

# YOUNG MEN'S HEALTH REPORT

## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

AN ANALYSIS OF RESULTS GATHERED FROM 204 MALES, AGED BETWEEN  
15 AND 16, ON A RANGE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR WELLBEING

**CONV//CT//ON**  
PEOPLE / STORIES / PERSPECTIVE **GROUP**



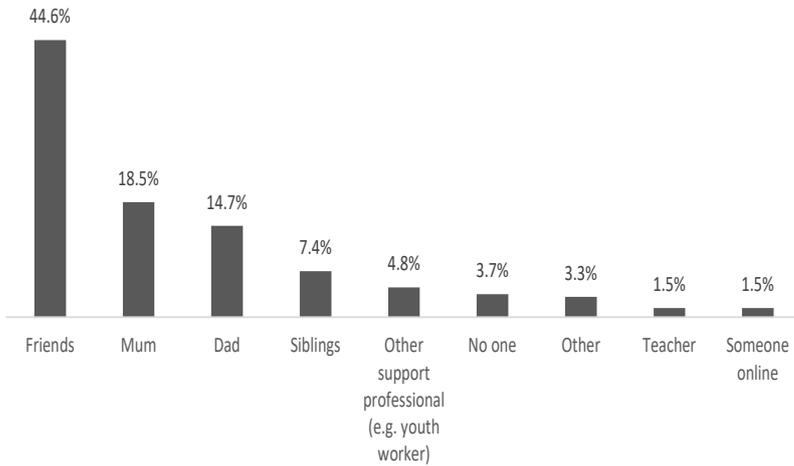
**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY

# KEY FINDINGS //

The data presented here is not an exhaustive representation of all responses to every question in the Young Men's Health Scoping Study Report but has been included in the highlights brochure for its key significance in understanding young males' attitudes and practices around their health and wellbeing.

## TRUSTED PEOPLE //

Who to go to for advice on relationships

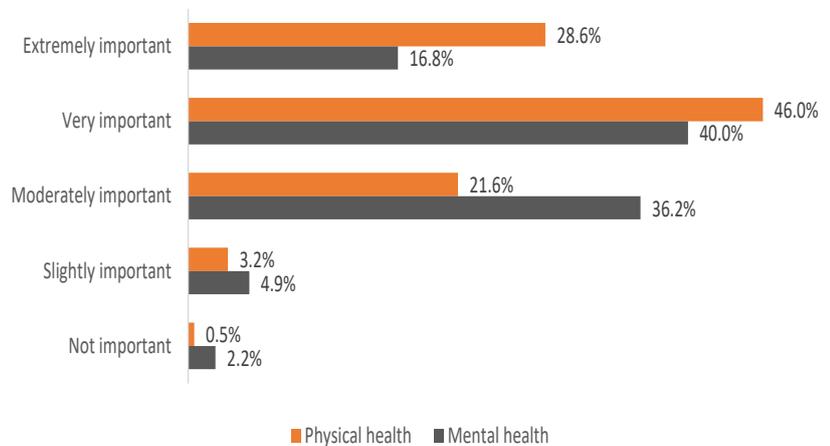


A dimension of trust explored in the survey was surrounding who to go to for advice on relationships. As can be seen, friends are the most common people to whom young males would go when seeking this advice.

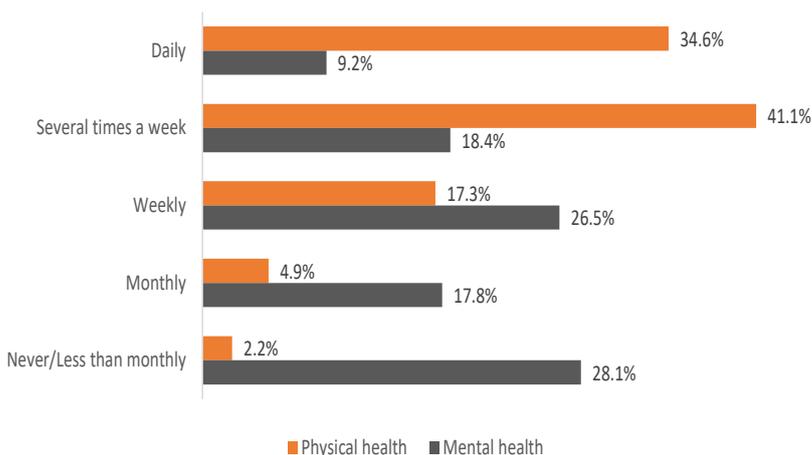
## VALUING HEALTH //

Respondents were asked about the relative importance they ascribe to mental health and physical healthy. There is a 12% difference in more participants considering physical health as 'extremely important' compared to mental health, and a 6% difference in the rating of 'very important'. Only a small percentage felt that either aspect of health was 'not important'. These ratings show that the young males place value in their continuing health, but it remains to be seen how likely they are to act on these attitudes.

