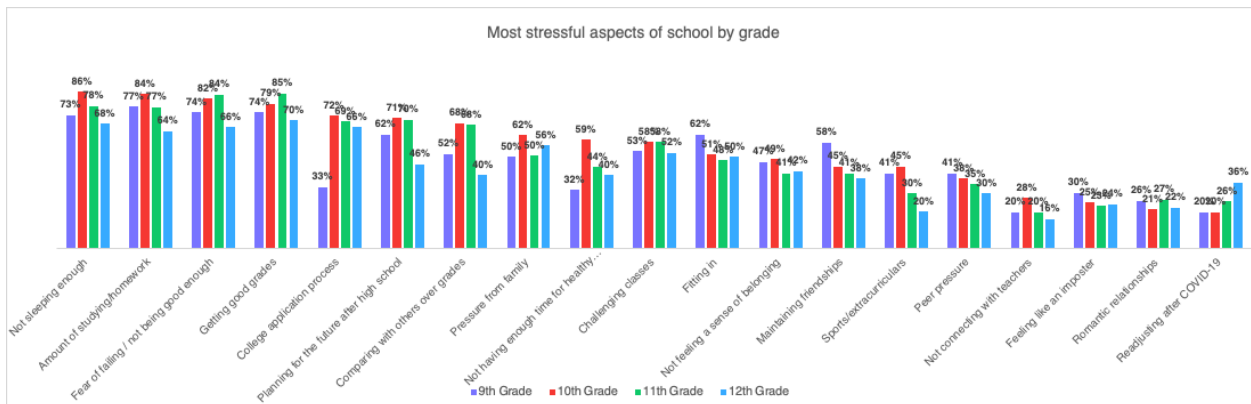


- Covid quarantining had a more negative impact on women than men, but overall negative for all.

Q4: We know that school causes a lot of stress for teens, which impacts their mental health. What do you think are the most stressful aspects of school?



- Top most stressful aspects of school reported by 70-79% of respondents are getting good grades, fear of failing/not being good enough, not sleeping enough, and the amount of studying/homework. The next tier of stressors (reported by 60 to 69% of respondents) include planning for the future after high school and the college application process. Also rated as highly stressful aspects of school (50-59%) were comparing with others over grades, challenging classes, pressure from family, and fitting in.

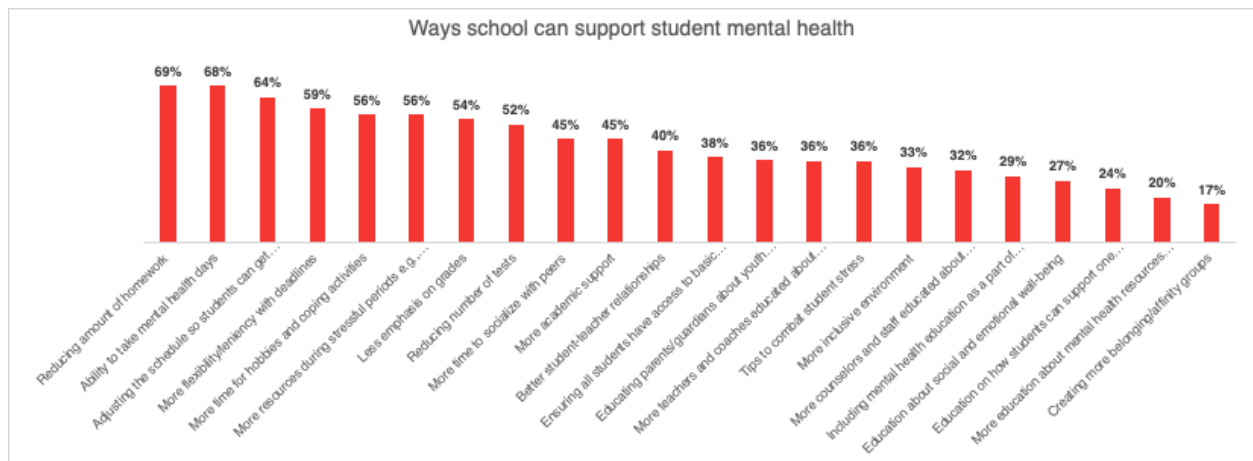


- Problems with social aspects and belonging (fitting in, not feeling sense of

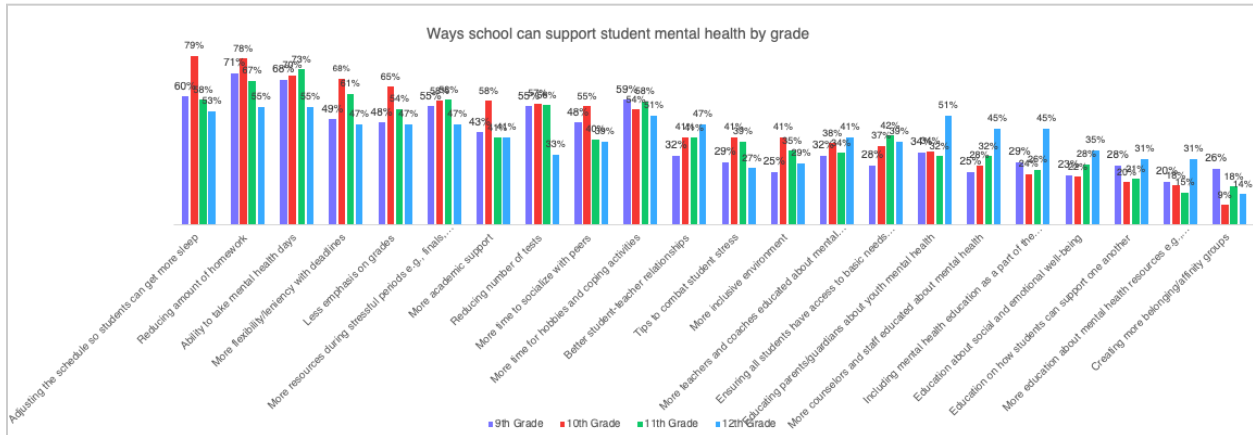
belonging, maintaining friendships, peer pressure, feeling like an imposter, romantic relationships) are slightly higher for freshmen than other grades

- The stress of academic related aspects of school is slightly higher for sophomores and juniors than other grades.
- Readjusting after COVID has most negative impact on seniors
 - May have to do with them being freshmen during COVID, and related to how freshmen struggle with social issues?

