

Student satisfaction & awareness regarding the Student Wellbeing Services offered by the University of Portsmouth

beneficial
university
depression
mental
anxiety
health
stress
life
awareness
exams
counselling
effectiveness
overwhelming
challenging
well-being
social
therapist
student
services

EVALUATION REPORT



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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Results
4. Analysis
5. Self - reflective discussion
6. Limitations
7. Recommendations
8. Conclusion
9. Appendix
10. References

1. Introduction

The purpose of this project was to investigate whether the Student Wellbeing Service offered by the University of Portsmouth is beneficial to students that encounter mental difficulties such as anxiety and depression. Students may struggle with mental illness in their everyday university life which could be triggered by the uneven balance between the stress encountered and the support received. (1) (2)

This project aims to evaluate the service offered, to highlight good practice and to put forward suggested recommendations to make improvements to the service. In addition, the project also aimed to test students' awareness of the service and discover ways in which the service can reach out to students in a more effective manner.

Moreover, the study was conducted with the support of Healthwatch Portsmouth, which is an independent organisation that aims to involve local people in the improvement of local health and care services. More details about their work can be found at www.healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk.

2. Methodology

An action plan was constructed primarily in order to outline the main steps of the project. (9.1) Two definite aims were set from the inception of the study onwards which were ultimately achieved: test the awareness and measure the effectiveness of the service offered.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information that was being collected and timings of the project different varieties of methodologies were used in order to reach out to students. Initially the primary goal was cooperation with the student wellbeing services, a questionnaire was constructed and by getting into contact with the service it was attempted for them to send out the questionnaires on behalf of Healthwatch.

Unfortunately due to the short timescale for the project and the protocols the wellbeing centre has in place in not using client's contact details for third party research / mailings etc, there needed to be a change in the methodology used. Instead using social media networks Facebook and Twitter and posting links to the questionnaire produced with the help of outside source sharing such as the Students' Union Facebook page. The questionnaire produced was a completely anonymous survey which covers the basic effectiveness and awareness of the service and the students overall thoughts. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 9.2. Using the data, a summary was produced to gain an understanding of how students heard of the service, if they helped with their wellbeing and if they had any overall improvements that they would recommend that the service should go ahead and put forward.

3. Results

The 11 responses obtained over a period of 31 days (See Appendix 9.3) from the online anonymous questionnaires were mixed, most of them leaning towards a positive experience overall. The service seems to have been used mostly by women, with 55% of the respondents being female, 36% male and 9% preferred not to say. The Wellbeing Service also appears to be most commonly used by the younger section of the university, with 73% of the respondents belonging to the age group of 18 to 21, the remaining 27% being over the age of 21. When it came to the year of study when the service had been used, responses were relatively close in percentage, 45% of them being first years and 55% second years.

In order to test the awareness of the service, one of the questions inquired by what means the student had previously heard of the Wellbeing Centre. 45% answered that the university website provided them with useful information, whilst the remaining were made aware by other means such as word of mouth, leaflets etc. A majority 63% of the students felt that the awareness should be improved.

Effectiveness was investigated by asking the students how long the service took to get back to them once they had registered. Responses were fairly split between a few days and within 2 weeks, with a somewhat small percentage stating that they had to wait for over 2 weeks. However, only a small proportion found it too long. We also found that, 80% of the respondents would recommend the service to other students due to different reasons, most of them stating how convenient it is because of its link to the university. In addition, when asked to rate the overall service, 70% of the participants gave it a 3 out of 4, inclining towards a rather positive result.

Out of all the different types of services offered by the Wellbeing Centre, such as E-counselling, workshops, courses, self-help and face to face counselling, the latter seems to be most popular between our respondents, 73% having chosen it.

4. Analysis

Overall the findings seem to confirm that the services themselves are adequate and helpful for the needs of the students, with genuinely good reviews about how it helped the students with the overall university life. Majority of the students whom used the service would also recommend it to peers which points to an overall good experience using the service. However, although seemingly good reviews are portrayed, there also seems to be a few less positive responses. These responses are seemingly linked to the time taken for the service to respond to their needs, with some of the students feeding back about the length of time taken for the wellbeing centre to respond. The responses also seem to lean towards the awareness side of the service needing to be improved. For a service such as this, the awareness is mightily important for catering to student needs. A lot of the students who used the services either found out through word of mouth or the university website and in addition stated that more can be done to improve awareness.

