



THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES IN HEALTH & WELL-BEING LAB

NIAGARA ADOLESCENT PERSONALITY & SOCIAL CONNECTION STUDY

FINDINGS FROM TIME 1
JUNE 2021 TO APRIL 2022

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Thank you!

To begin, the Developmental Processes in Health and Well-Being Lab would like to thank all of their participants who made this study possible. We deeply appreciate your time and willingness to take part in our research. Going forward, these findings will be used to help better support adolescents and their families.



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WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN ONTARIO DURING THE TIMING OF THIS STUDY?

During June 2021, the concern for new COVID-19 variants and the increase in COVID-19 cases was relatively high compared to previous months in Ontario, Canada. Thus, on June 2, 2021, the government announced that Ontario elementary and secondary students would not be returning to class in an in-person setting before September 2021.

As September 2021 approached, Ontario released a back-to-school plan allowing students to return to in-person learning, with remote learning still an option. A variety of restrictions were enforced throughout school settings to try to minimize COVID-19 exposure.

However, this back-to-school plan changed rather quickly during the winter holidays from December 2021 to January 2022, as COVID-19 cases of the Omicron variant began to surge. After winter break, the quick change to online learning was enforced until mid-January. More specifically, on January 17, 2022, the government allowed in-person learning for Ontario schools to resume. After returning from March break 2022, restrictions completely changed in school environments. Wearing a mask and physically distancing were no longer mandatory in Ontario schools. It is important to remember that June 2021 to April 2022 was a time of uncertainty and confusion.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Participant Demographics

