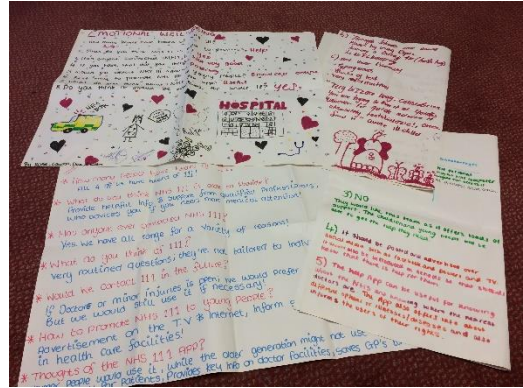




## Focus on Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing

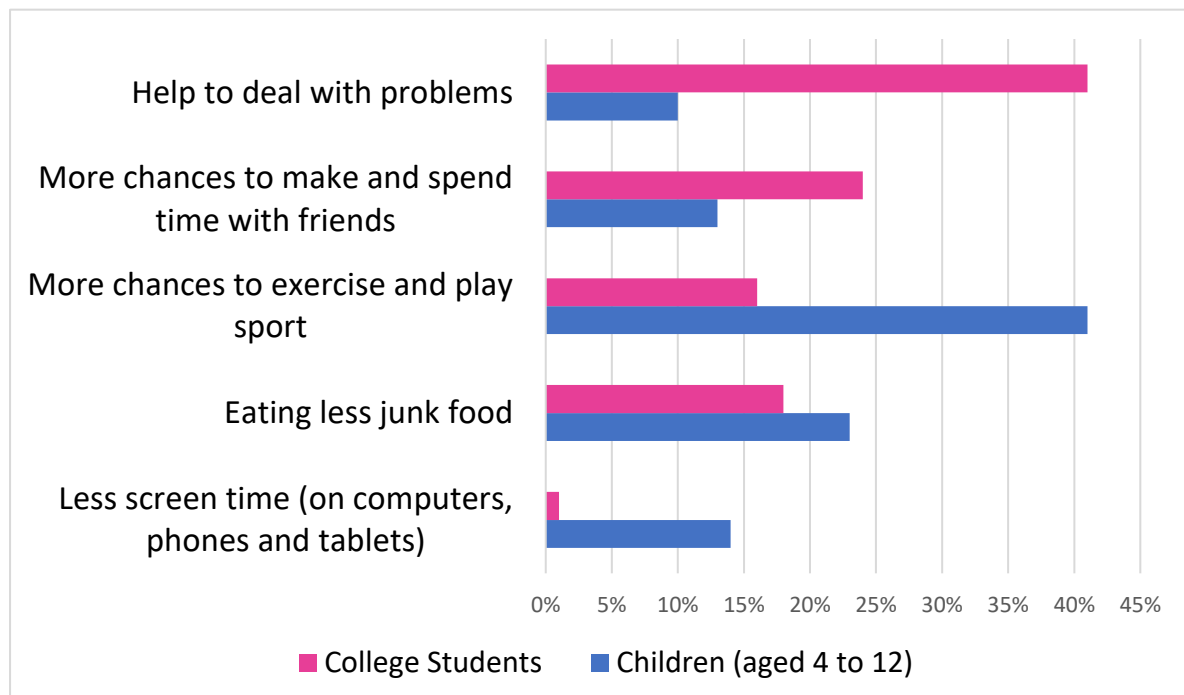


As part of our engagement over the last year Healthwatch Worcestershire has been asking children and young people about emotional wellbeing.

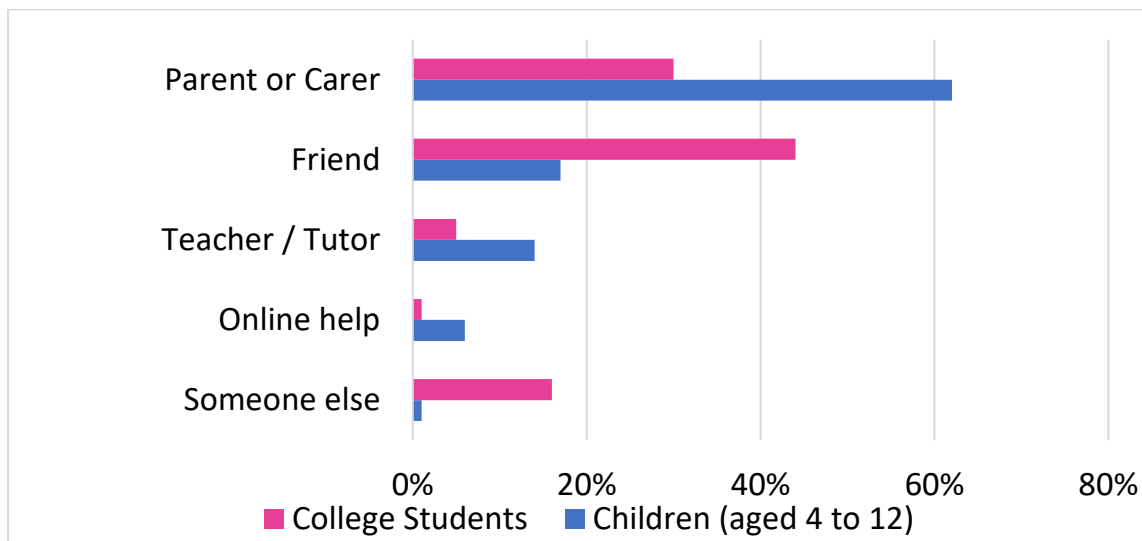
We delivered workshops to 88 Health and Social Care students, between November 2017 and January 2018 at HOW College Redditch, Worcester Sixth Form College, Evesham College, Kidderminster College and Dyson Perrins High School. As part of the workshops, students took part in an interactive quiz and group discussions about emotional wellbeing support.

