

Contextualising Mental Health First Aid in Islamic Schools

~A case study

4th Islamic Schooling Conference/Forum
A focus on Social Justice



Acknowledgement of country

2

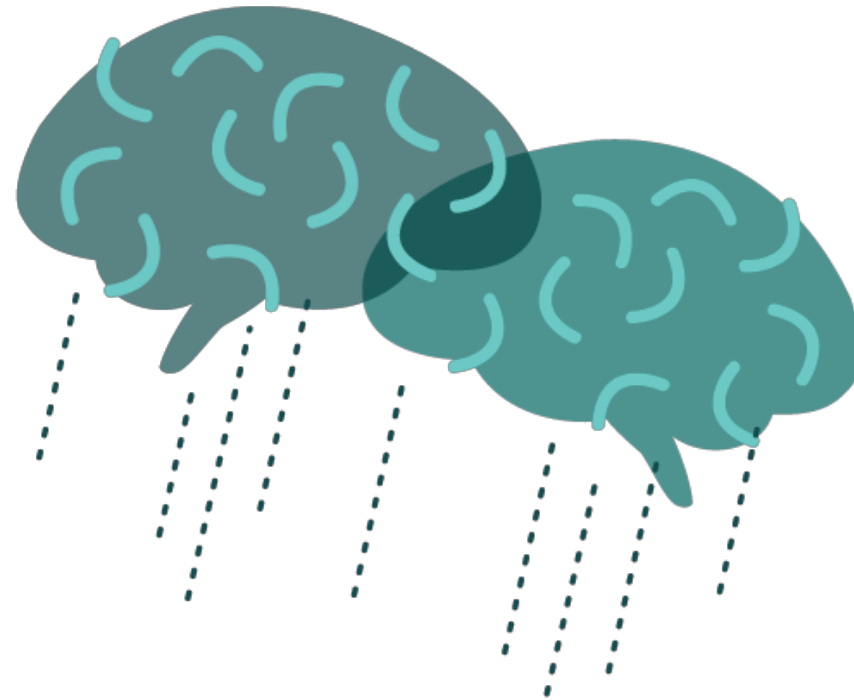


Outline

- What is mental health
- Stigma
- Mental health First Aid
- Research Overview
 - Background
 - Method
 - Findings
- Burden of disease

What is Mental Health?

- **Discuss**
 - *Physical Health*
 - *Mental Health*

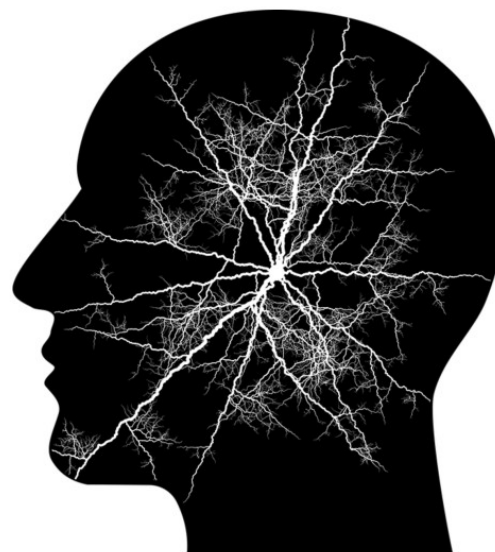


‘Mental Health’

“Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

~ World Health Organisation (2017)

'Stigma'



Ranking – Top 4 groups of people discriminated against	Strongly agree (8–10)
People who don't speak English	43%
Indigenous Australians	39%
People who are overweight or obese	37%
People who are gay, lesbian or bisexual	32%

Discrimination on the basis of mental illness	
People who are suffering from schizophrenia	29%
People who are suffering from depression	18%
People who are suffering from anxiety	32%

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/docs/default-source/research-project-files/bl1337-report---tns-discrimination-against-indigenous-australians.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



“Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years”

