SURVIVING OR THRIVING?

Healthwatch Slough asks how you look after your mental health

# October 2017

Introduction

Healthwatch Slough is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Slough. We are here to understand the experiences of people who use services and to make sure their voices are heard and responded to. Healthwatch Slough represents the views of local people. Views, opinions and experiences of local people are analysed and used to influence change.

Mental Health is the single largest cause of disability in the UK. We all have mental health and for most of us it could be better. Local data shows that the prevalence of mental health conditions in Slough is rising.

More than 4 in 10 people say they have experienced depression.
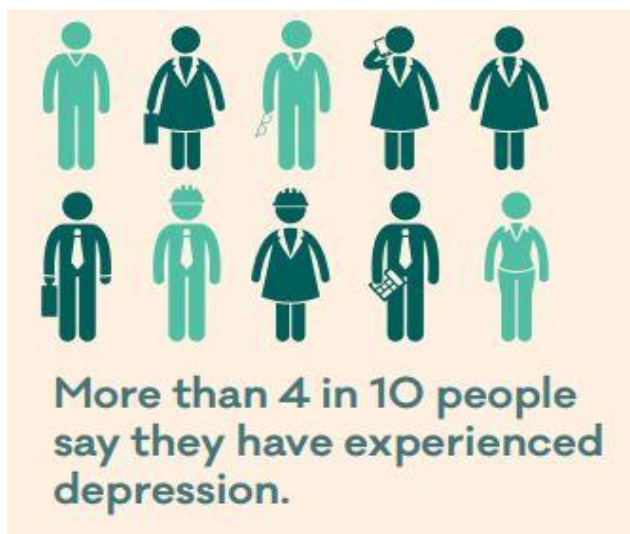
Healthwatch Slough was invited to participate in a series of mental health awareness activities by Slough Libraries in May 2017. This report sets out what people told us about mental health along with some tips on how to look after your own mental wellbeing.

What did we do?

- We invited 6 local organisation to take part in mental health week
- We met with a mental health support group to gather ideas on suggested activities and events to take place during the week.
- We created a 6 question surveys for young people this was completed by 22 young people aged 12 – 21 years
- We created a Mental Health Awareness week comments form this was completed by 40 people during the week

Healthwatch Slough displayed an information stand at venues including the Curve, Britwell & Cippenham Libraries.

Healthwatch activities available for people to participate in during the week

- The Healthwatch Slough Quiet Corner
- Download the Healthwatch APPYNESS APP
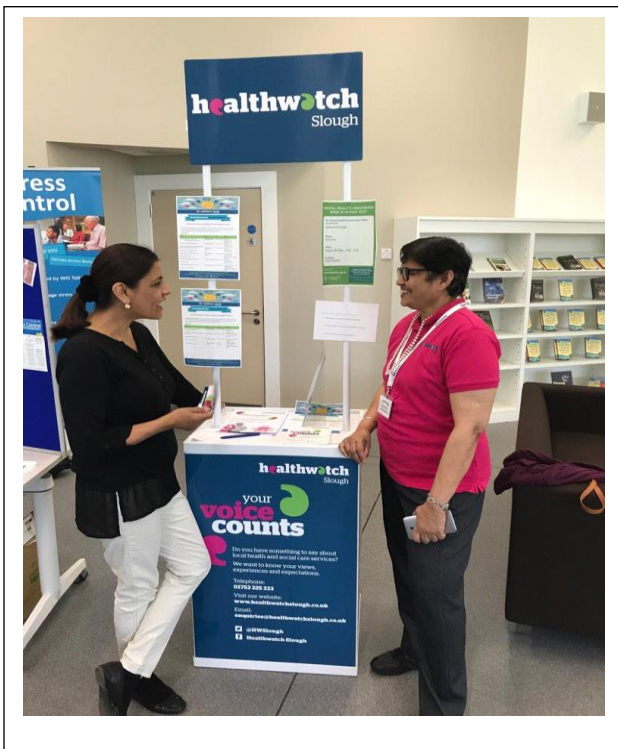- Healthwatch Chat with the team
- Coping Steps
- Surviving or Thriving Tree

Healthwatch Slough young volunteers manned the stall which was full of Healthwatch pens and hand sanitizers & Kooth information cards. Healthwatch Champions spoke to 25 young people and completed surveys with 22 young people.