We also carried out a survey with 78 children who we spoke with their parents and carers at summer engagement events in 2017, including Family Day events organised by Fortis Living.

### What do children and young people think could help them to have a happier and healthier life?



## Who would children and young people talk to if they were worried or had a problem?



### Emotional Wellbeing Support Services

As part of Worcestershire's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, new emotional wellbeing services have been introduced. These include -

- **Kooth** - an online counselling service available for 11 to 19-year olds
- **Reach4Wellbeing** - who run short term group support programmes for 5 to 19-year olds experiencing emotional difficulties, specifically anxiety, low mood and self-harm.

### Kooth

The majority of students had not heard about Kooth. Those from Kidderminster College were the only ones who told us that they had heard about it through the college. Others who knew about Kooth had found out either from family, friends, the internet and in one case as a Young Carer.

Most of the students thought that Kooth would be a valuable service and that young people would welcome the anonymity and accessibility of online support. Some felt that young people would find it easier to open up on line and that it would reduce anxiety about being judged for accessing support and about what is being said.

However, students did express concerns that in some situations online counselling would not give enough support and that more personal face-to-face support would be required. They also felt that it may be difficult to access for people with social and communication difficulties and other disabilities. A number of students also expressed concerns about security of the website and potential for others to access the information.

## Reach4Wellbeing

The majority of students had not heard about Reach4Wellbeing. With the exception of some of the students at Kidderminster College and a Young Carer.

Most of the students thought that Reach4Wellbeing would be a really useful service, as it was increasing the amount of support available in schools before issues became more serious. It would also show children and young people that they were not alone and give them positive ways of dealing with their difficulties. Some students reflected on experiences of their siblings or friends, who they felt may have benefitted from being able to access this kind of support.

Some of the students raised the importance of individuals being able to choose if it was the right kind of support for them. They felt that some teenagers in particular might find group sessions awkward and worry about others knowing they are attending the groups and potential bullying because of this. Another concern raised was having to wait for support while a group was set up.

## Promoting Emotional Wellbeing Support

Some of the students told us they felt that the Healthwatch Worcestershire workshops had been a helpful way of increasing their awareness and understanding of Kooth and Reach4Wellbeing.

In addition to promotion on social media and by health services, they suggested that further promotion around schools and colleges was needed, including -

- Making use of screens, for example in the entrance areas
- Having a dedicated section on website
- Posters on toilet doors, in lunch rooms and corridors outside classrooms
- Information emailed to parents
- Cards given to students

## NHS Go - Mobile App

Students discussed the NHS Go mobile phone and tablet app, currently available in London. NHS Go was developed with young people and aims to provide information for 16 to 24 year olds about health and emotional wellbeing, including mental health, sex, relationships, healthy eating and puberty.

The students on the whole felt that this is a useful App, as it provides information, advice and reassurance in an anonymous way. They felt that it is good to have reliable information, as often young people may use general internet searches, which may not always provide reliable information. They also felt that the information was well set out and the app was easy to use for young people.

They did however feel that in some cases it might not be a good idea for young people to be encouraged to self-diagnose and that this may lead to anxiety. It

would also be dependent on young people having access to a phone or tablet and the storage space to download the app.

## Points for Consideration

In March 2017 Healthwatch Worcestershire published Children and Young People: Emotional Wellbeing Information, Advice and Support Report. This set out recommendations about the need for promotion of new services for emotional wellbeing, as part of the implementation of Worcestershire's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.

Healthwatch has therefore continued to focus on emotional wellbeing and awareness of support as part of this year's engagement, to identify progress with this.

The feedback we have received from students shows that dealing with problems and emotional wellbeing is an important issue and they may be more likely to seek help from peers than a parent or teacher. The feedback also suggests that there was a low awareness amongst the students we spoke to of the support available via Kooth and Reach4Wellbeing.

Healthwatch Worcestershire, therefore makes the following points for consideration based on the feedback received: -

1. Consider if further promotion of Kooth and Reach4Wellbeing is required across schools and colleges in Worcestershire.
2. Consider if there could be further use of promotion methods suggested by students, such as social media, screens in entrance areas, dedicated sections on websites and the distribution of posters and cards.
3. Consider how emotional wellbeing support is promoted and delivered to those who are either home educated or not in education.
4. Consider if there is provision for alternative support, such as one-to-one counselling, if children and young people do not feel online or group support is appropriate for them. Or if this type of support would be difficult to access due to additional needs, such as learning disability or Autism Spectrum Condition.
5. Consider if there is scope for developing a local app similar to NHS Go to provide information to young people.