



The state of well-being of Singapore's youth

To assess the overall mental health of those aged 15 - 35 living in Singapore, the Institute of Mental Health carried out its first National Youth Mental Health Study in 2022. Here are the key findings:

Symptoms of depression

Nearly 15 per cent, or about one in seven youth,



had severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression, such as feeling sad, empty and a lack of interest and pleasure in activities most of the time.

Those more likely to have had severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression were:

- **Aged 20 - 24** (versus those aged 30 - 35)
- **Single** (v married)
- **Unemployed** (v employed)
- **From vocational schools** (v universities)

Symptoms of anxiety

About 27 per cent, or more than one in four youth,



had severe or extremely severe symptoms of anxiety, such as feeling worried, tense and restless most of the time.

Those more likely to have had severe or extremely severe symptoms of anxiety were:

- **Aged 15 - 24** (v those aged 30 - 35)
- **Females** (v males)
- **Single** (v married)
- **From junior colleges or vocational schools** (v universities)
- **From families with a monthly household income of below \$5,000** (v \$10,000 - \$19,999)

Symptoms of stress

Nearly 13 per cent, or about one in eight youth,



felt severe to extremely severe levels of stress, including being unable to relax or feeling upset or irritable most of the time.

Those more likely to have severe or extremely severe levels of stress were:

- **Aged 15 - 24** (v those aged 30 - 35)
- **Unemployed** (v employed)



Factors linked to mental health symptoms

Excessive social media use

About 27 per cent, or more than one in four youth,



reported spending more than three hours on social media platforms daily, which was defined as excessive in the study.

Those more likely to engage in excessive social media usage were:

- **Aged below 30** (v those aged 30 - 35)
- **Females** (v males)
- **Unemployed** (v employed)
- **From vocational schools** (v universities)

Young people with excessive social media usage were more likely to have had severe or extremely severe symptoms.

1.5 times depression
1.3 times anxiety
1.6 times stress

Body shape concerns

About 20 per cent, or one in five youth,



had moderate to severe body shape concerns, such as negative body image or excessive concerns about body shape that are typically associated with eating disorders.

Those more likely to experience body shape concerns were:

- **Aged 20 - 29** (v those aged 30 - 35)
- **Females** (v males)

Young people who had moderate to severe body image concerns were more likely to have had severe or extremely severe symptoms.

4.9 times depression
4.3 times anxiety
4.5 times stress

Cyber bullying

About 21 per cent, or one in five youth,



had been cyber bullied, encountering threats, harassment, or mean, aggressive or rude messages online.

The prevalence was similar across the different age groups and gender.

2 times Young people who had experienced cyber bullying were about twice as likely to have had severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress, than those who had not.

Young people who had moderate to severe body image concerns were also **2.6 times** more likely to have been cyber bullied than those without such concerns.

Other factors

Vaping, smoking and adverse childhood experiences were also associated with severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression or anxiety.

