



# Live4Life Initiative

## *Evaluation Report*

### *February 2013- December 2013*

*Reported in February 2014*

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## Introduction

The following report reviews and analyses a range of evaluative data pertaining to various aspects of the Live4Life initiative during 2013. Evaluation methodology includes both quantitative and qualitative feedback, and is based on materials including surveys, focus groups, and email testimonials. Evaluative data has been collected from a range of sources including: students, parents, teachers, and youth support workers. Ethics approval has been gained from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development where appropriate. Copies of this are available on request. The report covers both the successful aspects of the Live4Life initiative, and outlines recommendations for improvements and alterations to the initiative for 2013.

## Live4Life Initiative Overview

Live4Life is a Youth Mental Health Promotion Initiative working across a whole rural Victorian Municipality, targeting 12-14 year old young people in the Macedon Ranges, Victoria, Australia.

The adolescent population in the Macedon Ranges (12.6%) is greater as a percentage than adolescents in Victoria (10.1 %).<sup>1</sup>The region is unique in rural Victoria as there are not one but five larger townships across the area, divided by a mountain range. This poses challenges for not only location of services, but access to appropriate services for young people. These townships are not serviced or connected by an efficient transport network. As a rural community the issues of stigma and confidentiality related to mental illness further compound these challenges.

The Live4Life Initiative is a community-wide response from 2008, to a verbally reported increase from schools, police, community health and medical services of depression, anxiety, cyber bullying, and self-harm, particularly at year 8 level (13-14years). This led to the need for a coordinated, collaborative response, led by the Youth Development Unit, of the Macedon Ranges Council, to seek solutions *prior to* the need for crisis intervention.

Prior to the commencement of Live4Life, the five local secondary schools or community organisations involved had not collaborated to address young people's mental health and wellbeing.

The five secondary schools and community partners unanimously agreed to support the Macedon Ranges Council, as the Lead Agent, to instigate an approach

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<sup>1</sup> Adolescent Community Profile, Shire of Macedon Ranges 2010, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria.

to mental health and wellbeing focusing on Mental Health Education and Promotion that targets young people, their families, schools and community not just those young people with identifiable problems or a diagnosed mental illness.

A Needs Analysis conducted in late 2009 with over 50 local and state-wide stakeholders, primarily school staff and support services (community mental health and crisis services), confirmed an increase in mental health problems, plus there were consistent requests for support and education to focus on developing:

- Resilience;
- Self-worth;
- Coping strategies for everyday life;
- Forming positive friendships and social inclusion and;
- Community connection and participation.

There was also an acknowledgement that credible state and national mental health resources were available and accessible but all schools expressed concerns that:

- Adaptation was needed to reflect local needs and capacities including recognition of the limited services/support available in rural communities;
- Time was needed to 'sift and sort' the myriad of educational materials sent to schools which was often very time consuming and not well understood;
- There was a lack of professional skill/knowledge to interpret research, determine the quality and appropriateness of some materials and how to deliver mental health education in schools;
- A general 'nervousness' in schools and community organisations to deliver information on mental illness, mental health, address stigma and understand its origins.

Live4Life directly responds to local need, builds local school and community capacity, increases community understanding of appropriate responses to youth mental health, all underpinned by national and international research and health

promotion frameworks relevant to Australian secondary schools and community organisations.

Given the geography of the Macedon Ranges, Live4Life places high priority on ensuring key mental health messages, education and approaches to mental health and mental illness, are the same across all schools providing consistency of message across the broader community.

With a large strategic school-community partnership between six local schools and several community organisations in place, the initiative aims to address youth mental illness and suicide prevention by:

- **Increasing mental health literacy;**
- **Decreasing stigma of mental health issues in rural communities;**
- **Enhancing access to and delivery of appropriate services for youth in the Macedon Ranges and surrounds.**

### **Live4Life Future Directions**

Existing resources significantly limit the potential for expansion at either the local level or beyond the Shire boundaries. In 2012 Council commissioned a *Live4Life Future Directions Report* to identify a structural model for Live4Life that is sustainable and would allow further evolution and growth.

A preferred model was identified by the Partnership group and endorsed by the Macedon Ranges Council in August 2013. The Council will now endeavor to establish Live4Life as an incorporated association recognised as a not-for-profit organisation by the Australian Tax Office and could secure charitable status and apply for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, enabling it to attract philanthropic and grant funding. At the same time, the Macedon Ranges Live4Life Partnership Group would continue to meet to direct activity at the local level.

Therefore under this model two entities would emerge:

- Live4Life Inc. Committee (or Board)
- Macedon Ranges Live4Life Partnership Group

Using a gradual, phased approach as suggested in the *Future Directions: A Preferred Model* paper, it would be possible to establish Live4Life Inc. and only progress activities under this banner once additional external grant funds are secured. In this way activities at the local level could continue to be safely pursued by Council and the Live4Life Partnership Group while the incorporated association focused on securing funding before progressing further. It is envisaged the process will be completed in 2015.

## Funding

Core operations for Live4Life are funded on an ongoing basis by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council demonstrating a meaningful commitment to its local young people.

Additional notable funds (financial and non-financial) have also been acquired to support the work and growth of Live4Life in 2013.

For 2013 we gratefully acknowledge the support of:

- \$2000 donation from Kyneton Rotary Club
- \$2500 donation from Central Ranges Local Learning & Education Network
- 2 x private donations of \$1000 each

Other local sponsorship (for Launch and Celebration events) was received from:

- Bakers Delight - Kyneton
- Brumby's Bakery -Gisborne
- Coles - Woodend
- Country Cob Bakery - Kyneton
- Kyneton Bakehouse
- IGA - Kyneton
- Romsey Fresh Wholesale
- Safeway - Kyneton
- Watts Fresh
- Coles - Gisborne
- Organs Bus Service



## Live4Life Launch

The Live4Life Launch took place in March 2013 at Sacred Heart College. 600+ Year 8 students from partner schools attended. Additionally, approximately 30 members of the “Crew” took part, these comprised Year 9 and 10 students. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School chose to join the Live4Life program later in the year, and so their students did not take part in this event. School staff and community members also attended and took part in the day. This was the second year that the Launch was run by students, with this year’s “Crew” taking charge of the event.

**Crew members are a core group of 37 Year 9 and 10 students who completed Live4Life in 2011 and 2012. The Crew volunteer to help direct the aims and events of Live4Life activities during 2013 for the new group of Year 8’s. They are an essential part of keeping Live4Life activities and messages relevant and accessible to each group of Year 8’s who come through the six schools that take part.**

This year’s Launch guest speakers included among others Lachie Korvan from CanTeen. Students took part in myth buster activities and an interactive workshop by Ballarat Youth Services. Local services set up stalls and provided information for students on what they can provide. Additionally, students enjoyed a range of entertainment including a musical performance by Flaxxon, DJ Peter DeVos, and a poetry performance by Sam Hassel. Students were provided with morning tea which was donated by the following businesses:

- Bourkies Bakery, Woodend
- Coles, Woodend
- Romsey Fruit Shed, Romsey
- Brumbies, Gisborne
- Bakers Delight, Kyneton

Focus group questions can be found in Appendix A. The focus groups ranged in size from 5 to 10 participants with 49 focus group participants in total, including both males and females. One focus group took place at every Live4Life school. A breakdown of focus group attendees can be found in the following table.

	Number of students	Number of males	Number of females
Braemar College	10	5	5
Macedon Grammar School	9	3	6
Sacred Heart College	10	5	5
Gisborne Secondary School	7	2	5
Kyneton Secondary School	8	2	6
Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School	5	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>19 (39%)</b>	<b>30 (61%)</b>

Questions asked during focus groups related to many different aspects of the Live4Life activities over 2013. Three questions from the focus groups pertained to the Launch.

### ***What things did you enjoy about the Live4Life Launch?***

In response to this question, three main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

#### **Enjoyable aspects of the Launch:**

- ◆ **Combining with other schools**
- ◆ **Mode of delivery**
- ◆ **Free food**

### Combining with other schools

Consistently across groups, participants mentioned their delight in seeing old friends and meeting others from alternate schools.

*“I liked how the schools got together and you could just chat”*

(Participant no. 9, male, Braemar College)

*“I liked combining with the other schools and seeing other people”*

(Participant no.1, female, Sacred Heart College)

### Mode of delivery

Participants expressed enjoyment of the range of different performances, and suggested that they felt like it was age appropriate and engaging for them.

*“I liked the music, I think it was good. I guess they were kind of like trying to get it down to our level, with the cool music – I think it worked”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“The music and the bands and the acts [play]”*

(Participant no.3, female, Gisborne Secondary School)

*“I enjoyed that they were dealing with serious stuff but a bit lighter, not as deep.”*

(Participant no.10, male, Sacred Heart College)

### Free food

Participants in three of the focus groups mentioned their delight with the free food on offer at the event.

*“The food”*

(Participant no. 3, female, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“I liked all the free food and it was really like cut you up and made you happy so it showed good mental health”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

### **How do you think the Live4Life Launch could have been improved?**

In response to this question, four main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

#### **Recommended Improvements to Launch:**

- ◆ **Allowing mixed school groups/more interaction**
- ◆ **Changes to speakers**
- ◆ **Whole day event**
- ◆ **More food**

#### **Allowing mixed school groups/more interaction**

Participants in most groups mentioned their desire for further inter-school mixing for group activities, and for more active, physical activities. Despite the abundance of male comments below, this issue of inactivity was raised by female participants as well.

*“They could have had some activities where we kind of went into groups involving people from different schools with the teachers and stuff where we can meet some new people and then we can learn instead of just being with the same people that we go to school with everyday”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

*“Something more active. More running and less sitting”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“To have more interaction with everyone else, coz it was a long time sitting down”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“I think the teachers and everybody should let the schools mix and sit with each other”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

## Changes to speakers

A few different issues were raised with regard to speakers. Participant's recommended that speakers need to be spread out throughout the Launch program, rather than presenting one after the other. Additionally, requests were made for more young mental health consumers as speakers rather than the adults and specialists presenting.

*"Have maybe like a speaker at a station and then a games station, and rotate and have the groups of the schools mixed up in random order"*

(Participant no. 10, male, Sacred Heart College)

*"I enjoyed some of the speakers but honestly some other ones you get kind of... you find it a lot with counsellors and wellbeing [teachers]. It sort of distances them, like, do they even know what it's like to be in that position [having mental health problems]. The personal stories were good."*

(Participant no. 7, male, Sacred Heart College)

*"Have stuff that relates to us. There were some things that were in one part where they did the play about the guy [who] had schizophrenia and they were teasing him. Even though they were trying to tell us that bullying is not OK, they could have related it to something else that we would understand..."*

(Participant no. 6, male, Braemar College)

*"More people that come in where it [mental illness] had actually happened to them and then they can tell us their first hand experience."*

(Participant no. 8, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

## Whole day event

Participants from two groups requested that the event last for a whole day instead of just the morning.

*“Go for the whole day”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“Make it last the whole day instead of half the day”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Sacred Heart College)

## More food

A few participants suggested that more food could have been available. It is worth noting from previous evaluations it doesn't seem to matter how much food is provided at events, this request is continually made!

*“Could have been more food”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Braemar College)

*“More food” [N.B. This same participant praised the quality of the food in the previous section.]*

(Participant no. 3, female, Macedon Grammar)

## ***What was the key message for you from the Launch?***

In response to this question, three main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided.

### **Key messages taken away from the Launch:**

- ◆ **That the mental health of yourself and others is important**
- ◆ **Seeking help for mental health issues is a good idea**
- ◆ **There are help sources out there**

### **That the mental health of yourself and others is important**

Participants expressed that they had learnt that they shouldn't just ignore their mental health, that it is as important as physical health and worthy of their attention.

*"People do get depressed and stuff and they're not fine all the time."*

(Participant no. 1, female, Macedon Grammar)

*"To be aware of mental health... a mental illness can happen to anyone"*

(Participant no. 2, female, Macedon Grammar)

*"They really made it clear that it's an important subject; that we shouldn't overlook it kind of thing and we should actually try and work hard at it"*

(Participant no. 1, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"Make sure that, mental health is just as important as physical health and it can have a big impact on your life"*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

### **Seeking help for mental health issues is a good idea**

It was evident from participant comments that they had learnt not only that mental health problems can be treated but that it's in their best interests to seek help for them.

*"Just awareness that it does happen in life, that you will come across things like that [mental illness] and how you react to it and what you can do to deal with it"*

(Participant no. 8, male, Sacred Heart College)

*"Just try to stay happy and if you're not alright try and get help from someone"*

(Participant no. 10, male, Braemar College)

*“If you are feeling sad talk to someone”*

(Participant no. 3, female, Macedon Grammar)

### **There are help sources out there**

Participants indicated that they had learned that there are a range of help sources available and people to talk to about mental health issues should they have need of them.

*“There’s someone you can talk to about mental illness”*

(Participant no. 5, female, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“That you can actually help someone with a mental illness”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Macedon Grammar)

*“How to deal with it if you have a mental health issue and where to go”*

(Participant no. 10, male, Sacred Heart College)



## The Crew

Crew members are a core group of 37 Year 9 and 10 students who completed Live4Life in 2012. The Crew volunteer to help direct the aims and events of Live4Life activities during 2013 for the new group of Year 8's. They are an essential part of keeping Live4Life activities and messages relevant and accessible to each group of Year 8's who come through the six schools that take part.

The Crew met on a monthly basis and were supported by the Live4Life Coordinator throughout the year. In response to feedback from last year's Crew, this year the Crew were offered a range of additional training opportunities to help support them through the pressures of their highly responsible role. This training included:

- 1 day Youth Leadership Training Day in January
- Save-a-Mate Training in February
- An Adventure/Team Building day held at Lady Northcote YMCA Camp, Bacchus Marsh in July.

This year the Crew participated in the Launch, the introductory and four set education sessions, they were involved in the judging of the Live4Life Competition entries, and the Celebration event.

Survey data was gathered from the Crew at the end of 2013 to determine what they enjoyed about the experience, where it could be improved, and their attitudes towards those with mental illness. Of the 37 Crew members in 2013, 19 agreed to complete the questionnaire, providing a response rate of 51%.

## **What things did you enjoy about the Live4Life leadership day at the start of the year?**

Participants made reference to the opportunities to get to know others, build relationships, and learn leadership skills needed later for education sessions.

### **Team building**

Participants reported appreciating the chance to meet new and old crew members through ice-breaker activities, and build relationships with others in their team prior to starting their commitments for the year.

*"It was good to meet everyone and have a fun day before we had to start working together for other things."*

*"Ice-breaker games to meet everyone."*

*"Lots of games and getting to know you activities"*

*"I enjoyed the atmosphere..."*

*"Seeing the old crew"*

### **Learning skills for use in education sessions**

Participants indicated that they had learnt skills that they needed and used later in the year as part of their Crew commitments.

*"... we learnt skills to use in the education session which was valuable."*

*"It helped kids learn about [mental health] problems."*

## **How do you think the Leadership day could be improved?**

There were two main suggestions for improvement of the leadership day, these included requests for more interactive activities, and a change to the timing of the day.

### **More interactive activities**

Participants requested further entertainment, games and activities.

*"More entertainment"*

*"More games/activities"*

### **Timing of day**

Participants requested changing the day that the day is held, so that it is within term time as many students were unable to attend the leadership day. Although there was only one comment to this effect, it was noted that approximately half the participants who completed questionnaires left that section blank or indicated that they had been unable to attend.

*“Making it on a day when more of the members could come (I understand that it was school holidays and people had prior plans)”*

### **What else could we do at Live4Life to prepare you for your role as Crew member?**

Participants raised the issues of role definition, opportunities to increase their own mental health knowledge, and opportunities to practice public speaking as necessary for better preparation to be a Crew member.

### **Role definition**

It was raised by several participants that they felt their role as members of the Crew needed further explanation.

*“Be more informed about Live4Life role”*

*“Tell all year 8’s briefly about what being in the Crew entails”*

### **Increasing mental health knowledge**

The need to further their mental health knowledge prior to starting their Crew commitments with other students was suggested.