5. Self-reflective discussion

The project was a very useful learning and experience where many skills were trained and developed. Giving a great insight into what designing, planning and conducting a community research project truly entails. It has developed persuasion and negotiation skills, as well as problem solving skills in that when encountering certain impasses. Alternative ideas must come to mind in a timely manner, especially in the case of this project, where time scales were restricted.

Due to the lack of time of the placement gathering sufficient information proved to be rather difficult. Multiple snags and brick walls were encountered during the placement leaving alternative methods to be found at different points of the placement. The timing of the placement also proved difficult because of the summer months, with the placement targeted at students who may live away from Portsmouth, proving difficult to get into contact with these people. If the placement was to be repeated or carried on it would be advisable to contact the student wellbeing centre in advance to say when research was going to be carried out and give them timescales and the findings that want to be found. This will give a greater chance of cooperation of the centre and make it easier to contact the students who have used the service.

The overall placement was a steep learning curve with a lot of different skills and personal improvements. Participating in training programmes gave clear indication of the type of research that is carried out by Healthwatch. Different types of research methods that were used giving knowledge and experience of performing such tasks.

6. Limitations

There were many different limitations during this project. Firstly, the timing of the placement, this made the project difficult to manufacture. Further research would be more effective to undergo during term times. Due to the difficult nature of contacting students, the amount of responses gathered were insufficient to gather a broad understanding of the positives and drawbacks of the service.

This research could be propelled to new heights with small funding, creating the ability to organise focus via hiring out venues, as well as being able to send out a broader range of questions to all students attending the university.

7. Recommendations

Some of the ideas put across from the students include:

- Setting up a stall at Fresher Fayre which would make new students that are just starting at the university aware of the service should they ever need to use it throughout their university life;
- Personal tutors could tell their students of the services in form groups and by advertising it on social media networks which are linked to the university such as the university Facebook page;
- A referral procedure from places such as the university doctors or guildhall walk in so students can know where to go.

8. Conclusion

The initial aims of the project were to evaluate the awareness and effectiveness of the student wellbeing service. Although the amount of responses to the questionnaire was low, the results still indicate that the service is effective for helping students; however more research is needed for definitive opinion.

The wellbeing service offered the chance to research into the wellbeing café; this could a possible avenue of research for Healthwatch Portsmouth to proceed with. Healthwatch Portsmouth can also re-try to gain the cooperation with the Wellbeing service in order to contact the students that have used the service and students who want to use the service. Focus groups and telephone interviews can also be arranged on top of the already made questionnaire in order to gain more information about the service.

9. Appendix

9.1. Action plan:

Awareness and effectiveness of the Student Wellbeing Service

The purpose of this study is to gather the thoughts and opinions of the students that have used the University Wellbeing Service in order to test the effectiveness and accessibility of the service. By using this research a report can then be constructed which analyses the information received and formation of a series of good and bad points and what improvements can be made. This report will then be reviewed by Healthwatch Portsmouth.

<u>Aims</u>	<u>Steps</u>
1. Test awareness of the Student Wellbeing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be achieved through a basic brief questionnaire sent to the students who have used the services, asking how they heard of the service, etc. • Questionnaire will be anonymous, this reassuring students that confidentiality is of the greatest importance. • Questionnaire will also include an optional field to be filled in with the student's contact details (name, email address) for those who would want to expand on their experiences or if they wish to mention any inconveniences encountered. • A participant information sheet will also be provided in order to be sent along with the questionnaire, this will ensure students know exactly what is expected of them, the benefits of contributing, clarifying that it is completely optional as well as the reassurance of confidentiality. • Contact Student Wellbeing Services staff in order to evaluate the methods in which the centre informs the students of their presence. • Contact both Guildhall walk in and the University doctors and ask about their methods of referral to the Student Wellbeing Centre, and if they can make people in these locations more aware. • Use social media (Facebook, Twitter) as a platform for investigating awareness of the service.
2. Ensure effectiveness of the Student Wellbeing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information from questionnaires sent to students, asking students of their overall thoughts and feelings of the service, whether they thought it was beneficial or any complaints they may have about the service. • Organise focus groups/exchange emails with those interested in expanding on their experiences, thus resulting in collecting more significant data. • Get in contact with the Student Wellbeing Services staff such as therapists/counsellors in order to get a broader understanding of the counselling process and to draw stronger conclusions on whether their services can be improved. • Evaluate the data received and outline any improvements.