04

School Experiences

10

Physical Health

13

Mental Health

16

Social Connection

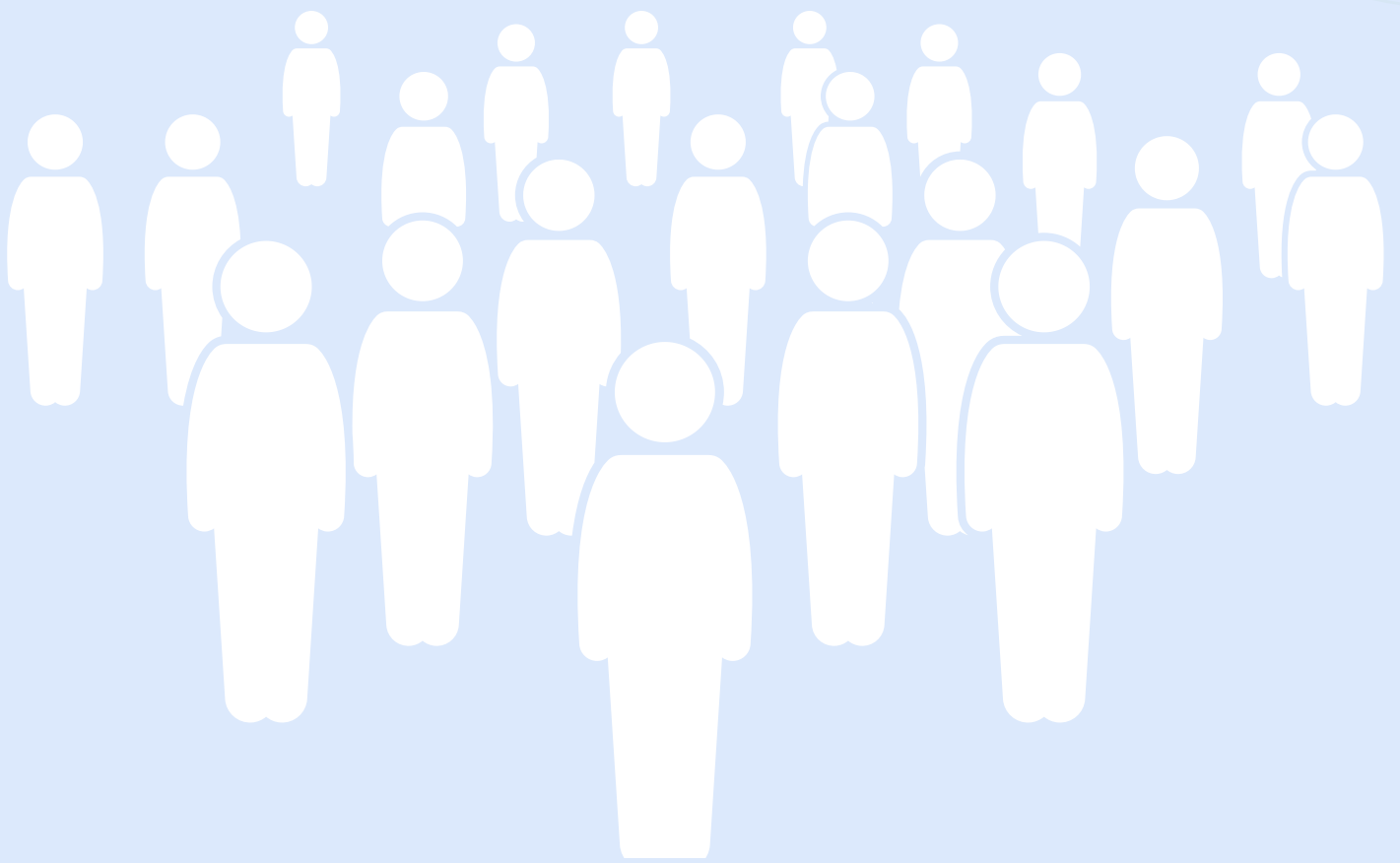
19

Social Media and Video
Game Usage

22

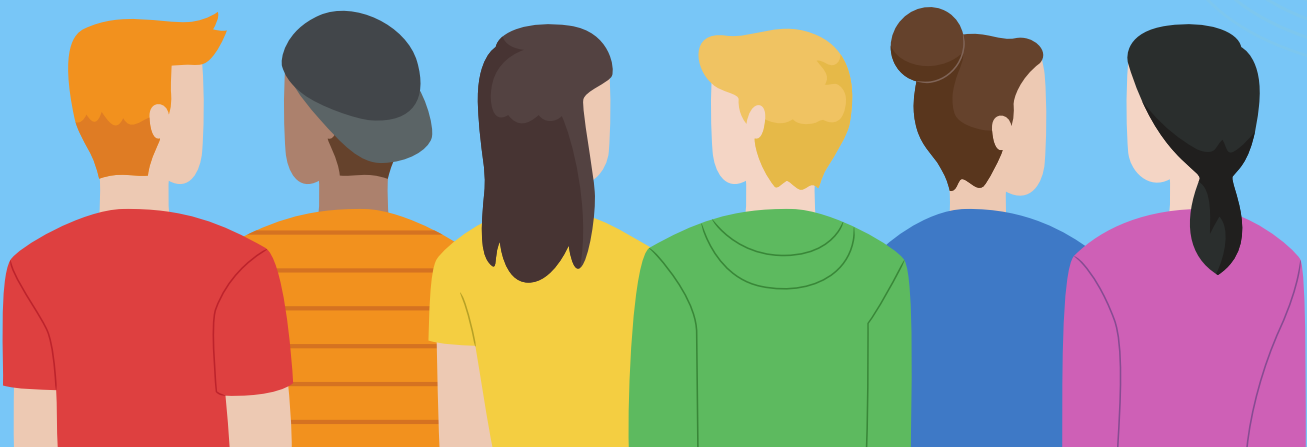
What Were Teenagers Most
Grateful for During the
Pandemic?

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the teens who participated in the study, 68.9% identified as female, 26.3% identified as male, 2.8% identified as non-binary/gender non-conforming, and less than 1% identified as other or female trans.



The participants ranged from ages 12-19 years with the average age being 15 years old.

In regards to race, 73.1% self-reported as White/Caucasian, 12.3% Asian Canadian, 8.1% identified as Other, 2.5% were Black/African Canadian, 1.1% of participants were Indigenous Peoples of Canada, and less than 1% were Latin Canadian.



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



Results found that compared to the average Canadian, 2.2% of participants believed they were a lot less rich, 12.6% believed they were less rich, 57.1% believed they were about the same, 26.1% believed they were more rich, 0.6% stated they were a lot more rich, and 1.4% preferred not to say.



