

Focus Group Consultation undertaken with young people

General questions around family, relationships and mental health

Key Points

This document has drawn out the key issues identified by young people during discussion at SNYAB Meetings, Young Commissioner Focus Groups, Langley School, Diss High School and Framingham Earl from October – December 2019.

Total Number participants: 47

Male: 21

Female: 26

Age	12	13	14	15	16	17
No. of yp	3	19	8	3	7	7

The young people live across South Norfolk and represent a good geographical spread from the district.

Process

Young people were asked to identify their influences in small groups and feedback what this meant to them. Mostly, discussion flowed from this, and we allowed free talk to really understand what was important. Where necessary, some questions prompted discussion.

Young people enjoyed the process, and wanted to stay longer and talk more. They understood that nothing may happen from their conversation, but that did not matter – they liked having the opportunity and time to talk about things that were important to them. Some young people did share different issues that they were experiencing, and these were supported appropriately.

Key Points

- Young people can identify what makes a healthy relationship. They understand that there are different types of relationships, as well as different levels of relationship – some have more depth than others. They also know that some relationships can be negative.
- Young people know what positive family life looks like, and understand that different things affect this at different times – including their own behaviour. They know that family life is affected by loss, arguments, their relationship with their sibling(s), and environment e.g. lack of personal space, only one bathroom, etc. Young people identified that time is key and that families need more time together, talking with each other and doing activities together. Although, most thought that Christmas would bring extra pressure into the household.
- Young people know what positive mental health means to them, and don't believe that you can be happy 100% of the time – this is OK and just needs acknowledging. Young people believe that young men still keep their thoughts to themselves, whereas young women are encouraged to speak out. Young people also stated that it is easier to dislike yourself than feel positive.
- Young people feel that there is still a stigma to having a mental health issue. There needs to be a reason for feeling bad, you can't just be. They felt that you can't be vulnerable, as there is always a need to keep improving.
- Young people believe that there should be different levels of support available to anyone who needs it, when they need it. i.e. young people and families should be able to access help when things start to go wrong for them. If there were always people about who could offer support, it wouldn't be unusual to see them, giving some anonymity to the interaction. They felt that certain groups e.g. Young Carers and Young Parents should be targeted as well.
- Young people felt that school did not prepare them for life and some young people did not get PSHE lessons. They would like to opportunity to explore different topics including the expectation around getting married and having children.

- ‘Judgement’ came out as a common theme in every discussion we had. Young people are feeling pressure from many different places, and feel judged if they don’t live up to an expectation:

FOMO – fear of missing out. YP need to do everything (watch the ‘right’ TV show) so that they can join in the conversation.	School – grades / tests / am I doing well? / what will I do after school? / workload / standards / status / pressure to succeed / homework	Social Media – what is real? / celebrity / likes / comparisons / marketing / trends /
Money – latest phone / technology / brands / adverts / fashion	Intergenerational – not the same / ‘back in my day’ / no respect / ‘it’s a phase’ / ‘snowflakes’ / lack of tolerance / no importance given because of being a YP.	Friendships – share different things with different people / need skills to get new friends / need to create a bond
Identity – body image / body shaming / sexuality / gender / confidence / perfection / need more conversation about this / looking different / disability	Isolation – don’t feel good enough / did something embarrassing / not got positive relationships for support	Safety – want to feel safe everywhere but don’t / media shares scary stories / want boundaries
Bullying – or is it ‘just banter’ / when does not being nice become bullying? / face to face and online	Communication – want to be open and honest with people without judgement / no secrets / language used	Family – different family units such as living with grandparents / not wanting to let anyone down

- Some young people gave what they believed to be the most important issue for young people:
 - Positiveness and coping strategies
 - Anxiety
 - Pressure / expectations / opinions
 - Social media
 - Mental health stigma
 - Awareness of services
- Some also gave ideas about what they thought might be helpful:
 - Community events and activities, that focus on getting people talking
 - Something regular (doesn’t matter how often, just needs to be regular)
 - Want real people with lived experience to share it
 - Watching the news at school
 - Information in assemblies
 - School policies and involving young people in their development
 - Craft activities
 - Online groups
 - Wellbeing sessions
 - PSHE Lessons – discussion based
 - Services in and out of school
 - Having people to talk to – this confirms what was stated in the Leisure Time Consultation.

Next Steps

Re-visit these groups with next stage of SNYAB planning.

Encourage involvement of young people as Young Commissioners.