Time scales of research

- Questionnaire already produced, hoping to be sent out next week, with replies to this questionnaire within a week.
- Any students wanting to give more information and any other queries will be dealt with before the end of July after the original anonymous questionnaires are collated.
- Research data will be analysed and evaluated, with a report published that can be seen by Healthwatch Portsmouth by no later than the end of August.

Outcomes

- Evaluate current and conduct new methods of making students aware of the services offered by the Student Wellbeing Centre.
- By using student experiences as guidance, produce new methods or improvements that can be made to improve the services at the Wellbeing Centre.
- Optimise the Wellbeing Centre capabilities for catering to the needs of students that need to use these services.

9.2 Questionnaire:

Student satisfaction regarding the Student Wellbeing Service

We are looking to raise the awareness and improve the services offered by the Student Wellbeing Centre within the University of Portsmouth. Your anonymous answers will be helpful in enhancing the services and meeting future needs of students contacting the centre and will be used only for study purposes. Thank you for your time and participation.

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

2. What is your age group?

- 18 - 21
- 22 - 25
- Over 26

3. What was the year of study when you used the service?

- First
- Second
- Third
- Postgraduate (e.g. Masters)

4. How did you hear about the Student Wellbeing Service?

- Word of mouth
- Email
- Poster/leaflet
- University website
- Other (please specify)

5. How long did you wait for the Student Wellbeing Service to get back to you once you registered? Did you think the waiting time was too long? (Tick the appropriate boxes)

- A few days
- 1 - 2 weeks
- Longer than 2 weeks
- Yes, it was too long.
- No, it wasn't too long.

6. Which service did you use?

- E-counselling
- Workshops
- Courses
- Self-help
- Face to face counselling

7. Do you think the Student Wellbeing Service should raise their awareness more? If so, how?

- No
- Yes,

8. If you've ever used this type of service before (therapy/counselling), how do you consider the Student Wellbeing Service to be? If never used, skip the question.

Better, because

Worse, because

9. Would you recommend the Student Wellbeing Service to other students? Please give reason for your answer.

Yes, because

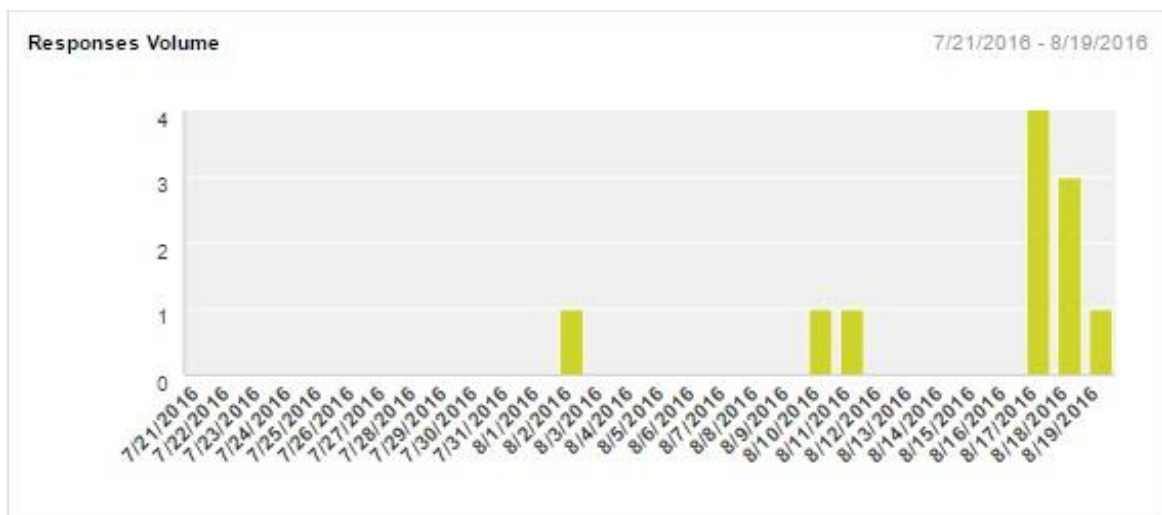
No, because

10. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4, how would you rate your personal experience using the Student Wellbeing Service? Briefly describe overall feelings about your experience.