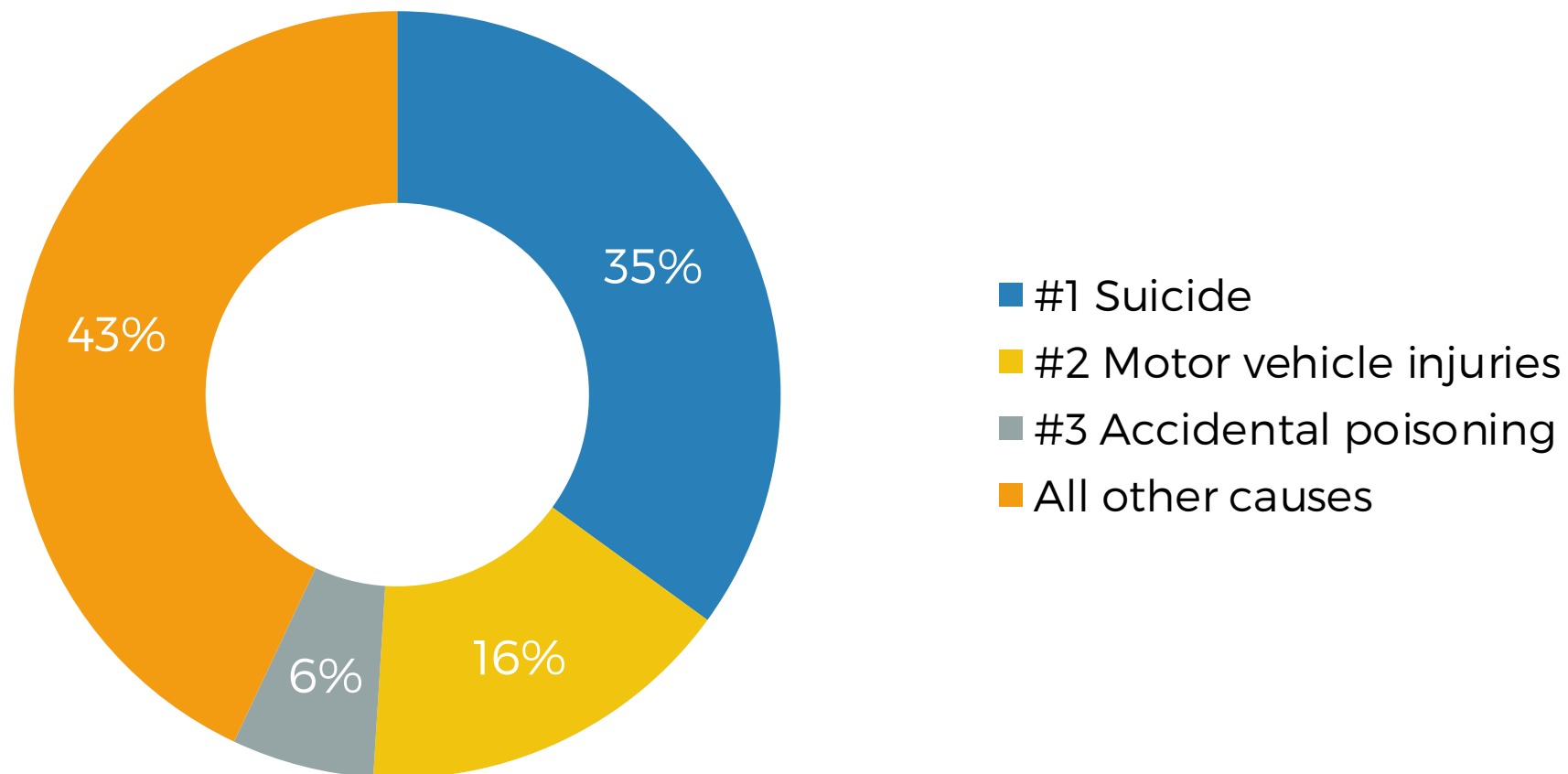
~ Author Unknown

Median age of onset mental illness

Type of illness	Median age of onset
Anxiety	15 years
Anorexia or bulimia nervosa	18 years
Substance use problems	18 years
Depression	25 years
Any disorder	18 years

Causes of death in 15-24 year olds

(Australia, 2016)



Barriers to help-seeking

- Feeling too embarrassed or shy 26%
- Afraid the person may think badly of them 10%
- “I don’t know” 43%
- Other barriers (< 5%) include cost, concerns about what others will think about help-seeking, and thinking that nothing can help.