WHICH MOST ACCURATELY REPRESENTS YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF SCHOOL?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Elementary | 70 | 19.6 |
| High School | 189 | 52.9 |
| College/university | 98 | 27.5 |
| Total | 357 | 100.0 |



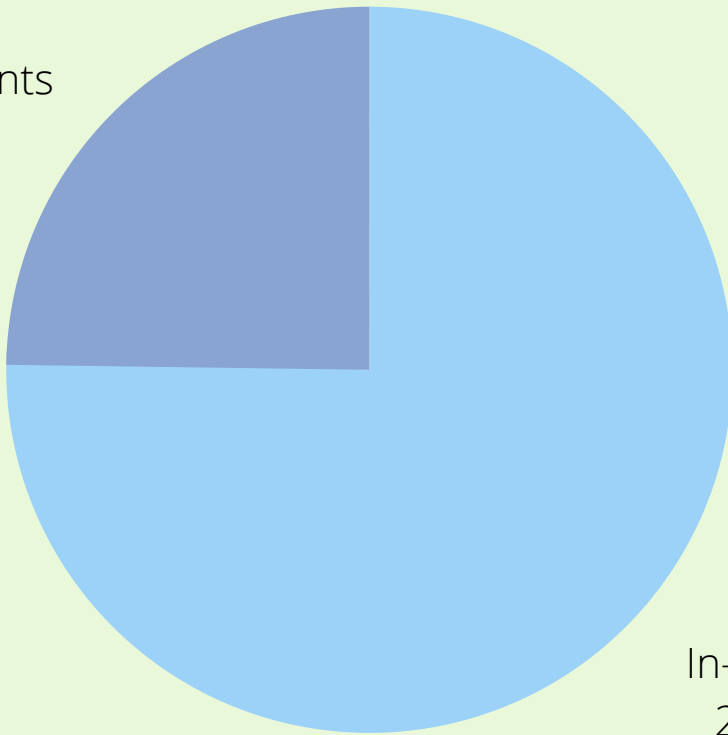
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR AVERAGE GRADES FROM LAST YEAR?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| All As | 162 | 45.4 |
| Mix of As and Bs | 156 | 43.7 |
| All Bs | 9 | 2.5 |
| Mix of Bs and Cs | 24 | 6.7 |
| All Cs | 1 | .3 |
| Mix of Cs and Ds | 3 | .8 |
| Total | 355 | 99.4 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | .6 |
| Total | 357 | 100.0 |



SCHOOL DELIVERY FORMAT

Online
85 Participants



In-Person/ Blended
258 Participants

When comparing in-person/blended and online school formats, participants in each group spent the same number of hours doing homework and felt equally connected to their teachers.

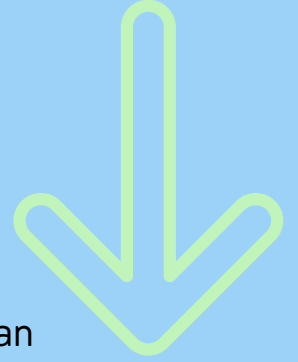
However, participants who attended school in-person/blended spent more hours in class with an average of 6.3 hours.