Q5: How can your school better support students' mental health?

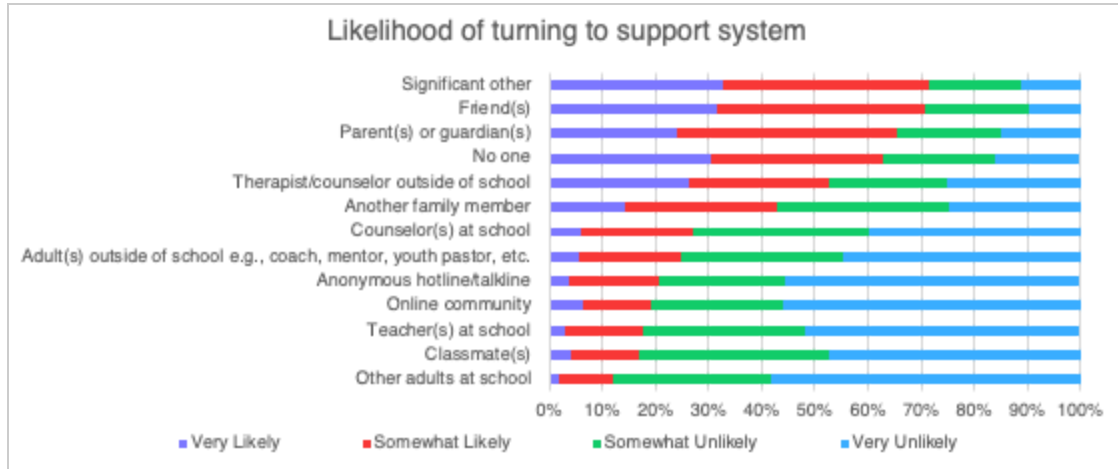


- Most recommendations for supporting mental health have to do with academics (deadlines, homework, tests) and having more flexibility within school programs (ability for mental health days/extension/in school resources)
 - 60-69% of respondents indicated that ways school can support student mental health are reducing the amount of homework, having the ability to take mental health days, and adjusting the schedule so students can get more sleep.
 - 50-59% of respondents indicated that ways school can support mental health are having more flexibility with deadlines, having more time for hobbies and coping activities, having more resources during stressful periods, having less emphasis on grades, and reducing the number of tests.
- Mental health education/support seems to have lower numbers
 - Are high schools doing well with mental health education or would students rather utilize other resources? People think we don't need more mental health education bc their experience of previous mental health ed didn't seem to help, getting the same things over and over again each year - should be consistent and building on top of what is learned each year and be tailored to specific challenges youth face during each grade.



- Sophomores seem to really struggle with sleep schedules especially compared to other grades – why is that?
 - **Recommendation:** mental health education should continue throughout high school, and can be more specific to each grade (eg. junior/seniors getting more education and support specific for college and balancing the stress of that)
- Seniors seem to feel a lot stronger than other grades about an increase in mental health education than their peers: educating parents/guardians about mental health, more counselors and staff educated about mental health, including mental health education as part of the curriculum.
 - Maybe younger grades feel like schools are already doing well/indicative of a better trend coming? Or is MH education not being done effectively so more won't help.
 - Maybe seniors look back and know where things were lacking for them?
- Freshman care most about creating more belonging groups- maybe because they are new to school and haven't found spaces yet? (See also Question 4)
- **Recommendations :** During periods of a lot of homework/tests have teachers collaborate so that some tests are one week and others pushed off to the next, so kids aren't so overwhelmed
- **Recommendation:** Allow more leniency with deadlines and assignments especially when it is affecting mental health

Q6: If you were going through a challenging time, how likely are you to ask the following people for mental health support?



Observations

- Teens are most likely to turn to their significant other and friend(s) for a support system (Very and somewhat likely for the two of those is up to 70%)
- People are very unlikely to use anonymous hotline/talkline for support—why is that?
- Parent or guardians have a high percentage as a use of a support system which could play into families having a positive impact of teen lives
- Respondents are unlikely to turn to school adults, teachers, and classmates (ones that aren't friends).
 - Do we need to work on creating connections in school communities?
- A majority of respondents seek help in therapists and counselors outside of school
- High percentage of respondents said they would be likely to not ask for help (62%)