*“More general knowledge on [mental] health illness and problems”*

*“Reminder session at the start of the year maybe”*

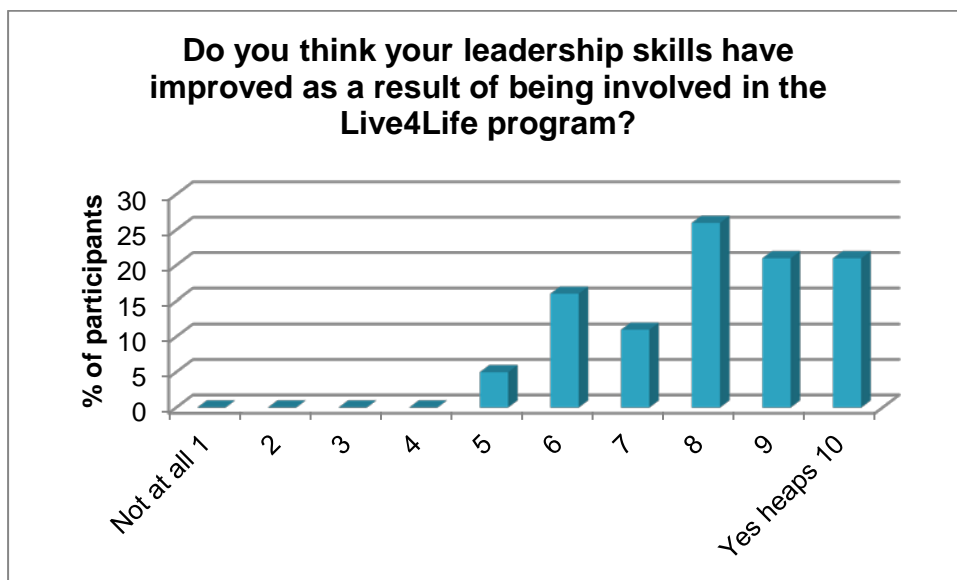
### **Opportunities to practice public speaking**

Participants requested that they be given some training in public speaking to assist them in their Crew role.

*“... letting the year 9’s do more speaking roles... or letting people practice speaking in public.”*

**Do you think your leadership skills have improved as a result of being involved in the Live4Life program?**

Participants indicated that they felt that they had gained some benefit to their leadership skills from the leadership day with all participants indicating their degree of benefit somewhere between a 5 and 10 on the response scale, and 68% of participants responding between 8 and 10.



**Do you think student's attitudes towards those with mental health problems have changed over the year? Why? Why not?**

All participant comments in this section indicated that they thought student attitudes towards those with mental health problems had changed for the better. There were three main points that students made, firstly they praised the mode of delivery of the program, secondly they felt that the way the program increased mental health awareness changed attitudes, and finally they reflected on the apparent increased degree of interest in learning about this area from students.

### Peer delivery

Participants felt that because the program had been delivered in part by themselves, that students had been more inclined to take on board the messages about mental health that were being disseminated.

*“ABSOLUTELY. Because us young, dashing, fun-loving crew members reach out to the young people of our society.”*

*“I personally think it has. The people that were either dealing with a mental health issue (whether it was them or a friend/family member) were able to know that it wasn’t just them going through everything and that there are people that are there any time they need them whether it is just to help or to listen. I think that was the main message we wanted to get across, and I think we succeeded in doing so.”*

### Increased awareness as a result of program

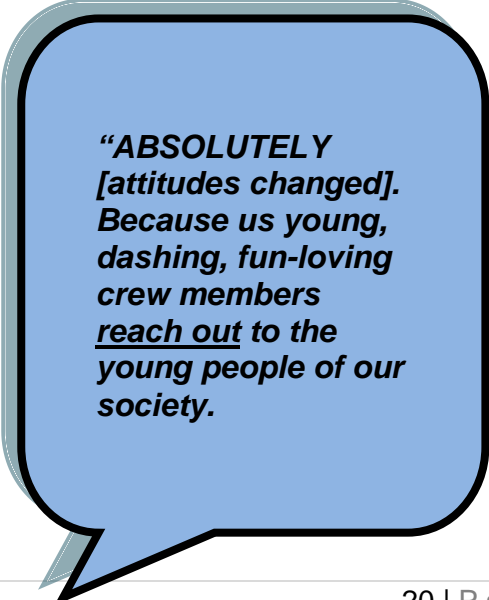
Crew members reported noticing changes in awareness of mental health issues, and that this was having flow on effects to their behaviour, with increased help-seeking.

*“Yes. I believe that many are more aware of the things that are out there to help. And that its OK [to seek help] I know a lot of people do actually see our school wellbeing team.”*

*“Yes. I believe they have become more aware of the problems and are able to know how to help those that ask them, therefore they are more comfortable with them.”*

### Increased degree of interest in learning from students

It was indicated that students were taking the issue of mental health seriously, were generally attentive, and respectful during education sessions, and that the mode of delivery was appropriate and getting the messages through.



***“ABSOLUTELY [attitudes changed]. Because us young, dashing, fun-loving crew members reach out to the young people of our society.*”**

*“Yes, they are becoming more educated and accepting”*

*“This year’s groups were a lot more attentive [than last years] so I think they’ve embraced it more.”*

*“Yes, because I think the education sessions were very informative and interactive so they actually want to learn.”*

*“I believe those that have an open mind have been able to have a change of attitude. I have noticed a change in a few students.”*

### **What did you like about being involved in the education sessions?**

Enjoyment of the teaching and leadership role over younger students, seeing progress in students and the opportunity for own learning increases were all mentioned by participants.

#### **Teaching and leadership role**

Participants described improvements in their confidence and teaching and leadership skills as highlights of their involvement in the education sessions. Additionally, their skills being valued by others was also pleasing for participants.

*“It was a good way to use leadership skills, and gain confidence and organisational [skills]”*

*“We got an opportunity to show others what we have learnt previously.”*

*“I liked teaching the students about mental health and being the GP for the day! I think when we teach each other they change their point of view.”*

*“Learn to lead younger people”*

#### **Observing student progress**

Delight in seeing student attitudes and knowledge change was expressed by participants.

*“Seeing progress amongst the schools”*

*“The people, the knowledge, watching kids learn and grow.”*

## Own learning opportunities

Participants also highlighted the opportunities they gained to improve their own knowledge and understanding of mental health issues further.

*“The public speaking...”*

*“... like that we can get involved and be able to run some of the activities by yourself or with little help.”*

*“I have been able to learn stuff of my own and educate others about it.”*

## What didn't you like or what do you think could have been done better in the education sessions?

Evaluation of responses from this question did not yield any themes, of the 19 participants, 7 chose to leave a comment answering the question, several others used this opportunity to again report their delight with the current program. The suggestions for what could have been done better are listed here, however, as each idea was not replicated by any others, it is unlikely any of these issues were systemic.

*“I felt that a lot of time was wasted in our meetings... I know I talked a lot.”*

*“We might need to be a bit more engaging.”*

*“I didn't like how kids kept misbehaving, shows rudeness.”*

*“Communication between crew and leaders (getting places/meetings etc.)*

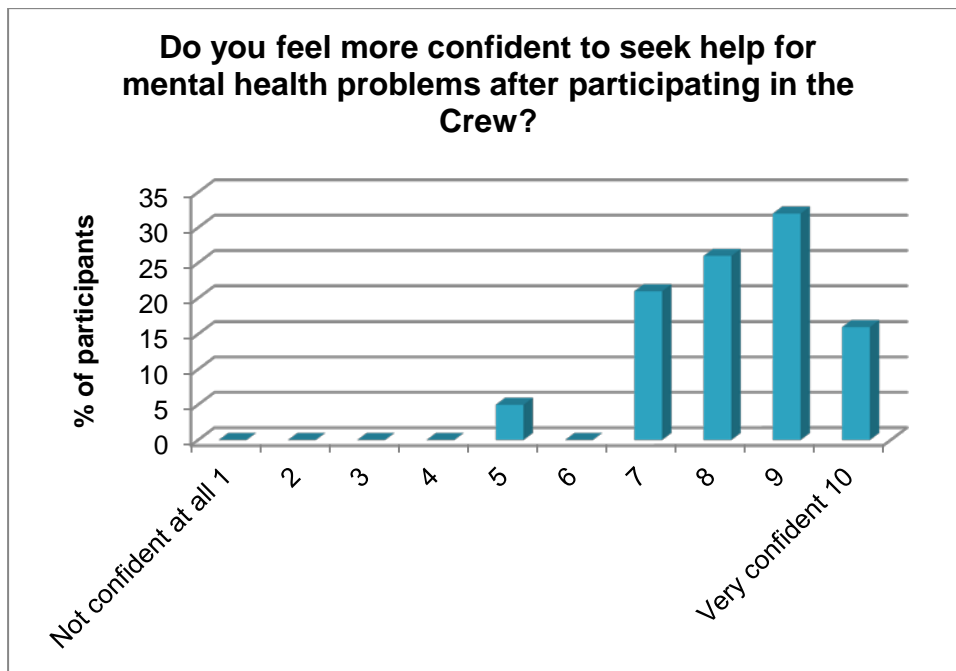
*“I think we could improve on reaching out to the year 8's, and really get to know them.”*

*“I didn't really know who was in the Crew and who wasn't.”*

*“Be more organised.”*

### Do you feel more confident to seek help for mental health problems after participating in the Crew?

As seen in the below table, participants indicated that yes their confidence in seeking help for a mental health problem themselves in the future had increased as a result of being involved in the Crew. A total of 95% of participants indicated a score of between 7 and 10 for confidence post Crew participation.



### How can we improve the Crew for next year?

Few responses to this question were provided, participants requested more food be provided, more educational lessons and sessions, and more time spent together.

*“More educational lessons and sessions.”*

*“Plan the meetings more to suit the majority”*

*“..visit the other schools.”*

*“Make them [Crew] spend more time together.”*

*“More shapes (food)”*



## **What was your favourite part about being in the Crew?**

Participants indicated that their favourite aspects of being in the Crew were opportunities to increase their learning about mental health, meeting people and making friends, and the friendly and supportive environment.

### **Learning more about mental health**

*“The friendships and people I’ve met, learning and how fun that is.”*

*“To get a better understanding about mental health”*

### **Meeting people and making friends**

*“The after school meetings because we got to chill, hang out, and socialise but somehow still got stuff done.”*

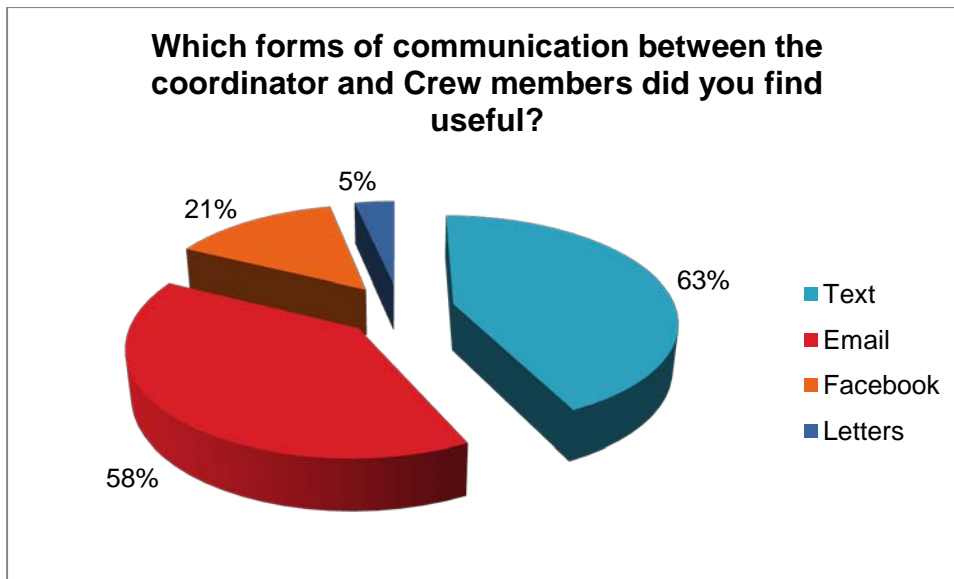
*“Meeting lots of new people.”*

### **Friendly and supportive environment**

*“Being in a friendly environment and seeing the contest entries.”*

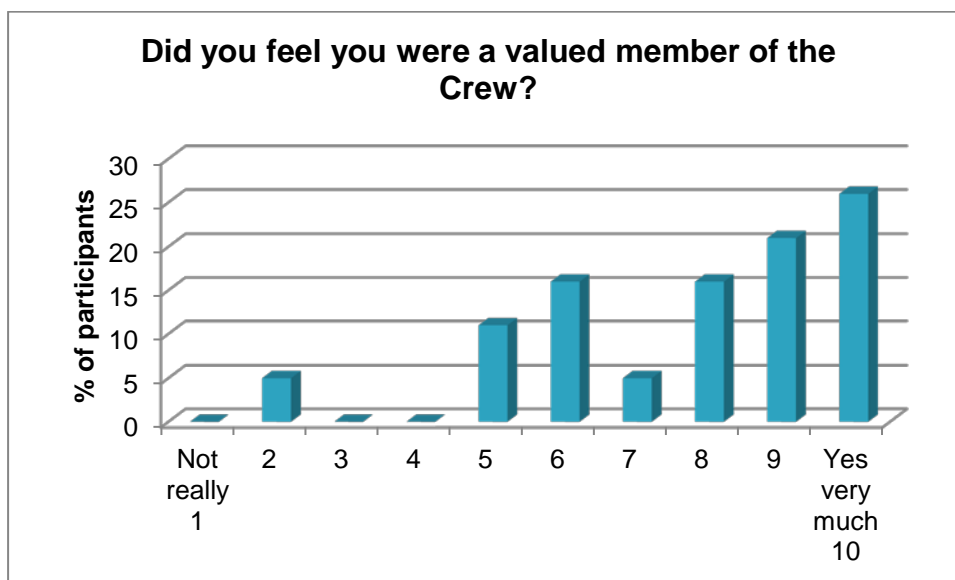
## **Which forms of communication between the coordinator and other Crew members did you find useful or not useful? Explain.**

Although responses to this question were qualitative, generally people just listed text or email. One person mentioned that letters are easily misplaced, and a few others alluded to the reliability and accessibility of electronic communication methods. There had evidently been an issue with email addresses being incorrectly recorded at the start of the year and a few students therefore, not receiving these. As can be seen below, the most desired forms of communication were text and email. A considerable number of participants listed both of these, and it would appear that adolescents currently expect to be informed through a variety of media rather than one single source for every event or update.



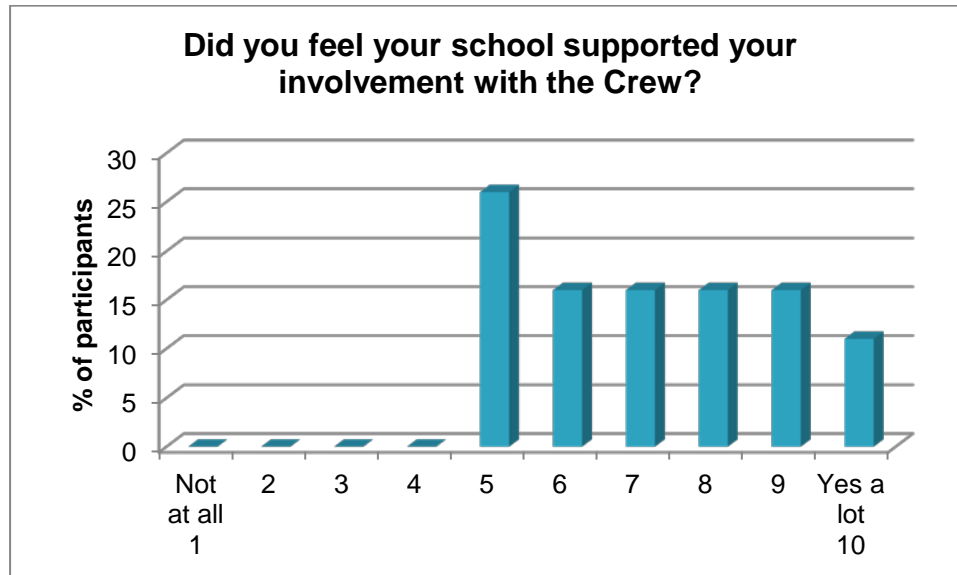
**Did you feel you were a valued member of the Crew?**

The majority of participants indicated that they felt that they were valued members of the Crew, a few evidently felt less valued than others, and one participant (represented by 5%) did not feel valued.



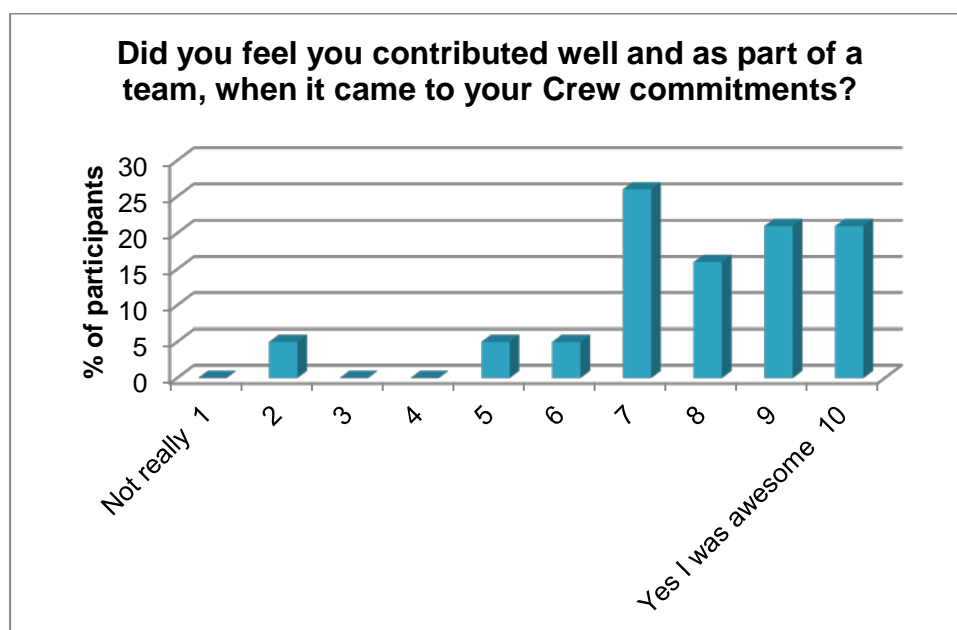
### Did you feel your school supported your involvement in the Crew?