- 1 (Very poor)
- 2 (Poor)
- 3 (Good)
- 4 (Very good)

Overall Feelings:

9.3 Responses:

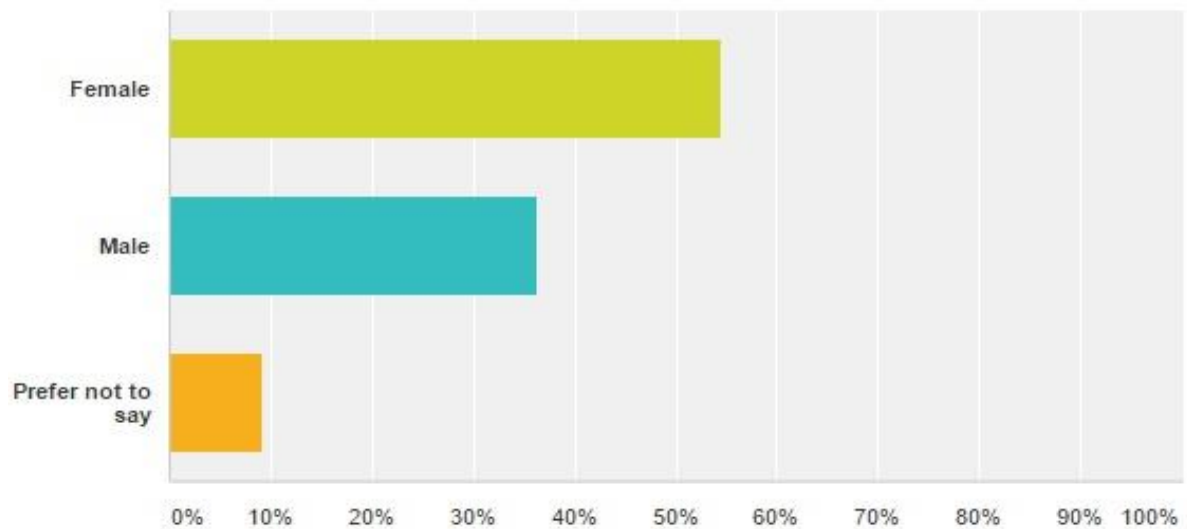


9.4 All results:

Q1:

What is your gender?

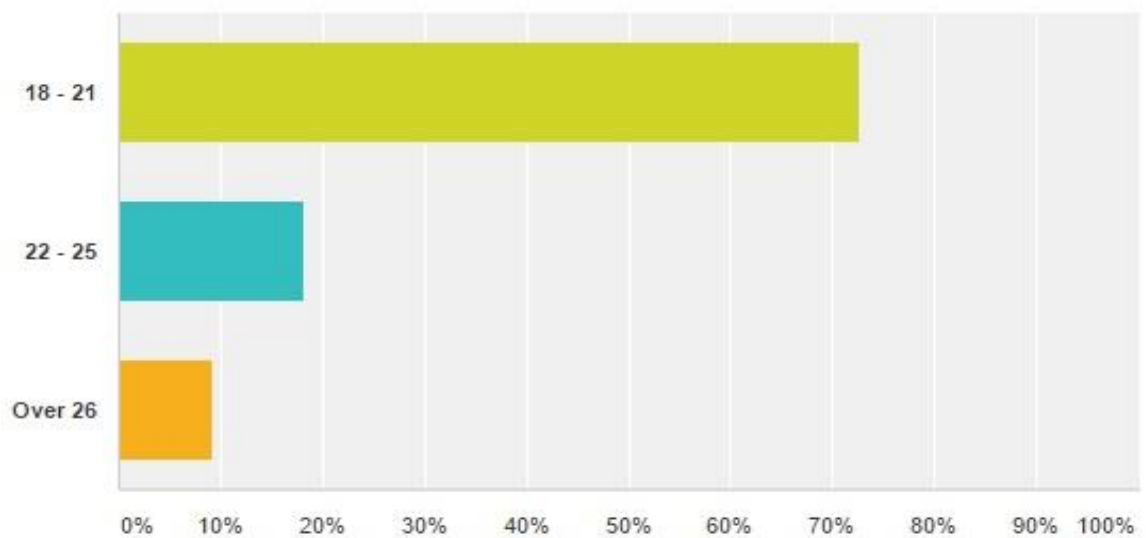
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q2:

What is your age group?