What is MHFA?

“Mental health first aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis”

Why MHFA?

- Mental health problems are common
- Many people are not well informed
- Many do not seek help
- High level of stigma and discrimination
- May not realise that they need help or that effective help is available
- Professional help is not always immediately available
- The helper's actions may determine how quickly the person gets help or recovers
- MHFA has resulted in better knowledge, attitudes and help-giving

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

(ALGEE)

A

pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis

L

isten and communicate non-judgmentally

G

ive support and information

E

ncourage the person to get appropriate professional help

E

ncourage other supports



MHFA Manuals

2.1 Depression in Young People



Blue
"This work shows how I have spent many days, particularly in my middle to late teens - curled up and crying. The colours represent my emotion during these times." **Kiri Smith**

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Section 3



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SECTION I

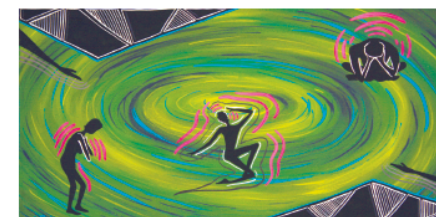
Introduction to Mental Health Problems and Mental Health First Aid



3 Faces
By Catherine Brennan
"The 3 Faces or masks are really one person. The middle face is the face which the world sees, but behind this face is a person who hears voices, often these voices are angry, irrational voices (right face). The third face is another side which the world does not see. It is a face of sadness, a "blue" face of a depressive nature."

1

2.2 Anxiety



A whirlpool of dizziness and stress can touch our bodies.
Frequent chest pains to headaches are a reaction of anxiety.
Diagonal lines in a traditional form, signifies a person not at ease.
Elders arms reach out to try and help these tormented souls.

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Contextualising MHFA in Islamic Schools:

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(RESEARCH)

- Youth Mental Health First Aid (for Teachers)
 - 17 teachers
- Teen Mental Health First Aid (for Students)
 - 12 students

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



Method

- 17 teachers: 14-hour Youth MHFA course
 - 13 completed pre-surveys only
 - 4 completed both pre and post-surveys

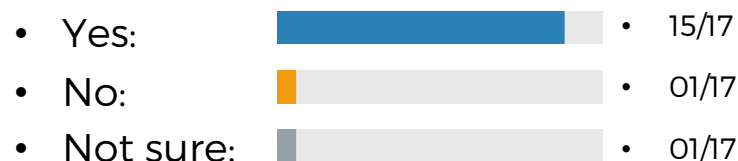




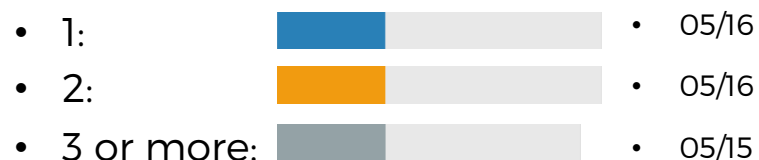
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Prevalence and assistance given

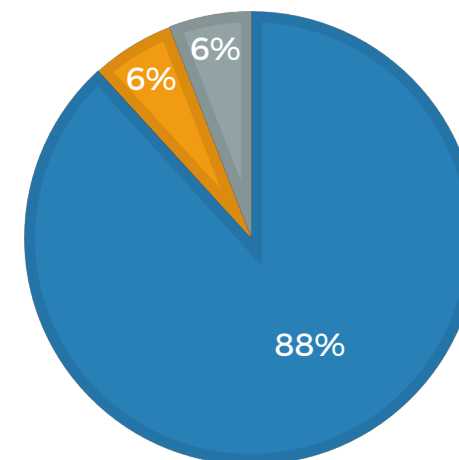
- In the last 12 months, have you had any contact with someone who has experienced a mental health problem or crisis?



