Student Survey on Well-Being

Survey to students of the European School of Varese

January 2021

Preliminary Report

Contact point: Reps of S6 EN

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Introduction

There have been countless articles written by mental health professionals regarding the toll this situation has had on children's and teens' mental health and a more proactive approach is suggested for now and the future. For example, in the UK, Prof. Russell Viner, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health told the UK Government that, "When we close schools we close their lives."[1] He says the pandemic has caused a range of harms to children across the board from being isolated and lonely to suffering from sleep problems and reduced physical activity due to sporting activities being banned. UK children's charity the NSPCC says the amount of counselling for loneliness provided by its Childline service has risen by 10% since the pandemic started. A volunteer said, "it's had a devastating impact." Sunil Bhopal, an expert in child health at Newcastle University says, too many people dismiss the impact on children, claiming they are 'resilient' and will 'bounce back' but that this is misguided and that children will be living with the legacy of the pandemic for years to come[2]. The social bonds teens have form support systems and safety networks. With those gone or reduced, it can lead to an increase in anxiety or depression symptoms. It's hard for teens who have lost daily contact with friends along with not being able to see close family members living in other countries for so long. All this combined with the gruelling schedule of online school, homework and exams has added to the stress.

Hence, this survey.

Feedback was coming through from students and parents in S6 that the last-minute chopping and changing of exam dates and locations since November 2020 was exacerbating students' stress levels which have already been heightened since home schooling began on 2nd March 2020. The main intention of the well-being survey was to give students in S6 a platform to voice any concerns and express how they have been feeling since online schooling began. The intention was also to establish what needs of theirs are not being met, what they would like to see happening, and what sort of support they need in the future.

It was considered important to establish the current mental and emotional health of students by understanding what they are experiencing that may be preventing their well-being, that is, the emotions/feelings and thoughts they may be having that are getting in the way of living a satisfying and positive life. We wanted to understand how they are feeling and functioning so that an evaluation of their lives as a whole could be made and presented to those of you who are in a position to make changes and do something to improve their lives at a profound level. Different questions with plenty of space for further commentary were asked that focussed on:

- Key concerns
- Feelings
- View on current support and the desirable support from school and others
- Suggestions to improve their situation

[1] https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/1531/html/
[2] https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55863841

116 students responded ANONYMOUSLY to the survey between 17th - 25th January 2021. The survey was implemented through EU Survey portal and the results were analysed through spreadsheet analysis, and manual and iterative coding of students' comments.

This is a small survey of mainly 6th years but it is quite clear from the age range that students from other years (namely S7) have answered; should it be extended to the other students who have also been online for the best part of a year now, it is likely that the story would look very similar.

In the remainder of this document, we present the preliminary key findings[3], which could deserve further analysis, but certainly deserve urgent attention and action. Warnings need to be sent to families and some issues need to be debated at school.

This survey is a starting point to assess the situation. More assessments need to be done and extended to other years.

[3] There are questions that have not been analysed yet because of lack of time and urgency of communicating some of the findingss.

Analysis

Characterisation of students according to age and sex – based on the responses to the survey.

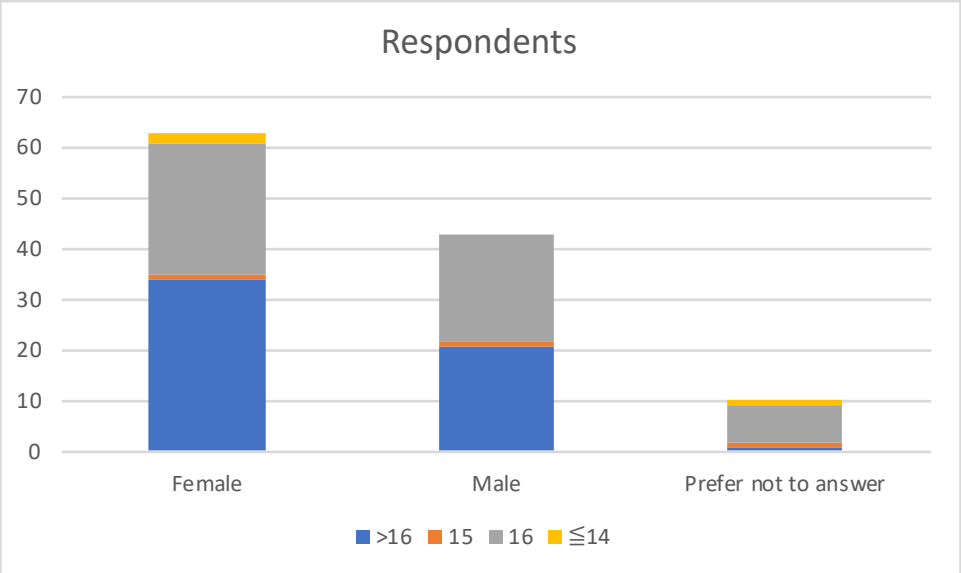


Fig. 1 Distribution of respondents across age and sex.

What were you doing before and after the 2nd March 2020?