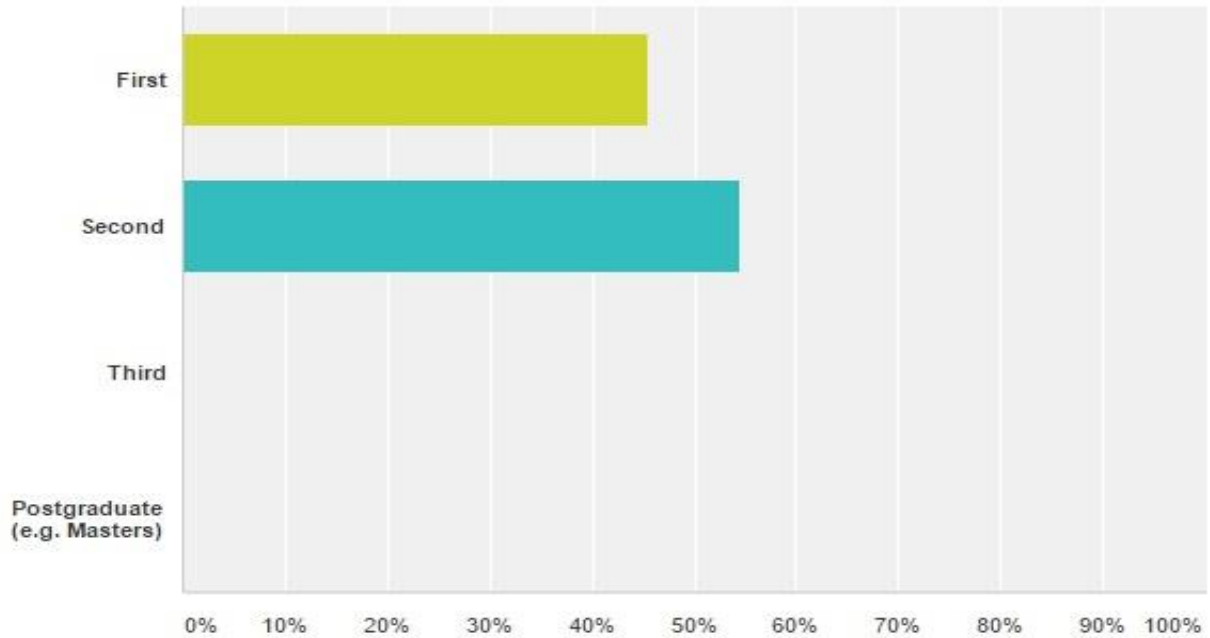
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q3:

What was the year of study when you used the service?

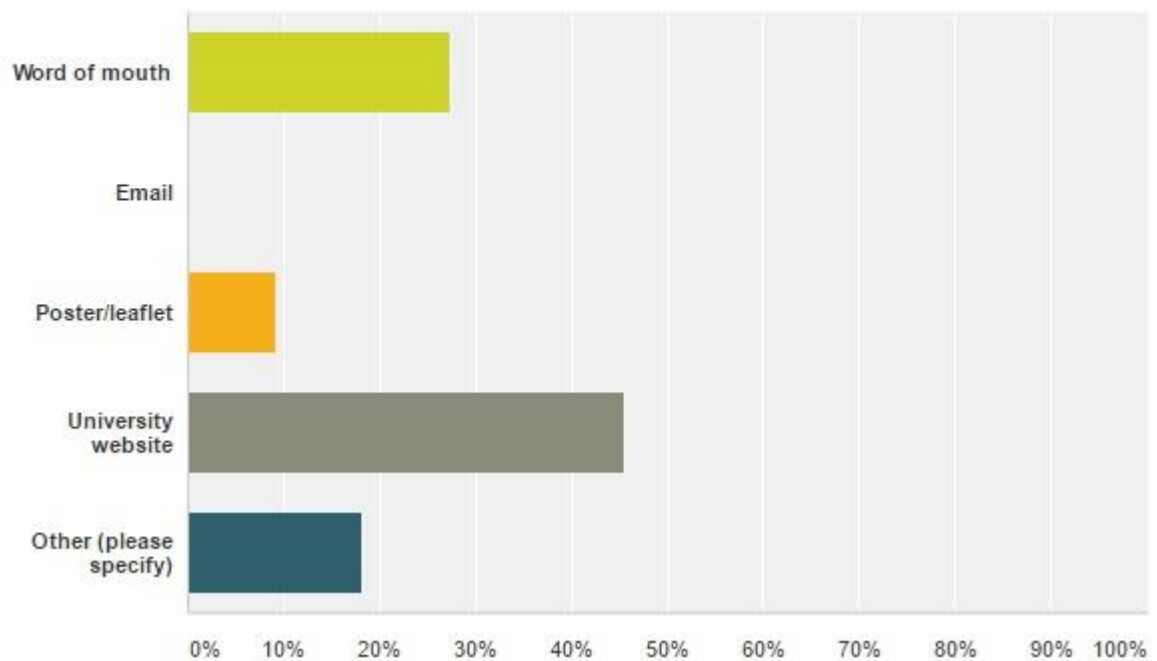
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q4:

How did you hear about the Student Wellbeing Service?

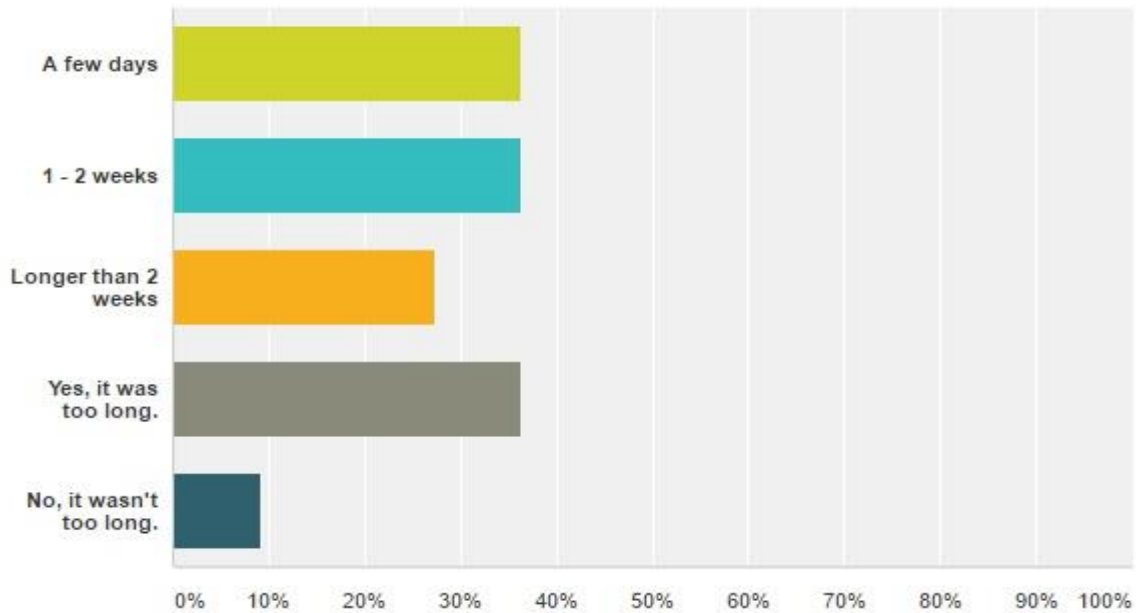
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q5:

How long did you wait for the Student Wellbeing Service to get back to you once you registered? Did you think the waiting time was too long? (Tick the appropriate boxes)