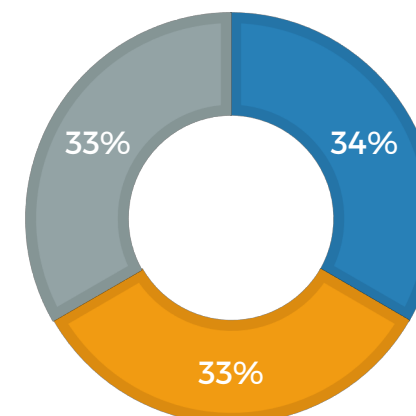
- From those 15 people who answered yes and then went on to answer, "How many people have you helped through a mental health problem or crisis?"



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



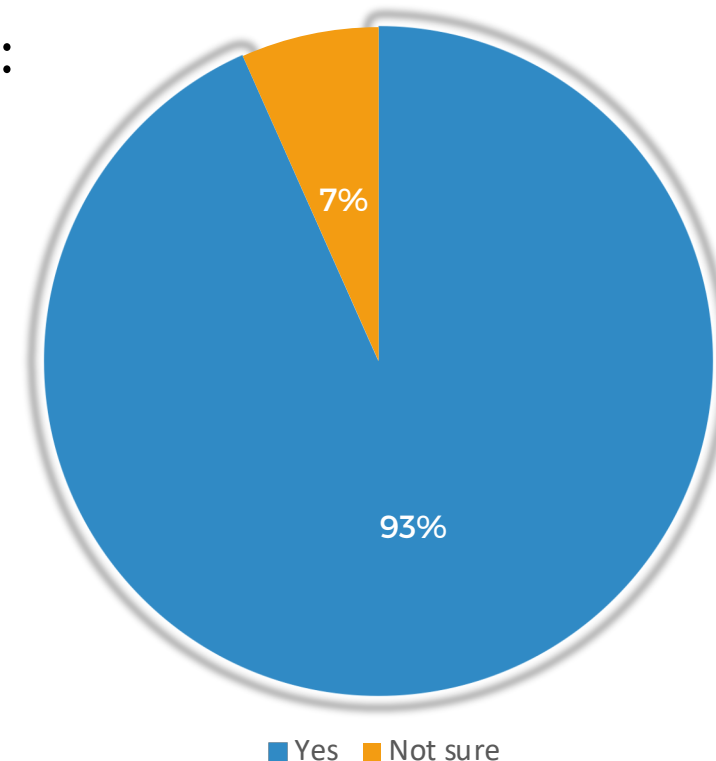
■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 or more



1. Prevalence and assistance given

- Did you offer the person any help:

- Not sure: 01/15
- Yes: 14/15



2. Confidence in assisting

(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

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(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-

2. Confidence in assisting

(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1

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I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1
<i>Asking someone whether they are having thoughts of suicide.</i>	4	-	7	1	1

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<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1
<i>Asking someone whether they are having thoughts of suicide.</i>	4	-	7	1	1
<i>Listening to and interact with a person without expressing judgement about their situation.</i>	1	-	3	4	5

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(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1
<i>Asking someone whether they are having thoughts of suicide.</i>	4	-	7	1	1
<i>Listening to and interact with a person without expressing judgement about their situation.</i>	1	-	3	4	5
<i>Offering a person information and support about their mental health problems.</i>	3	1	5	3	1

2. Confidence in assisting

(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1
<i>Asking someone whether they are having thoughts of suicide.</i>	4	-	7	1	1
<i>Listening to and interact with a person without expressing judgement about their situation.</i>	1	-	3	4	5
<i>Offering a person information and support about their mental health problems.</i>	3	1	5	3	1
<i>Encouraging a person to seek appropriate professional help.</i>	1	1	4	6	1

2. Confidence in assisting

(13 participants; 1 school)