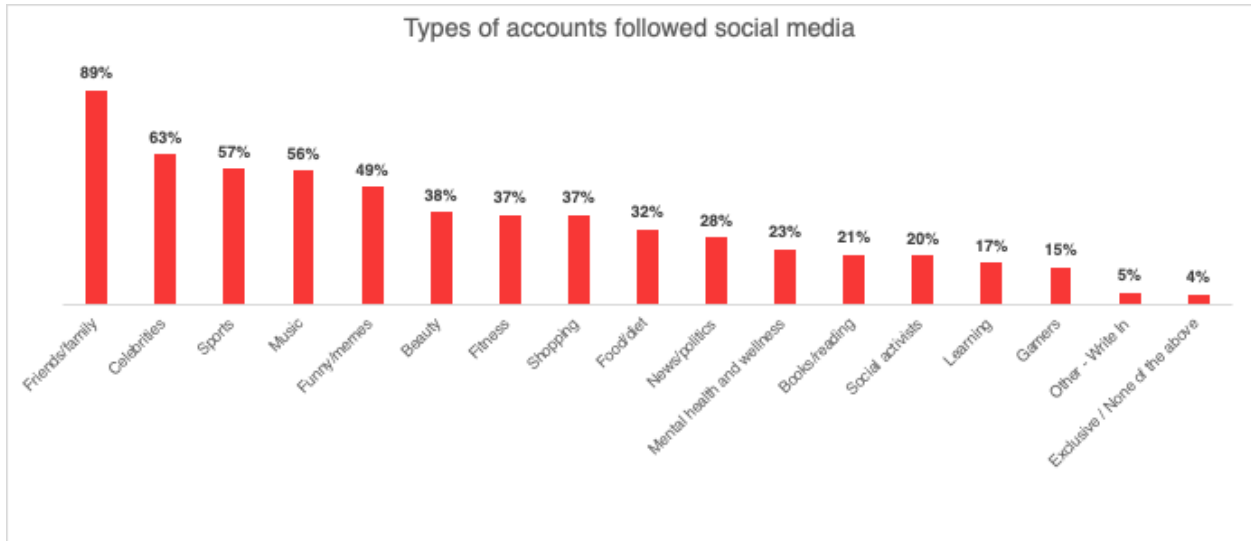
Insights:

- Feeling comfortable about talking about mental health is greatly reflected in turning to significant others and friends for support
- The high unlikely percentages towards school members as a support system could be due to worries of confidentiality and judgment
- The likelihood of using a hotline has improved 4% when compared to a very similar question in the AIM Ideas Lab Report 2023.

Recommendations:

- Building more community in schools - how?
- Providing school resources with information about confidentiality
- Providing more information on hotlines
- Finding out if people just prefer to keep to themselves or if they have no one they feel comfortable confiding in

Q7: What types of accounts do you follow on social media?



- **Observations:**

- Teenagers are most likely to follow accounts of their friends and family (89% of teenagers follow friends/family)
- Many teenagers follow celebrities with 63% following celebrity accounts
- Teenagers are least likely to follow gamers, and education accounts with 15% and 17% following respectively
- Accounts that focus on interests are relatively intermediate (ie sports, music, fitness) - Why is this? - Often these accounts can make people happier if based off of a interest they enjoy doing - could be relaxing
- From Q3 many teenagers respond that scrolling through social media impacts mental health negatively- maybe in future survey ask how certain types of accounts impact mental health (ie. celebrity, family/friends, sports etc.)

- **Insights:**

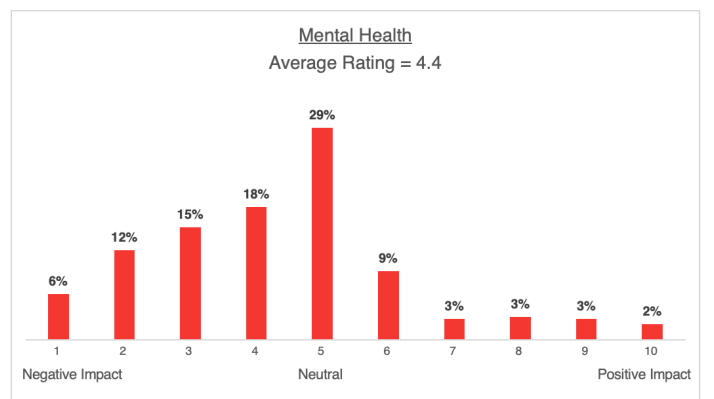
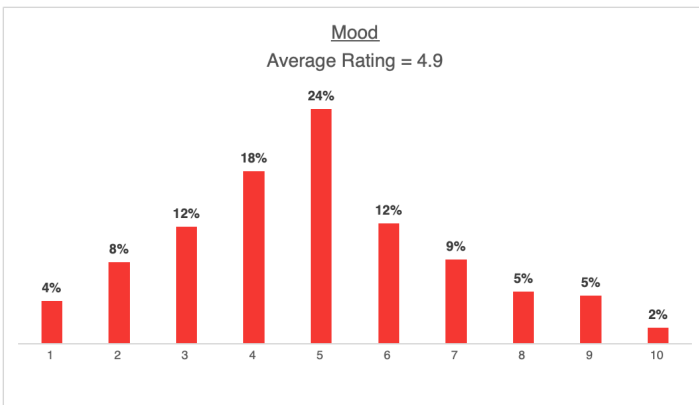
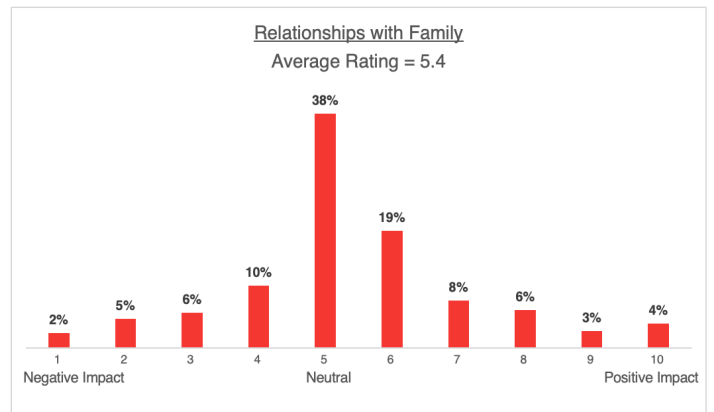
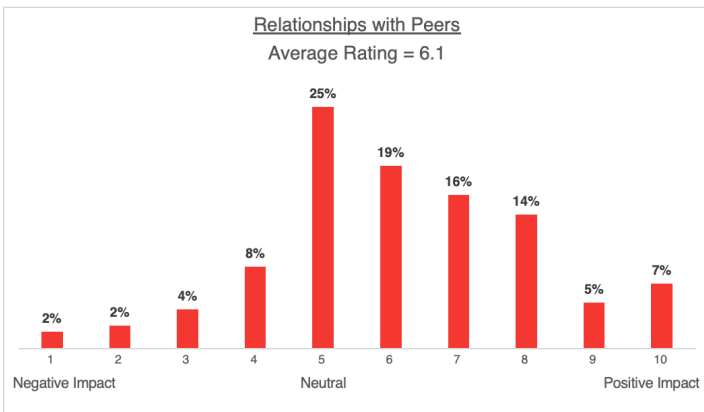
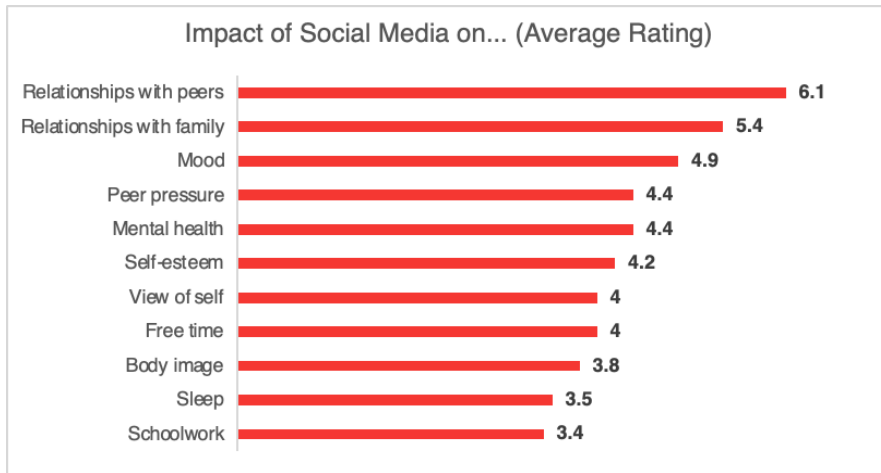
- Teenagers are probably impacted by posts they see from friends, family, and celebrities the most, which possibly could be an impact their self esteem, confidence or mental health based on social media
- Less teenagers are impacted from posts from gamers, education accounts or social activist as they are the least followed in general
- Future surveys could ask participants if accounts impact their mental health negatively or positively.