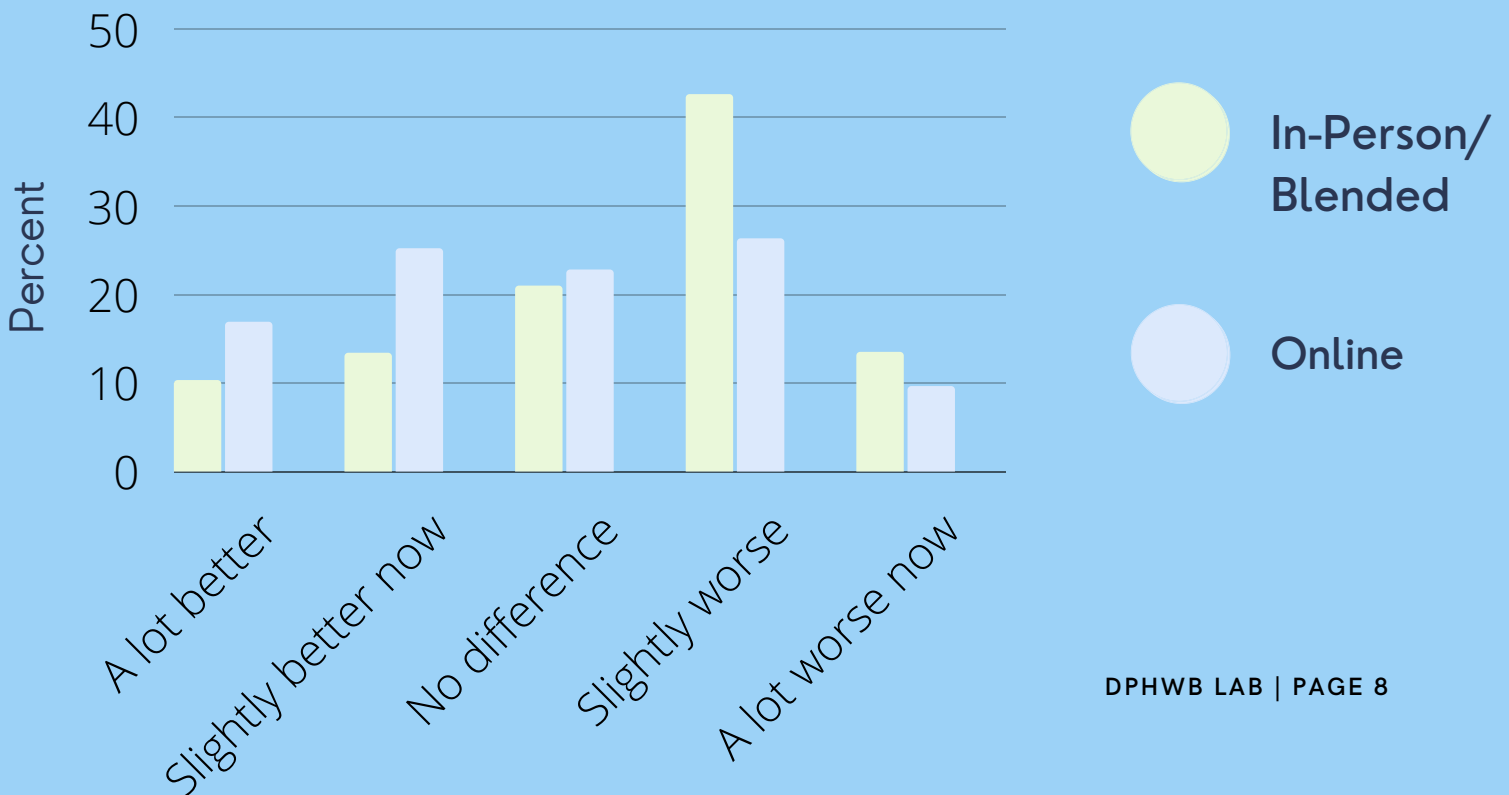
Additionally, participants who attended school in-person/blended felt more connected to their peers. On a scale of 1 (not at all connected) to 5 (totally connected), the average feelings of connection for participants who attended school in-person/blended was 3.4. Whereas, the average for participants who attended school online was 2.9.

CHANGE IN LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Participants felt that their learning and academic achievement got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, on a scale of 0 (poorest quality learning and academic achievement) to 10 (best quality learning and academic achievement), participants reported an average of 7.9 before the pandemic compared to an average of 7.1 during the pandemic.