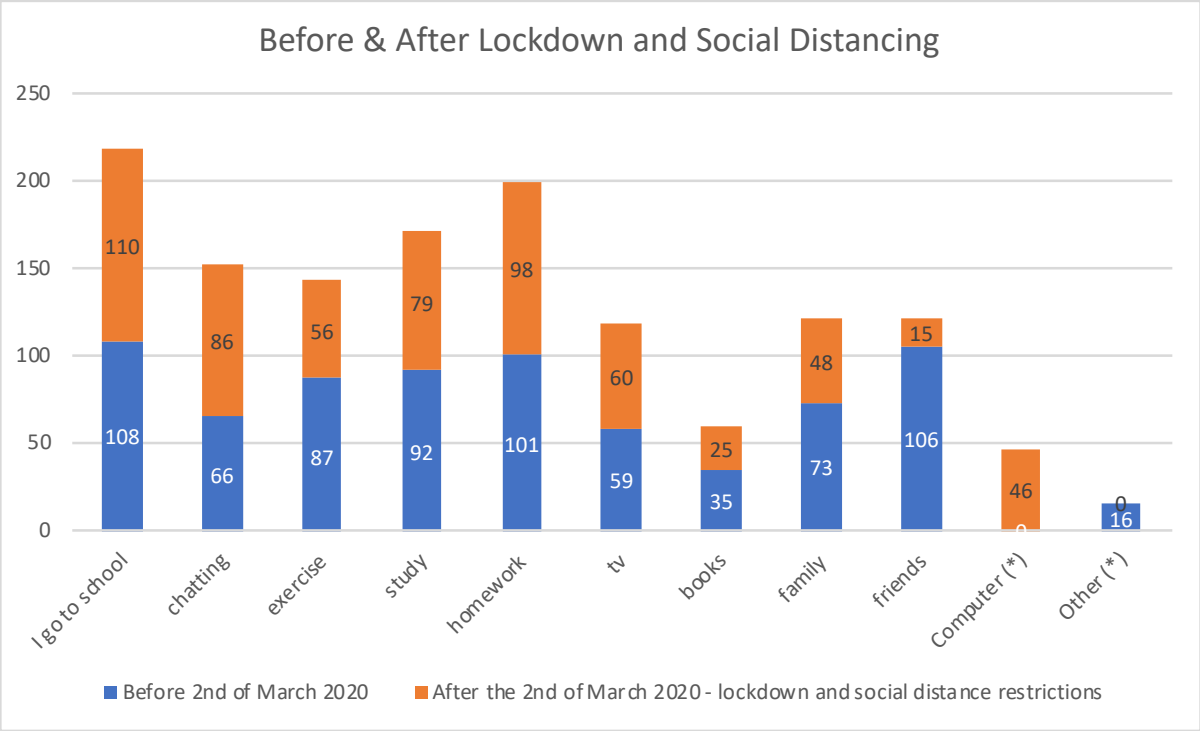


Fig. 2 How students were occupying their time before and after the start of the lockdown on 2nd March.

Question: In a few words, what is your main feeling about the online schooling situation?

As it can be seen from the world cloud (fig. 3), there were a variety of ways chosen by the respondents to express feelings about the online schooling situation. The most prominent words express "stress" (in different wordings), ineffectiveness, boredom and demotivation.



Fig. 3 Word cloud for the question "in a few words, what are your feelings". The bigger the font means that the word was used more times by students. For example, the word stressful is used in 38 answers, besides the other variations: stressed, stress, very stressful.

Question: Are you currently experiencing any of the following? (Please tick all that apply)

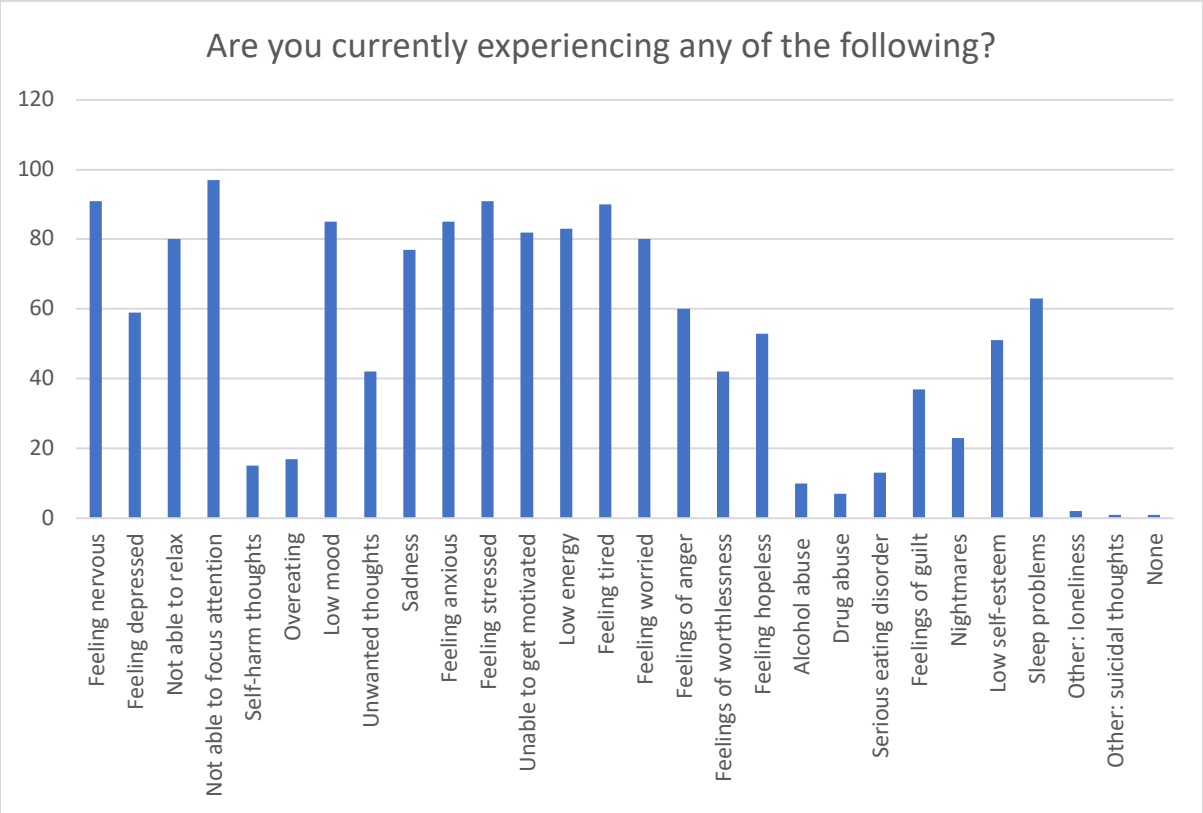


Fig. 4 Number of times feelings have been mentioned. All students.