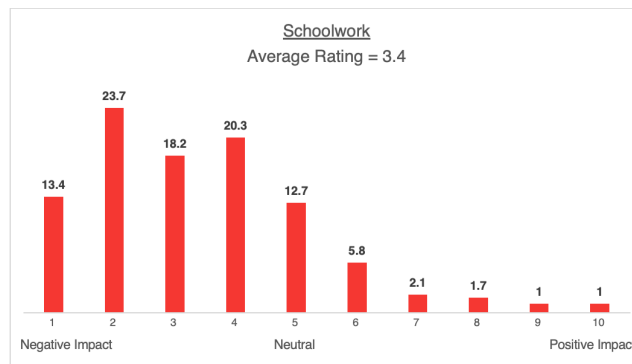
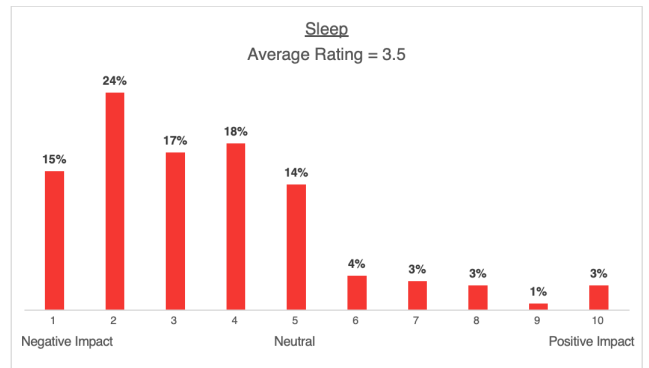
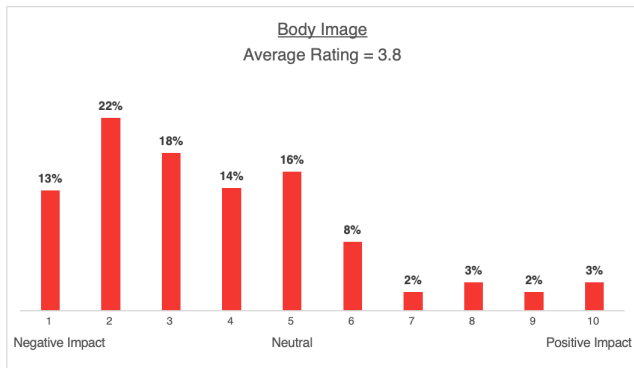
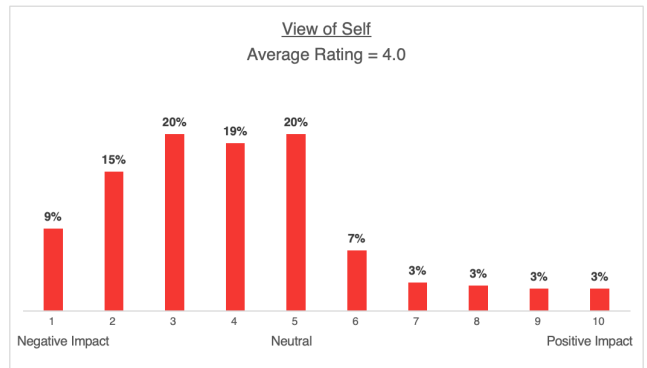
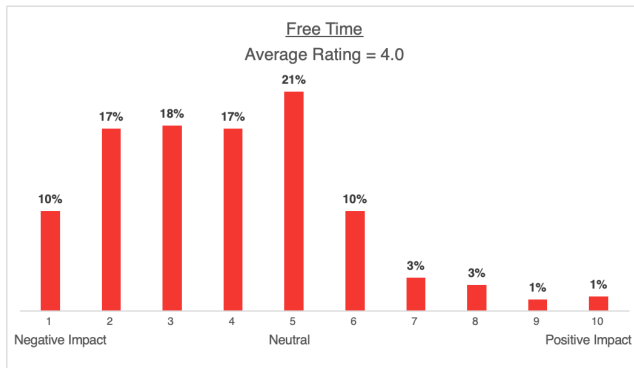
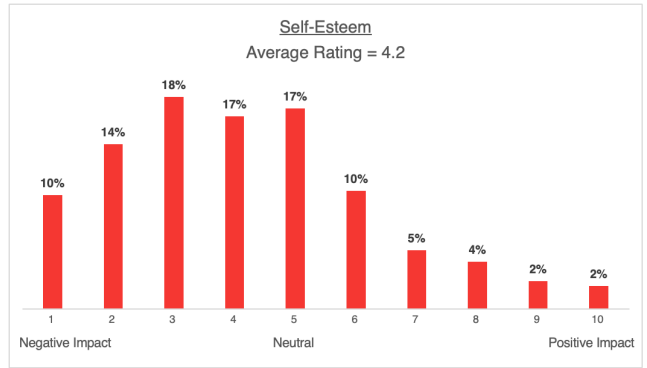
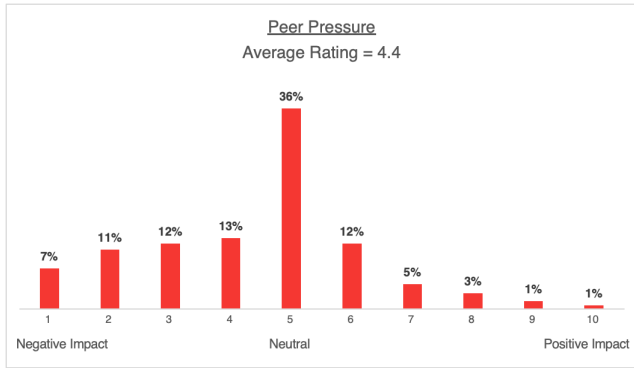
- **Recommendations:**