I am confident in:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Recognising the signs that someone may be developing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis.</i>	1	2	7	3	-
<i>Approaching someone who I think may be experiencing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.</i>	2	2	5	3	1
<i>Asking someone whether they are having thoughts of suicide.</i>	4	-	7	1	1
<i>Listening to and interact with a person without expressing judgement about their situation.</i>	1	-	3	4	5
<i>Offering a person information and support about their mental health problems.</i>	3	1	5	3	1
<i>Encouraging a person to seek appropriate professional help.</i>	1	1	4	6	1
<i>Recognising and correcting other peoples' misconceptions about mental health problems.</i>	2	2	5	4	-

3. What teachers were hoping to get out of the course

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*“**Better understanding** of different types of mental health issues”*

*“**How to deal with different situations** and be able to help those who suffer from the illness”*

*“**Learn about signs of mental illness**, and learn **strategies** to help someone experiencing mental illness.”*

*“Understand the nature of mental health issues and better **equip ourselves as Teachers...**”*

*“**Guidance** to assisting the youth in their battles with mental health issues”*

“More knowledge about mental health, strategies, identification importance”

*“**Information** about various mental health issues and how i can provide some assistance to these people”*

*“**Techniques and strategies** on when to listen help or act upon a problem”*

*“Understand **how to talk to people experiencing suicidal thoughts**”*

*“A better understanding of mental health problems and to be able to **recognise them in young people**”*

*“Know how to **handle** people with mental health issues”*

*“I would like to get **more confident** in recognizing the symptoms of mental health and how to ...**recognize suicidal tendencies**”*

*“Being able **to better deal with a person experiencing a mental health problem or crisis**. Understand the support and help available from external agencies for youth at risk”*

*“How **to identify the many different mental health problems** and to respond using a proven **methodology** to support and respond to their needs”*

*“More **insight** on **how to help** my students and teaching team”*

*“Learn to **better recognise** if some needs help and assist them in getting the help they need”*

4. What teachers got out of the course

*"This course has given me **confidence** in approaching someone who might have a mental issue..."*

*"**Confidence** in recognising mental health issues..."*

*"How to **respond** to and **assist** a person who is going through a mental health problem or crisis..."*

*"A clear **framework** and **methodology** in **approaching** and **supporting** people with mental health issues..."*

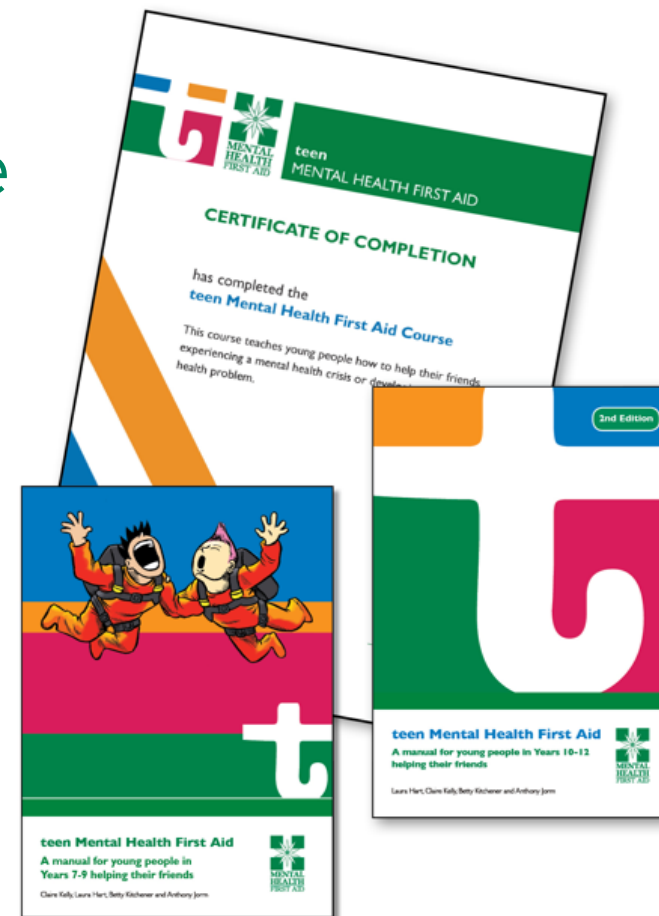
TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



educAID_{Au}
Growing People, Impacting Communities

Method

- 18 teachers: 3.5-hour Teen MHFA course
 - 12 completed pre-survey
 - 10 completed post-survey





RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Scenario

Mohamad is a 15 year old living at home with his parents. He migrated to Australia 2 years ago from the Middle east as a refugee with his family. They fled because their country was unsafe. Mohamad loves Australia but his parents struggle to adapt and are constantly thinking about their family back home.