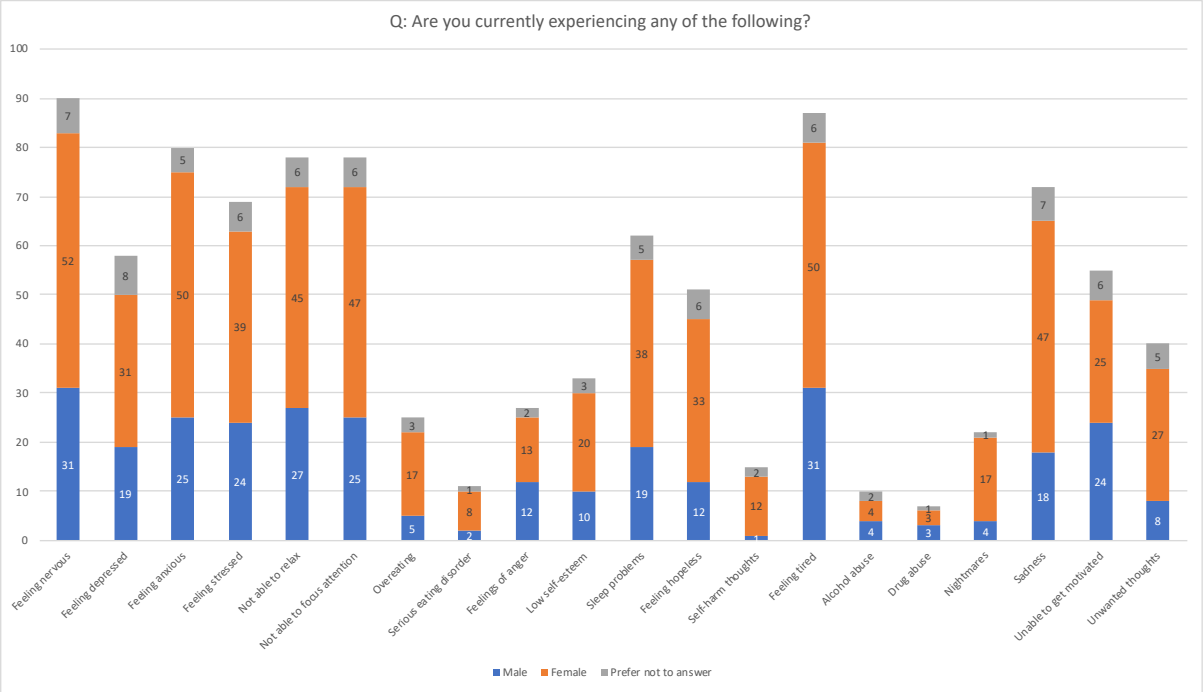


Fig. 5 Feelings selected by students, plotted according to sex.

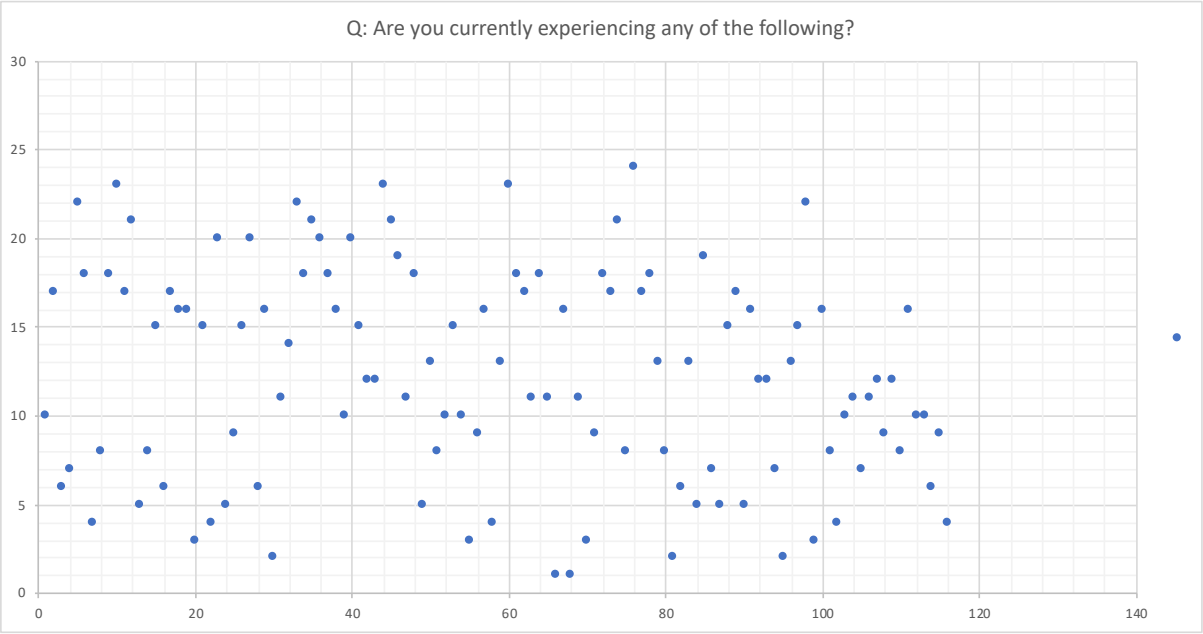


Fig. 6 Number of feelings chosen by students from the list provided.

All the enlisted feelings were selected by the 116 students that responded to this survey, except for one (Fig.4). Several students have enlisted more than 20 of the enlisted feelings (Fig. 6), and 5 students have chosen 'Other'. Females selected many more options than males (Fig. 5). In the free text question, other feelings that the students are experiencing are the following (**including drinking issues and suicidal thoughts)**:

- "Less stressed when thinking that I don't have to attend school in situ (such us exams or just being in class)"
- "Loneliness"
- "Loss of appetite sometimes"
- "I've started drinking more than usual, but not really abusing. And I had suicidal thoughts many times. I feel really lonely and depressed."
- "I mainly cannot focus on anything. I already had a history of mental illness and quarantine is making everything worse."

Question: Are you experiencing any physical symptoms in relation to the above? If yes, please give details.

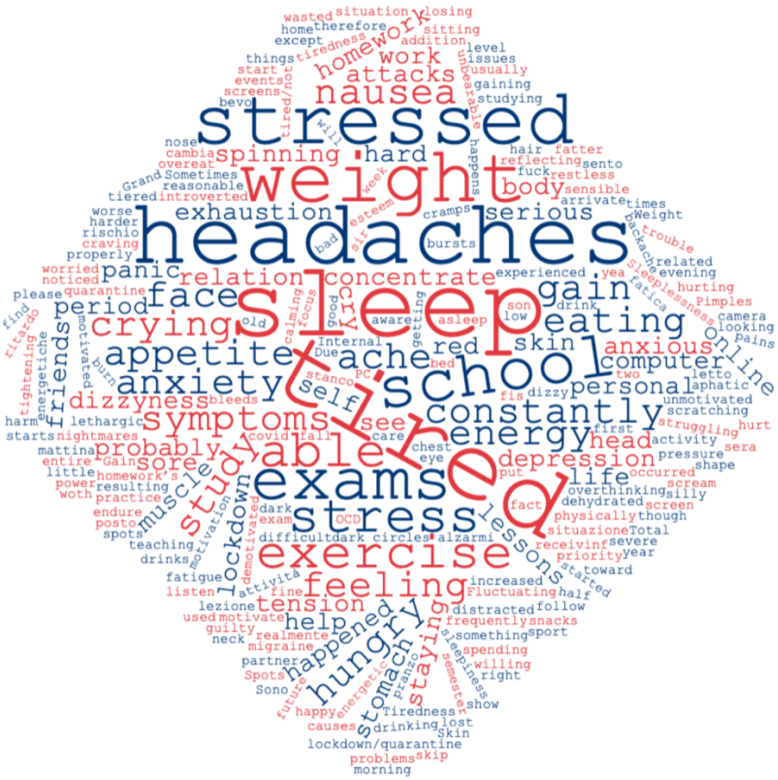


Fig. 7 Physical symptoms referred to by students in a word cloud form. The bigger the word, the more the word was used.