Participants reported differing degrees of support from their school for their Crew commitments from neutral to well supported as can be seen below.



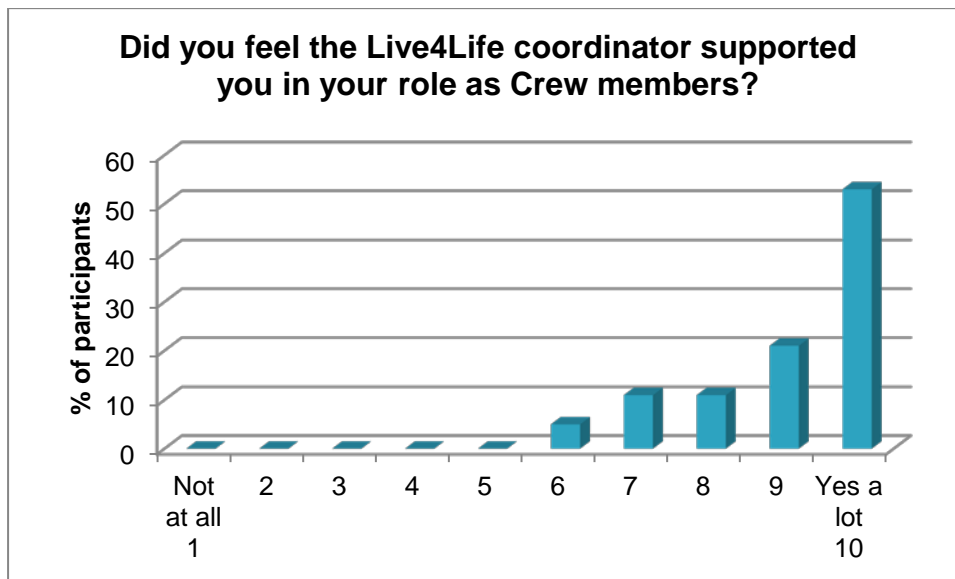
### Did you feel you contributed well and as part of a team, when it came to your Crew commitments?

Generally participants did feel they contributed well to their Crew with the majority of responses being towards the positive end of the response spectrum.



### Did you feel the Live4Life Coordinator supported you in your role as Crew Members?

Over 50% of participants indicated that they felt very well supported by Jacqui during the year, and several made a point of leaving special messages of thanks for Jacqui. All participants indicated they felt moderately to extremely well supported as is illustrated below.



### Are there any other comments about Live4Life that you would like to make, either positive or negative?

Participants who chose to respond to this question only left positive feedback, the following is a snapshot of some of these comments.

*“Love you Jacqui”*

*“I wish I could have attended meetings more often.”*

*“Live4Life is a spectacular program, everyone in the Crew treats everyone like family and I felt we all bonded so closely.”*

***“Live4Life is a spectacular program, everyone in the Crew treats everyone like family and I felt we all bonded so closely.”***

*"I think that L4L is an amazing program that teaches young adolescents awareness of mental health issues good or bad."*

*"Great learning experience"*

*"Loved it"*

## **Youth Mental Health First Aid Training**

Youth mental health first aid (YMHFA) training was introduced by Live4Life in 2011 and has been well received by the community. Demand for the course has continued to increase over the past few years with increasing popularity among not only teaching and parent bodies, but community health professionals as well. This year seven parent and carer groups were held, two teacher groups, and two groups for emergency and youth workers, each group comprising between 8 and 18 participants.

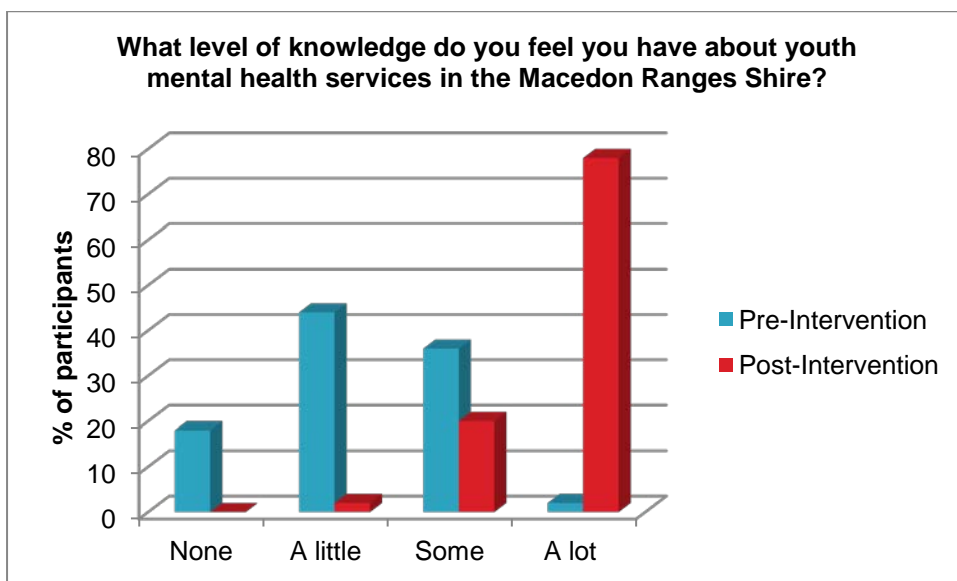
### **YMHFA Effectiveness Questionnaire**

Of those who participated in the YMHFA course in 2013, all were invited to complete a pre and post questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of the training received (See Appendix B). Of these, 109 agreed to complete the pre-questionnaire, and 120 agreed to complete the post-questionnaire which represented an excellent response rate.

Participants who completed the YMHFA questionnaires reported where their children attended school and their year level. No bias was evident amongst this data, and each school and year level was approximately equally represented at each stage of data collection. Data for all groups was combined.

Participants were asked to indicate their knowledge of youth mental health services in the Macedon Ranges Region. The following chart displays a breakdown of their results.

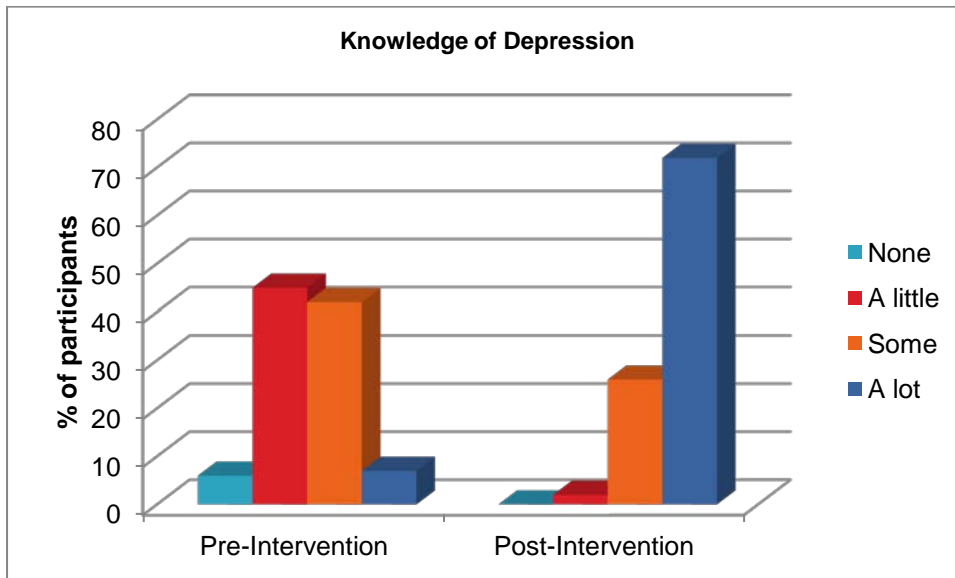
Level of reported knowledge about mental health services was higher at post-intervention than at pre-intervention by a significant margin. The majority of participants indicated at pre-intervention that they knew “a little” (44%), yet the majority indicated they knew “a lot” about available mental health services at follow up (78%).



Participants were asked to indicate their level of knowledge they considered themselves to have of young people in a number of areas including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance misuse and psychosis. These constitute the most pressing concerns for young people. Results will now be presented in each of these categories.

Depression

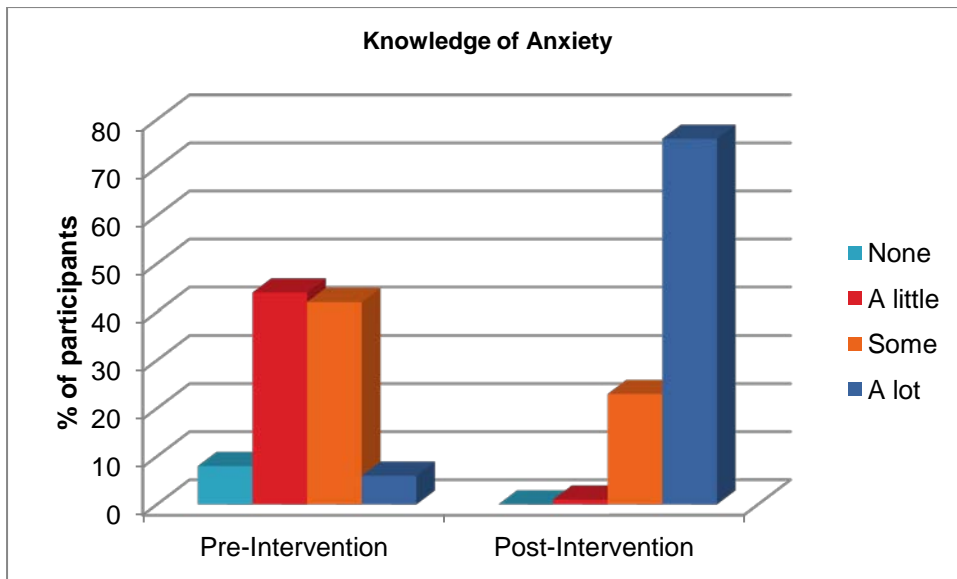
Participants indicated that their knowledge of depression increased significantly from pre- to post-intervention. Prior to the intervention the majority of participants indicated that they knew “a little” or “some” about depression (45% and 42% respectively), whilst post-intervention the majority of participants indicated that they knew a lot about depression (72%), with only 2% of participants indicating their knowledge base to still be “none” or “a little”.



Anxiety:

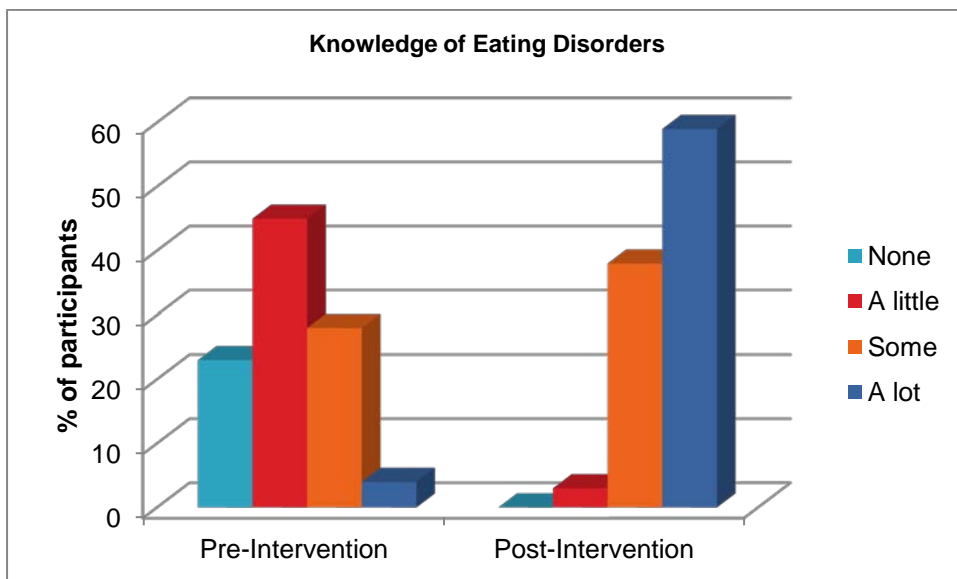
Knowledge of anxiety disorders followed a similar pattern of change with a marked increase from pre- to post-intervention. From pre- to post-intervention participants that indicated that they knew “a lot” about anxiety grew from 6% to 76%.





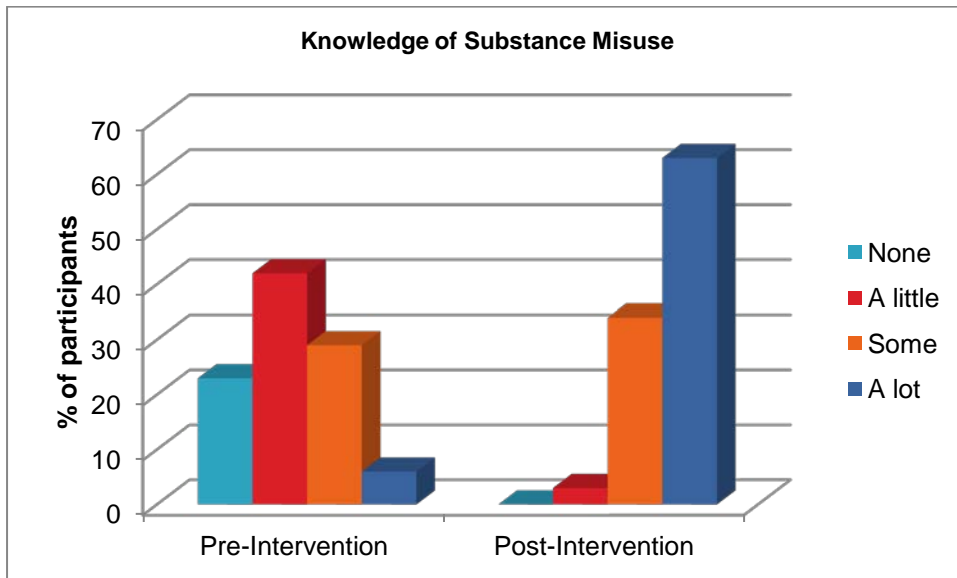
Eating Disorders:

Although the pattern for eating disorders is somewhat similar, it is notable that the percentage of participants who indicated they knew “none” about this issue (23%) was higher at pre-intervention than it was for depression (6%) or anxiety (8%) indicating that participants had a lower starting point for their knowledge in this area. Despite this lower knowledge base, again the rise from pre- to post-intervention was marked with an increase from 68% of participants indicating they either knew “none” or “a little” about eating disorders at pre-intervention, to 97% of participants indicating their knowledge of eating disorders to be “some” or “a lot” post-intervention.



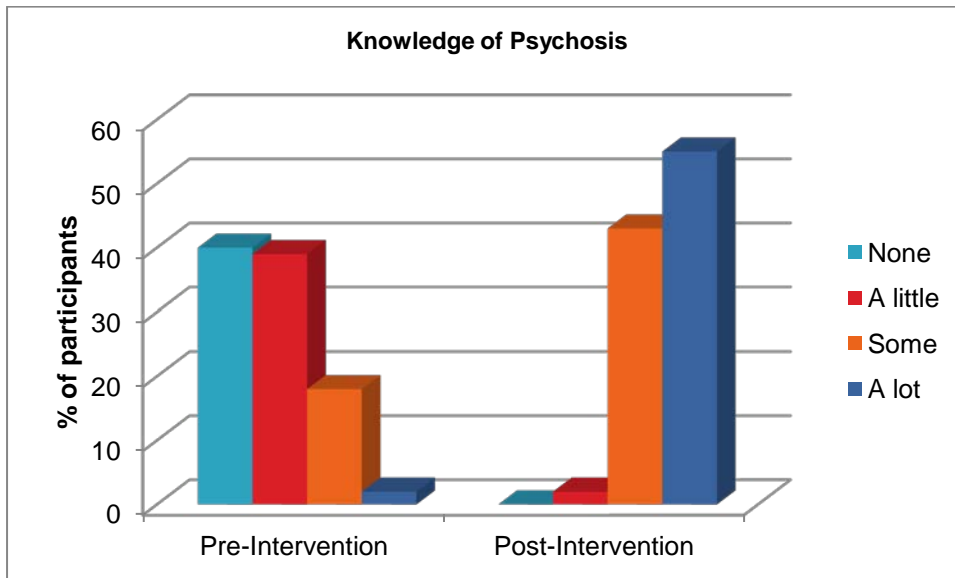
Substance Misuse:

Consistent with results for eating disorders, 23% of participants again indicated that their level of knowledge of substance misuse was “none”. The increase in knowledge from pre- to post-intervention was considerable, with post- YMHFA training 97% of participants indicating their level of knowledge of substance misuse was either “some” or “a lot”.