Since starting at his new school, he has become more then shy then ever and has only made one friend. He would be really embarrassed when he is around others. Although he works well, he barely says a word in class and becomes extremely nervous and trembles, blushes and seems like he might vomit if he has to answer a question or speak in front of the class. Although he is talkative at home, he never answers the home phone and refuses to spend time with his friends. He knows his fears don't make sense but he can not seem to control them and this really upsets him.

1. Mental Health Literacy

BEFORE	AFTER
<i>Mohamad is scared- he may have anxiety</i>	<i>He is anxious and when he is at school, because people might judge him</i>
<i>Not confident about his self, accent. He has an issue communicating about his mental health issue.</i>	<i>he feels left out, doesn't belong, cannot adapt himself to the environment</i>
<i>Too shy and lacks bravery, mostly influenced by his parents their doubt in Australia.</i>	<i>He feels unsafe and not at home</i>
<i>Parents aren't communicative, parents never listen, parents don't think about his perspective</i>	<i>Nervous and has anxiety</i>
<i>Mohamad didn't feel comfortable in his new country, didn't feel confident and was shy</i>	<i>Anxiety and shyness</i>
<i>Not confident, overhtinking everyting, always thinks spotlight is on him and that everyone is trying to get something out of him</i>	<i>Anxiety, Depression</i>
<i>Anti social</i>	<i>He is isolated and doesn't want to know anyone</i>
<i>Anti Social problems</i>	<i>He is isolated and doesn't want to know anyone</i>
<i>Migrated and cant make friends. Maybe because of skin colour or from where he is from.</i>	<i>He migrated and didn't adapt to Australia yet</i>
<i>His migration</i>	<i>Anxiety, paranoid</i>
<i>Might feel depressed that he isn't in his real house or country</i>	