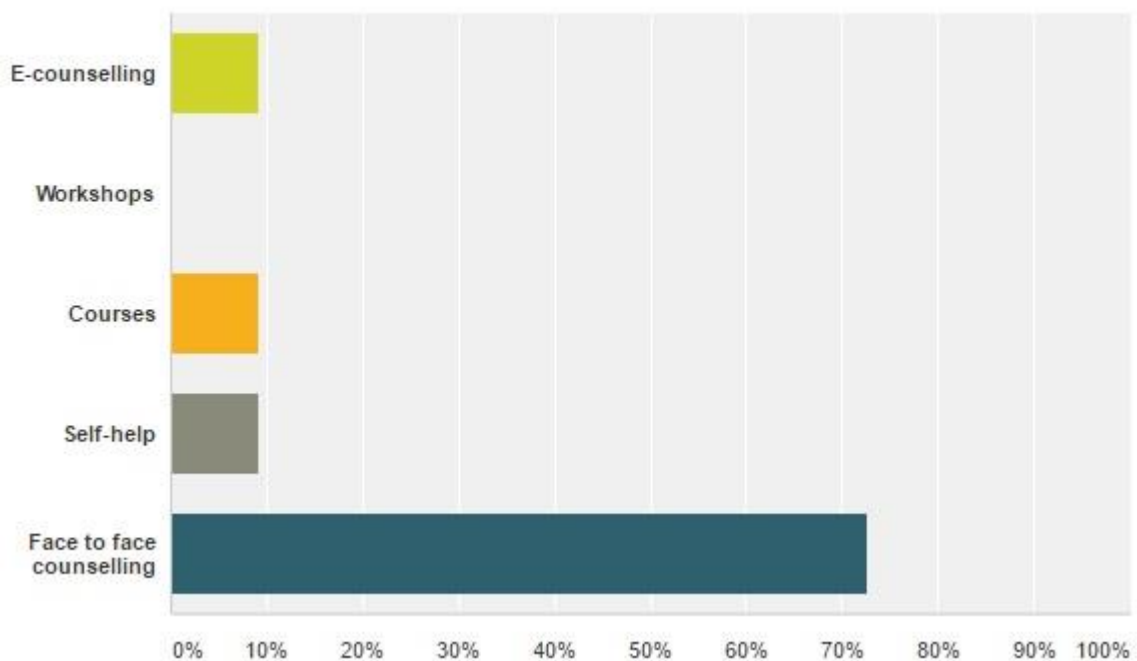
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q6:

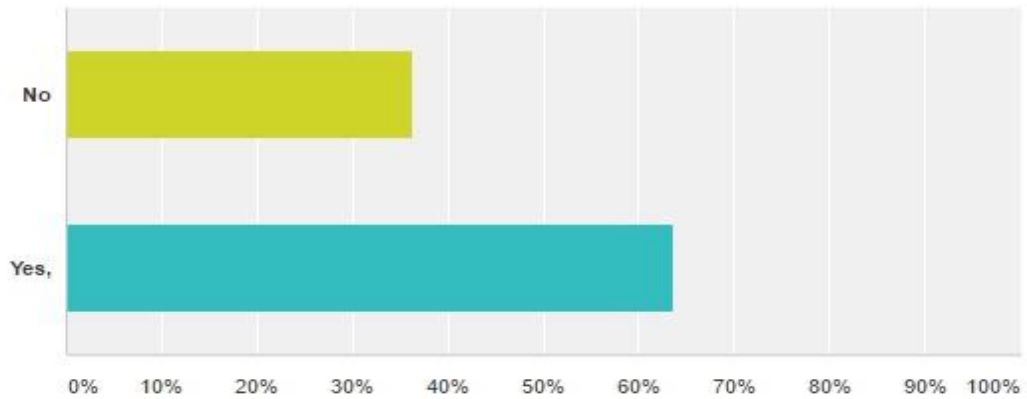
Which service did you use?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Q7: Do you think the Student Wellbeing Service should raise their awareness more? If so, how?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



Comments on how:

Showing 7 responses

- handing out flyers, send emails etc
 8/18/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I had not heard of the services offered by the student wellbeing services until midway through second year, more should be done to target new students so they know what is offered.
 8/18/2016 12:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- More advertisements of their services maybe set up at freshers, or tell personal tutors to recommend their service
 8/17/2016 7:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Send more emails, stand at fresher's fayre etc
 8/17/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Make it more clear that face-to-face counselling is more available
 8/11/2016 2:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Send out emails, give out flyers etc
 8/10/2016 10:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Send out uni-wide emails explaining services available ect

Q8:

If you've ever used this type of service before (therapy/counselling), how do you consider the Student Wellbeing Service to be? If never used, skip the question.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 7

Answer Choices	Responses
Better, because	50.00% 2
Showing 2 responses	
good. 8/18/2016 12:23 PM View respondent's answers	
Link to uni meant better able to offer advice on what to do regarding uni stress/anxiety 8/2/2016 2:40 AM View respondent's answers	
Worse, because	50.00% 2
Showing 2 responses	
although the actual services of the wellbeing service are adequate, the waiting time and getting the chance to use the service should be improved. 8/18/2016 12:02 PM View respondent's answers	
They don't offer enough sessions to fully help students. 8/17/2016 7:20 PM View respondent's answers	

Q9:

Would you recommend the Student Wellbeing Service to other students? Please give reason for your answer.