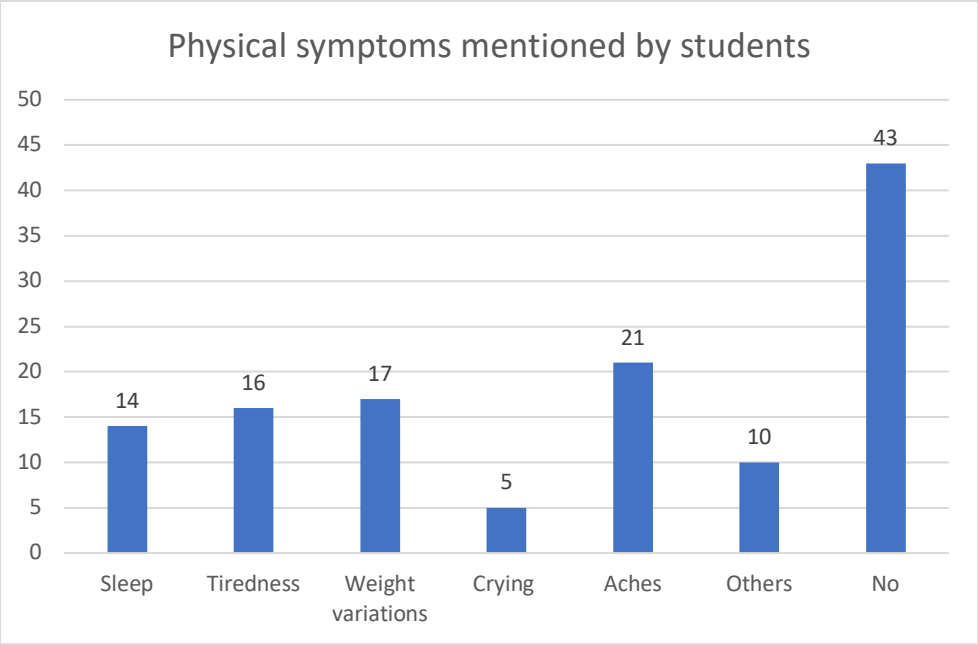


Fig. 8 Physical symptoms that were mostly mentioned by students. N.B. Sleep refers to sleep disturbances.

43 students out of 116, state that they **do not have physical symptoms or think they don't**. The most reported physical symptom is **tiredness** associated to difficulty with **sleeping**, **anxiety** and the **number of hours spent in front of the computer**. Examples of quotes are:

> "I can't sleep well and I'm constantly worried about the exams: we had online teaching for half semester, how will we be able to do an exam in school?" Female, 16 y.o.

> "I don't sleep well at night due to the anxiety and due to many hours on the PC." Male, 16 y.o.

> "Headaches, muscle tension, migraine, sleep issues", Female, 16 y.o.

> "It is a lot harder to get up in the morning and all in all it is really hard to motivate yourself, not only to work for school, but also for doing some physical activity and more." Male, >16 y.o.

Different types of aches and soreness: backaches, headaches, sore eyes, stomach aches, sore necks are mentioned 21 times.

"Constant headaches, my eyes burn from being on the screen so much and from being tired." Female, 16 y.o.

> "Headaches, my eyes are sore, gain of weight." Female, >16 y.o.

Weight variations and changes in eating habits are prominently mentioned:

> "I've started to overeat and gain weight. Sometimes I can't fall asleep at night because I'm overthinking everything, school, my future and how much time has been wasted. My head starts spinning and I feel dizzy in the evening after work. I am really tired all the time." Female, >16 y.o.

> "I don't have time to practice any type of exercise so I feel out of shape and probably am. I start drinking more energy drinks to have enough energy and eating more snacks than I used to and therefore probably getting fatter." Unspecified sex, 16 y.o.

> "I'm dehydrated, I have little muscle power. I'm lethargic and I'm either always hungry or never hungry". Female, 16 y.o.

Crying is mentioned as a physical symptom in 5 responses.

> "Many more headaches than before, nausea, loss of appetite, nightmares almost every night, increased crying, craving physical contact from my friends and partner" Female, 16 y.o.

Skin problems, such as:

> "Spots on my face and more tired" unspecified sex; 16 y.o.

> "I have a lot of dark circles", Female 16 y.o.

Other manifestations of the feelings described by the students are for example:

> "Had multiple panic attacks, something that never happened before." Male, 15 y.o.

> "I drink and cut myself a lot" Female, >16 y.o.

It is clear that the feelings and the physical symptoms need immediate attention and families should be warned in order to verify the situation at home.

Question: What do you need to help you with your mental/emotional health and well-being at this time?

72% of the students expressed the need for some type of help – see figure 9. "Other" include a number of needs such as: just seeing friends to "I need what I had before the march 2020".

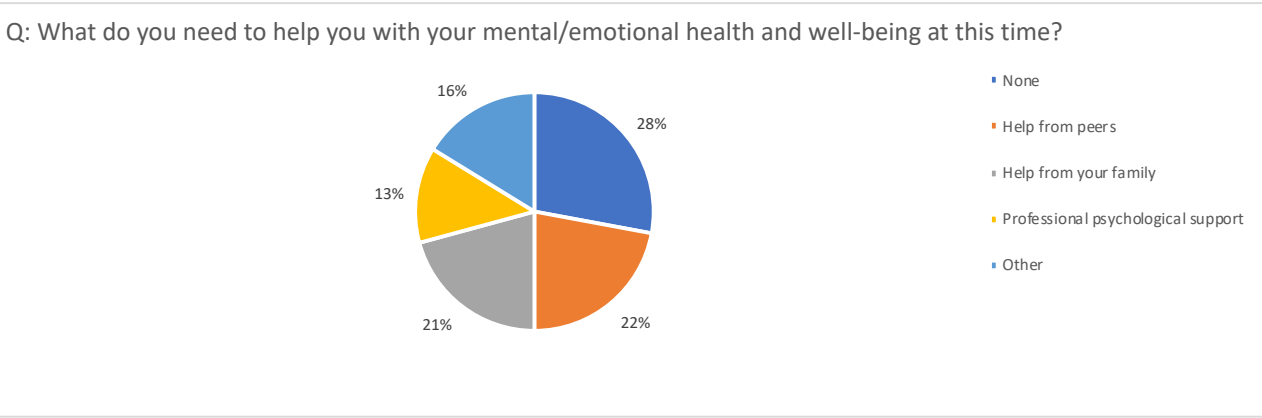


Fig. 9 Types of help required.

Question: Have you contacted the school psychologist?

