

Evaluation Report 2023

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Mental health at third level.

Students who responded to the USI National Report on Student Mental Health in Third Level Education [2019], reported feeling experiencing extremely severe levels of anxiety (38.4%), depression (29.9%) and stress (17.3%).

Impact on Higher Education participants

As well as an increase in the number of students who formally declare a mental health condition to their HEI, there are a high number who have self-reported mental distress. While not always meeting the threshold for mental illness, the distress is likely to have a significant effect on their ability to thrive both academically and personally and lead to an increase of demand for services including the counselling services.

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Method of Evaluation

5 Criteria

- Effectiveness
- Relevance
- Coherence
- Efficiency
- Added value

Expected Outcomes

- Improvements in young peoples' mental and physical health, wellbeing, and fitness levels.
- Build social connections through team building and fun group activities.
- Develop a best practice model that can be replicated in other organisations.
- Provide young people with the skills to manage stress: psychoeducation, relaxation, mindfulness, physical activity and education on the link between physical and mental health.
- Increase young people's motivation and confidence to engage in regular physical activity.
- Integrate young people who traditionally struggle to participate in sport and physical activity.

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6 Intellectual Outputs

- Pedagogical Guidelines (O1);
- Design and development of APP and data collection, including manual for training the trainers (O2);
- Pre & post assessment survey (O3);
- MBB Programme implementation (O4);
- A Handbook and Toolkit that gathers all the information generated in the project and serves for its replicability in other institutions (O5);
- An Evaluation report of programme (O6)

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Partners

1. Trinity Sport, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (Project lead)
2. National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), Ireland
3. University of Stirling, Scotland
4. University of Limerick, Ireland
5. Universidade Europeia, Lisboa
6. The Technical University of Munich (TUM)
7. Vilnius University, Lithuania
8. It's Great Out There Coalition, Belgium

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Pre-Surveys

Age

- 69.31% of respondents were aged between 18 and 24. Over 95% of respondents were aged between 18 and 34

Gender

- Over 85% of respondents were female

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Pre-Survey

Learn about program

- 64.18% of respondents reported learning about the program through campus media, social media or student union

Days active in past week

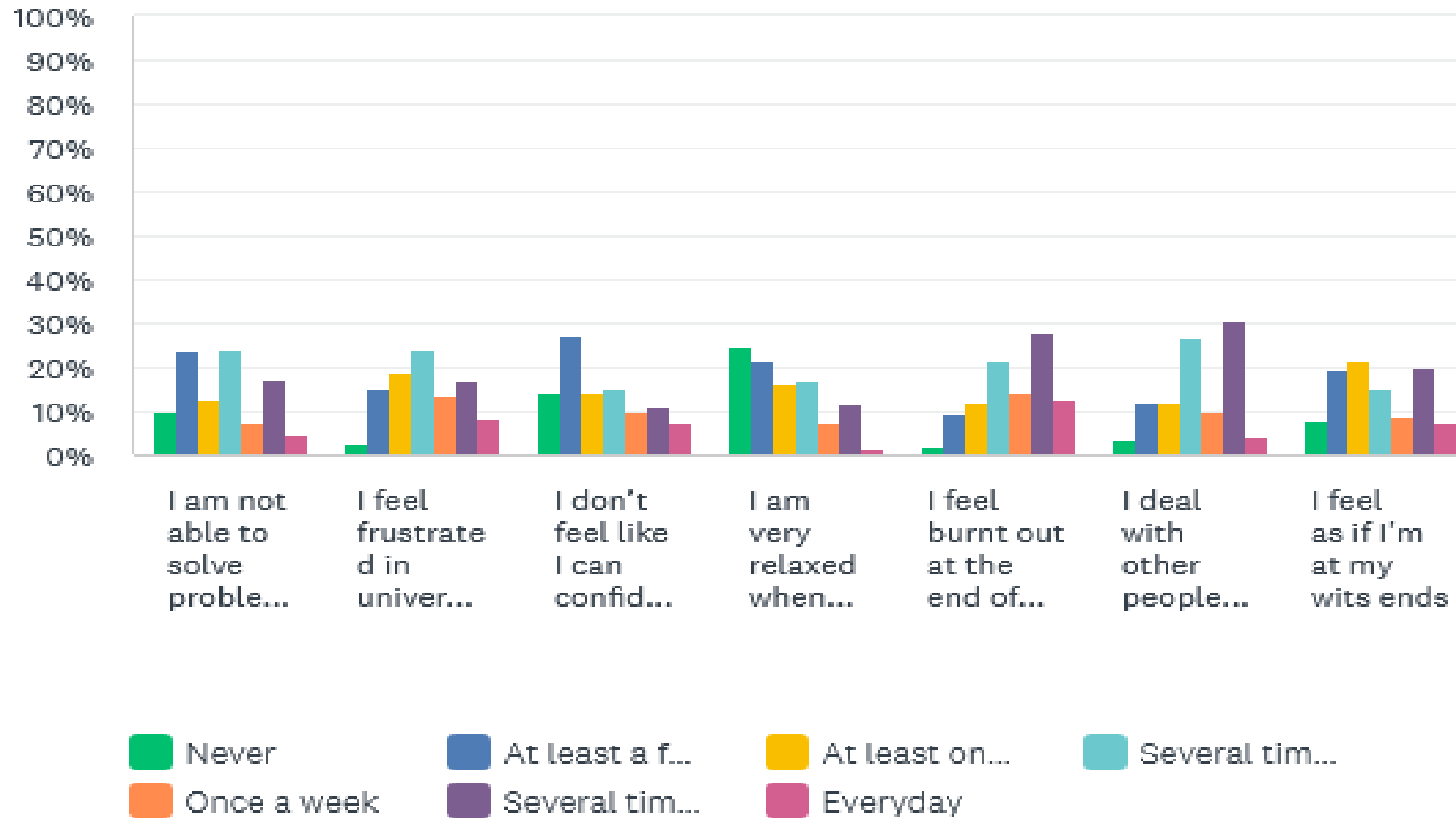
- Only 11.62% of respondents reported being active on 5 or more days in the past week.
12.12% reported not being active on any day in the past week