What Healthwatch asked…

- What do you do to keep yourself happy?
- What do you do to keep yourself well?
- Who do you speak to when you are feeling low or down?
- Have you heard of these words/terminology?
- Do you know where to access information about keeping well?

10 WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Talk about your feelings — Keep active — Eat well — Take a break

Drink sensibly — Keep in touch — Do something you're good at — Accept who you are

Ask for help — Care for others — Mental Health Foundation — mentalhealth.org.uk

Survey Findings

Question 1 - What do you do to keep yourself feeling happy?

Top answer - 33% of Young people answered **spend time with family & friends**

What do you do to keep yourself feeling happy?

Answer	Count
Other	2
sleep	2
Music	5
Talk	1
Eat	8
Walks	1
Watch TV/Play Computer games	4
Sports	3
Spend time with family & friends	13
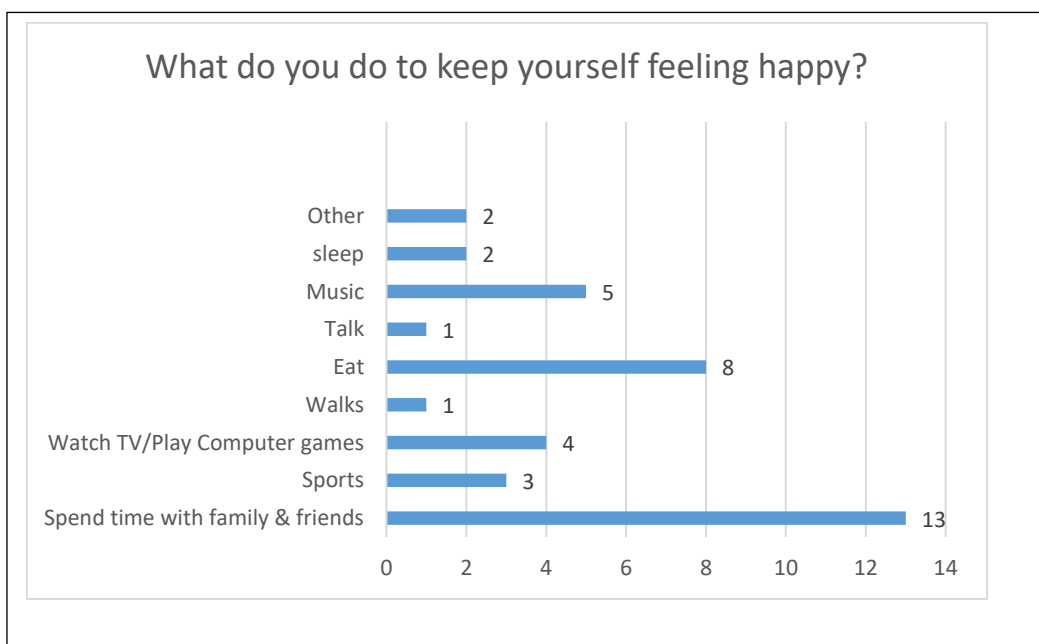
Question 2 - What do you do to keep yourself well?
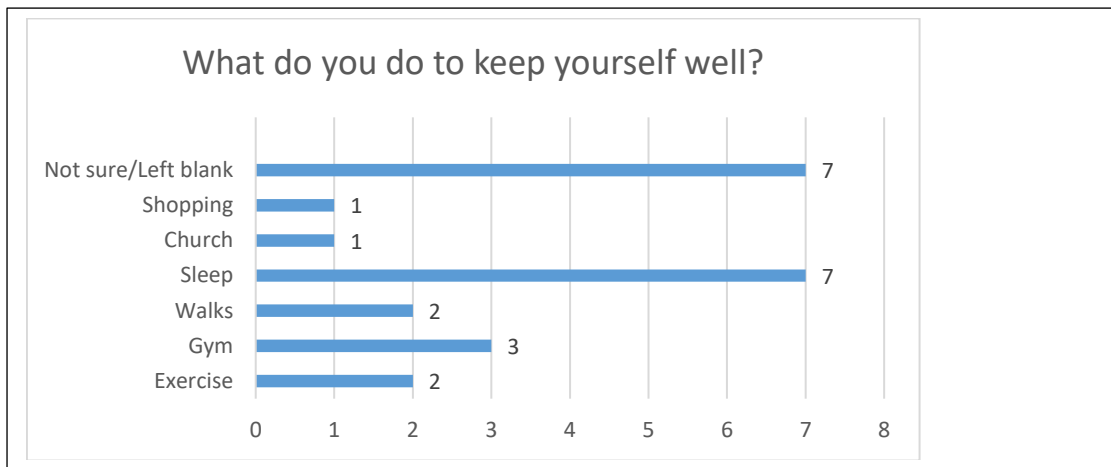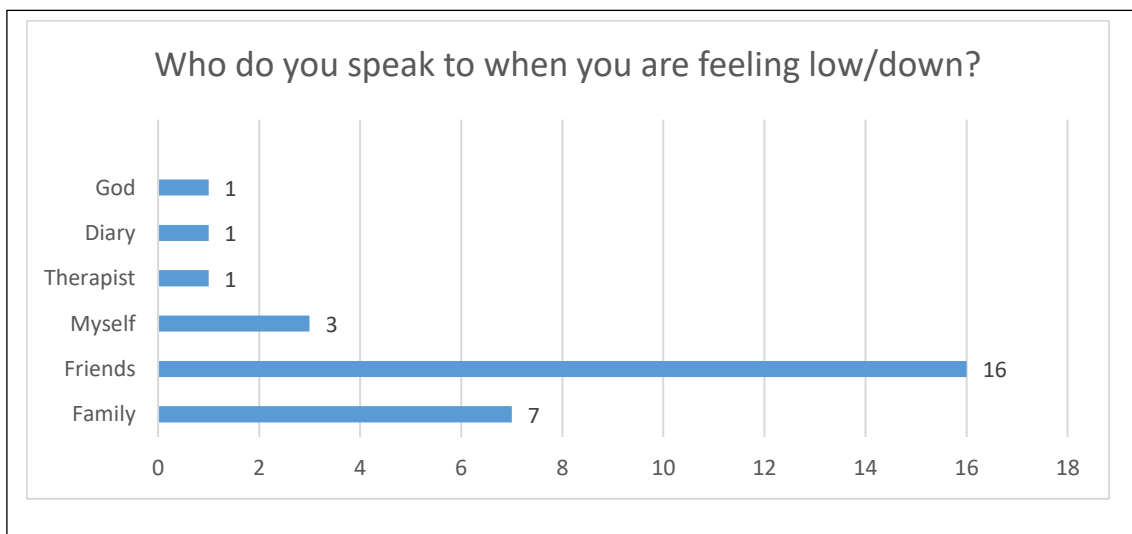
Top answer – 31% of Young people answered **Sleep**