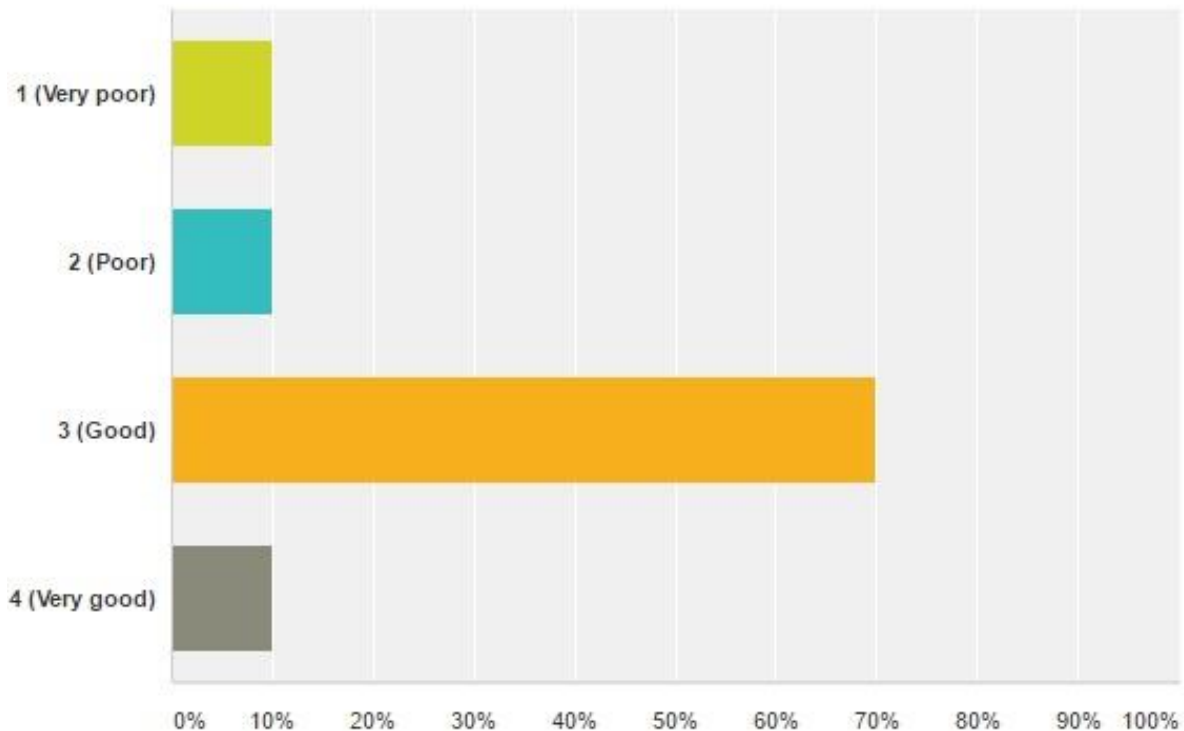
Answered: 10 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	Responses
Yes, because	Responses	80.00% 8
Showing 8 responses		
it was pretty good 8/18/2016 12:23 PM View respondent's answers		
if a student is no [articular rush to use the services offered then going through the university may a good route, however if someone had more deep problems that needed quick management then going private would perhaps be a better option 8/18/2016 12:02 PM View respondent's answers		
It helped me very much so 8/17/2016 7:19 PM View respondent's answers		
Although they were slow in response to my application once I used the service it was very beneficial in my university experience 8/17/2016 7:12 PM View respondent's answers		
It's free 8/17/2016 3:43 PM View respondent's answers		
can be extremely helpful even for students who didn't originally believe that it would be. 8/11/2016 2:54 PM View respondent's answers		
Relatively helpful in dealing with uni inducing stress 8/10/2016 10:54 PM View respondent's answers		
Was very helpful when I was struggling with mental health issues 8/2/2016 2:40 AM View respondent's answers		
No, because	Responses	20.00% 2
Showing 2 responses		
takes too long to attend to needs 8/18/2016 12:07 PM View respondent's answers		
They would be better off going to private counselling as they would be guaranteed more contact time. 8/17/2016 7:20 PM View respondent's answers		

Q10:

Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4, how would you rate your personal experience using the Student Wellbeing Service? Briefly describe overall feelings about your experience.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 1



10. References

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Zivin, Kara et al.

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(2) Help-Seeking and Access to Mental Health Care in a University Student Population

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