2. Confidence in helping someone in crisis

2. If Mohamad was a friend, I would...

Definitely not

Probably not

Not sure

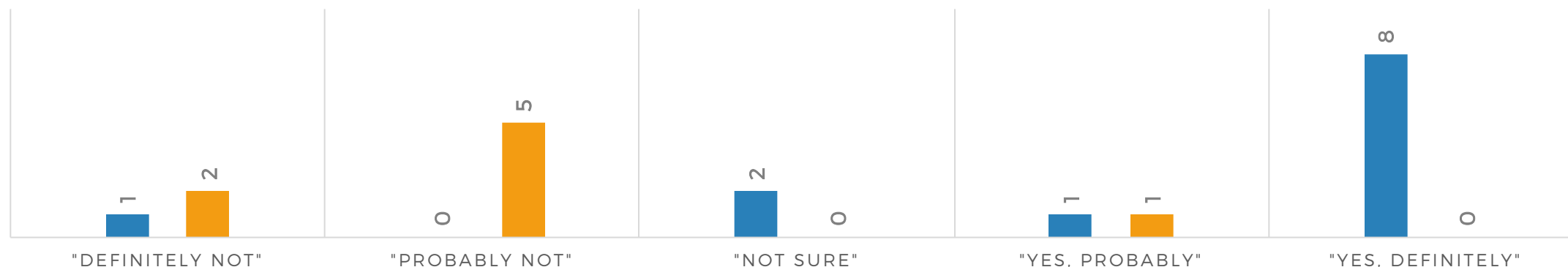
Yes, probably

Yes, definitely

Avoid talking
about suicide,
because it might
put the idea in
his head

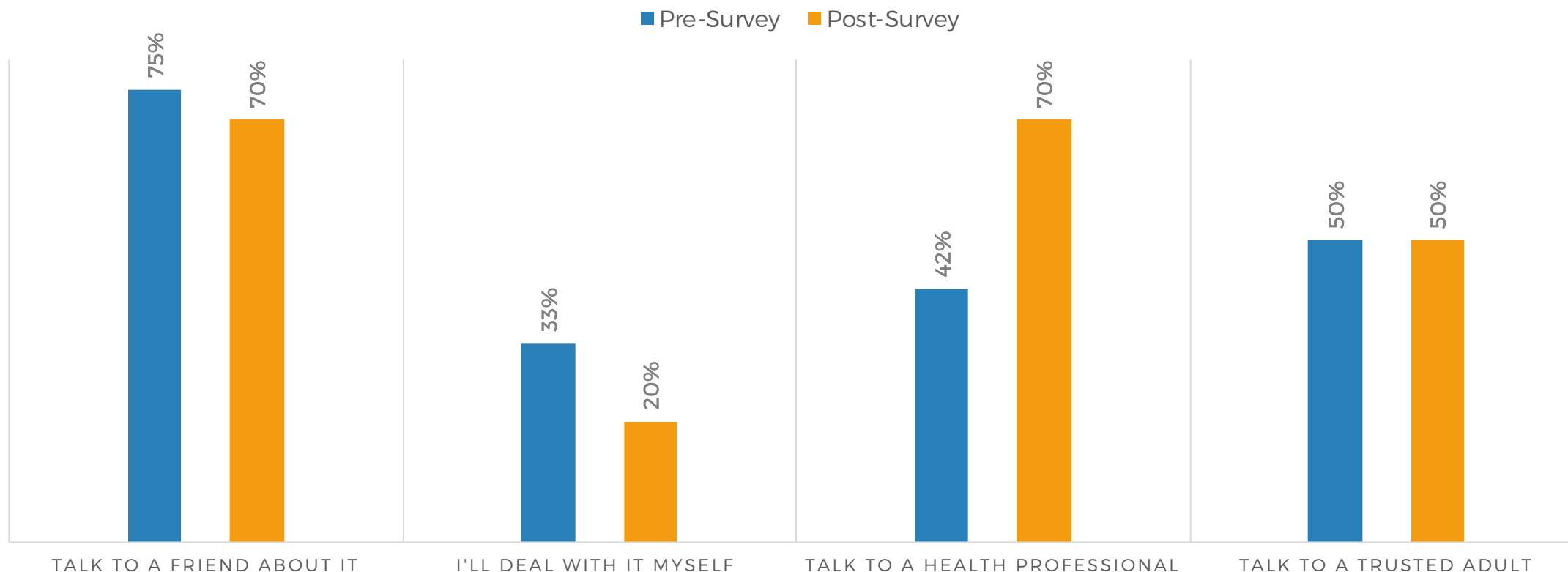


■ Pre-Survey ■ Post-Survey



3. Seeking help during a mental health problem/crisis

IF I HAD A PROBLEM LIKE MOHAMAD, I WOULD...



4. In the last 12 months, have you had any contact with someone aged 12-18 years old who has experienced a Mental health problem or crisis?

- 4/10 had contact with someone who has experienced a mental health problem or crisis in the last 12 months