- Teenagers should follow more accounts about their interests which often relate to happier mentality
- Teenagers should follow fewer accounts negative to mental health

Q8: How would you rate the way social media impacts the following aspects of your

life? (1 = Negative Impact, 10 = Positive Impact)



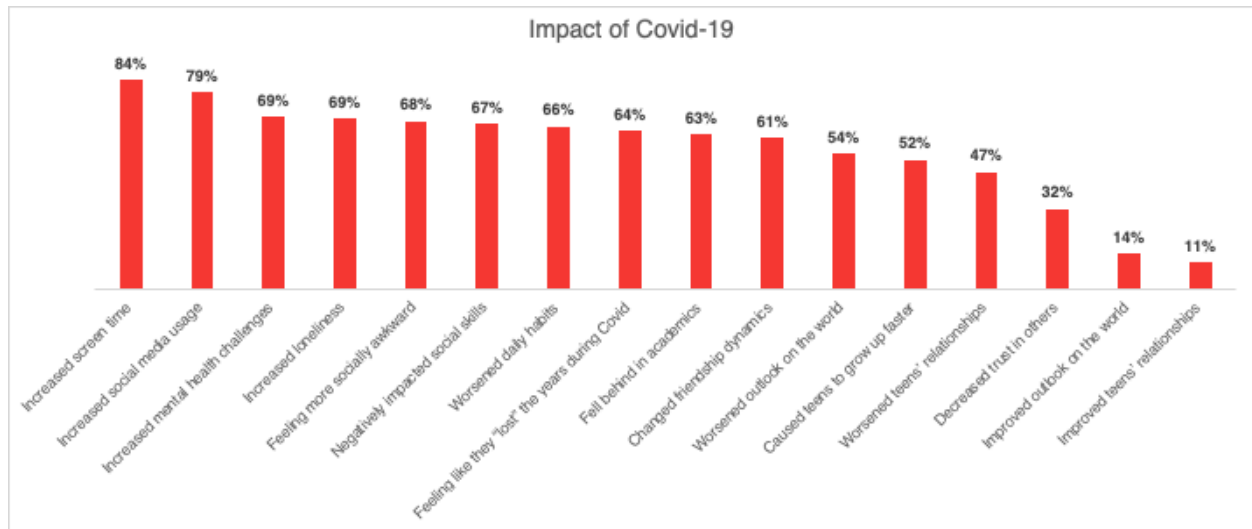


Insights:

- **Relationships with peers**, social media has a fairly positive to neutral impact on those relationships, practically no one thinking it is negative (6.1 score)
 - Can possibly help connect with new people
 - More neutral possibly as relationships are developed more in person
- **Family relationships** - more neutral effects of social media, with an average of 5.4
 - Talk to family at home
 - lots of parents/older people also don't have social media/ the same apps as their younger relatives
- **Peer pressure** also very neutral - 36% picked 5, social media also doesn't have the biggest impact on peer pressure
 - Happens more in person - parties, school, etc.
- **Mood** is widely spread across negative through positive
 - this is very subjective to the person
- **Mental health** = neutral/negative - an average of 4.4
- **Self esteem/View of Self/Body Image** - all similar topics with similar results of evenly spread though negative side (1 - 5/ 6)
 - We see a pattern through most of the questions that social media is negative towards thoughts on self
- **Free Time** - Surprisingly negative (avg 4.0 but lots of negative) -
 - possible reason = with lots of time on your hand it gives you more time to overthink/ scroll on social media and get jealous/ envious
 - Get stuck scrolling - takes up free time
- Most Negative - **Schoolwork and Sleep** - These often go hand and hand
 - big distraction from boring tasks of homework/studying
 - Taking a 5 min break - "Only one more video" turns into 30 mins
 - Staring at the phone before bed can make it harder to fall asleep after being exposed to light/ overstimulation?
- Overall
 - none of the scores say that social media is overall positive to these aspects of life (6.1 highest and 3.4 lowest) - lots of neutral/ leaning towards negatives
- **Recommendations:** Learn how to create a healthy relationship with social media, set screen time limits, set mobile phone to grayscale, etc.
- **Recommendation:** Teens set their own time to self regulate, use screen-time report to check daily/weekly

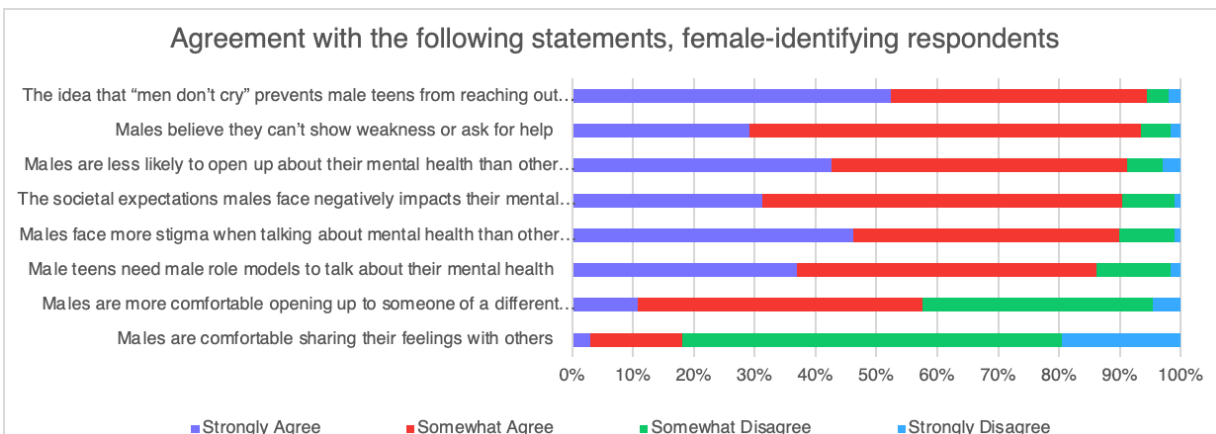
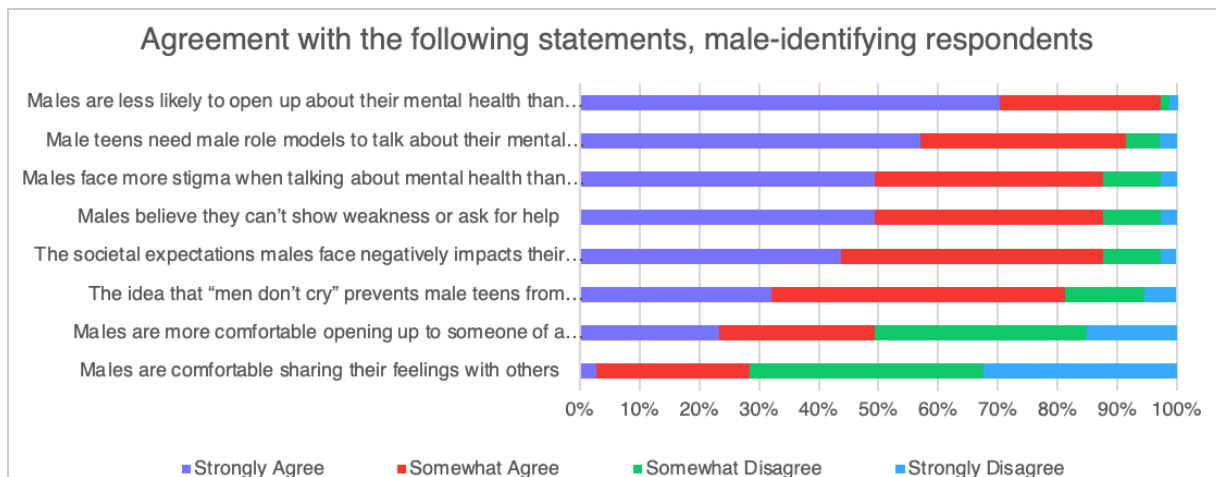
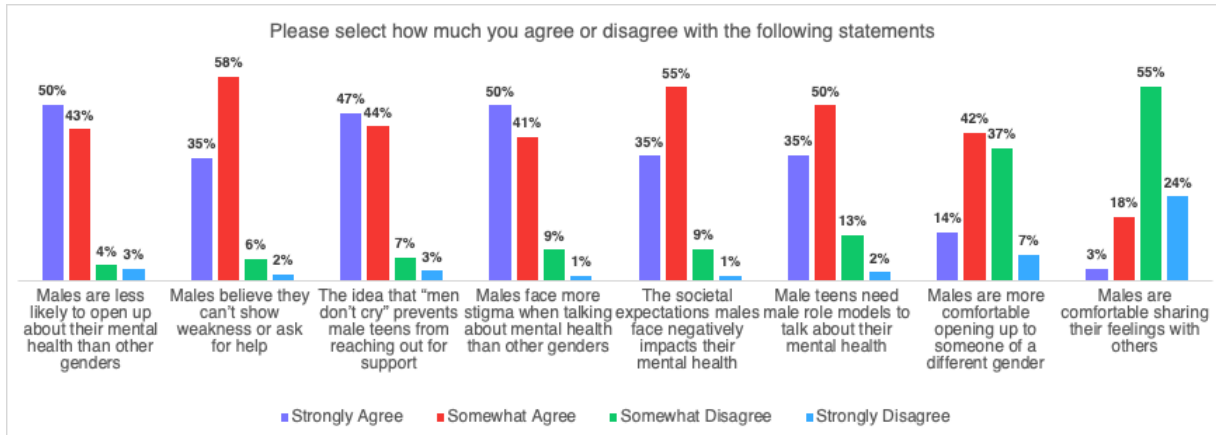
Q9: Below is a list of ways teens may have been impacted by Covid-19 and