Comparative importance of physical and mental health



How often do you do something to look after your health?

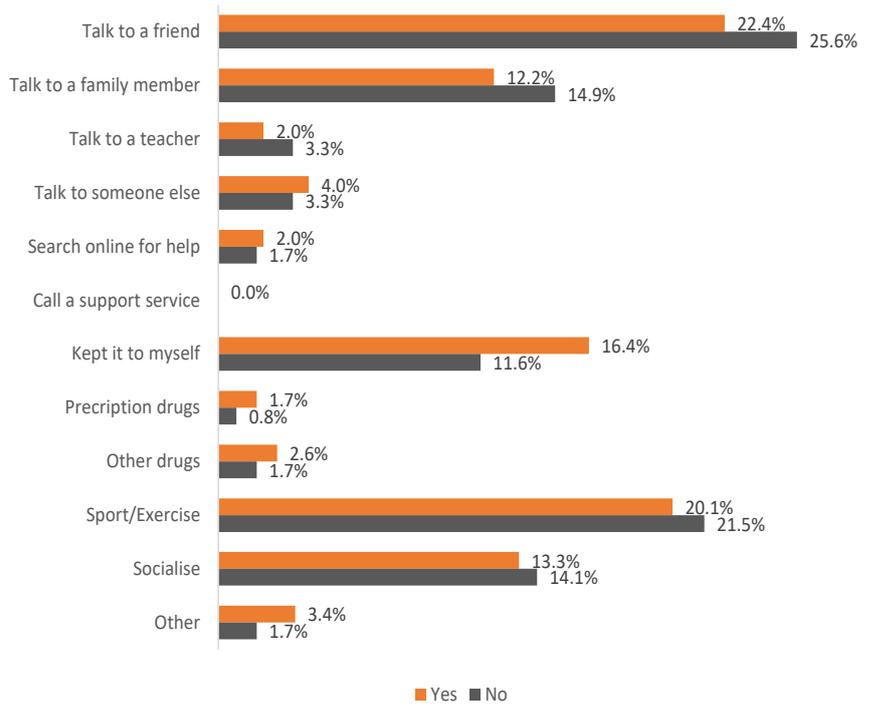


There is a significant difference between regular activities for sustaining physical and mental health. Young males were far more likely to engage daily or several times per week in activities to maintain their physical health (approximately 76%) compared to activities to maintain their mental health (approximately 28%). In terms of mental health, 28% of respondents selected 'never/less than monthly' as opposed to only 2% for physical health. These statistics are alarming and the implications quite disturbing. However, it must be considered that young men may be unaware of which activities maintain their mental health, even if they are performing them.

# EXPERIENCING FEELINGS //

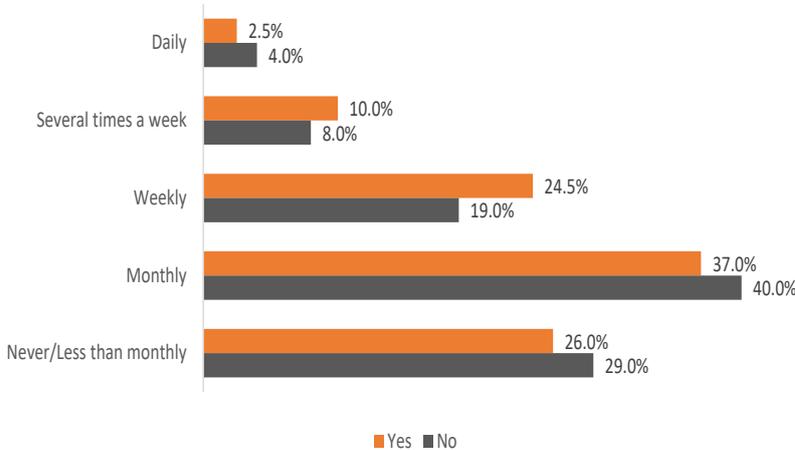
76.8% of respondents answered in the affirmative when asked if they have felt “upset, worried, stressed or down” in the past month. The survey segregated yes and no responses to ascertain the range of actions taken already (for the ‘Yes’ group) or possible future actions (for the ‘No’ group) as a consequence of experiencing feelings. The percentages follow a similar pattern regardless of whether the young males had experienced the named feelings or not. The most common responses of talking to a friend, sport/exercise, and socialising top both lists. The exception is in those who reported having experienced said feelings, they were more likely to keep it to themselves if they were to feel them in the future.