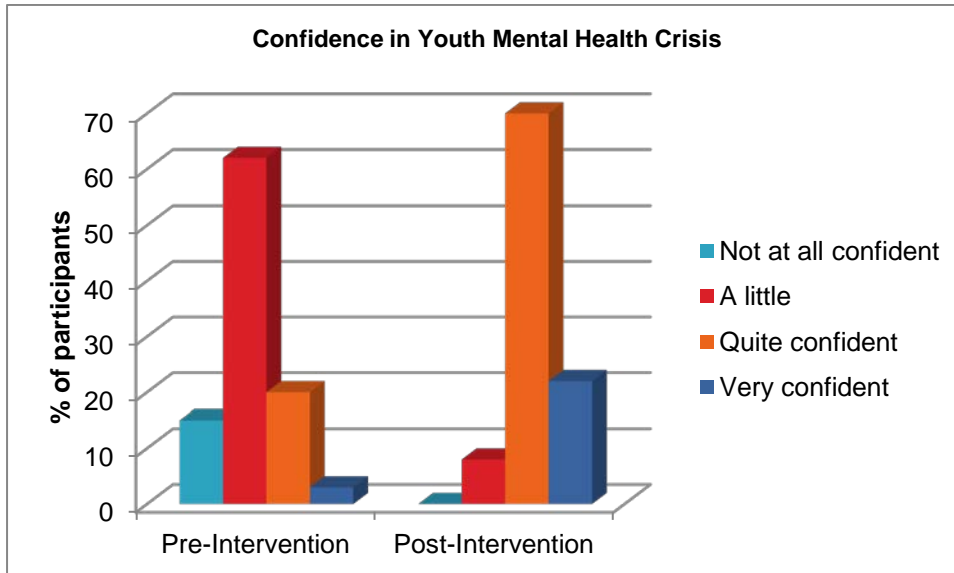


Psychosis

Existing knowledge of psychosis was considerably lower than for any disorder surveyed, with 79% of participants indicating that they either had “none” or “a little” knowledge of psychosis prior to starting their YMHFA training. This changed noticeably at post-test with 43% reporting knowing “some”, and 55% reporting knowing “a lot” about psychosis at the completion of YMHFA training.



Participants were asked to indicate if a young person was having a mental health crisis (e.g. panic attack or suicidal), how confident would they feel about helping that person.



The response to this question shows a clear trend prior to YMHFA training towards low confidence in ability to help a young person in a mental health crisis. At the completion of YMHFA training this degree of confidence had improved markedly with 90% of participants stating they were “quite confident” or “very confident”, compared to 23% prior to the training. This is an important figure as confidence in ability to assist someone is expected to be aligned with likelihood of offering assistance to someone in a mental health crisis.

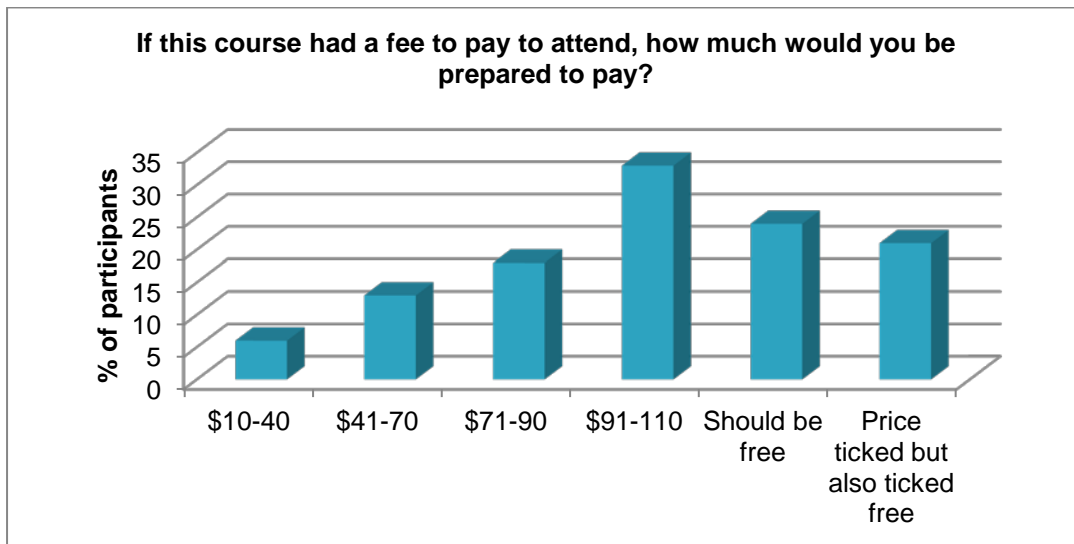
***It can be clearly seen that for each area of mental health surveyed (depression, anxiety, disordered eating, substance misuse, and psychosis), vast improvements in knowledge were evident from pre- to post-YMHFA training.***

It can be clearly seen that for each area of mental health surveyed (depression, anxiety, disordered eating, substance misuse, and psychosis), vast improvements in knowledge were evident from pre- to post-YMHFA training.

Participants were asked to comment on what fee they thought was appropriate for the course. Approximately 6.5% of participants did not respond to this question at all. Therefore percentages are based on those who did respond. Many checked a price and the “should be free” box, with qualifying statements indicating that it was worth a high figure, but should be kept free to encourage accessibility to all.

*“Should be free, but worth \$250”*

*“School [participant workplace] should pay- usually a day like this would cost \$200+”*



### **Qualitative data**

The YMHFA post-intervention Effectiveness questionnaire asked participants to comment on three different areas including what was achieved through attending, where they felt the YMHFA training might come in handy, and any suggested improvements to the course. All qualitative data from participants who completed the course in 2013 has been combined as themes were consistent across groups. Themes for each of these questions will be presented in turn.

**What was achieved by attending the YMHFA training:**

**Increased confidence in ability to communicate effectively with adolescents with mental health issues**

Participants indicated an increased ability and confidence in dealing with adolescents with mental health issues and a sense of being better prepared if issues arise with adolescents around them. They described learning how to effectively engage and approach a young person who needs help.



*“...I have talked with my own young people about what we cover in the course and that feels much more of an informed conversation and I am very grateful that I feel able to be that resource for my children.”*

*“My attendance and participation has provided me with a level of competence and responses to/for young people or others experiencing mental health issues.”*

*“Learnt new ways to help my teenage daughter and communicate [with her]”*

*“I think this is excellent and important training for life and extremely relevant for all people in society. I have talked with my own young people about what we cover in the course and that feels much more of an informed conversation and I am very grateful that I feel able to be that resource for my children.”*

*“... I now know not to “stand over”, better to sit down”*

### **Better understanding of local services**

Participants indicated that following the YMHFA training they had a greater understanding of local services that exist to help adolescents in their area, and how to direct them to those services.

*“Obtaining info about the services in the area”*

*“I now have some information on how to assist a person in crisis and who to contact in the health sector.”*

### **Greater ability to recognise symptoms of mental illness in adolescents and respond appropriately**

Knowing what to do in a mental health crisis is of no help unless individuals are also able to recognise when someone is in need of help, and an improvement in knowledge in this area was evident in participant responses.

*“Greater understanding of what are mental illnesses, the risk factors, symptoms, and how to respond if someone was in crisis.”*

*“Better able to recognise mental health issues and act appropriately.”*

*“Good overview of mental health and how I can help as a first step.”*

*“Confidence in my ability to handle a crisis situation that I believe I would not have had prior to this course.”*

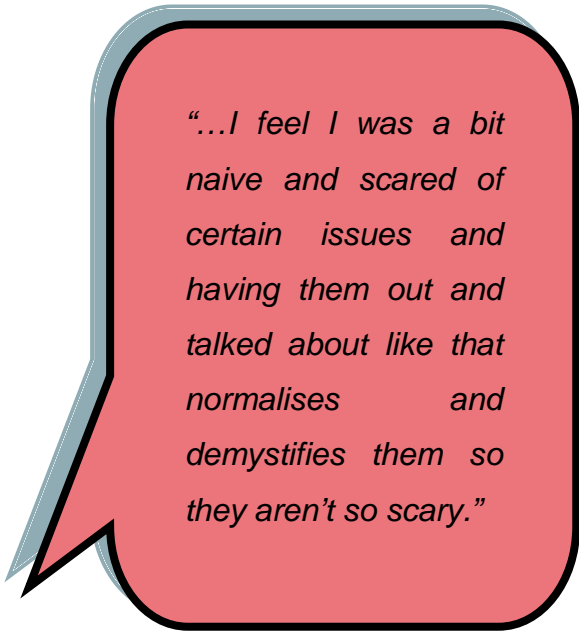
### **Reduced stigma of mental illness**

Some responses from participants indicated that as a result of their YMHFA training they had reduced stigma of mental illness and increased empathy towards those with mental illnesses.

*“[I’m] no longer paralysed with fear about mental health”*

*“Increased interest in disseminating [knowledge and improving] awareness”*

*“Dispelled a few misconceptions”*



*“...I feel I was a bit naive and scared of certain issues and having them out and talked about like that normalises and demystifies them so they aren’t so scary.”*

*“A huge learning curve about what young people experience, [and] that it can happen to anyone.”*

*“Maybe I’ll be less judgemental”*

*“Increased my knowledge and understanding, I feel I was a bit naive and scared of certain issues and having them out and talked about like that normalises and demystifies them so they aren’t so scary.”*

### **Where YMHFA training might be useful:**

When asked where they thought their YMHFA training might come in handy, participants identified the following groups:

- Supporting own children and partners
- Supporting adolescents in their care at their workplace
- In the community
- With extended family members
- Supporting their children’s friends with their issues
- In youth coaching
- In caring for themselves and determining when someone’s mental health issue is beyond their capacity to manage on their own
- In assisting in prevention direction and curriculum development in the classroom (teacher specific)
- Assisting others they encounter to seek professional help, and reducing their fear in following this through

### **Suggested Improvements to the Course:**

Participants were asked to comment on any ways they felt the course could be improved. The vast majority of responses to this question were to either leave it blank implying satisfaction with the course in its current state, or to respond positively expressly stating the value they placed on attending the course. Of those that chose to make recommendations, these responses included reference to availability and marketing, requests for further self-education material and increased opportunities to practice skills.



### **Increased availability and marketing**

The value of the course was recognised, and many participants rather than referring to changes the course needed, instead made a point of mentioning the need to get the course out to a greater number of community members.

*“Just reach out to more adults in the community, make people more aware that this is available to them! High school info nights!”*

*“Advertise benefits more i.e. ‘struggling with your teenager’, ‘did you know’ etc.”*

*“More often or more groups so more people through course”*

*“Have a men only course”*

*“...somehow get this to everyone, the information and discussion is crucial to everyone and I only hope it continues”*

### **Greater resources for further self-education**

A few participants requested further information on local services and what they do and for some recommendations on where to go to further their education.

*“Discussion on what other services do and resources for further education e.g. websites, literature.”*

*“a bit more on local services”*

*“some pre-reading/homework to reinforce ideas”*

### **Increased opportunities to practice skills**

Several participants raised the need for more opportunities to practice skills learnt in training, with suggestions that more role-plays and case-studies are needed to illustrate the theory.

*“Perhaps a couple more case studies/diversity in practical activities”*

*“I would like to practice some skills learnt”*

*“Have examples of challenges to ALGEE i.e. if you make a mistake, how do you get back on track.”*

**How did participants find out about the course:**

Participants found out about the YMHFA course from a number of avenues: workplace, council, local paper, friends, neighbourhood nurse and internet research, predominately, however, participants found out through their school, either via email or school newsletter. Evidently, the variety of marketing methods for this course continue to be required in raising the profile of the availability of this training.

## Education Sessions

Following feedback from students and educators in 2011, the delivery of the *SenseAbility* program was altered to improve outcomes for students in 2012. Feedback at the end of 2012 was still fairly poor, and it was determined that a different approach entirely would be utilised in 2013 in response to the feedback over the last two years. Schools retained the option to run the *SenseAbility* program on their own if they wished.

As an alternative in 2013 four education sessions were offered to year 8 students at all six of the Live4Life schools, this was in addition to the Launch day, initial information session, and the Celebration event. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School took part in Session 4 which was modified for the needs of their students and the Celebration event. At least one of each session was run at each of the other five Live4Life schools. The Launch day and Celebration event were, on the other hand, combined school events. Sessions were delivered by Live4Life staff and members of the Crew from that school.

The four education sessions were spread across the school year and the goal of these was to meet three key aims:

1. Improve mental health literacy
2. Destigmatise mental illness
3. Promote positive mental health messages and connections to local mental health services

Each of the four sessions had key messages to get across to the students as follows.

**Session 1: What's Up:**

- ◆ Mental Health vs. Mental Illness
- ◆ Myth busting on anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, and eating disorders.

**Session 2: In Your Head:**

- ◆ How your thinking affects your mental health & what you can do about it
- ◆ Positive and constructive thinking styles
- ◆ Building resilience and promoting self-worth

**Session 3: Body Talk:**

- ◆ How your physical health affects your mental health & what you can do about it
- ◆ Relationship building with, friends, family and peers

**Session 4: Helping Hand:**

- ◆ Who can you talk to? School, family, locally, community, web-based activity through cyber life
- ◆ How should you treat others, bullying is a choice- say no
- ◆ Ways to stay and keep well – self-help/coping strategies

The main structure was different for each session, but generally included the use of multimedia, music, group work, discussion time, resource provision and handouts, a fun activity, summary, and an opportunity for questions and answers. Three guest speakers spoke at different times across the sessions including the school student wellbeing officer Markus, and representatives from Cobaw Community Health, and WayOut.

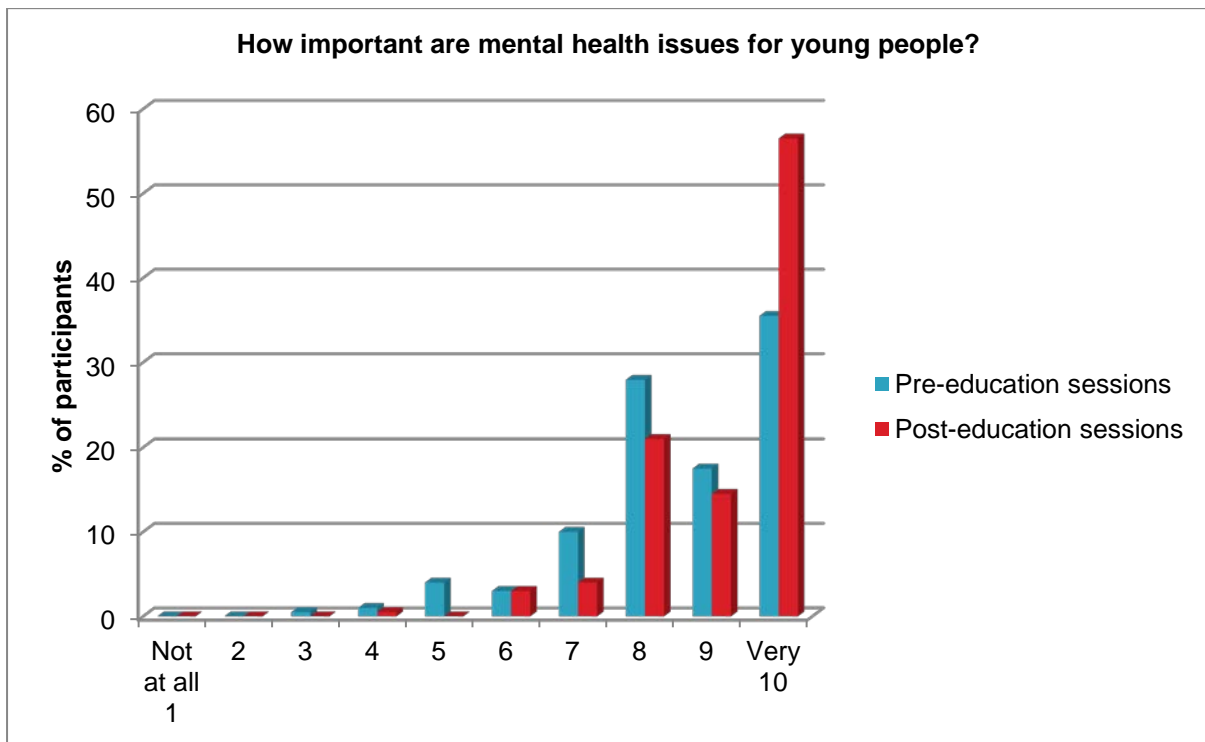
Feedback on the education sessions comes from three sources – the first was a questionnaire completed by a sample of participating year 8 students. The second source of feedback was through year 8 focus groups which took place at each school at the end of 2013. Data from the questionnaires will be

presented first, followed by focus group data, and then an email testimonial from a school principal about the sessions.