quarantining. Please select the ways you believe Covid-19 has impacted teens in Marin County.



- Increased screen time (+ social media use) seem to be the way Covid-19 has impacted teens the most
 - This could be because during Covid-19, teens couldn't socialize as much and relied on technology for entertainment
- As seen through these responses, socializing seems more difficult for teens, especially since it seems teens are feeling more socially awkward and lonely. This is probably because during Covid-19, teens were isolated for long periods of time and weren't able to spend as much time with friends.
- Overall, Covid-19 has had negative impacts on teens, and most teens who responded to this survey said it contributed to worsening their daily habits and mental health as well
- Recommendations:
 - Find ways to lower screen time (set limits for yourself, delete some forms of social media?)
 - Find ways to get more comfortable socializing:
 - Meet new people
 - Spend more time with friends

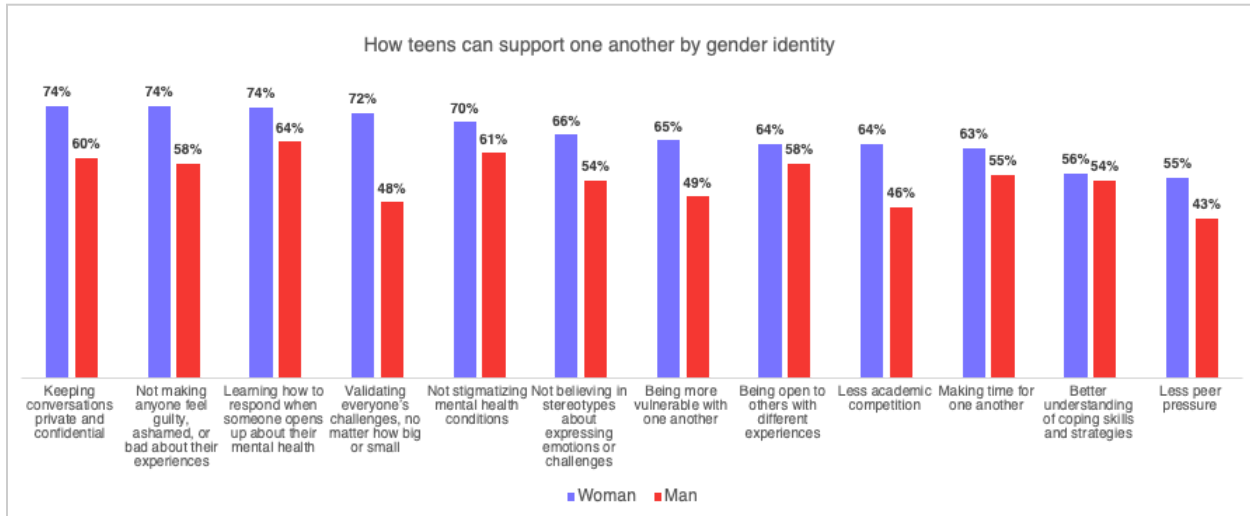
Q10: We are interested in learning about how to support the mental health of male teens. Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about male teens in Marin County.



- Overall males don't like to talk about mental health.
- **Insight:** Males may not like to talk about their mental health mostly because of stigma, but also because they do not generally learn how.
- men and women responses seem to be fairly equal with each other
- Females believe that "men don't cry" prevents males from reaching out as most strongly agreed whereas men on average indicate that they only slightly agree
- **Observation:** Males say that they aren't more likely to open up to one gender

versus another, however females think that males are more likely to open up to the opposite sex.

Q11: How can all teens in Marin County better support one another’s mental health?



- **Observation:** The top three ways teens can better support one another are: learning how to respond, keeping conversations private, not making anyone feel bad/ashamed/judged.
- **Differences between men and women** – more women responded to more of the options, with higher % of women in every category. The one that showed the greatest difference in gender: validating everyone’s challenges no matter how big or small (high for female respondents, low for males)

Q12: What do you wish you knew about mental health when you were younger?