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How often do you do the following?



How often do you feel the following?



Pre-Survey Significant Stats

- 72.82% of respondents reported feeling at their wits end once a month or more
- 84.1% of students reported feeling overwhelmed by their daily workload at least sometimes in the last week
- 47.18% of respondents reported rarely or never feeling full of energy in the last week, while 52.82% reported feeling full of energy at least sometimes. Only 1.54% reported feeling full of energy every day

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Post Survey

Days active in past week

- 67.61% of respondents reported being active between 2 and 4 days in the last week.
- 12.67% reported being active 5 or more days in the last week, which was a greater percentage than in the pre-program population (11.62%).
- Only 7.04% reported not being active on any day in the last week, which was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (12.12%)

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How often do you do the following?

- 94.37% of respondents reported enjoying exercise at least sometimes. This was a greater percentage than in the pre-program survey (86.29%)
- 43.66% of respondents reported rarely or never exercising with a group (Figure 3). This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (71.07%)
- 87.32% reported walking in nature at least sometimes. This was a greater percentage than in the pre-program survey (78.68%).

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How often do you do the following?

- 61.97% reported rarely or never exercising to meet people. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (82.74%).
- 60.57% reported setting exercise goals at least sometimes. This was a greater percentage than in the pre-program survey (57.87%)
- 52.11% reported rarely or never performing strength training. This was a similar percentage to the pre-program survey (52.28%) (Course Content)
- 43.66% reported rarely or never performing balance exercises (Figure 3). This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (49.75%), however there was no statistically significant difference between the means.

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How often do you feel the following?

- 65.22% reported feeling unable to solve problems related to their studies once a month or more. This was a similar percentage to the pre-program survey (66.16%).
- 67.65% reported feeling frustrated in university once a month or more. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (82.05%)
- 20.28% reported feeling very relaxed when dealing with emotional problems a few times per year or less. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (46.39%).

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How often do you feel the following?

- 50.73% reported feeling unable to confidently handle their degree requirements once a month or more. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (58.46%)
- 39.13% reported feeling burnt out at the end of the day once a week or more. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (54.87%).
- 47.83% reported dealing with other people's problems successfully once a week or more. This was a similar percentage to the pre-program survey (45.13%).....
- 57.97% reported feeling at their wits end once a month or more. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (72.82%).