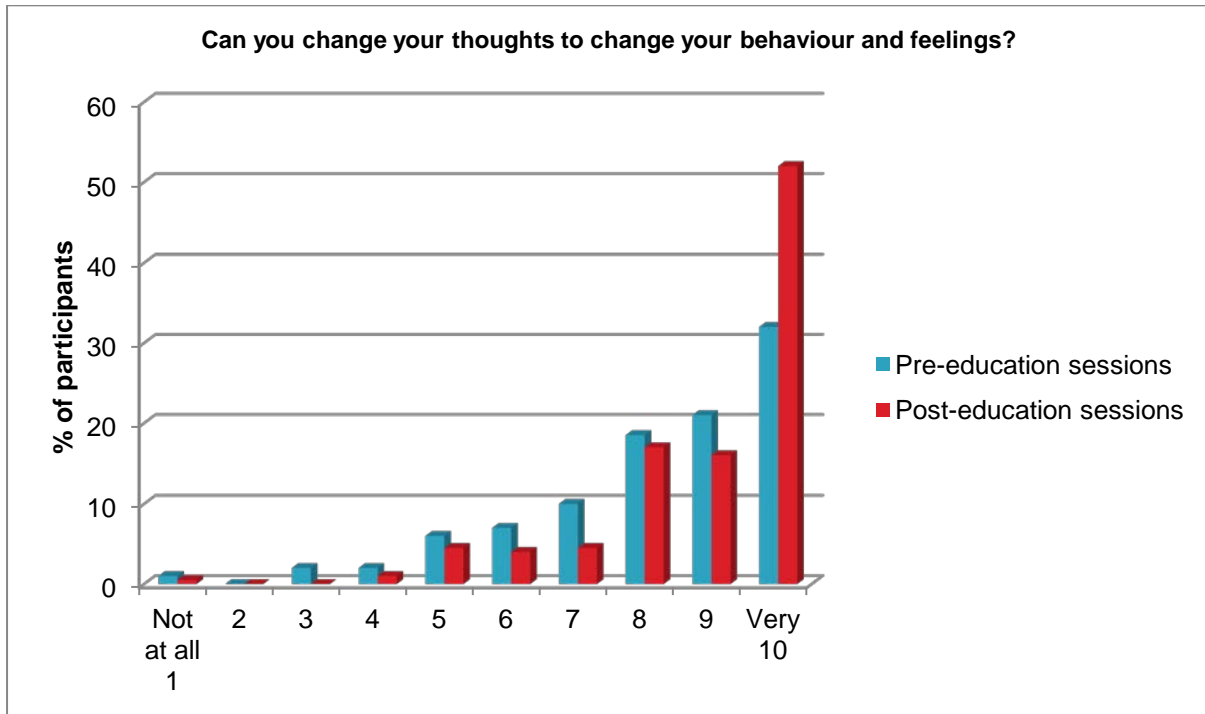
### Questionnaire Data

Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from a sample of the 600 year 8 students who took part in the education sessions across the year, and all were given the opportunity to complete a pre- and post-questionnaire (see Appendix D) to assess the changes in their attitudes about mental health and seeking help. Students and their parent/guardians had to provide voluntary, written consent to take part in this evaluation. Of those who took part, 182 students completed a pre-education session questionnaire, and 339 completed the post-education session questionnaire. Gender distribution data was not gathered. The following is a break-down of their results.

#### How important are mental health issues for young people?



**Can you change your thoughts to change your behaviour and feelings?**

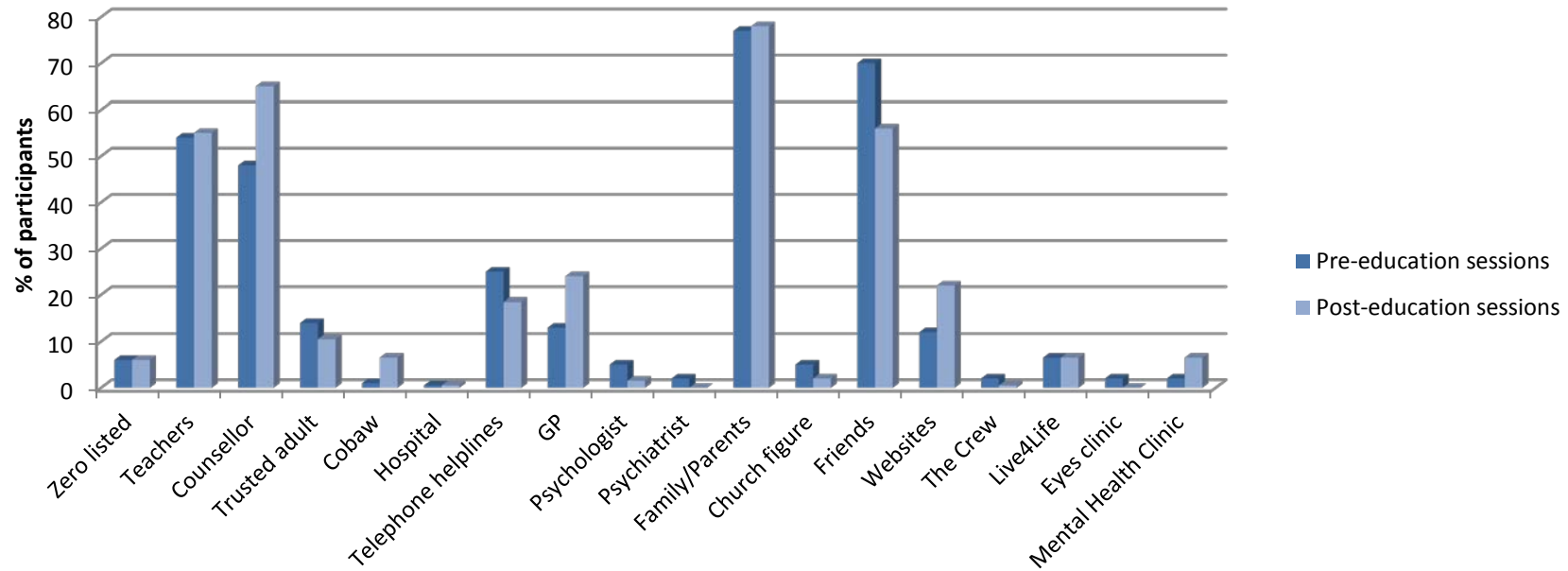


**Please list where you could go for help if you were feeling depressed or anxious:**

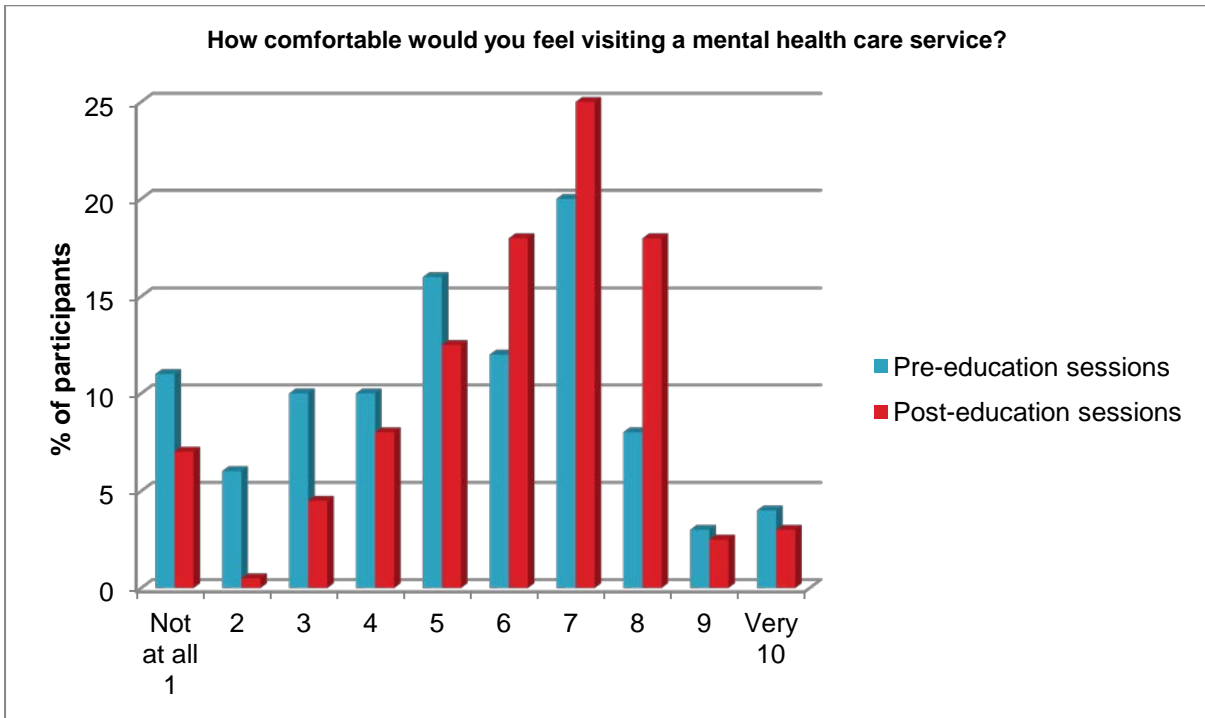
Participants were allowed to list as many places/people as they wished in answer to this question. Full results table can be viewed on the following page.

Although results were not negative, nor were overwhelming improvements in help source knowledge evident. The most encouraging changes were a slight decrease in preference to seek help from friends about a mental health issue which dropped from 70% to 56%, and slight increases in preferences to seek help from adults such as teachers, counsellors, and family members. At post intervention, there was also an increase in the number of participants aware that they could speak to their GP about a mental health issue, increasing from 13 to 24%. Please see following page for full results table.

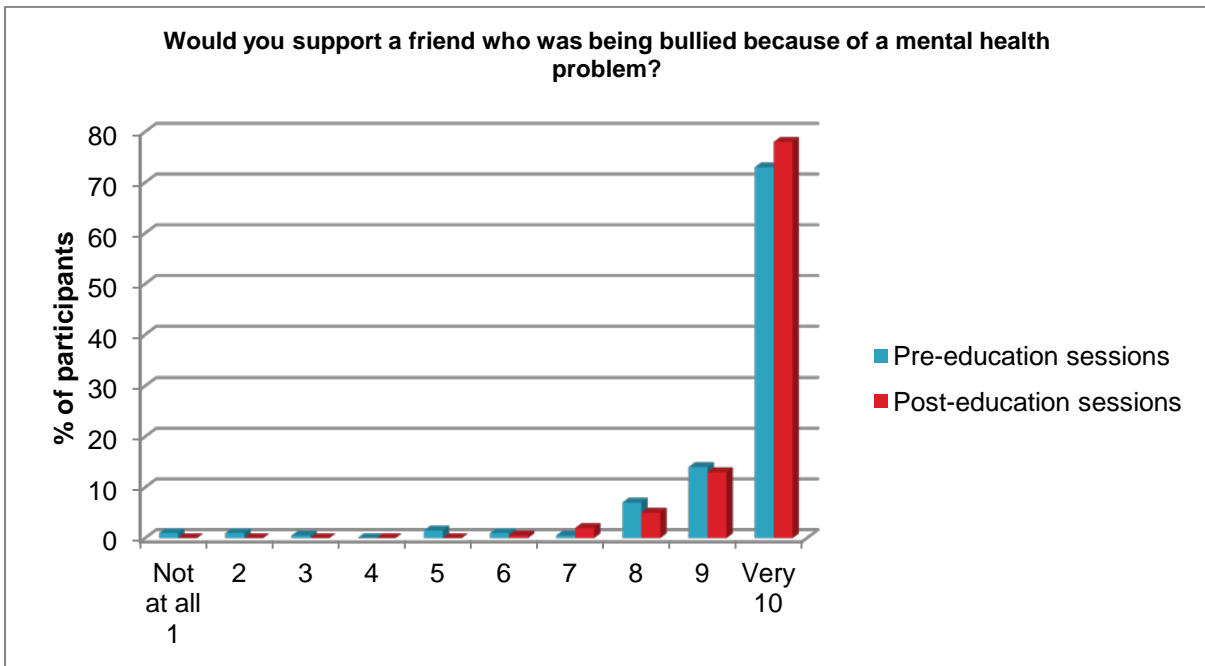
### Where could you go for help if you were feeling depressed or anxious?