QUALITY OF EDUCATION COMPARED TO BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS AT SCHOOL

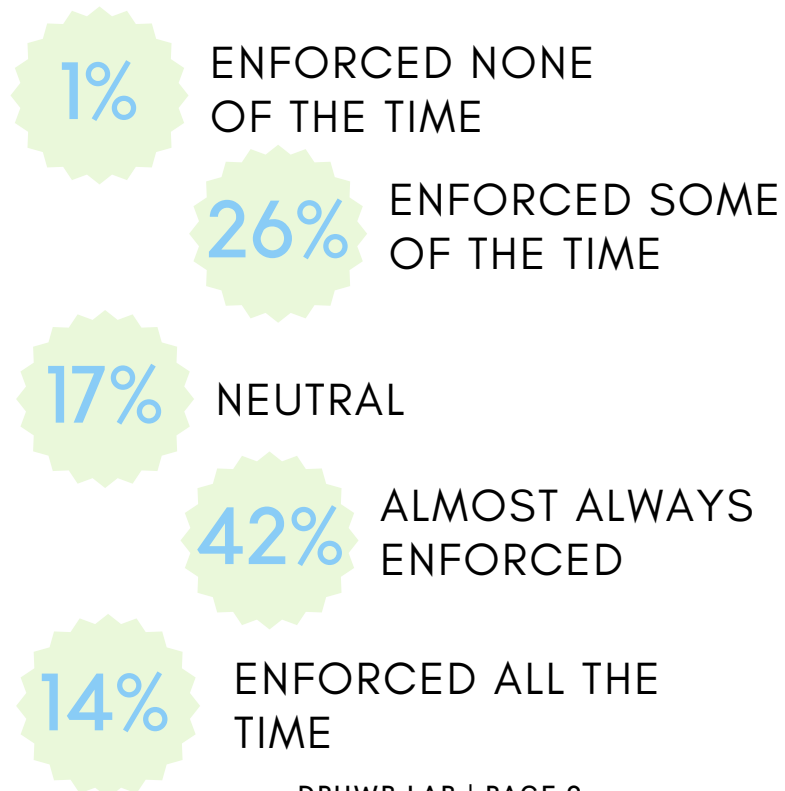
Of the participants who attended school at least partly in-person, roughly 84% reported being 'very careful' or 'somewhat careful' when following protocols at school. Slightly more than 11% said they were neutral about school protocols. Just under 5% indicated that they were not careful about following COVID-19 protocols at school.

TOP 5 RULES AND PROTOCOLS AT SCHOOL

- 1 Face masks required
- 2 Social distancing
- 3 Frequent hand sanitizing
- 4 Assessment of COVID-19 symptoms
- 5 Desk spaced further apart than they were before the pandemic



How often are COVID-19 protocols enforced at school?





PHYSICAL HEALTH

PERCEIVED CHANGE IN PHYSICAL HEALTH

Participants expressed that they experienced a decrease in physical health throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, on a scale of 0 (worst physical health) to 10 (best physical health), participants reported an average of 7.6 before the pandemic compared to an average of 6.7 during the pandemic.



COVID-19 EXPOSURE

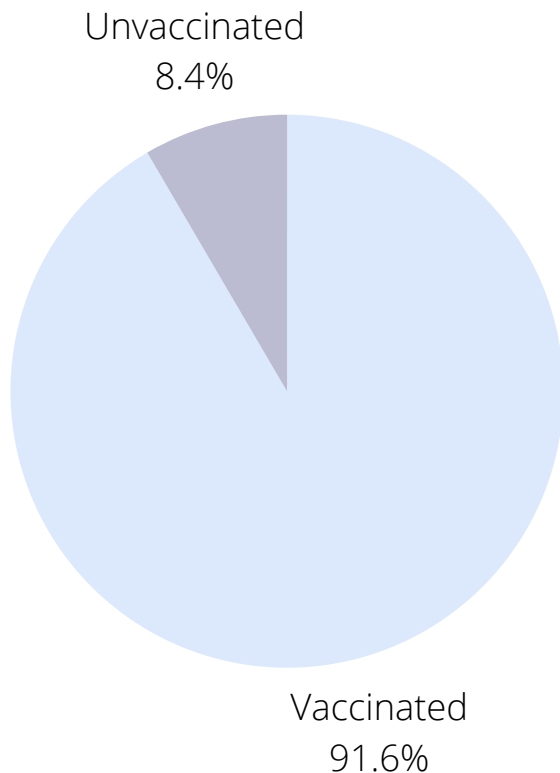
On average, participants knew around 3 people who had tested positive for COVID-19.



In total, 16.1% of participants had been exposed to COVID-19 and 4.9% had tested positive. For the teens who tested positive, 35.3% experienced no symptoms, 35.3% experienced mild symptoms, and 29.4% experienced moderate symptoms.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

PARTICIPANT VACCINATION STATUS



Of those who are unvaccinated, 65% indicated they planned on getting vaccinated in the future

TOP 5 FACTORS CONSIDERED

For those who are vaccinated

1. Public health recommendations
2. Type of vaccine
3. Health considerations for loved ones
4. Advice from family and friends
5. Own health considerations

For those who are unvaccinated and planning on getting it

1. Type of vaccine
2. Amount of information on short term effects
3. Amount of information on long term effects
4. Advice from family and friends
5. Amount of information on how effective COVID-19 vaccines are

For those who are unvaccinated and not planning on getting it

1. Own health considerations
2. Type of vaccine
3. Amount of information on long term effects
4. Amount of information on short term effects
5. Public health recommendations



MENTAL HEALTH

PLEASE NOTE: The information presented is intended for information purposes only. It is not intended to be used as diagnostic criteria. The information in this report is NOT a substitute for advice by an appropriate health professional. If you are experiencing distress, please contact an appropriate health professional.