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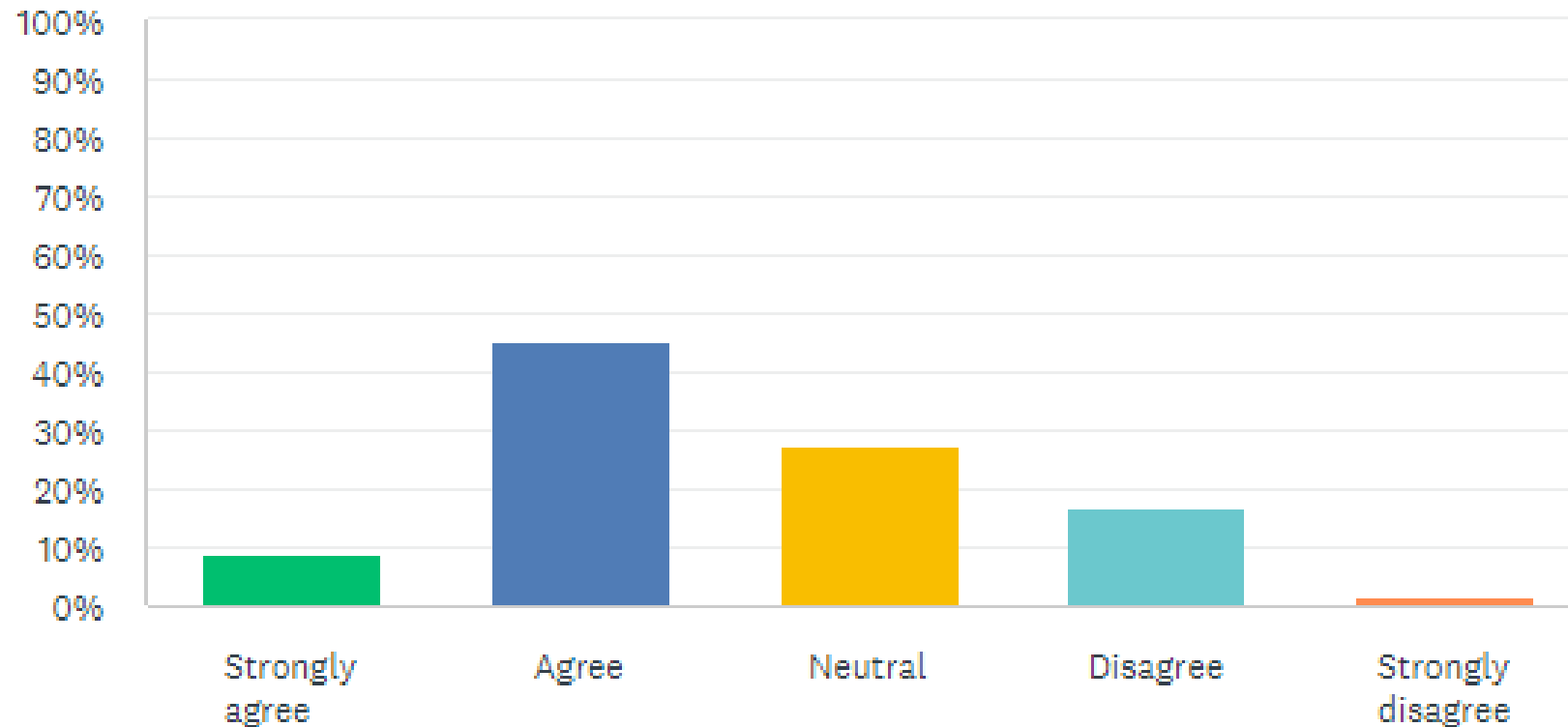
In the last week...

- 33.33% reported rarely or never feeling full of energy in the last week. This was a lower percentage than in the pre-program survey (47.18%).
- 81.16% reported feeling overwhelmed by their daily workload at least sometimes in the last week. This was a similar percentage to the pre-program survey (84.1%).
- 65.22% reported sleeping for at least 7 hours a night often or every day in the last week. This was a greater percentage than in the pre-program survey (51.8%),

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I feel I have enough resilience to deal with the stress levels of my daily life.

54.54% reported strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement, compared to only 18.19% who reported strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. 27.27% were neutral



Findings

- More students reported enjoying exercise, exercising with a group and exercising to meet people in the post-program population than in the pre-program population.
- Less students reported feeling at their wits end and feeling burnt out at the end of the day and more students reported feeling very relaxed when dealing with emotional problems in the post-program population than in the pre-program population.

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Findings

- More students reported practicing self-compassion or treating themselves kindly, watching for sensation in their bodies to understand what they are feeling emotionally and feeling full of energy in the last week in the post-program population than in the pre-program population.
- Most participants responded positively to delivery of the program, with over 90% reporting that the times of the sessions suited them, the sessions were easy to access, the tutors helped them achieve their goals and the program provided adequate support.

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Findings

- Most participants (over 85%) reported that the content delivered was “just right”, rather than being too simple or too advanced.
- Most participants reported a positive experience of the Mind Body Boost program, with over 90% enjoying it often or always and over 75% feeling part of the group often or always.
- Almost 80% reported a change in health behaviours since the beginning of the MBB program.
- On the session feedback form, the average rating given to the sessions was 9/10.

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Student Testimonials

“It was really a game changer. I've wanted to start strenght training and daily stretching for a few years now (!), and finally I got to it !!!! I am sure it is thanks to the program 😊. The dynamic of it inspired me greatly. Also in terms of mental health, I learned a lot about self compassion”

“Checking my stressors and stress levels and using the helpful motivating and calming sentences we discussed instead. Also recognising my body and it's signals more”

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Student Testimonials

“The instructors created a welcoming atmosphere and the group was lovely as well so it was easy to learn a lot but have fun at the same time. It was a safe space where I could feel comfortable and everything including emotions and opinions were allowed. I really enjoyed the relaxed environment, the content that was based on scientific background and studies and especially the group exercises. Additionally, the instructors were also available outside of the problem and could help me with further resources”

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Student Testimonials

“Actually I was positively surprised. I initially thought the programme would be much stricter and more like an official study structure but the welcoming atmosphere made it much more fun, relaxed and enjoyable”.

“It helped me set and meet exercise goals, and it gave some general tools for common problems with emotional wellbeing at university (like mindfulness and self-compassion)”.

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Observations

- APP is an excellent tool to keep a link with students – daily check-ins and daily / weekly tips
- Retention - all institutions showed a minimum drop off of 15-20% - not due to course content more personal (time, academic activity etc)
- Consider a 'buddy system' to encourage attendance – student more likely to come with a friend.
- Self-referral is not straight forward.

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