

Snapshot from ReachOut's research:
*Understanding the Issues Impacting
Young People's Mental Health*

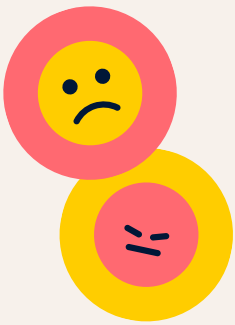
Study stress: Key findings

7 in 10

young people were concerned, worried or stressed about school, study or exam stress.

2/3

of those young people said this was the most concerning issue for them.



Nearly all of the young people who listed study stress as a top concern reported that it had a moderate or major impact on their mental health.

Young people are feeling burnt out from study and want to be more supported to manage their heavy workloads.



About the study

These findings are a snapshot from ReachOut's *Understanding the Issues Impacting Young People's Mental Health* study, a national survey of 667 young people aged 16–25 years conducted in 2022. The primary aim of the research was to understand what issues young people are concerned, stressed or worried about, and how these worries are impacting on their mental health and wellbeing. The full report can be found [here](#).



Who is being impacted by study stress?

Of the young people who listed study stress as a top concern, moderate and major impacts on mental health were reported by:

Students in Years 11 and 12

94%

Students in Years 8–10

90%

Tertiary students (TAFE, university and postgraduate)

85%

- Study stress was ranked as a top issue across all genders.
- **Just over half** of young people who identify as **female** reported that study stress was having a major impact on their wellbeing, and 38 per cent reported it was having a moderate impact. By comparison, **31 per cent of males** reported a major impact. Additionally, **61 per cent of non-binary young people** reported that study stress had a major impact on their wellbeing.

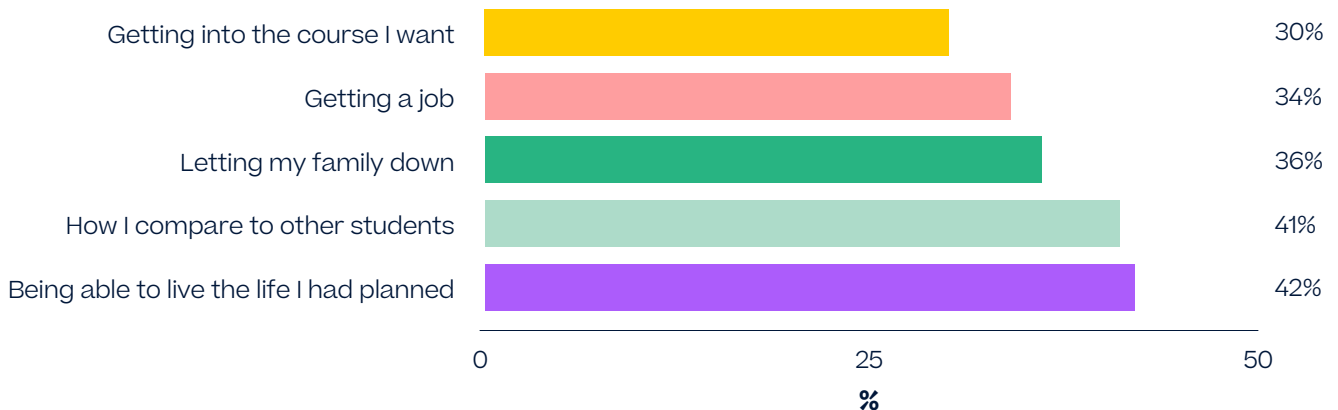


What are young people's greatest concerns related to study stress?

Participants were asked what it was specifically that concerned them in relation to study stress. Their responses indicated that they were concerned mostly about the future and about not being able to live the life they had planned, as shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Key concerns of young people relating to study stress



What impact is study stress having?

Nearly all young people who listed study stress as a top concern reported that it had a moderate or major impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

The study showed that mental ill-health can make school and study difficult for some young people.

'I have severe [mental health issues] which makes school so hard to do on a normal day, let alone to sit 5 exams each up to 3 hours and to also study and do well in high pressure and high intensity exam blocks ... [My mental health condition] makes it hard to do anything, especially focus, which is needed for school.'

Female, 16

The most commonly reported impacts of study stress were lack of motivation (75%) and not doing the things they enjoy (75%).

75%



75%



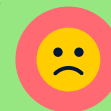
73%

reported having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much or too little



72%

reported changes to mood as a result of study stress



The majority of young people with study stress also reported they had trouble focusing (72%)

72%



42%

In the last 12 months, study stress also resulted in 42 % of young people taking time off work or study.



What kind of support do young people want?



Support from school

'... Having more support would save me more time and I could study more effectively and have more time to work to support myself and go to the gym to be healthier.'

Female, 25

Reduced financial pressures

'A stable job with stable income that allows me to continue studying. That's my best solution, I believe.'

Male, 20

'More adequate financial support from the government to assist with my study load.'

Female, 23

Top five things young people do to cope

1. Watch TV or listen to music
2. spend time on digital platforms or social media
3. snack or eat
4. do activities they enjoy
5. do more exercise or physical activity.

Is study stress still a problem in 2023?

We surveyed young people again in 2023, and here's what we found:

- Nearly nine in ten (88%) young people had experienced study stress in the previous 12 months, especially students in Year 11 (91%) and Year 12 (90%) and undergraduate students at university (94%).
- Just under half (43%) said study stress had a moderate impact on their wellbeing, while 18 per cent said it had a major impact.
- Young people mostly worried about 'not being able to live the life I had planned' (45%), while 43 per cent worried about how they would compare to other students, 38 per cent worried about letting their families down, 38 per cent worried about employment, and 33 per cent were worried about not getting into the course they wanted.
- Stress was primarily affecting motivation (61%), mood (56%) and sleep (51%). It also affected young people's enjoyment (42%), impacted their relationships with others (31%), caused them to take time off from work or study (27%), or impacted their physical health (30%).
- Of those who said sleep was affected by study stress, 65 per cent reported sleeping less and 56.9 per cent reporting staying up later at night to study.

How ReachOut can help

ReachOut is the leading online mental health service supporting young people during tough times.

We help young people feel better about today and the future, no matter what challenge they're facing. ReachOut provides a safe online place where young people can openly express themselves, explore what's happening in their lives, connect with people who understand their situation, and find the resources to help them manage their challenges now and in the future. Anonymous, free and 100 per cent online, ReachOut has been designed specifically for – and with – young people.

From one-to-one support from experienced peer workers, to online forums, as well as tips, stories and resources, ReachOut offers a wide range of support options that allow young people to engage in the ways they want to, when they want to.

