

U R OK

YCIS students tackle mental health with their project work

STRUGGLING WITH ANY sort of disease or illness is hard. But it is even harder when it's something others cannot see, much less be aware of. This was the challenge counsellors Alana Martin and Rachel George discovered when a search for mental health resources for young expat teenage students came up empty.

'While in many cities there are helplines for children and counseling services run by volunteers, we couldn't find anything of the sort in Beijing. We therefore felt an urgent need to fill this gap in our school.'

And thus began the 'U R OK' project, also read as 'You Rock' when put together. The project is a curriculum of workshops by lower secondary students about mental health, the challenges and problems that arise and how to deal with it. The final projects were presented at YCIS' Global Community Day on May 11, when a total of 60 student groups took part.

We chose nine YCIS students to speak to about what they thought good mental health meant and how they put their projects together.

No Bullying

by Ella Dai and Hermione Wang

We think that good mental health is about one's character, a positive attitude and good adaptability. We chose No Bullying because we knew that bullying and being bullied is bad and hurtful, so we wanted to tell everyone about this by giving examples on how to deal with bullies. We did this by making a video and a comic book to share our project to the audience.



Friendship

by Cindy Ke and Sarah Zhang

Good mental health is about keeping one's heart, thoughts and body healthy. We chose Friendship because we wanted

to help others be more confident and be mentally stronger. So we interviewed our teachers and asked them these questions:

- What is friendship?
- What are the most important things in friendship?
- Can you give some advice when it comes to friendships?
- How can you differentiate a true friend and a fake friend?
- What will you do if you find out your friend is a fake friend?
- What is the most important thing in making friends?
- What will you do if you feel left out?

Our project aims to help strengthen friendships and to make sure that no one feels left out.

Stress Management

by Julie Ju and Elly Kee



Good mental health is about being positive and not giving up. For example, if we become negative because we have so much homework, then nothing changes; we still have to do the homework anyway. So we should be positive and avoid giving up. That's why we chose stress management. We wanted to focus on students' health because if they are too sleepy when they get to school or have problems with their health, they cannot concentrate on their studies and it will affect their school lives. So we made a website about sleep and health where students can get some useful information about their health and avoid getting weak or sick.





Understanding Self-Harm

by Olivia Sun, Elsa Zang, Yona Yue and Clare Zhang



Good mental health means having a strong psyche and self-control. So we addressed the issue of self-harm. Some people hurt themselves when they experience emotional pain, so showed how students can vent their emotions.

Cyber bullying

by Luca Sasso and Hillary Tian



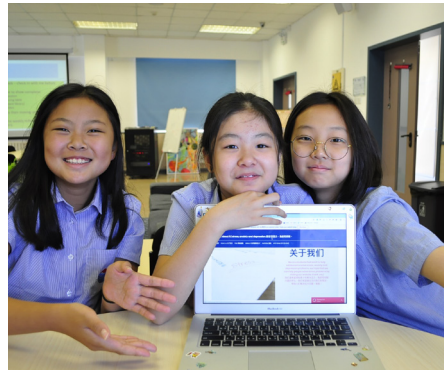
Good mental health is when a person accepts themselves for who they are, respects themselves, has a proper mind-set and positive attitude towards others. They can cope with new things, instead of being depressed or have an unhealthy mind set.

But this is hard for those who are bullied, so we focused on cyber bullying. We made a simple website which everyone can easily access and understand. We showed the common scenarios of cyber bullying and how to solve it and avoid it. It also teaches tips on how to help anyone close to you if they are in those situations.

We hope our project can help decrease cyber bullying. Less cyber bullying leads to less depression, vulgarity and eventually less suicidal thoughts or suicide itself.

Stress Management

by An-An Chang, Sophia Li and Jenny Yu

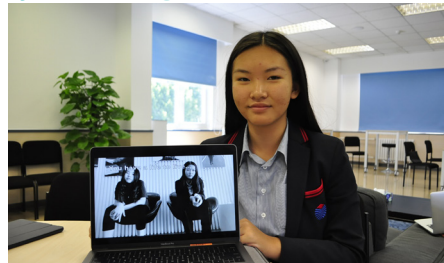


Good mental health is about keeping one's mind healthy, learning how to control one's emotions and not getting too overwhelmed. When your mind gets really busy and messy, try to take a deep breath to calm yourself down.

So we created a website to help adolescents overcome stress, anxiety and depression. It's a very serious problem because some adolescents commit suicide because of it. Our website has some basic information about stress, some recommendations in alleviating stress, some DIY (Do It Yourself) projects other kids can do and more helpful tips.

Suicide

by Charlie Leung and Amber Lee



Good mental health is about being able to express or release one's emotional discomfort. You would accept the fact that sometimes you will feel angry, guilty, annoyed, or depressed. You would let yourself be angry when you're angry, let yourself be happy or sad when you are. You don't end up trapping your emotions inside.

For our submission, we chose to base our project on a very serious topic: suicide. We wanted to help people who are going through a hard time and let them know that suicide is not the answer. We wanted this message to spread to those in need and let them know how and why they should stop themselves.

For our suicide prevention video, we used simple but strong English to hopefully make the victim think twice clearly about whether suicide is the right path or not. We wrote a poem-like script structured

to challenge the victims beliefs and intentions. We shot ourselves reciting the script at two different locations, switching from both videos in the final video to make a dramatic effect, and added music and subtitles here and there where we thought corresponded to the whole video theme.

Suicide

by Luli Podesta and Serenity Barreras



Good mental health is about taking care of oneself and helping other people if they have a problem. We want to help fellow teenagers to make better life choices when problem arises, including avoiding suicide.

So we created a video to help other teens prevent suicide by taking care of themselves, to not be afraid of asking for help if they need to and why suicide should never be the solution.

Friendship

by Chloe Lee, Grace Kang, Justin Mellen



Good mental health is about taking good care of oneself, including one's mind, and learning how to regulate our emotions. We created videos that show how to solve conflicts that could happen between friends, because friendship is very crucial to an adolescent's life (sometimes even more important than their own families).

We created a project in different languages, English, Korean and Chinese, so that people from different backgrounds can learn how to have a better friendship and how to solve conflicts when they face it.