PERCEIVED CHANGE IN MENTAL HEALTH

Overall, participants did not experience a perceived change in their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, on a scale of 0 (worst mental health I could have) to 10 (best mental health I could have), participants reported an average of 4.4 before the pandemic compared to an average of 6.1 during the pandemic.



DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

Our sample appeared to be at risk for clinical depression based on the number of symptoms reported. In total, 52% of teens in our sample were at risk for clinical depression.



ANXIOUS SYMPTOMS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Average Number of Anxious Symptoms | 21 |
| Minimum Number of Anxious Symptoms | 0 |
| Maximum Number of Anxious Symptoms | 39 |



TOP 3 ANXIOUS SYMPTOMS

1. I get angry sometimes
2. I worry about making mistakes in front of people
3. I have trouble making up my mind

PERFECTIONISM

Definitions

Self-Oriented Perfectionism

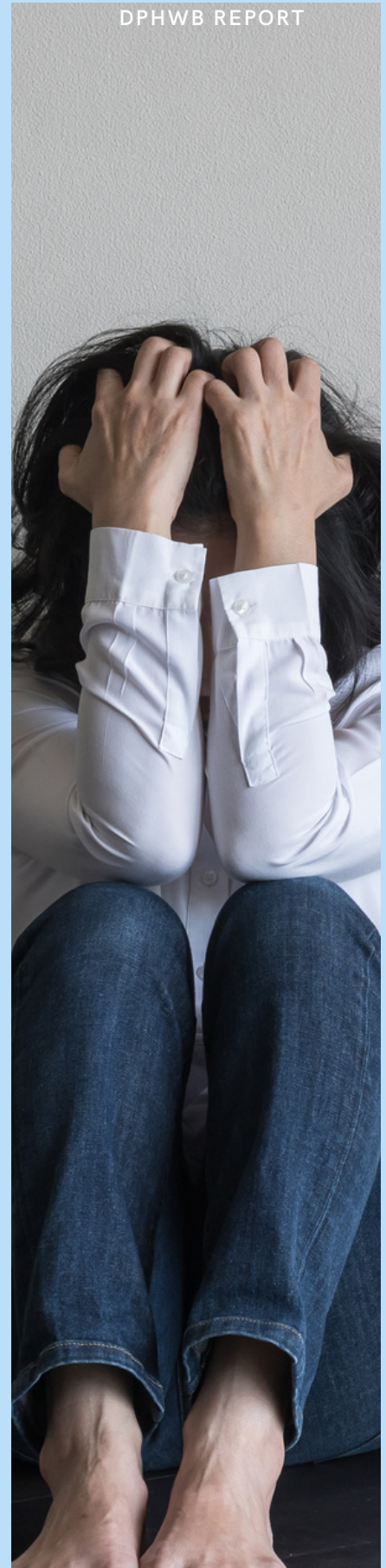
A self-driven need to achieve exceptionally high standards along with harsh self-criticism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991)

Socially Prescribed Perfectionism

Represents the belief that other people in your life demand perfection from you and will be critical and harsh towards you if you fail to meet their standards (Hewitt & Flett, 1991)

Participants' Experience

Our sample is higher in self-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism compared to a normative sample of adolescents in the same age range.





SOCIAL CONNECTION

SOCIAL LIFE AND CLOSENESS

Participants felt that their social life decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, on a scale of 0 (worst social life) to 10 (best social life), participants reported an average of 7.4 before the pandemic compared to an average of 6.4 during the pandemic.