## Actions taken/potentially taken on mental health



# TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS //

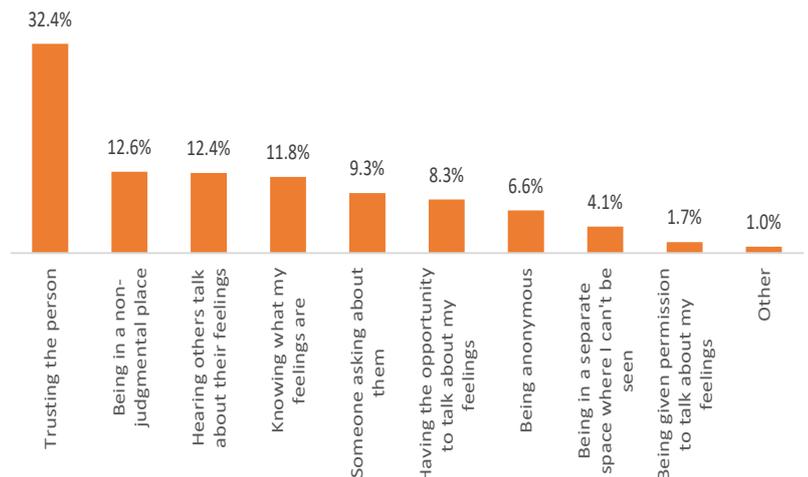
## Regularity of talking about feelings for Yes and No groups



A comparison of the regularity of talking about feelings, segregated by whether the young males answered yes or no to having experienced the named feelings in the past 30 days. The patterns and percentages are remarkably similar, with ‘monthly’ talking about feelings being the most common response regardless of experience of those feelings. Monthly is an infrequent practice but there is a possibility that it could be equated to monthly appointments with a counsellor or health professional. This data provides some encouragement that potentially 1 in 5, or 1 in 4, young males are talking about their feelings with some regularity.

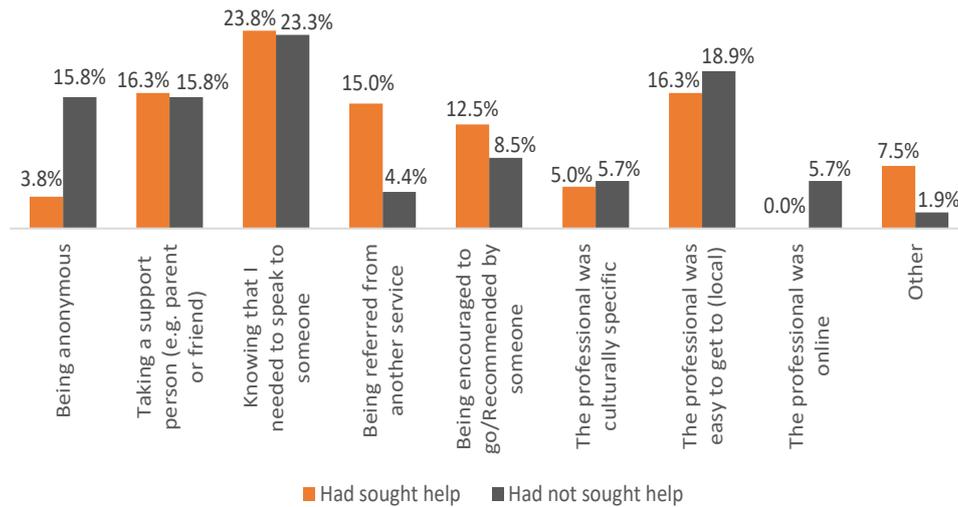
We asked what would make young males feel more comfortable to talk about their feelings. In responding to this question, participants reported that “Trust” as by far the most frequent response with more than double any other answer at 32.4%.

## Factors to facilitate talking about feelings



# HELP SEEKING //

## Facilitators to help seeking



23.5% of the participants have sought help from a mental health professional. In terms of facilitators to help-seeking, some differences were noticed according to whether they already sought help. 'Knowing that I need to talk to someone' is the top answer for both those who had sought help and those who had not. Further, the ability to take a support person with them was also seen as important for both groups. Interestingly, anonymity was ranked very low for people who had sought help (3.75%) as opposed to who had not (15.7%). This finding could indicate that it is the fear of being known/seen that acts as a barrier to going to a support service for the first time, but that this fear may dissipate after having been already.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS //

There is some evidence of a generational shift in young males, offering an alternative discourse to hegemonic masculinity in relation to talking about feelings and help-seeking behaviours. The psychological tasks of adolescence and emerging adulthood centre around identity, independence, and forming new attachments. This report has consolidated thinking around the importance of friends over family in this phase of life. Who they spend time with, who they go to for conversation and expressing feelings, and from whom they seek advice is mostly friends. This practice has clear implications for the changing roles of family and other authority figures.

The mental health/wellbeing attitudes and practices of the young males providing feedback for this report hint at some new territory. In addition to the reliance on friends, there was an equal level of value placed on physical health and mental health. They also related a growing level of comfort in relation to talking about their feelings, engaging in activities that help sustain their mental health on a reasonably frequent basis, and a willingness to seek professional help if required. The transition from comfort to action, however, was complex and seemed mostly to relate to the intensity of a relevant issue. Nevertheless, 1 in 5 respondents indicated having sought professional help, a figure on par with general population experience of mental health incidents.

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