(Open-ended) (N = 201)

Common Themes	Direct Quotes
Mental health is a real thing, and struggling with mental health is normal and valid.	“I just wish I had someone who told me my feelings were normal and valid.” “That it's normal to not be okay, and to talk to people about it because your not alone” “Just because you don't have that issue doesn't mean others can't” “That it's very real and can affect anyone.”
It is common to have mental health issues, everyone struggles (to some degree)	“I wish I knew how common it is and how many people around me went through the same thing, so I wouldn't feel so alone” “I wish I knew that I am not alone and there are people close to me that we're going through or had gone through things very similar to me.”
There are lots of degrees of mental health, and teens wish they knew the signs and how to recognize mental health struggles so that they can show up and support other people in their own mental health.	“How to respond when people bring mental health up and how to identify when my friends are having mental issues and learning how to support them” “I wish I knew more about mental health because when I was younger I did not know really anything about mental health like throughout middle school I always knew like the names of different disorders but not much else. I wish that schools would have talked more about mental health and different mental health disorders. “
You should give yourself permission to feel your emotions, receive support, and talk about it.	“Giving yourself self time to heal...Talk to someone. It's normal to have these feelings.” “I wish I knew that it is okay to rely on others and that being overly independent doesn't necessarily make you strong” “That it is okay to talk about how you were feeling, no matter, if you think it is small in comparison to others experiences”
Teens wish they knew about coping strategies and resources.	“I wish I knew of all the ways to get help. “ “How to effectively deal with my own mental health in a productive manner” “How to deal with stressful situations and leaning better coping mechanisms” “I wish I knew when I was younger how to talk about it with other kids, my age.” “I wish I knew strategies to compact days that affect my mental health, and I wish I knew how to open up more to those close around me.”
Importance of talking about mental health problems and reaching out for support	“That the people around you will support you. “ “It's ok to feel stressed but if it's impacting how you live your life you need to reach out for help. Also that asking for help is not something to be ashamed of. “

	<p>“I wish that I would have talked about my challenges and my stress earlier on in life and gotten help sooner.”</p>
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Q13: What do you wish adults in Marin County knew about youth mental health and how to support teens better? (Open-ended) (N = 193)

<p>Adults should have a better understanding of teen mental health and how to give support.</p>	<p>“I think that instead of being afraid of it, parents and adults should embrace it and try to learn more in order to help support their teens/others. They need to be aware of the signs and symptoms so that they will be able to help in the future. Adults need to be understanding and patient because it's so prominent and manifests in young ages and can have a significant influence on a teens day to day life.”</p> <p>“ I wish they fully understood how different times are now then they were in the past, and how much more pressure and comparison there is for us and to cut teens more slack.</p>
<p>Academic pressure is particularly high.</p>	<p>“It's a struggle being a teenager. There's so much pressure (mostly from adults in our lives) to achieve academic/athletic success. Everyone is comparing themselves to others (in positive and negative ways) not just online (as adults love to point out) but in person— at school, at practice, at rehearsal. Mental health should be more understood and less of a thing to be angry or confused by (as an adult)”</p> <p>“We are trying our hardest. Its just never seems to be enough. And when it is, its at the expense of our sleep, health, and mental stability. What do you care about more? Your own child, or a messed up education system?</p>
<p>Teens need to take a break sometimes.</p>	<p>“Balancing school, sports, and social life is incredibly difficult for teenagers and sometimes we are truly tired. (Not always physically, but emotionally.)”</p> <p>“Teens need breaks”</p>
<p>Mental health challenges are not a phase or laziness - they needs to be taken seriously</p>	<p>“I think that, especially older folks, believe that teens fake things to get attention, and though some might, there are also people who are really struggling, and when they are made to feel bad about speaking up for themselves, it makes them less likely to reach out for help, which can be dangerous for the person struggling, as well as very lonely”</p>
<p>Teens wish adults would just be there for them and listen in a non-judgmental way - they may not need advice.</p>	<p>“Instead of comparing their lives and saying how it was harder during their time, they just need to be someone people can talk to and they can just listen”</p> <p>“To not project how they feel and give too much advice but to listen and try to understand from the youths point of views”</p>

<p>Parents mental health and actions affect teens, and teens with that their parents were good role models.</p>	<p>“I wish that adults knew how to express their own emotions and how that affects their children” “To be good examples that their kids can look up to. if they demonstrate bad behaviors ... then their kids will subconsciously ingrain those behaviors into their lives and that will actually create more difficulties (either internal or physical to the world). it's important to model good behavior and to not shape your kid to be something that they shouldn't be.”</p>
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Q14: What could our community do to better support the mental health of male teens in Marin County? (Open-ended) (N = 173)

Common Themes	Direct Quotes
<p>Destigmatize mental health.</p>	<p>“Destigmatize talking about your feelings - Offer resources made for male teens - Less emphasis on masculinity” “... it is important to acknowledge there is a stigma around men opening up, and educating the people who worsen this stigma” “ Reduce the stereotype of males have less feelings, encouraging them to open up more, no peer pressure/shame”</p>
<p>Need positive male role models.</p>	<p>“Have open-minded male role models [...]” “I think there could be more male role models that were open and candid about mental health.” “Positive male role models, positive male spaces (i.e. Coach [X] with the [sports] team)</p>
<p>Others need to reach out and check in on the men in their lives - they may just need the chance to open up.</p>	<p>“Reach out. Check in. No one ever checks in on guys. In my day to day life people don't ever check in on me. It would be nice if people did that more.” “Talk about the stigmas but DO NOT force them to talk. Get the seed planted, they will talk when they want too.”</p>
<p>Spaces that are safe for open communication and education in emotional health and expression.</p>	<p>“Give them more resources and education, validate their feelings, and make it a non-judgmental space”. “Educate parents on teen mental health and offer constructive methods of help. Also educate young males about emotional expression, teach it to them young. So many males struggle with mental health but struggle to communicate it and they need to be taught how it's okay and manageable.”</p>

Topics for further research:

What is the disconnect between teens knowing they need help and actually seeking it?

And how long does that take? What are the obstacles?