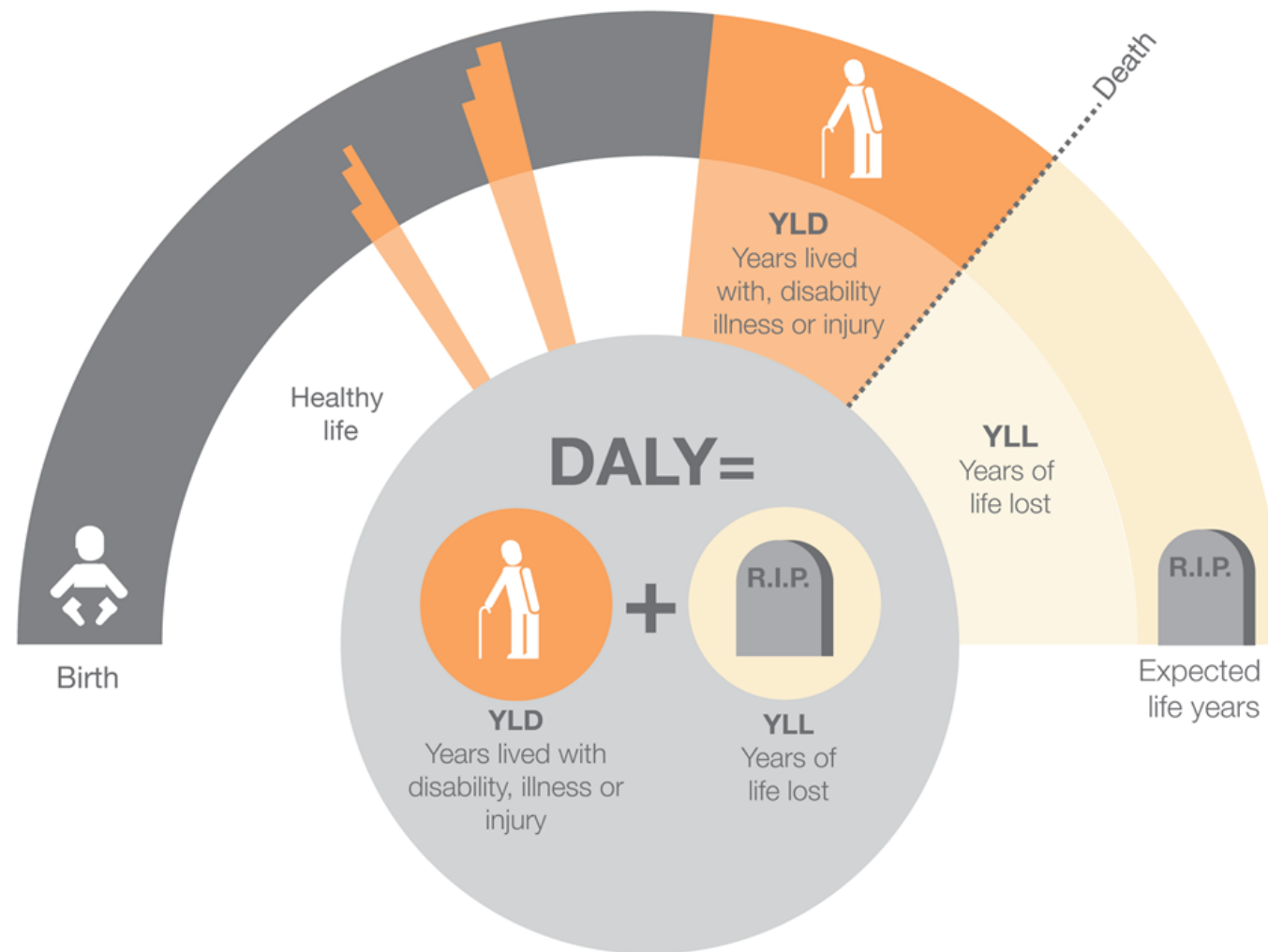


Testimonial Video



Activity: Comparing Mental Illness to Physical Illness





<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2015/09/15/the-burden-of-disease-and-what-it-means-in-england/>

Burden of disease in young people

(aged 15-24 years)

#	Males	Females
1	Suicide and self-inflicted injuries	Anxiety disorders
2	Alcohol use disorders	Depressive disorders
3	Road traffic injuries	Asthma
4	Depressive disorders	Suicide and self-inflicted injuries
5	Asthma	Bipolar disorder
6	Anxiety disorders	Back pain and problems
7	Upper respiratory conditions	Upper respiratory conditions
8	Other musculoskeletal	Polycystic ovarian syndrome
9	Acne	Road traffic injuries
10	Back pain and problems	Alcohol use disorders

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