**How comfortable would you feel visiting a mental health care service?**

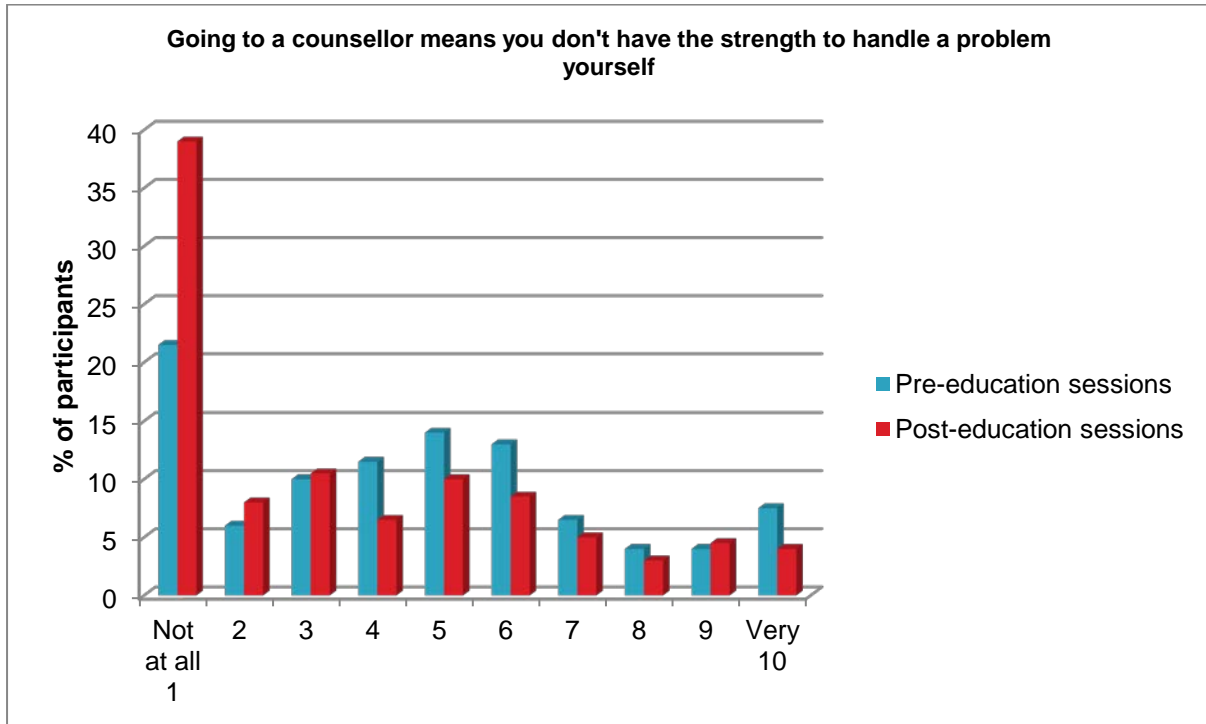


**Would you support a friend who was being bullied because of a mental health problem?**



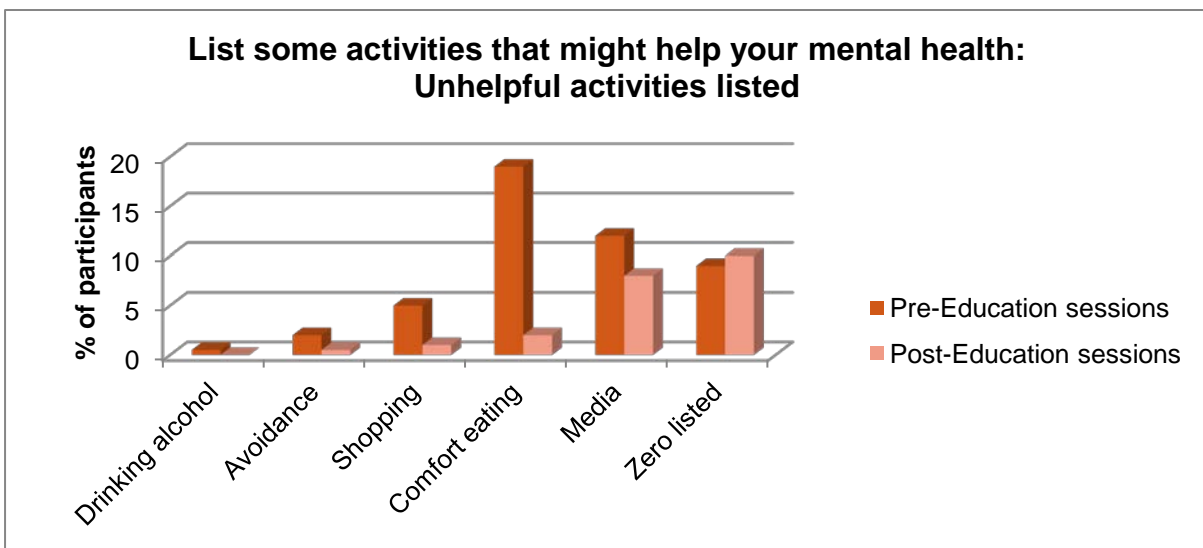
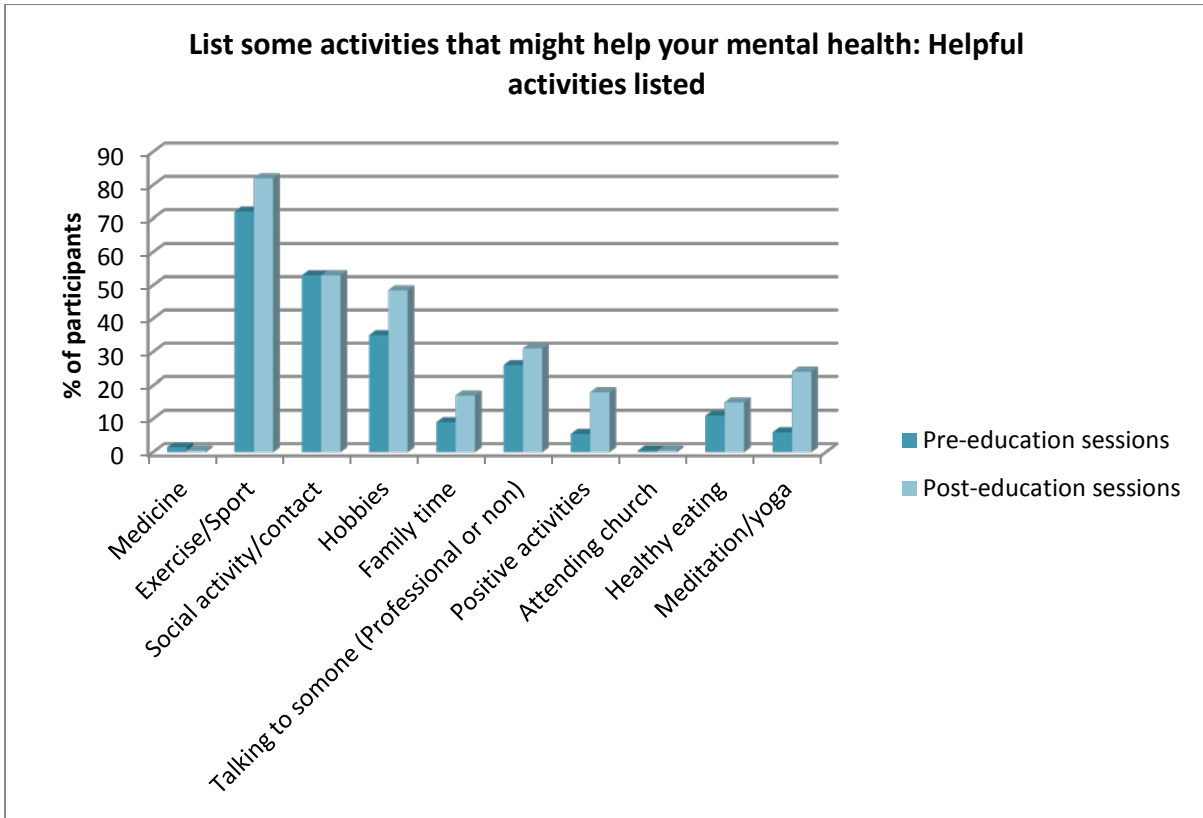


**Going to a counsellor means you don't have the strength to handle the problem yourself.**



**Please list some activities that might help your mental health:**

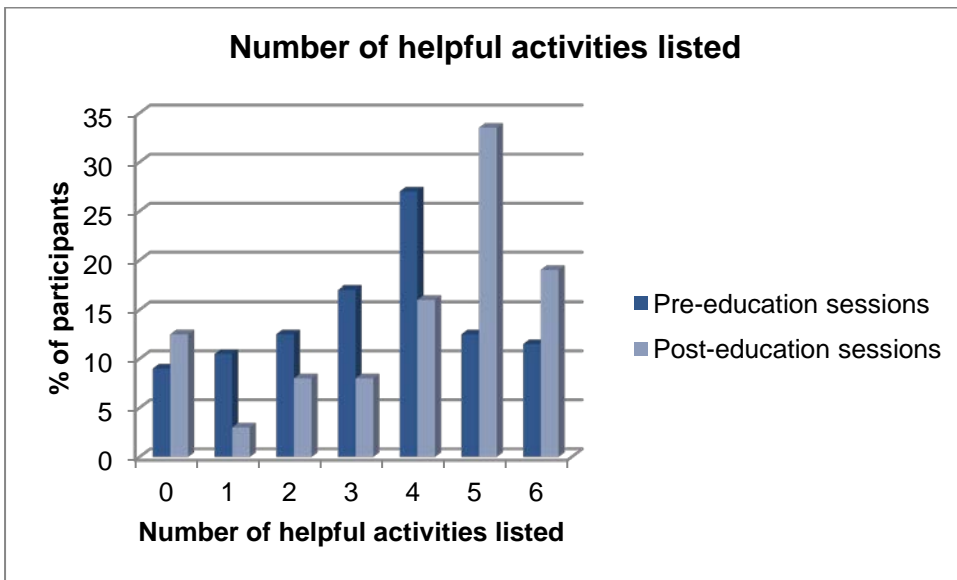
Participants were asked to list activities that might help their mental health, as participants were able to write anything they wished, results have been simplified by collating some groups. These results have been broken down into helpful and unhelpful suggestions for reporting purposes, and a full break down of results can be found on the following page.



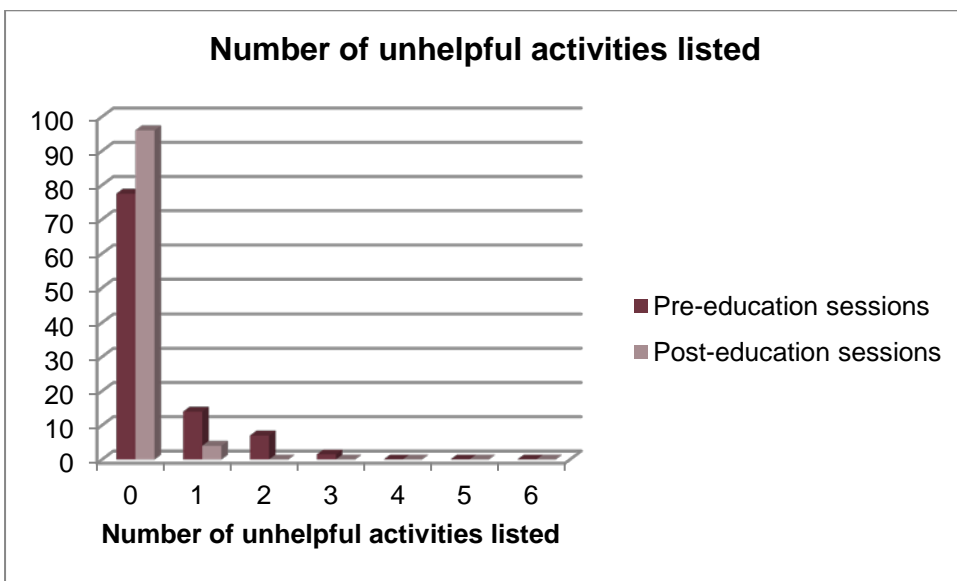
NB. The following sections also refer to other activities. Media: Movies, TV & Computer. Avoidance: Running away, leaving the situation and not thinking about it. Hobbies: Relaxing, reading and writing, attending Live4Life activities, playing with pets, listening to music, playing music, games, drawing, chess, going outside, acting, camping, baking, art class, and youth group. Positive activities: Positive thinking, problem solving, breathing, laughing and smiling in the mirror. Sport/Exercise: if four sports were listed this was only counted as one known activity to help mental health.

Also please note that sleeping was reported both pre- and post-education sessions as a way to assist mental health, although this is something commonly suggested by parents, and good sleep is good for your mental health, it has been considered for reporting purposes a neutral suggestion, so results on this have not been displayed.

This data is also presented in terms of number of helpful activities that were able to be listed by participants before and after the education sessions as this is more revealing. Generally participants were able to list considerably more helpful mental health activities post intervention than pre-intervention, with 24% of participants able to list 5-6 activities pre-intervention, and 52.5% of participants post-intervention, an increase of over double.



Given the occurrence within the data of unhelpful mental health activities being inadvertently listed by students pre-intervention representing a concerning trend, this data was also tracked from pre- to post-intervention. There was a clear drop in listings of unhelpful mental health activities from 22.5% pre-education sessions, to 4% post-education sessions.



## Focus Group Data

### ***What key messages did you learn in the Live4Life education sessions?***

In response to this question, three main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

#### **Key messages learnt in education sessions:**

- ◆ **Mental health and physical health are linked**
- ◆ **Mental health issues are treatable, and where to go for help**
- ◆ **What you can do to look after your mental health**

The author would also like to raise three further ideas that were raised in only one of the focus groups (therefore not qualifying as a theme) but demonstrating other important lessons learned:

- ◆ Ways to help others with mental health issues
- ◆ What the different mental health issues are
- ◆ Don't feel embarrassed if you have a mental health issue

### **Mental health and physical health are linked**

Participants described having learnt that there is a strong link between physical and mental health.

*“There’s different activities that you can do physically and mentally just to help your thinking and your mental health”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

*“There’s a link between physical health and mental health”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

### **Mental health issues are treatable, and where to go for help**

Participants were able to demonstrate that they had learned that there were a range of help sources available to help treat mental health issues, and that some of these are quite easily accessed.

*“In the sessions where you had all the stations and you went around and talk to the counsellors and that showed how many different people there were to talk to about a multitude of issues”*

(Participant no. 9, male, Sacred Heart College)

*“I learnt who you can talk to if you have a [mental health] problem”*

(Participant no. 5, male, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*“There’s not just one place you can go to and a lot of them are quite local so we can get there without having to go on public transport or something”*

(Participant no.2, female, Braemar College)

*“I learned there are a lot of places you can go when you have problems. There’s a big variety of websites and stuff like that”*

(Participant no.2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

### **What you can do to look after your mental health**

A range of participant comments showed that they had started to learn some practical tips for keeping their mental health on track through their education sessions.

*“I learnt a lot about mental health, like depression and I learned a lot about bullying and how much it can damage people and how to get yourself more confident to deal with situations and stuff like that”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*“Like with the different activities, the more relaxing tasks, that can really help you as well”*

(Participant no. 3, female, Sacred Heart College)

*“There’s a lot of things that we do normally like eating a good diet and drinking lots of water which you wouldn’t think would contribute to that”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

*“That you can actually change your thoughts about how you think about some things”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Macedon Grammar)

### **What did you like about the Education sessions?**

In response to this question, four main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

#### **What liked about Education sessions:**

- ◆ **Inclusive**
- ◆ **Informative**
- ◆ **Fun and Interactive**
- ◆ **Food**

#### **Inclusive**

The inclusive nature of the education sessions was praised by participants.

*“You always felt, you didn’t feel as though anyone was single[d] out. It was very inclusive”*

(Participant no. 9, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“They were really inclusive”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Braemar College)

*“That Jacqui [Live4Life Coordinator] was so nice and polite and the people that came from Live4Life make you feel really comfortable and that they make you feel welcome and they kind of understand what you guys are saying and they present everything so well, especially us kids with special needs that sometimes find it hard to understand things. I’m not meaning exactly us (the focus group) but maybe some of the higher needs kids – they actually probably understood a lot. In one of the sessions they asked a question and Jonathan\* actually answered and I realised he had understood what they were talking about so even the higher needs kids had understood –*

*sometimes when people explain things they get a bit confused and daydream and stuff. I found they actually explained things really well for everyone there (in the sessions)."*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

## **Informative**

Information on what it was like to have a mental illness and ideas for what you can do if you have a mental illness were all well received by participants.

*"It was quite informative"*

(Participant no. 7, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"There were people there that had gone through mental illnesses so that we could understand like how hard it is for them and that there is people out there that they can talk to"*

(Participant no. 6, male, Braemar College)

*"We got to like meet some of the people who could help us so it kind of gave us a few tools for our toolbox if we had an issue"*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

*"... they taught you what you can do to help with your mental health, but they also kind of taught you how to do it. Like boxing and meditation and all that..."*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

*"You learnt something every time they came here"*

(Participant no. 5, male, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

## Fun and Interactive

Interactive group activities were favoured by participants.

*“The activities in the groups were good”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“I like[d] the one where we did all the activities, like the variety of activities... the relaxing ones where you just pretty much sit around and relax and the more active ones like the boxing and running around really kind of got you involved in it”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Sacred Heart College)

*“It was interactive I guess”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“It was nice to interact with other people”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Macedon Grammar)

*“It was fun”*

(Participant no. 3, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*“Yoga and meditation was fun”*

(Participant no. 3, female, Macedon Grammar)

## Food

The provision of food as a motivator for answering questions and listening to information in sessions was well received.

*“That we got muslie bars instead of lollies cause they are a bi[t] healthier”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Bullengarook Special School)

*“There were muslie bars”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)



### **What didn't you like or could have been done better in the Education sessions?**

In response to this question, five main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

#### **Areas for improvement in Education sessions:**

- ◆ **Less repetitive**
- ◆ **Sexuality pamphlet location more discreet**
- ◆ **More mental health consumer speakers**
- ◆ **More interactive, and more physical movement needed**
- ◆ **Range of food prizes needed**

#### **Less repetitive**

Some focus group participants indicated that they found the content of the education sessions too repetitive.

*"I reckon there were lots of things that got repeated about the same thing and it just got a bit boring after a while"*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*"I think like in some of the sessions they just kept repeating what we'd learnt like it was a bit too repetitive in the nicest way"*

(Participant no. 1, female, Braemar College)

#### **Sexuality pamphlet location more discreet**

Participants in one focus group highlighted the difficulties for students in accessing the pamphlets on sexuality without being "seen" by classmates due to the stigma of sexuality difference.

*"...with the thing of having the pamphlets on the table it's kind of awkward if you did want to take one so I think that it would be much better if they gave them out to everyone and then we had the opportunity whether we would throw them out or not cause you don't want to get one in front of your friends"*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

*“... I know friends were saying that it’s really awkward to go up and grab one of those pamphlets...”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Braemar College)

### **More mental health consumer speakers**

Several participants indicated that they felt that they absorbed the messages more when they were delivered first hand, and by younger speakers that they could relate better to.

*“... Some of the speakers, it tended to be the older ones, they seemed... the way of getting it across make [made\*] it seem like they’re speaking a bit patronizing you in a way and it sort of distances themselves from you”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Sacred Heart College)

*“I know we had that one thing where the guy came in and told us he was picked on cause he was a ranger and was overweight. It would have been better if we had more people come in cause first hand experience really made you think about it and think there always is that light at the end of the tunnel and there is always help”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

### **More interactive and more physical movement needed**

Participants made requests for further interactive activities, more physical activity either as part of activities or briefly in between more sedentary activities to aid their concentration. Additionally a preference for small group work was expressed.

*“For one bit they separated us into little groups, I think it was like for physical health. I think they should do more like that – splitting into groups so it’s smaller and more concentrated. Not with a big group.*

(Participant no. 2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“...just like you could do maybe two speeches and then maybe like a song and you get up and mingle and then you have to sit back down and go through the speeches. So just spread things out.”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

*“The first few sessions could have been a bit more interactive. We did do some fun things but there wasn’t too much to do that interactive”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Macedon Grammar)

*“when we were sitting down every lesson and watching the slide shows and answering the questions it got boring and I think the first lesson where we stood up when we were like answering questions, even that little change so you were moving around made everyone a bit less bored and was happy to pay more attention”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

### **Range of food prizes needed**

Participants from three different schools suggested that mixing up the prizes within the education sessions might aid motivation to answer questions.

Students from Sacred Heart as a group provided some alternative suggestions – fruit, natural confectionary company lollies, wristbands, pens, water bottles.