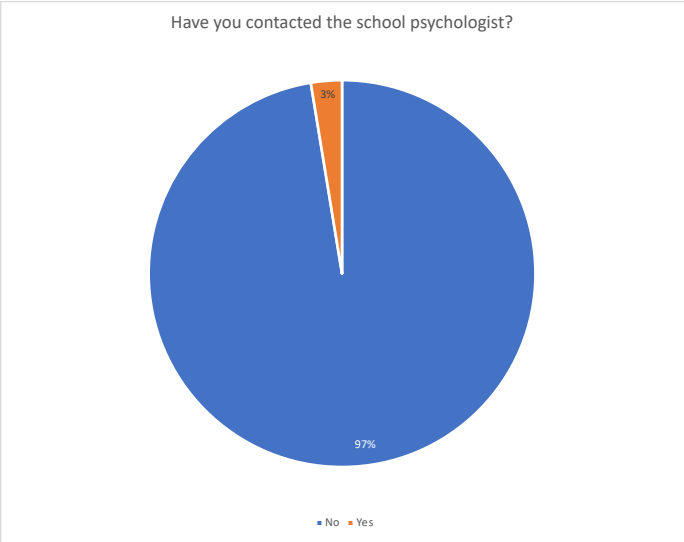


Fig. 10 Only 3% of the respondents report having contacted the school psychologist.

Despite the school providing a psychologist, very few students responding to this survey have contacted her. The reasons for not doing so are myriad, as illustrated by the analysis below.

For those who chose to see the school psychologist, the following answers were given to the question, "did you get the support you needed":

> "No they're terrible and they always pass the weight onto someone else. I haven't talked to the new guy, thought." *Unspecified sex; 16 y.o.*

"Not really" *Male, 16 y.o.*

"Everything that has changed in the past year is my own efforts to grow as a person." *Unspecified sex; 16 y.o.*

Thirty-eight respondents are saying they do not need it, they either are not in the mood to go to him/her or they can manage the situation by **themselves**:

> "I don't feel comfortable opening up to a male psychologist, my problems aren't bad enough to need professional help" *Female, 16 y.o.*

Or with the help of their **families**:

> "I don't feel like i need a support from a psychologist, and i have my family that helps me and reassures me" *Female, 16 y.o.*

Or with friends:

> "I have my friends who I prefer talk to as they know me better" *Female, >16 y.o.*

And another ten students expressed that it is **useless**:

> "I contacted the psychologist before the pandemic for other concerns and never got any useful help from them" *Male, 15 y.o.*

Four of them state they **do not know the procedure**:

> "I haven't quite figured out about it though if I need to I definitely will go to her and ask for any help" *Male, 16 y.o.*

and three more are expressing **lack of confidence** on the psychologist:

> "He doesn't inspire me to talk + I would need not to talk only about school but about traumas too". *Female, >16 y.o.*

Moreover, when he is **new** at the school:

> "We just got a new one and he said that there is no way to meet him with Covid and stuff" *Female, >16 y.o.*

and the professional in charge has changed several times:

> "It's weird (2 of them left the school), I don't feel like it's necessary" *Female, 16 y.o.*

Several students state that they know exactly what the problem is, considering that *the issue is the School* (too much homework, not being clear about the type and date of exams, etc.):

> "Because the underlying problem, the school prioritising grades and exams over students' mental health, cannot be solved by a psychologist." *Female, > 16 y.o.*

In these cases, they consider the psychologist part of the problem:

"Because I feel like I need the separation between school and my emotions, because school is a huge reason for my mental health decline" *Female, >16 y.o.*

Following this idea, there are seven respondents that consider they do not have time for that, they are clearly stressed with homework, classes and preparing exams:

"don't feel comfortable and don't have the time to spend on my mental health". *Female, >16 y.o.*

Finally, they claim needs to meet friends and more free time:

"I just need some social restrictions to be removed" *Male, 16 y.o.*

"I don't feel the need of talking with someone about it. It wouldn't solve the situation...I just would like to have some more free time". *Female, 16 y.o.*

Recommendation

The school, in collaboration with the students, needs to find ways of giving the support needed in response to the issues clearly stated in the survey. Some students didn't seem to be aware of the school psychologist's existence/availability and it seems that there have been no initiatives implemented by him/her to deal with the mental health needs of pupils over the last 12 months. Some of those who responded they had contacted the school psychologist remarked they didn't get the support they needed or didn't have confidence in him/her and were told that they wouldn't be able to go and see him/her. All of this needs to be addressed.

Question: What do you need from your teachers/school that you are not getting?

To this question, what is prominent is the need for more "understanding" and "comprehension" in the context of "this situation". Examples of quotes:

> "A better understanding of how this is affecting our lives as much as everyone else's, if not even more.", *Female, 16 y.o.*
>
> "To be less on our backs and to understand us better" *Female, 16 y.o.*
>
> "More understanding, not so high expectations, belief that we are not being lazy" *Female, >16 y.o.*

Those words are used by many students (understand and understanding are used 34 times in the responses above) but the issue is also framed as requests *for less pressure* and *less stress* from teachers (around 20 students), quantity of homework (this is mentioned by more than 30 students) and the uncertainty about exams. More interactivity during the classes is also mentioned by many, pointing to demotivation. Examples of quotes of the above:

> "Some understanding from the teachers, we need some time [off] the computer and cannot stay all day doing homework's or studying" 16 y.o.
>
> "they should tell us a date of exams and stick to it. Can't change them every week if they can't happen because of the pandemic they should cancel them not postpone until April. Tell teachers to give less homework or be optional", >16 y.o.

The other prominent aspect is to be given time off from studying and from the computer.

> "Time for ourselves, time where I can relax and dedicate myself to the things I like. It's from November that I am studying for the exams and they have continued to be postponed. I am tired. I can't go on like this." >16 y.o.

The following quote also illustrates another prominent issue is the sense that teachers do not care about what the students are going through, which is visible through these quotes:

> "I think they should ask us how we feel", 16 y.o.
>
> "Personally I don't need anything, but if the school looked like it cared more about us than the constant orders from brussels then maybe, just maybe everyone would feel more appreciated in this time of uncertainty. Going down an unpaved road, and no help coming in the form of mental support." >16 y.o.

We have chosen to provide the full table with the full exact sentences as written by the students.

Age	What do you need from your teachers/school that you are not getting?
16	Enough **time** and them **understanding** us and our situation
16	More **free time** and **faith**.
16	we want the professors not to fill us with **homework** to do, better with the marks and to **understand** each other
>16	some **compassion** and **understanding**. Also, I need to be represented
>16	they can't do much either
>16	Personally I don't need anything, but if the school looked like it **cared** more about us than the constant orders from brussels then maybe, just maybe everyone would feel more **appreciated** in this time of uncertainty. Going down an unpaved road, and no help coming in the form of **mental support**.
16	More **support** and defiantly a better **understanding** of what we are going through at the moment...
>16	**less stress** and **less high expectations**
16	**Support** and **comprehension**. **Flexibility** and let us take a **pause** from school work, to enjoy ourselves more. I found out that my day is made of studying every hour and always. I really need to chill down and **take time for myself**.
>16	It's all **alright** at the moment.
>16	I would like them to really **listen** to us, students. We should be taken more seriously.
16	**Support**, **understanding**. I would also appreciate if they were more **empathetic** to our current situation, because our last year of school has essentially been ruined, but they still pressure us to do just as well as when we were back at school.
16	Some **understanding** from the teachers, we need some **time** [**off]** the computer and cannot stay all day doing homework's or studying
>16	**Support** with actions. Some teachers don't **care** at all about us, they even give us tests during exams
16	**Less pressure** to exceed in the exams, less/lower expectations for me to be okay
>16	Responses: they should **tell us a date of exams and stick to it**. Can't change them every week if they can't happen because of the pandemic they should cancel them not postpone until April. Tell teachers to give less **homework** or be optional
>16	It is in my opinion not at any point the school's fault, but just due to the fact that we are home all day basically doing nothing. And because especially here in Lombardy we have no Idea about what is going to happen within the next days
>16	**understanding**.
>16	**Nothing**, I am okay

>16	**Understanding** and **emotional support**. I don't think teachers realize how much we are struggling and how much we are afraid of this **uncertainty**. We miss our friends and the upcoming exams are really important for us and for our futures. **What matters to them is if we submit our assignments on time**.
>16	Support and help
>16	fucking **friends**. and I need the school to go fuck itself, it is made up of fucking prehistoric dinosaurs, what do you want them to understand. ye ye you have internet for friends and school is more impor... FUCK YOU IN THE ASS
>16	Consapevolezza
>16	comprehension
>16	- more **support** for exams
>16	For the school **I need to know long term plans about what they want to do next**. I cannot relax if I am uncertain about what will happen, at least in the near future.
>16	**Peace**.
>16	**Explanations**, guidance, **help**. I feel like everything is just thrown at us for us to deal with, as if it were so easy. If i ask teachers what main topics will be on the exam, they get so secretive. Ok i understand that its an exam, but due to the situation i don't see the problem with giving **guidance**
16	**Human interaction** not online
>16	To give **less assignments** and more **free time**, I am exhausted but I have so much to do!
>16	**Less stressful situation** and more **free time**
>16	More **free time** and **less pressure**.
>16	Given the circumstances, the school is doing a magnificent job. However, I think **decisions need to be made much more in advance than they currently are**. It would release a lot of stress to understand exactly what we're working towards.
>16	**Time** for ourselves, **time** where I can relax and dedicate myself to the things I like. It's from November that I am studying for the exams and they have continued to be postponed. I am **tired**. I can't go on like this.
>16	More **understanding**, **not so high expectations**, **belief** that we are not being lazy
>16	**Information about the situation (on time**)
>16	A **break** and **empathy**
>16	**Understanding** and **less pressure**
>16	It depends from the lessons, but in general more interactive lessons, **more enthusiasm** from the teachers to attract students attention, to **motivate us** and make the **lessons more enjoyable**
>16	**helping** and **preparing us well for the exams**, facilitation in exams
>16	More **help** to study

>16	I feel like my teachers are doing the best that they can however they are humans too and I don't want to put pressure on them. I only want **more comprehension from the school** because **it seems to me that they focused just on our mark than our mental health**.
>16	**compassion**, **understanding**, **some pauses**
>16	A sense of **understanding** of our situation, students, because they don't know how is stressful stay at home without seeing friends at our ages
>16	**nothing**
16	**Niente**
16	**Interactiveness** in lessons.
>16	They should give us more time for our **homework**, and not that much quantity. If we are at home all the **time** doesn't mean that we just have to study
>16	Nothing
16	**Understanding** mostly, some teachers prioritise work, but when for example you have a panic attack, the only thing **you don't wanna hear** is that you have to hand in **your homework or get a zero**. This happened to me and some of my friends multiple times from a set of teachers.
16	More **time** to relax, even if se have less **homework** it is still so hard to focus on your own and get the motivation
15	To be at school
>16	Face to face time and Covid gone
>16	**Stop changing exam dates**, stop switching everything all the time and **no hw**
>16	**Feedback on assignments**
16	Certainty I understand that the pandemic is unpredictable but they **should make a decision** regarding our prebacs and stick to it. Also more time off or less **homework**. Some teachers make us work until after their lesson time on purpose because we have no lessons after them, meaning we finish later.
16	i need them to give us less **homework**
>16	i need **them to stress us less** and stop overloading us with **homework** and tests
15	A connection to my friends (socializing).
	Less stress and fewer online lessons
16	The exams are easy the wort thing.thel need to give us **answers that are concrete**
16	**Less work** and for them to actually **understand** what we are going through instead of just saying "I understand" and the proceeding to give us a lot of things to do, or just not listening to our points because we should be speaking about it to someone else, it's not their problem.
16	Teachers must **understand** what the students are going through and, yes, i am aware that all the staff is working hard as well. it is, however, crucial to note that we are still in phase in our lives in which our emotional and physical well being are particularly vulnerable.

16	**Understanding**!! Everyone always says “i understand that you’re going through a lot.. so here’s 50 assignments try to do your best”
16	Exams should be online. why are we expected to do online school and then do exams in situ structured as if weve been going to school for the past 6 months. i dont get why we students have to be okay with that, **we are the ones doing the exams we get to have a choice at least**
>16	A better **understanding** of the current situations
16	**Nothing**, they're doing their best to keep an eye on us.
>16	Actual class time
16	A little bit more of **comprehension**, they say words but then never really show to have understood the way students are feeling
>16	**Compassion**, **empathy**, and **some slack**.
16	What I’m not getting is enough **time** to relax because of the extreme amount of studying I’m having to do
>16	**Understand** that I can't do all that **work**. Everyone is giving so much work and if I ever catch up they think everything is solved and that I'm fine and functional, I'm not. **Also don't make me show myself on camera.**
16	it’s not what we’re not getting, it’s what we ARE getting. it’s obviously too much to bare and we’re all going through a stressing time (teachers too) and i beg to get less to do because i really feel like this is ruining my entire career because if i fail these exams i wouldn’t be able to go to uni
16	some sort of **compassion** and **understanding** (some do, but the majority don't)
16	**mental support** and instead of saying after each lesson “go study and prepare for your exams” maybe say to get time to self-care
>16	**Less video calls**, they are supposed to do 50/50 but they do all of them and give us the same amount of work.
16	**Time** to relax
16	Good education
16	More free **time** to go outside and exercise for example. Because when we were at school we could at least be outside a lot and with friends. I think its **difficult to be in front of the screen for such a long time** and its really negatively affecting me
16	**More attention to their students**
16	More **transparency**; **clear vision / plan for the second half of the year**; lessons in situ
16	**School insitu**
>16	I think the teachers should do less study and **more interactive lessons**, as we easily get bored and don’t pay attention during classes
16	**More interaction**

16	A better **understanding** of how this is affecting our lives as much as everyone else's, if not even more.
>16	**Less homework**
16	To be **less on our backs** and to **understand** us better
16	Less workload/more free **time**. I need them to **understand** our situation that **we are the most vulnerable during online school** and that they need to **stop treating it like normal school**
16	Less **homework** and **less stressing lessons**
>16	Less **work** be more **flexible**
>16	**Nothing** they're doing all they can and they're also very comprehensive
16	More **trust** from school, more **interaction** with teacher during lessons, more time to review tighter with the teachers the lessons, more **feedbacks** from my teachers on my homework.
16	I would like that teachers **understand** that this is not an easy situation. **You can't expect us to stand in front of a computer for like 7 hours, speak in every lessons and follow everything, and then, doing every homework that each teacher gave.** Online school doesn't mean more work!!!
16	I need them to **understand** that its stressing for us this situation
16	**Nothing**
16	to **understand** our situation and **do not stress us** with exams and future when we do not know how it would be
16	Respect of our **time**. Knowing that we are all at home doesn't mean that we have more time for homework's and study.
15	**Less confusion**, less **homework** because after 8 hours in front of my computer I can't always keep doing homework.
>16	**Nothing**
16	They are just doing their work, and I can understand that, but during these days the only thing I'm doing is studying, even after dinner until 11 pm or more. This just brings a lot of stress and it is not even healthy for us. **It is our duty to study, and I agree with that, but there's a limit.**
>16	A serios seen about the covid and the fact that **in red zone doing exams is not a great idea**
16	**patience**, **understanding**
16	More **time** for ourselves and not spending all the day doing **homework** and studying in front of a computer
16	**comprehension**
16	**Comprehension**, remember that we are teens in a difficult situation and the **last thing that we need is more stress regarding exams in situ**
16	Being **comprehensive**, **need teachers don't stress us too much**

>16	Less things to study, **less stress**
16	**nothing**
16	**I think they should ask us how we feel**
16	They should try **to stick more to the timetable** without taking our break time off
16	Enough **time** and them to **understand** us and our situation
16	To be **more structured with their work**. They are not organising their activities enough, so we are facing situations of overload of work due to bad planning

Recommendation

Some of these remarks beg questions such as:

- Why, since the students have been attending online school been given more homework than in situ?
- Why have the S6 students with exams been covering more of the syllabus in early January lessons when the exams should have been taken in December?

School Future – engaging students in imagining school and schooling

Finally, to the question: "This question is about the future of school and schooling, given this pandemic crisis and any other future crises. If given the opportunity, would you like to transform your concerns and ideas into imagining a new school model? This would imply participating in an online activity to be organised in the near future."

50% of the students responded that they would like to participate in an activity to imagine the school of the future. This is a good indication that students are craving a space to be heard and that can contribute to a much needed concept of school in a post-COVID19 era.

Final remarks

The following are key findings and recommendations from the answers given to this survey:

1. The fact that 116 students answered this survey in a matter of very few days (at the end of day 1 after the dissemination of the survey by Reps, 76 students had already answered the survey) is indicative that the students are in need of a space to voice their problems and in particular how this whole situation is affecting their well-being.
2. Many students have used a large number of the items in the list of feelings to describe their situation; many have expanded on the free text question. It is worrisome that so many feelings have been chosen by so many. It is worrisome that few students have chosen "self-harm thoughts" including suicidal thoughts.
3. Many students are reporting physical symptoms linked to their mental state.

4. The school psychologists are not considered a solution for many reasons, including them being part of an institution that students are currently distrusting.
5. Students need help.
6. Students need that the school reviews: the workload, the styles and practises with which online teaching is being carried out, consistent decision making about how the school will operate under uncertainty, and any plans for future coaching.
7. Students are stakeholders tout court. They should be involved systematically on the idealisation of their school especially at times where nobody has clear and definitive answers for the way ahead. The idealisation of a new school should be a collective endeavour.
8. The survey was answered by students in years other than S6. The survey should be circulated to include students in S4/S5 and above.

We hope that all issues raised by the students will be addressed and dealt with immediately. Our children's mental health should have taken priority from the start but unfortunately, the survey results reveal that not enough has been done to support the students through this difficult time. It is evident that their needs have not been fully taken into consideration by all levels of management in Varese and it is clear that there is much room for improvement in the teaching too. The focus of management/teachers seems to have been more on carrying on as normal and ticking boxes in terms of the students' assessment by examination and usual methods employed by in situ teaching rather than adapting to the situation and finding other less stressful, and fairer ways of evaluation. According to the majority of responses, the students feel that they have been let down and unsupported by their school. Students have expressed thoughts and feelings that should be concerning for every adult responsible for their care. The current mental health situation of our kids is not looking good and more care and attention is needed for all, in particular, those who have indicated thoughts of self-harm and suicide.

Finally, the ongoing return to school is a positive step forward but will not be an overnight fix for those who have had serious mental health challenges. Should online schooling continue, modified procedures need to be put in place including a broader discussion with the management of European School systems regarding the appropriateness of the current syllabus requirements and homework expectations etc. The students and management at the European School in Varese have been in a unique situation due to the geographical location and nature of the governmental restrictions in Italy. As a result, our school and students have been put under pressure in ways the other European Schools have not. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect students here to have the same level of knowledge and same methods of assessment as students at other European Schools who have not had such a long time learning online etc. Debate is needed to find the best way forward and come up with a plan. Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress but the feeling of being on guard and bracing for disaster can continue even long after the initial threat has gone and when the traumatic event is ongoing - like a pandemic - it can lead to harmful coping habits that treat imminent disaster as though it's always around the corner.

Annex

Have you contacted the school psychologist? **Why not?**

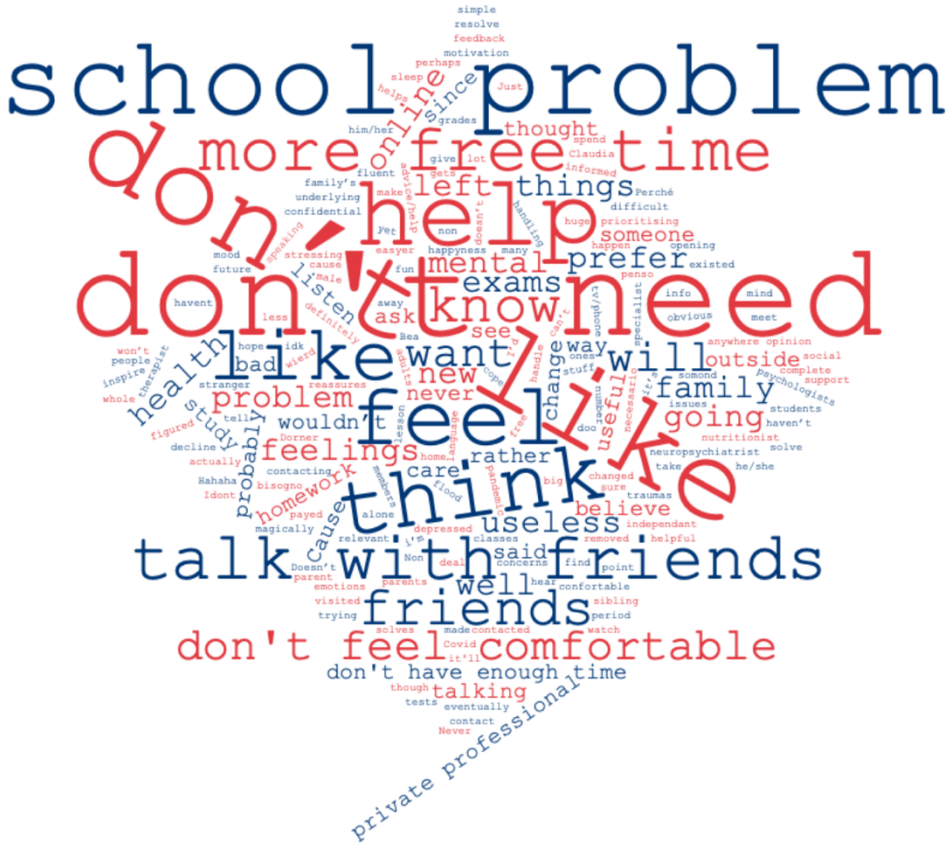


Fig. A.1 word cloud of why not psychologist – see full text below.

Have you contacted the school psychologist? Why not?

I don't need to
I don't know who she/he is and how to contact it
I don't feel the need.
I already go to a private psychologist
i will
Because I don't need them
All I need is to see my friends and have fun
Because what is the psychologist going to do about my flood of homework? Or my online classes? My tests? My exams? My future?
I have been think of contacting...
because i don't want to
I don't like it, I would probably prefer to talk to a stranger outside school.
I don't think there's the need to for me.
Because my situation isn't too bad and i believe that I'm handling it well. I also have a sibling and a parent that listen when I need advice/help.

Because I already have a therapist

I don’t need it

I don't really need to and don't really have the motivation

The only problem is school. We don't know when exams are going to happen and give so much homework we can't complete

Cause I don't need to

Because the underlying problem, the school prioritising grades and exams over students' mental health, cannot be solves by a psychologist.

I will probably do it but I am not sure about it. I am trying to handle this situation by my family’s and friends help, as well as my own help.

I don’t think they will be able to help. The situation cannot be changed. The school doesn’t actually care.

I’m not confidential with him/her

too much shit going on. as I said, can't even listen a lesson, the only thing I can doo is watch tv/phone and sleep.

Non penso sia necessario

I’m have too much study to do

Because I don't need to

I never thought about doing that, as I feel like my problems aren't enough relevant to talk to a specialist.

Cause I don’t need to

Because I feel like I need the separation between school and my emotions, because school is a huge reason for my mental health decline

Never thought they could help

I think that I have to resolve this on my own

I don’t feel the need

Because I go already to two neuropsychiatrist and a nutritionist

I have a private psychologist and I don't feel comfortable with the new school one

because I feel it’s better to talk about my feelings with my parents or friends.

I did not find the need not hope for help for any problems

I don’t think that I need to see the school psychologist yet.

I’m not ready to get help

I don't know him, as Claudia Dorner has left, and I don't believe the psychologist can tell me anything new or magically change the situation.

Because I don't think it's necessary

I'm able to deal with my problems alone

Because I don't want to

I have my own

don't feel comfortable and don't have the time to spend on my mental health

I don't think that psychologists are helpful, even the ones of the school

I visited psychologist before, in my opinion they're useless, and the only way to cope with my problems is to put my mind to it.

Perché non ne ho bisogno

He doesn't inspire me to talk + I would need not to talk only about school but about traumas too.

Because I don't think that I need it

I contacted the psychologist before the pandemic for other concerns and never got any useful help from them

Don't have feedback from other people

I don't care and I don't want to

Hahaha I won't simple

Because I didn't even know she existed, the number or info hasn't been out anywhere, or perhaps it has but hasn't been made obvious.

Not needed

I don't feel like I would have the time to talk to them.

i already have one

i don't feel the need to

I wouldn't feel comfortable speaking to someone I don't know, in a language that I'm not fluent in.

I don't feel comfortable opening up to a male psychologist, my problems aren't bad enough to need professional help

Just easyer talking to friends and family rather yhan somond who gets payed for it

Because I don't feel like they're able to do anything for me since they can't change the situation, I rather talk to my friends about these things.

Don't need anything

We just got a new one and he said that there is no way to meet him with Covid and stuff

I havent had the need to.

I don't feel confortable

Don’t need to

I already have one outside school

I don’t know how to ask for one

Because I can’t talk with a psychologist online since members of my family would hear me

Because I don’t feel that I am at the point where I need professional help.

I haven’t quite figured out about it though if I need to I definitely will go to her and ask for any help

i don’t really need help i just need less things to do because i’m very independant and i could get much better if i had more time to myself

I don't think it could help

its wierd (2 of them left the school), i don’t feel like its necessary

I don't think it would be useful, and it's a stressing period of time but it'll go away eventually

I don't need it

I don't want to

I dont think a psychologist would be able to help me a lot, its just a difficult time being at home the whole time.

Because I don't think I need to

Doesn’t make sense

I don't need

I don’t think I have such big issues

I don’t want to

I’d prefer not to

I don't think I need it

I don’t even know

I didn't have time

Because I don’t need it

I dont feel the need

I don’t feel the need to

I don't think he/she can help me

I don’t want to.

idk

Not needed

because i do not like to talk about my feelings

I have my friends who I prefer talk to as they know me better

I just need some social restrictions to be removed

I don’t need to

I don’t feel the need of talking with someone about it. It wouldn’t solve the situation...I just would like to have some more free time.

I typically not depressed ad all because i have a mood where typiccal i take all with happiness but in online school even i feel a but sad im ok

i don't feel like i need a support from a psychologist, and i have my family that helps me and reassures me

I don't really know, also I don't have much time left for doing that because there are many things to study

Did not have time

I know what's the problem I don't need a psychologist

Because i think i don't need it

I don’t like showing my feelings to adults.

i dont like

Because i think is useless

Because I didn’t feel the need to

I didn’t need to, but also because we are not well informed about her or him.

It useless