



Key findings:

- 83% of the participants said that their mental health is 'important' or 'extremely important' to them.
- 50% of the participants reported that they felt they needed professional mental health support. Of these, 67% reported they had reached out for help and 33% had not reached out. Only 37.3% of the young people feel comfortable to seek for help.
- Young people don't reach out because:
 - a. They don't know where to get help
 - b. They lack confidence to reach out
 - c. They don't want their parents to know
 - d. They find it difficult to open up to strangers
- 50% of the young people reported that the access to mental health support is 'very difficult' or 'difficult' because:
 - a. They don't want the involvement of parents or schools
 - b. They worry about what people will think of them
 - c. The available services are not culturally appropriate
 - d. Long waiting times
- Young people would like to have professional mental health services available to them at schools (39.1%), over the Internet (34.8%) and at youth centres (33.3%).

Recommendations:

- Talk about mental health in a fun way, use persuasive language. Advertise on social media, promote mental health in schools, colleges and youth clubs.
- Increase mental health awareness via workshops and talks. Speaking more about mental health will make young people feel more comfortable to open up.
- Address male stereotypes when talking about mental health.
- Create safe spaces and make young people feel comfortable around mental health professionals. This can be done via empathising/relating to how young people feel.
- Make services more available and accessible, such as online services and easy access to non-medical interventions.
- Create anonymous/independent mental health services to increase trust and encourage relationship building.
- Normalise mental health, teach that most people experience mental health challenges at some point in their lives and teach them that having mental health difficulties is ok, while at the same time taking it seriously.
- Include young people's views in designing the interventions and support provided to them.
- Better understanding of the cultural differences that make mental health issues harder for some groups to deal with.

Our next step:

The research findings will be used to shape a Highbury Roundhouse Youth and Community Centre offer on mental health and we hope to influence the future offer on access to mental health for our young people London. The findings will be shared with policymakers working on the New Deal for Young People, Islington colleges and youth clubs, and mental health organisations in the borough.

The young peer researchers from Highbury Roundhouse youth club who worked on this project are Nassiirah Kureembocus and Anisa Lleshi, both 14 years old. Dinisha Shibnauth and Eneida Capaldi from Highbury Roundhouse supported them. Tamanna Alam, Jessica and Sarah Keleta have collaborated on this project.

Highbury Roundhouse is a local charitable organisation in collaboration with Islington Young People's services and the Greater London Authority to provide a place for teenagers to socialise, play games or participate in structured activities. Our project is supported by the Mayor of London and the London Borough of Islington.

Research Questions:

What are the challenges and barriers that young people aged 13-18 in the London Borough of Islington face in accessing professional mental health support?

What approaches did you use and why?

Initially we decide to use surveys, focus groups and interview - we manage to use only focus group and surveys as it was challenging to book interviews with professionals. However, the two approaches we did use gave us qualitative data and have a better understanding of the young people thought around mental health.

Who did you speak to?

- We communicate with 72 young people through surveys
- We conducted 2 focus groups in youth clubs around Islington with a total of 12 young people

See more of what we have done:

- See our report- click here: [Highbury Roundhouse](#)
- A video clip of our research journey coming soon on our website.

