



National Children's
Bureau

Young people's views on gender and mental health

NCB has been exploring how gender relates to children and young people's emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Awareness and media coverage of this topic is growing.

We have reviewed research evidence, looked for examples of gender-sensitive services, and heard what over 100 young people think, including:

- Boys and young men using a youth centre based on a London housing estate
- Members of Young NCB (YNCB)
- 96 young people aged 13-24 who took part in online surveys (71 female, 22 male and 4 trans).

Young people's input is helping us to share learning with professionals who play a role in supporting young people's emotional and mental health and wellbeing. These professionals may work with children and young people directly or may make decisions about the services they receive.

This document aims to feed back to young people on what we learnt from our engagement activities. We gathered a sample of a mixed group of young people's general views rather than a full picture of 'what young people in general think'.

Some of our key findings are presented on the next page.

If you took part, thank you for contributing!



- Some healthy ways of managing stress are widely acceptable to the young males and females we surveyed – e.g. having fun and exercising.
- Young people are very aware of expectations on boys and men to be strong and not show emotion.
- Sharing problems with others seems more widely acceptable among the young women than young men but not as much as stereotypes might suggest.



- Some girls and young women described feeling that, when they try to share difficulties with adults, they are seen as hormonal and over-emotional, or their problems as nothing more than a 'fall-out' with friends or 'boy trouble'. Although other girls were an important source of support, some young women expressed uncertainty about trusting female friends.
- We were able to hear from a small number of trans young people (who find that their sense of their own gender doesn't match the 'male' or 'female' label they were given at birth), or young people questioning their gender identity. Some of these young people felt that gender stereotypes affected how they coped with difficulties: specifically, decisions about exercise, diet and relaxation. Some also commented that professionals needed to understand gender issues better.
- The areas in which the young people most wanted to see greater gender-sensitivity were information about support available; support within settings like schools, youth clubs and youth offending institutions; and how professionals relate to young people.

Find out more

You can read more detail and young people's own words in our summary report for young people. We have also published:

- a report on young people's views for professionals
- a review of research evidence on gender and children and young people's mental health and emotional well-being
- examples of gender-sensitive work with children and young people.

All these resources are available at <https://www.ncb.org.uk/genderandmentalhealth>.

NCB's young people's group, Young NCB, works on a wide range of issues including mental health and well-being. Find out more, including how to join, at <http://www.youngncb.org.uk/>