*“Different food prizes, so not muslie bars all the time. I got a bit sick of muslie bars”*

(Participant no. 4, females, Macedon Grammar)

*“Better prizes, not muslie bars. Maybe a wrist band or something you don’t just eat and then it’s all gone.”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

***Do you think student's attitudes towards those with mental health problems have changed over the year? Why? Why not?***

In response to this question, it is important to note that no one in the six focus groups thought that attitudes had not changed, so all responses are relevant only to how attitudes have changed. Two main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

**Student attitudes have changed because:**

- ◆ **Increase in knowledge leading to less judging**
- ◆ **Developed empathy towards those with mental health issues**

**Increase in knowledge leading to less judging behaviour**

Insert text here

*"I think it has changed [attitudes towards those with mental illness] because people learnt a lot of other things and that its actually quite common and that it's important to them to like to be aware of themselves even though they might not think they get it [mental illness]"*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*"[They've learnt] It doesn't mean they're weak"*

(Participant no. 6, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"Yes, because you see a bit more of it now and you're able to recognise it"*

(Participant no. 2, female, Macedon Grammar)

*"Yes, I think people understand mental health issues better when they do Live4Life because I think some people might not understand it properly if they don't know exactly what they (mental health) issues are. I think you*

*understand it better and they don't judge people with mental illnesses. I understand it a lot better now."*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

### **Developed empathy towards those with mental health issues**

Participants indicated that students had developed empathy for those with mental illness and that this had changed attitudes towards those people, however, one participant noted that she had also noticed that it was not considered "cool" to admit this to others, which speaks to needing further work.

*"They have because they've learn[t] about what they're actually going through and they like understand what they are going through and how they can't deal with it themselves and stuff like that"*

(Participant no. 5, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"I think the personal stories were good because it actually put it into perspective what it would be like so I think people felt a bit more respected"*

(Participant no. 1, female, Braemar College)

*"I think a lot of people's attitudes did change but for some reason it was this thing where it wasn't cool if you actually said you were enjoying it or you'd changed your mind so a lot of people pretended that it wasn't good and they hadn't learnt things but we all did"*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

### ***What did you learn about help-seeking for mental health problems after participating in the Live4Life education sessions?***

In response to this question, four main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided.

## You don't have to cope on your own

Participants indicated that they had learnt that there are a range of different help-sources available to them, and that, therefore, they do not have to just manage on their own if they have or develop mental health issues.

*"I learnt that there's a lot of programs that are different for different people so like if you're brave enough to go to*

*someone face to face you can do something like that, but if you're not you can do the anonymous stuff like... call people or do the web stuff..."*

(Participant no. 6, male, Sacred Heart College)

*"Where you can go and just the amount of people that are ready to help you, willing to help you get through... people from school or local community services"*

(Participant no. 4, female, Macedon Grammar)

*"That you can actually go online or ring up the phone numbers to actually get help. Or you could go to a counsellor or you could go into the youth centre..."*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*"Help is always here like our school counsellor and stuff and if he can't help you he can send you onto someone else who's more experienced and qualified. It's easy to get access if you need help"*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

*"That even if you don't for instance like speaking over the phone that you can contact them (service providers) in different ways"*

### What learnt about help-seeking:

- ◆ You don't have to cope on your own
- ◆ That it will help
- ◆ Confidential nature of help available

(Participant no. 6, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

### **That it will help**

Participants indicated that not only are they now aware of the range of help sources out there but that they realise now that it is worth contacting them as they believe it will help.

*“I learn that help seeking does actually help... I used to think that a lot of wouldn't [have sought help] because they were scared that it wouldn't help but now I kind of realize that it does, no matter how much you don't think it will”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

*“If you don't seek help early enough it gets worse”*

(Participant no. 10, male, Braemar College)

*“You're not the only one who's gone through this so there are people there who know how to help you with whatever you're dealing with”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Braemar College)

### **Confidential nature of help available**

References were made to the confidential nature of information that is shared with the various help-sources, and how this has changed attitudes to seeking help.

*“...If you're not [brave] you can do the anonymous stuff like... call people or do the web stuff...”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Sacred Heart College)

*“When you go to someone that information is going to be confidential”*

(Participant no.16, female, Braemar College)

***Do you feel more confident to seek help for a mental health problem if you needed to after participating in the Live4Life program?***

In response to this question, two main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below. Please note that one participant stated that they were not more confident as they were afraid

**More confident to seek help because:**

- ◆ Know it's confidential
- ◆ Know where to go and that won't be judged there

their friends may find out. This needs to be balanced against the 49 other participants who agreed their confidence to seek help had improved.

**Know it's confidential**

Much like the response to the previous question on help-seeking, confidentiality of information shared with help-sources was shown to be improving student confidence in seeking help.

*"I liked that they told you it's completely confidential and if you didn't want your parents to know they would try not to tell them... which is kind of good cause they're keeping your private things which you think others would be mean to you about and they're keeping them within the connection to the person you're speaking to"*

(Participant no. 1, male, Braemar College)

*"...I would feel comfortable talking to them cause they can't really tell anyone else"*

(Participant no. 5, female, Sacred Heart College)

**Know where to go and that won't be judged there**

Participants indicated that as a result of the Live4Life education sessions they have learnt who they can ask for help, who those people are and that they are approachable and non-judging, and that they also have a better understanding



of the process of seeking help and that has also improved their help-seeking confidence.

*“Yes, because other people know what you are going through and you know that you won’t be judged because... they know the meaning of mental illness and how to fix it”*

(Participant no. 5, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“I think with all the information we’ve been given it would make it a lot easier if say you went to a counsellor, it would make it easier to talk to them about it cause you know partially what’s going on and I think the more you know the more confident you can be about telling someone”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Braemar College)

*“You know that they’re not going to judge you for your problems”*

(Participant no. 6, female, Macedon Grammar)

*“Especially with some of the, say student welfare, they gave a speech at Live4Life so I know what kind of person they are and who they are now and I’d feel more comfortable talking to them. I know what they’re like”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Sacred Heart College)

*“Yeah I would because now I know like all the facts about it; I’m not just going there clueless. I understand it [the process]”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Sacred Heart College)

## Email Testimonial

The following email was received from Mark Smith, Principal at Macedon Grammar School expressing his approval of the Education sessions and the wider Live4Life impact in his school, and was received by the Live4Life coordinator.

**“... Our students have really benefited from your input this year with Live4Life, both our Year 8 students and our Year 9 ‘Crew’. Please accept my sincere thanks to you personally and the wider Live4Life Team for their efforts and time sensitivity in dealing with the challenging areas that are addressed as part of the program.**

**I do think the Life4Life program is outstanding, very well thought out and very well evaluated and certainly not a one size fits all approach. I believe it has enormous benefits for our students at a very impressionable time for them in their lives and personal development...”**

**(Mark Smith, Principal, Macedon Grammar School)**

## Live4Life Competition

The competition was started in 2010, and has run each subsequent year as it has remained popular amongst students. This year saw 85 individual and group entries from the six schools with 273 names put to entries.

Crew members were an integral part of the competition in 2013, choosing the theme, and short listing, then judging the entries, ultimately determining individual and group prize allocation.

The theme this year was “Reach Out” with an emphasis on help-seeking for mental health issues. In the student information this was touted as “helping a mate, or getting help for you.” In response to feedback in 2012, an information session on the theme was held at each school, and information posters were also distributed to participant schools. This year prize winning categories were individual, group, category, and judges choice awards. The 25 prizes distributed varied from a \$20 iTunes voucher, to a \$500 Visa gift card (to share amongst a winning group).

Feedback about the competition comes from students who attended the Year 8 focus groups. Responses were sought regarding positive and negative aspects of the competition in 2013, and whether or not students felt the competition should be compulsory.

### ***Positive Feedback about the Competition:***

In response to this question, three main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided.

#### **Positive Feedback about the competition:**

- ◆ **Extending skills**
- ◆ **Prizes and prize winning entries**
- ◆ **More fun than regular classes**

### **Opportunities to extend skills**

Participants indicated that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about mental health and help-seeking through the competition entries.

*“I liked it cause it really extended our skills and we got to put all our ideas into something that we really committed to and made us like really committed and wanting to do something school related...”*

(Participant no. 7, male, Braemar College)

### **Prizes and prize winning entries**

Prizes were popular with students, and opportunities to see the entries of others.

*“The prizes and also a lot of the artwork was pretty cool”*

(Participant no. 8, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“Watching, having a chance to see what everyone else took out of it, what they thought, and put into their work”*

(Participant no. 6, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

### **More fun than regular classes**

Participants indicated that working on their competition entries was more favourable than usual school activities.

*“It was fun to make the video and good to get out of class, good to film and do something different”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“It was funner [than regular class] and we had fun doing it”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Macedon Grammar)

## Negative feedback and suggestions for the competition:

In response to this question, three main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided.

### Negative Feedback about the competition:

- ◆ Iron out some prize issues
- ◆ More school support to complete entries
- ◆ Offer choice to speak if win an award

### Iron out some prize issues

Participants raised a number of issues with the prizes. Some felt that having ambiguity about what the prizes were prior to the Celebration event demotivated entrants. Others raised issues around the collection of entries, and yet more thought that having a large number of prizes made those who missed out feel even worse than if there had been few prizes.

*“Well it wasn’t clear [what the prizes were], some people said it was technology like an iPod, some people said it was money so it was really confusing”*

(Participant 6, male, Braemar College)

*“I thought maybe with the prize giving there were big prizes and then there were a bunch of small prizes but there were other people that, maybe because there were so many runners-up there were people who thought their entries were really crapped so they didn’t get anything”*

(Participant 6, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

### More school support to complete entries

Insert text

*“... I think we should have had more class time cause people didn’t want to give up time at home to do it and most of us didn’t have remotely enough time in school to get through our projects”*

(Participant 2, male, Braemar College)

*“We didn’t really have many materials on offer to us so a lot of projects were ruled out because we didn’t have the facilities we needed so maybe if the school could offer up art materials to us right at the start so we*

*could plan around that*” [NB. Two other students went on to describe receiving supplies when they sought them out]

(Participant 2, male, Braemar College)

*“More time in school to complete project”*

(Participant 8, male, Kyneton Secondary College)

### **Offer choice to speak if won an award**

Participants in several groups discussed the issue of being called up to the stage if they had won a prize and asked to speak. There was some confusion over this, as participants were given the choice to speak or not, but all prize winners were called to go onto the stage.

*“Winners should not have to go on stage in front of everyone and be stared at and speak cause that can be quite intimidating”*

(Participant 4, female, Macedon Grammar College)

*“When you did win an award you had to go up and answer some questions. I think that was good cause it gave people the chance to talk in front of everyone and give their opinion but I think for other groups who were shy they didn’t want to talk so it was kind of forced on them. It was kind of awkward cause if they didn’t want to [talk] they would just run off stage”*

(Participant 2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

### **Should competition entry be a choice or compulsory?**

Responses to this question have been broken into a sample of arguments presented for competition entry being compulsory or by choice. As a general rule, there were some participants for and against compulsory entry in every focus group and both sides were represented equally. The only exception to this was the focus group participants from Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School who all shared strong views that it should be entry by choice only.

### Compulsory competition entry arguments

*"I reckon it should be compulsory because when we were told it was compulsory for us it was like though 'oh yeah', you didn't really want to do it, but once you started it you really enjoyed and had a lot of fun with it"*

(Participant no. 5, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"It should be compulsory cause it gets other people involved instead of just sitting around"*

(Participant no. 5, female, Gisborne Secondary College)

*"I think it should be compulsory but you don't actually have to enter it in the competition, you just have to make one and show your teachers you've put in the effort"*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

*"I think it should be compulsory because we're winning prizes, what's wrong with that?"*

(Participant no. 9, male, Macedon Grammar)

*"Maybe make it not as big but make it compulsory because it made us think about what we've learned through the year and how we can use it to benefit our lives"*

(Participant no. 10, male, Sacred Heart College)

### Competition entry by choice arguments

*"I reckon it should be a choice because if you don't want to do it, well, I guess you don't really have much [motivation] to put into it"*

(Participant no. 6, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*"I think it should be a choice cause I don't think you should be pressured into doing it"*

(Participant no. 1, female, Braemar College)

*"A choice because some people might not be confident enough to do a competition like this... if you get an award you have to go up there and get it... you [need to] know you are going to go through that"*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*"It should be a choice because some people are very, very bad at art, like myself, and they shouldn't have to make a fool of themselves"*

(Participant no. 3, female, Macedon Grammar)

*"I think it should be by choice because in my position if it was compulsory then I'd have all this other stuff on top of school work and everything and it would be too big and I wouldn't do a very good job of it and I'd be angry at myself. Yeah, I'd end up rushing"*

(Participant no. 7, male, Sacred Heart College)



## Live4Life Website

The purpose of the Live4Life website is to be a source of information for students and parents of students participating in Live4Life. Information on events, dates, competitions, and links to other reputable mental health websites can all be found there. Additionally past competition entries and photos of students at past events can be viewed here.

The Live4Life website has been in operation for three years now, and alterations were made in 2012 and then again in 2013 in response to suggestions from Year 8's on how it could be improved.

Qualitative feedback was again sought from Year 8 focus group participants to gain an impression of the response to the 2013 version of the Live4Life website, whether they had used it or not and why. Responses have been broken down into those who used it, those who didn't and their reasons for this, and suggestions for improving the website in 2014.

### Why used Live4Life website?

Those who had used the website reported they had used it to:

- Check out what was on it, curiosity
- Look up competition details
- To show others photos of their school at events

### Why not used Live4Life website?

Those who claimed to not have used the website suggested this was for a range of reasons including:

- Had no reason to look at it, didn't think needed to
- Thought sufficient information gained from Live4Life program, didn't need to look up anything further on the website
- Felt the reasons they would visit the website were not made clear
- Didn't know or forgot website existed

### **Suggestions for improving the Live4Life website?**

Some students chose to voluntarily make suggestions on how the website could be improved for 2014. These are listed below:

- More interactive
- More colourful and “in your face”, less text, more graphics
- Run another mini competition of some description for those that visit the website to get them to go there and have a look
- Have games to play on there, quizzes or activities
- Post last year’s competition winners on there
- Post videos of Live4Life events, or a video diary of someone who has gone through the Live4Life program for students at other schools who don’t get the program to access
- Hand out business cards with phone numbers and the website to students
- Promote the existence and purpose of the website more widely amongst students
- Include relevant links to other reputable mental health websites, phone numbers, and local services
- Put a new update on every week

## End of Year Celebration Event

In October 2013 an end of year Live4Life Celebration event took place at Braemar College. This year The Crew had a greater ownership of the event than previous years and assisted in a range of tasks which are outlined below.

The purpose of this event was to celebrate the achievements of the students during 2013 who took part in Live4Life activities and to display and award prizes for successful "Reach Out" competition entries. Students, school principals, year 8 teachers and some parents attended.

### Crew Involvement in Celebration Event 2013

- ◆ **Organising the content of the event**
- ◆ **Writing and delivering Award speeches on stage**
- ◆ **Performing short skits during the Celebration.**
- ◆ **Taking the role of ushers for the Year 8's as they arrived**
- ◆ **Organisation of morning tea**

As part of this event, entertainment was also provided. This entertainment included performances by DJ Nate (Nathan Galliano), and the band Einstein. Additionally, Crew members contributed to entertainment through their band Flaxxon, and a poetry performance by Jacqueline Anderson.

Initially, a summary of learning's from the event will be presented, followed by the highlights of this event, and recommendations for future end of year celebrations. This feedback data originates from Year 8 focus groups.

## What were your favourite parts of the End of Year Celebration event?

In response to this question, four main themes were raised. Explanations of these with supporting quotes are provided below.

### Favourite aspects of Celebration event:

- ◆ Seeing students winning awards and their entries
- ◆ Socialising with other schools
- ◆ Entertainment
- ◆ Crew involvement

### Seeing students winning awards and their entries

Participants indicated that they enjoyed both seeing people winning awards and seeing their entries and what they could have done themselves.

*“Watching all the videos and looking at the entries”*

(Participant no. 5, female, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“I liked seeing all the multi-modal presentations – they were great!”*

(Participant no. 4, female, Macedon Grammar)

*“I liked the awards and the reactions of the people, the dancing and the songs”*

(Participant no. 9, male, Sacred Heart College)

### Socialising with other schools

Participants, predictably, most enjoyed spending time with the students from others schools.

*“Being with all the other schools. It’s good to see all the other students from your year from around the shire and friends. It’s good to see them again and you might meet a couple of friends there...”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“Catching up with friends from different schools”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

## Entertainment

Participants reported enjoying the various forms of entertainment during the Celebration event.

*“The people singing, the twins - Flaxxon”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

*“I liked the band Einstein and the two sisters, they were the young singers. They were really good...”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

## Crew Involvement

Participants noticed that there were Year 9’s highly involved in the event, and commented that they felt better about the event because of this.

*“I liked the year 9’s, the people that like run the whole thing. I think that was really good to see people just a year older than you running the whole show”*

(Participant no. 2, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

*“... I enjoyed how the people wearing the tops and speaking [the Crew] how much they presented and they were nice...”*

(Participant no. 1, female, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School)

## What parts weren’t so great or would you change for another time?

In response to this question, only one main theme was raised. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School focus group

participants stated they felt it was too crowded, this was only supported by one participant in another focus group who felt the space was too small.

### Suggestions for improvement:

- ◆ More mingling opportunities

## More mingling opportunities

Participants requested more opportunities to sit together with friends from others schools.