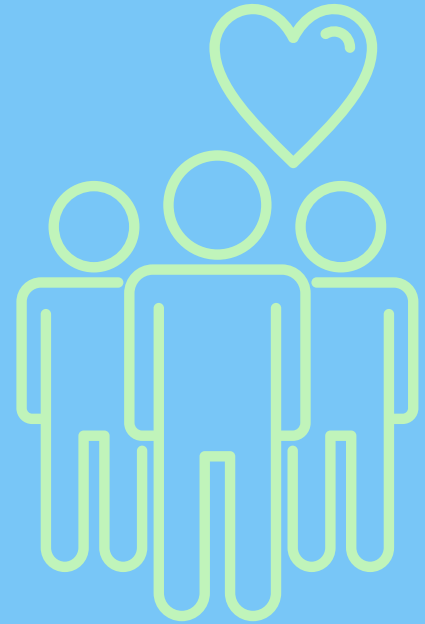
Additionally, participants felt that their closeness to friends decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. On a scale of 0 (as detached from my friends as I could be) to 10 (closest to my friends that I could be), participants reported an average of 7.5 before the pandemic compared to an average of 6.7 during the pandemic.

However, teens expressed that they felt closer to their family during the COVID-19 pandemic. On a scale of 0 (as detached from my family as I could be) to 10 (closest from my family that I could be), participants reported an average of 7.0 before the pandemic compared to an average of 7.5 during the pandemic.



SOCIAL LIFE AND CLOSENESS

Teens expressed that they felt more connected to people in-person compared to people in an online format. More specifically, higher scores represented greater feelings of connection. In the context of online connection, participants had an average of 79.2. Whereas, in the context of in-person connection participants had an average of 83.



RANGE OF LONELINESS

Higher scores represent greater loneliness



SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK AND SATISFACTION

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE OVERALL LEVEL OF SUPPORT?

Higher scores represent greater satisfaction



HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK?

Teens had an average of 26 people in their social network. The minimum number of people in their social network was 0 and the maximum number of people was 54.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO GAME USAGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

95.5% of participants used social media platforms. On average, the teens used 3.5 different platforms, with 6 being the maximum number of platforms used and 0 being the minimum number of platforms used.

FRIENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Average Number of Friends | 2743.3 |
| Minimum Number of Friends | 0 |
| Maximum Number of Friends | 190,447 |

HOURS PER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Average Number of Hours | 4.2 |
| Minimum Number of Hours | 1 |
| Maximum Number of Hours | 18 |

DAYS PER WEEK ON SOCIAL MEDIA

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Average Number of Days | 6.7 |
| Minimum Number of Days | 1 |
| Maximum Number of Days | 7 |

TOP 5 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

1. Instagram
2. YouTube
3. SnapChat
4. TikTok
5. Facebook



Overall, participants felt that their interaction on social media has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, the increase was noted across social media in synchronous fashion, asynchronous fashion, and time spent passively scrolling.

VIDEO GAMES

52.2%

of participants played
online games

WHO ARE THEY PLAYING WITH?

84.2%

Friends they hang
out with in-person

42.3%

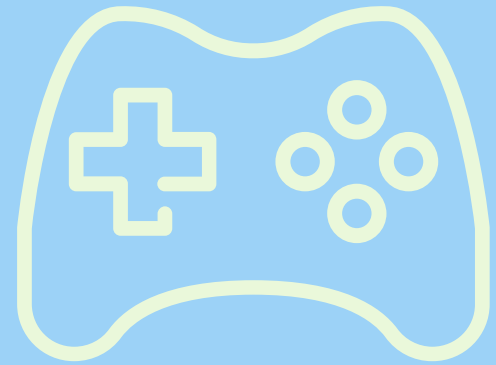
Friends they met
through video
gaming

45.5%

Play with strangers

63.3%

Play against the
computer



DAYS PER WEEK PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Average Number of Days | 4.3 |
| Minimum Number of Days | 1 |
| Maximum Number of Days | 7 |

HOURS PER DAY PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Average Number of Hours | 2.6 |
| Minimum Number of Hours | 1 |
| Maximum Number of Hours | 11 |

Teens shared that the hours they spent during the week playing video games increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, participants reported an average of 0.9 hours playing video games before the pandemic compared to an average of 1.5 hours during the pandemic.



WHAT WERE TEENS MOST GRATEFUL FOR DURING THE COVID- 19 PANDEMIC?

"These days I am most grateful for my family and friends, without them I feel like my life in lockdown wouldn't have been as happy."

I am grateful that I can relate with other students in-person at school again."

GRATEFUL

"I'm grateful for my family and friends, my well-being, and my good health."

"I am most grateful that all of my family and friends are healthy and well."