What do you do to keep yourself well?

Category	Value
Not sure/Left blank	7
Shopping	1
Church	1
Sleep	7
Walks	2
Gym	3
Exercise	2

Question 3 - Who do you speak to when you are feeling low/down?

Top answer - 55% of Young people answered **Friends**

Who do you speak to when you are feeling low/down?

Category	Value
God	1
Diary	1
Therapist	1
Myself	3
Friends	16
Family	7

Question 4 – I have herd of the following words/terminology–

Only 10% of young people had heard the term CAMHS

I have heard of the following words/terminology

Category	Value
Child Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS)	6
Looking after your mind	14
Mental Ill Health	20
Mental Health	22
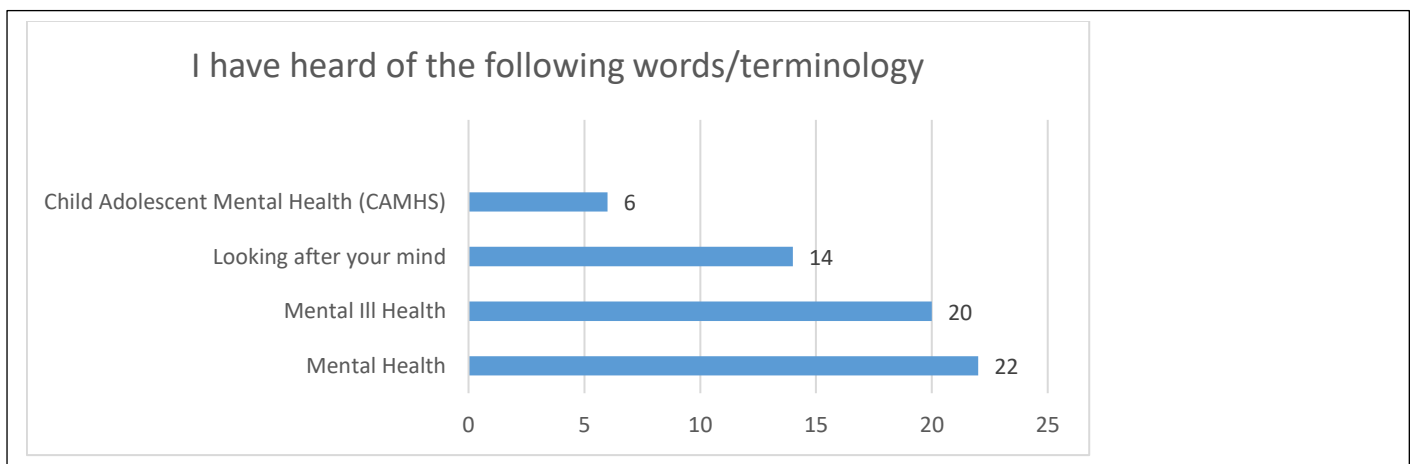
Question 5 Do you know where to access information about keeping well?
55% of people answered – Yes
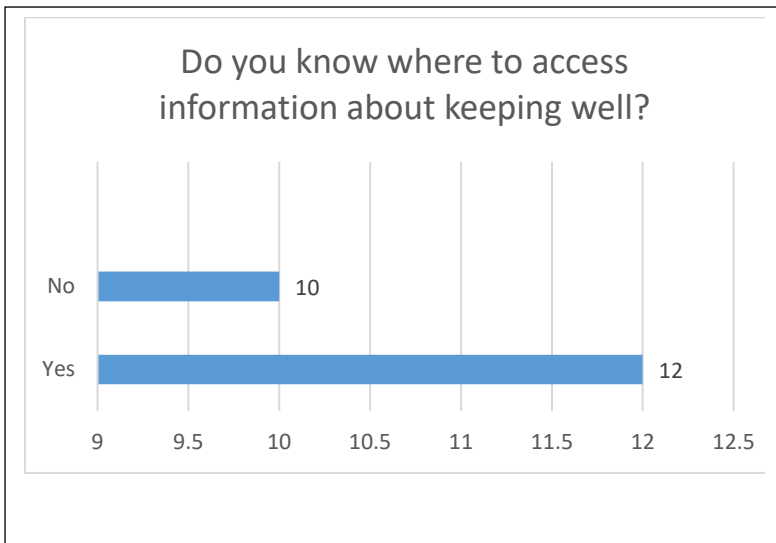
Do you know where to access information about keeping well?

No	10
Yes	12

(Axis: 9, 9.5, 10, 10.5, 11, 11.5, 12, 12.5)

Where people completed the questionnaire with a member of the Healthwatch team and answered no – we signposted people to GP, NHS Choices website , schools and local youth service.

Question 6 – My age is….

The age range of young people completing the questionnaire was 12 – 21 Years -
25% of people who completed the questionnaire was aged 16

Comments from young people who spoke to the Healthwatch team

- Everyone is stressed today because it is exam time
- *You have to appreciate what you have, I pray, spend time with those close to me and remove negative people*
- To keep well I do hobbies that I enjoy
- *I am just always happy*
- Drinking makes me happy
- *More needs to be done in schools around mental health it shouldn't be just done to celebrities to raise awareness*
- Families need help to discuss the issue with their young people
- Exams are so stressful
- *I hadn't heard about Kooth before; im gonna let my friend know – thank you.*

Mental Health Awareness Week Comments Forms

Healthwatch Slough distributed comment forms asking 3 questions:
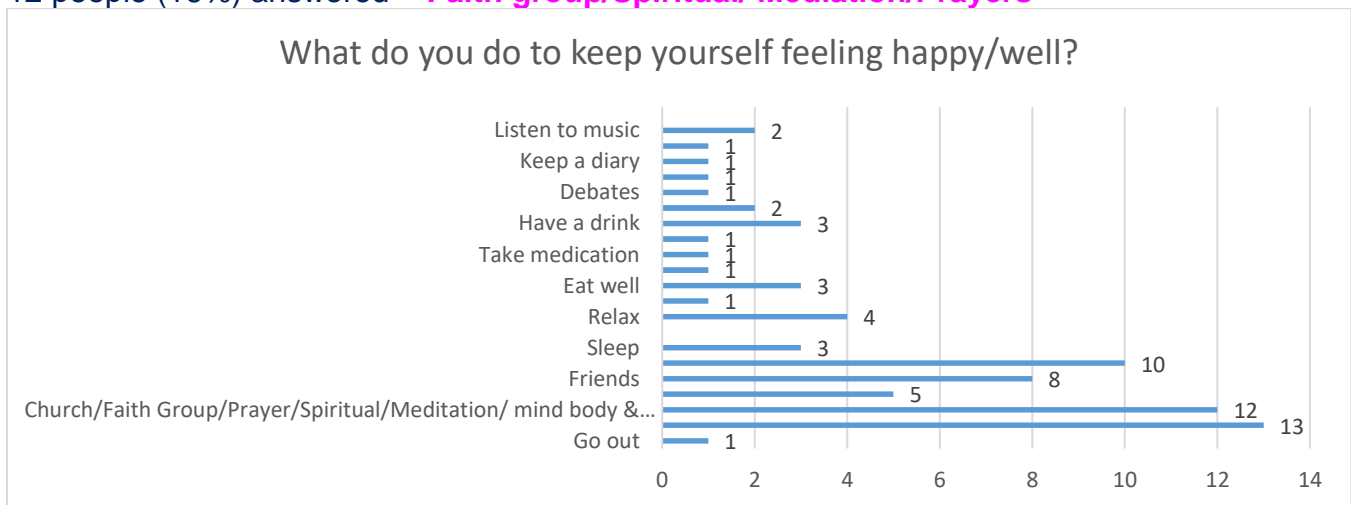
- 🌍 What do you do to keep your mental health well/thriving?
- 🌍 Do you know where to go if you need information on mental health?
- 🌍 What would you like to say about mental health?

Question 1 – What do you do to keep your mental health well/thriving?

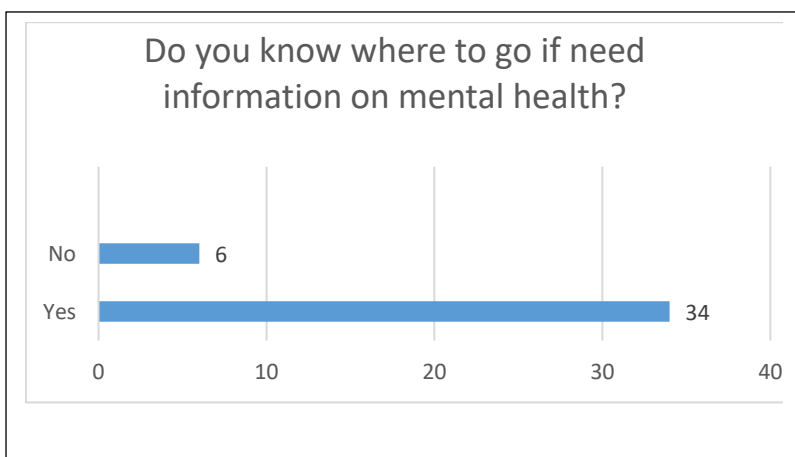100% of people answered this.   Top two responses
13 people (18%) answered – **Gym, exercise, yoga, walks**
12 people (16%) answered = **Faith group/Spiritual/ Mediation/Prayers**

Question 2 – Do you know where to go if you need information on mental health?

85% of people answered YES

Where people completed the questionnaire with a member of the Healthwatch team and answered no – we signposted people to GP, NHS Choices website , schools and local youth service.

Question 3 –What would you like to say about mental health?

If I need help I would……..
- … go to Talking Therapies
- ….go to my GP if I needed help, people should be more aware of how to look after others with mental health
- … go to my GP or ask you Healthwatch for help.
- More promotion on ill mental health.
- For more to be done to support ethnic minority families especially black Caribbean until we are recognised as being different, having different needs from the other ethnic minority groups our problems will only increase. It is important to strengthen the black communities in supporting our families through mental health conditions and information
- When I had my first daughter I had post natal depression, I called NHS online and they helped me. I visited my GP. I also found something to do for myself – I learnt how to drive I can now go anywhere. It is so important to talk to people.

Top Tips to look after your mental health by

Keep Active

- A good way to beat mental health is to learn new skills
- Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and look and feel better.
- Even walking the dog gives you a reason to get up and out of bed each morning

Talk about your feelings

- Talking about your feelings can help you feel less alone
- Sharing how you feel can create some "head space"
- We all have ups and downs in life. Know your boundaries and stress triggers and seek help when you need it

Take a break

- Take some "me time"
- A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health.
- Take 5 minutes a day for myself and watch a tv programme.
- Sleep, relax, watch films and colour – this will keep you well
- Try yoga or meditation or mindfulness, or just putting your feet up.

Do something you are good at

- Doing an activity you enjoy can help improve mood and self esteem
- Concentrate on a hobby or interest like gardening or music, it can help you forgot your worries for a while

Keep in touch

- It Is important to talk to family and friends
- Let people know more about mental health and how to identify it
- I keep a diary and write messages, I speak to myself and family members, I listen to the radio, I do not read the newspapers or listen to the news as I find it overwhelming
- Its important to monitor yourself for self happiness as it can affect so many individuals.

Eat Well

- What we eat effects how we feel, think and behave. Eating healthily will help.
- Try to limit how many high-caffeine, sugary drinks and portions of processed food you have.
- It is of utmost importance to maintain physical health, to keep body and mind in unison

Drink Sensibly

- Alcohol is a depressant and can lower our mood
- When the drink wears off, you feel worse because of the way the alcohol has affected your brain and the rest of your body.

Ask for Help

- If things are getting too much for you and you feel you cannot cope, ask for help. .
- If you are concerned that you are developing a mental health problem you should seek the advice and support of your GP as a matter of priority.
- Healthwatch can signpost you to local services
- Download an app (such as Appyness) to log and monitor your mood

Some of the comments we received during the week were

I would like to highlight that……
- It would be good if information was available with experience shared of when people have described their mental health state
- They need to go into schools more and let young people know how to access information
- There should be more facilities in Slough, like a centre where you can go to regularly and know you are safe and understood
- Mental health professionals need to come out into the community more

I'm fine ……..
- I don't understand why people get depressed, it's alien to me. I think we can just get on with life and not get mentally ill.
- Mine is good. On a wider scale more public information is required.

Stigmas and fears……
- I'd avoid anything available on the NHS as too many stigmas attached by professionals
- I have an image from the olden days, where they used to lock people up.
- You need to get people out in the community but this brings up fear from local people

Feeling sad and low….
- Mental health is a very sad thing it can make you so lonely and isolated
- More information should be available. I often feel low and don't want to visit the GP to be judged and I have to hold it together for everyone so cant tell friends or family so I just have to ignore how sad and low I feel at times
- I think that anyone can get ill under the right circumstances. I used to think that I was strong and was shocked when my doctor diagnosed me with anxiety and depression

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