*“When we were sitting down in the hall we should have been able to sit where we wanted not in our school coz everyone wanted to sit with their friends.*

(Participant no. 2, female, Braemar College)

*“Sit wherever and not be restricted by school”*

(Participant no. 6, male, Gisborne Secondary College)

*“Maybe do like activities so we could talk to other schools. So instead of sitting muddled up with all the other schools, do activities with them and get to know everyone”*

(Participant no. 5, female, Kyneton Secondary College)

## **Email Testimonial**

The following email was received from Pam McDonald, Assistant Principal at Kyneton Secondary College expressing her approval of the Celebration event from a school staff perspective.

**“Well done on the Live4Life Celebration day – it was very successful! You have done a great job - there’s a lot of things to organise and so many people to be in contact with.**

**Our kids felt pretty good with their acknowledgement of work displayed and those who got prizes and we were really pleased with their behaviour.**

**We have been happy with the sessions run at school and found the format this year more manageable and effective.”**

(Pam McDonald, Assistant Principal, Kyneton Secondary College)

## **Live4Life Awards Won in 2013**

Live4Life is proud to announce that they won the runners-up award (Highly Commended) at the VLGA READYS Awards in Dec 2013. The READYS recognise excellence in delivery of youth services among local governance organisations.

## Goals Achieved from 2012 Report Recommendations:

### Networking

Networking opportunities have continued to be made available to students, school and community staff within 2013, although further staff transitions have taken place during the year within the Live4Life team, these have been managed with minimal impact to network partners.

### Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth mental health first aid has continued to be made available to parents and teachers, and this year the scope of professional and volunteer staff working with youth was expanded as well. Live4Life continued to operate this as a free program for all participants and chose not to charge anyone including organisations. The Teen Mental Health program for members of the Crew was not started due to lack of resources, however, this year the Crew took part in a one day leadership course to better prepare them for their role. Year 11 and 12 students at Gisborne Secondary and Sacred Heart College took up the offer of the Teen Mental Health first aid course during 2013 – this was not evaluated, so no further mention of this has been made in this year's report.

### *SenseAbility*

As recommended the *SenseAbility* program was handed back to schools if they wished to continue this, and Live4Life ceased to be involved in this.

### Large Scale Events

It was recommended that Live4Life simplify their education messages into several large scale events each year, and a version of this approach has been taken in 2013. The Launch and Celebration days were kept as interschool events with the addition of five events for the year 8's in each school across the year, each with specific mental health messages to get across.



### **Competition**

As recommended, the competition has continued, and has retained its degree of success with the students. Efforts were made this year to make entries more accessible for students.

### **Live4Life Website**

Efforts were made to make the Live4Life website more friendly, accessible and relevant to students although Crew help was not requested with this in 2013.

### **Expansion of Live4Life**

The process of considering options in this area is underway, and it is likely that Live4Life as it stands in the Macedon Ranges will continue, parallel to the development of a Live4Life foundation. Further information on this can be found on page 5 of this report.

## Summary

### Live4Life Launch

◆ **Enjoyed Aspects of Launch:**

- Combining with other schools
- Mode of delivery
- Free food

◆ **Opportunities for Improvements:**

- Allowing mixed school groups/more interaction
- Changes to speakers
- Whole day event
- More food

◆ **Key messages taken away from the Launch:**

- That the mental health of yourself and others is important
- Seeking help for mental health issues is a good idea
- There are help sources out there

## The Crew

- ◆ **Enjoyed Aspects of Leadership day**
  - Team building
  - Learning skills for use in education sessions
- ◆ **Opportunities for Improvement to Leadership day**
  - More interactive activities
  - Timing of day
- ◆ **What else could be done to prepare you better for being a Crew member:**
  - Role definition
  - Increasing mental health knowledge
  - Opportunities to practice public speaking
- ◆ **Opportunities for Improvement to Leadership day**
  - More interactive activities
  - Timing of day
- ◆ **Improvements in Leadership skills reported**
- ◆ **Changes in student attitudes towards those with mental health issues reported**
- ◆ **What liked about education sessions:**
  - Teaching and leadership role
  - Observing student progress
  - Own learning opportunities
- ◆ **What didn't like or could be improved – nil themes**
- ◆ **Favourite parts of being involved in the Crew:**
  - Learning more about mental health
  - Meeting people and making friends
  - Friendly and supportive environment
- ◆ **Preferred communication between Crew and Live4Life Coordinator were text and email.**
- ◆ **Majority of Crew members felt valued, supported by their school to some extent, that they contributed, and well supported by the Live4life Coordinator.**

## Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

### **YMHFA training was completed by 11 groups comprising:**

- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ Volunteer and paid youth staff

### **YMHFA Effectiveness Questionnaire Quantitative Results:**

- ◆ Knowledge of depression, anxiety, disordered eating, substance misuse, and psychosis all improved dramatically from pre- to post- YMHFA course.
- ◆ Confidence in helping a young person in a mental health crisis improved
- ◆ Free courses recommended

### **YMHFA Effectiveness Questionnaire Qualitative Results:**

- ◆ What was achieved by attending YMHFA training?
  - Increased confidence in ability to communicate effectively with adolescents with mental health issues
  - Better understanding of local services
  - Greater ability to recognise symptoms of mental illness in adolescents and respond appropriately
  - Reduced stigma of mental illness
- ◆ Where YMHFA training might be useful
  - Supporting own children and partners
  - Assisting in paid and unpaid work with adolescents
  - Supporting extended family members, own friends and children of friends
  - Ability to manage and cope with a mental health crisis if encountered
- ◆ Suggested improvements to the course:
  - Increased availability and marketing
  - Greater resources for further self-education
  - Increased opportunities to practice skills

## Education Sessions

- ◆ **The following increased from pre- to post- education sessions:**
  - Understanding of importance of mental health issues
  - Understanding that you can change your thoughts to change your behaviour and feelings
  - Increase in percentage of students who knew to contact their GP for a mental health issue
  - Increased knowledge of activities that could help their mental health
- ◆ **Key messages learnt in education sessions:**
  - Mental health and physical health are linked
  - Mental health issues are treatable, and where to go for help
  - What you can do to look after your mental health
- ◆ **What was liked about these sessions:**
  - Inclusive
  - Informative
  - Fun and Interactive
  - Food
- ◆ **Areas for improvement in education sessions:**
  - Less repetitive
  - Sexuality pamphlet location more discreet
  - More mental health consumer speakers
  - More interactive, and more physical movement needed
  - Range of food prizes needed
- ◆ **Student attitudes have changed because:**
  - Increase in knowledge leading to less judging
  - Developed empathy towards those with mental health issues
- ◆ **What learnt about help-seeking:**
  - You don't have to cope on your own
  - That it will help
  - Confidential nature of help available
- ◆ **More confident to seek help because:**
  - Know it's confidential
  - Know where to go and that won't be judged there
- ◆ **Email testimonial**

## Live4Life Competition

- ◆ Theme 'Reach Out' determined by The Crew
- ◆ Positive Feedback about the Competition:
  - Extending skills
  - Prizes and prize winning entries
  - More fun than regular classes
- ◆ Negative Feedback about the Competition:
  - Iron out some prize issues
  - More school support to complete entries
  - Offer choice to speak if win an award
- ◆ Should competition entry be compulsory:
  - Arguments for both sides equally supported by participants

## Live4Life Website

- ◆ Why used website:
  - Check out what was on it, curiosity
  - Look up competition details
  - To show others photos of their school at events
- ◆ Why not used website:
  - Had no reason to look at it, didn't think needed to
  - Thought sufficient information gained from Live4Life program, didn't need to look up anything further on the website
  - Felt the reasons they would visit the website were not made clear
  - Didn't know or forgot website existed

## End of Year Celebration Event

- ◆ **Favourite aspects of Celebration event:**
  - Seeing students winning awards and their entries
  - Socialising with other schools
  - Entertainment
  - Crew involvement
- ◆ **Opportunities for Improvements**
  - More mingling opportunities
- ◆ **Email testimonial**

## Live4Life Awards Won in 2013

- ◆ Runners up award (Highly Commended) at the VLGA Ready's awards in Dec 2013

## Goals Achieved from 2012 Report Recommendations

- ◆ **Networking**
- ◆ **Youth Mental Health First Aid Continued**
- ◆ ***SenseAbility* ceased**
- ◆ **Focus on Large Scale Events**
- ◆ **Continued competition**
- ◆ **Live4Life website changes**
- ◆ **Expansion of Live4Life investigated further**

## Recommendations

### Networking

- ◆ Continue networking opportunities between students, school staff and community staff
- ◆ This will require continued prioritisation and efforts from Live4Life management

### Youth and Teen Mental Health First Aid

- ◆ Given the ongoing positive response to this program, I would recommend that it continues to be made available to parents, teachers, and other professional staff such as medical centre staff and youth workers.
- ◆ Continue to offer it free of charge for parents and volunteers who work with youth to make it available to those of low socioeconomic status
- ◆ Consider charging a fee to the organisations for others who wish to take part such as teachers, medical centre staff and paid youth workers
- ◆ **Teen Mental Health First Aid**– Make this available to Year 11 and 12 students at all Live4Life schools

### Education Sessions, Launch and Celebration Events

- ◆ This appears to be quite a successful learning format, and quite popular with students
- ◆ Consideration could be given to making education sessions whole school events as requested by students
- ◆ Increase multi-media and interactive components of education sessions
- ◆ Split up activities with one minute of stand and stretch type exercises to keep participants active and involved
- ◆ Be sure to make access to sexuality pamphlets possible in a confidential way, providing an email address to contact for a pamphlet or providing information to every student are two possible ways to achieve this outcome.
- ◆ Speakers with first person experience of mental health issues need to be incorporated into events
- ◆ Particularly well received by students was the option to meet staff from local services, the welfare staff from their school etc.
- ◆ I would consider requesting a GP come and talk at one session to provide students with an overview of what a GP might ask, likely outcomes etc. if they speak to their GP about a mental health issue



## The Crew

- ◆ Keep the leadership day, but change the date to during school term
- ◆ Use a range of media to roll out all essential messages to crew members, with an emphasis on text and email.
- ◆ Continue to keep them involved in all events in a similar way to that achieved in 2013
- ◆ Utilise input from the Crew to redesign the Live4Life website so that it is more teen friendly
- ◆ Use parts of the Crew report or request their help to put together an information sheet on the role and expectations of a Crew member for those considering taking part in 2014. Also list some of the positive outcomes of taking part as illustrated in the report.
- ◆ Although Crew requested a better mental health knowledge grounding themselves to assist in their education session duties, this won't be a problem for next year, as all Crew members will have completed the sessions themselves in the year prior.

## Competition

- ◆ The competition is a chance for students to think about mental health in a variety of different ways, open up the conversation about mental health issues and reduce the stigma of mental health.
- ◆ It receives a positive response each year, and I would recommend keeping it in its current format.
- ◆ Issues around compulsory or non-compulsory entry are irrelevant as this will always be influenced by individual schools.

## Expansion of Live4Life

- ◆ Continued requests are made for expansion of Live4Life, and the process of considering options in this area are underway and need to be continued.

### Author Comment

“The nature of Life4Life in putting each subsequent year level of Year 8’s through this program, having the Crew in place setting an example for younger adolescents to look up to, and more people every year through the YMHFA training over time should start to make a cultural difference in the school community and then in adults as they get older, but it is important to acknowledge that this is a monumental undertaking. I say this not to discourage others from trying, but to highlight the importance of addressing this issue on a wider scale, and to praise the efforts of Live4Life in making small differences and dents in this entrenched culture over time and not just deciding it is too hard.”

Dr Krystal Bowers, Clinical Psychologist

## Appendix A: Year 8 Focus Group Questions

### Launch:

1. What things did you enjoy about the Live4Life Launch at the start of the year?
2. How do you think the Live4Life Launch could have been improved?
3. What was the key message for you from the Launch?

### Live4Life Education Sessions:

4. What key messages did you learn in the Live4Life 4 education sessions?
5. What did you like about these 4 sessions?
6. What didn't you like or do you think could have been done better in these 4 sessions?
7. Do you think student's attitudes towards those with mental health problems have changed over the year? Why? Why not?
8. What did you learn about help-seeking for mental health problems after participating in the Live4Life education sessions?
9. Do you feel more confident to seek help for a mental health problem if you needed to after participating in the Live4Life program?

### Live4Life Website:

10. Have you used the Live4Life website this year? Why? Why not?

### Competition:

11. For those of you involved in the competition, what did you enjoy about this experience?
12. If the competition was to run again next year, is there anything you think should be done differently?
13. Should the competition be a choice or compulsory part of Live4Life? Why? Why not?

### End of Year Celebration:

14. What did you learn at the end of year Celebration?
15. What were your favourite parts of the end of year Celebration?
16. What parts weren't so great or would you change for another time?

### General:

17. Are there any other comments about Live4Life that you would like to make, either positive or negative?

## Appendix B: Crew Survey

### Leadership and Training:

1. What things did you enjoy about the Live4Life leadership day at the start of the year?
2. How do you think the Leadership day could be improved?
3. What else could we do at Live4Life to prepare you for your role as Crew member?
4. Do you think your leadership skills have improved as a result of being involved in the Live4Life program?

Circle your response:

(Not at all)

(Yes Heaps)

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

### Education:

5. Do you think student's attitudes towards those with mental health problems have changed over the year? Why? Why not?
6. What did you like about being involved in the education sessions?

7. What didn't you like or what do you think could have been done better?

8. Do you feel more confident to seek help for mental health problems after participating in the Crew?

Circle your response:

(Not Confident)

(Very Confident)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Contribution and Support:**

9. How can we improve the Crew for next year?

10. What was your favourite part about being in the Crew?

11. Which forms of communication between the coordinator and other Crew members did you find useful or not useful? Explain

12. Did you feel you were a valued member of the Crew?

Circle your response:

(Not really)

(Yes Very Much)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

13. Did you feel your school supported your involvement in the Crew?

Circle your response:

(Not at all)

(Yes a Lot)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

14. Did you feel you contributed well and as part of a team, when it came to your Crew commitments?

Circle your response:

(Not really)

(Yes I was Awesome)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

15. Did you feel the Live4Life Coordinator supported you in your role as Crew Members?

Circle your response:

(Not at all)

(Yes a Lot)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**Anything we've missed:**

16. Are there any other comments about Live4Life that you would like to make, either positive or negative?

## Appendix C: YMHFA Effectiveness Questionnaires



### Youth Mental Health First Aid Course Pre Course Survey 2013

Please state your child's school and the year level \_\_\_\_\_

I am attending this course because \_\_\_\_\_

What level of knowledge do you feel you have about the mental health services available to young people in the Macedon Ranges Shire?

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What level of knowledge do you consider you have about mental health and young people in the following areas:

*Depression*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Anxiety*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Eating Disorders*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Substance Misuse*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Psychosis*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If a young person was in a mental health crisis (e.g. Having a panic attack or thinking of suicide) how confident do you feel about helping that young person?

Not at all confident	A little	Quite confident	Very
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Youth Mental Health First Aid Course Post- course survey 2013

Please state the school your child is at and the year level:

---

1. What level of knowledge did you feel you had about the mental health services available to young people in the Macedon Ranges Shire prior to completing the YMHFA training?

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What level of knowledge do you feel you now have about the mental health services available to young people in the Macedon Ranges Shire after completing the YMHFA training?

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What level of knowledge do you consider you now have about mental health and young people in the following areas:

*Mental Health and illness in Australian Young People*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Depression*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Anxiety*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Eating Disorders*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Substance Misuse*

None	A little	Some	A lot
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



*Psychosis*

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| None                     | A little                 | Some                     | A lot                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. If a young person was in a mental health crisis (eg. Having a panic attack or thinking of suicide) how confident do you feel about helping that young person?

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Not at all confident     | A little                 | Quite confident          | Very                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. What do you think you have achieved by attending this course?

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6. Where do you feel your YMHFA training will come in handy?

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7. Do you have suggestion on how we could improve the course?

---



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8. If this course had a fee to pay to attend, how much would you be prepared to pay?

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| \$10-\$40<br>free        | \$41-\$70                | \$71-\$90                | \$91-\$110               | should be                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. How did you find out about the course?

---

Thank you for your feedback and attending the course. You may be contacted next year in a follow-up evaluation. Please contact Pauline Neil or Charmaine Vanderbeek if you do not want to participate.

Congratulations you are now a Youth Mental Health First Aider!

Good luck using your Youth Mental Health First Aid

## Appendix D: Pre and Post Education Session Questionnaire

Please circle a number you feel most represents your response to the scale questions:

**1) How important are mental health issues for young people?**

Not at all important Yes Very Important

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

**2) Can you change your thoughts to change your behaviour and feelings?**

Not at all Yes Agreed

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

**3) Please list where you could go for help if you were feeling depressed or anxious?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**4) How comfortable would you feel visiting a mental health care service?**

Not at all Yes Very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

**5) Would you support a friend who was being bullied because of a mental health problem?**

Not at all Yes Always

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

**6) Going to a counsellor means you don't have the strength to handle the problem yourself.**

Not at all Yes Agreed

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

**7) Please list some activities that might help your mental health?**

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |