



Perspectives on health from young people in the Kaipatiki Local Board area



Wordle created from all of the survey responses received from young people

Planning, Funding & Outcomes

Introduction

Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust run children's panels each term. These involve distributing and collecting surveys from a panel of students at schools or youth groups across the Kaipatiki Local Board area. Waitemata District Health Board was offered an opportunity to use these panels to gather feedback from young people about health. This was distributed during term 2 during 2017. A total of 11 schools and youth groups participated from primary school to college and the Kaipatiki local youth board. An alternative education group was also included and a total of 216 responses were received from year 6 to year 13.

Follow up discussions or feedback sessions were held with each school group and some ideas were explored in more detail during these face to face sessions. These were an opportunity to provide some health promotion information through a quiz and also were an opportunity to distribute health information such as 5+ a day resources, health and wellbeing apps and a guide on local walking tracks.

What does the word 'Health' mean to you and what makes you healthy?

Most people referred to health having a number of aspects. Some referred to being whole, having balance or a balanced hauora so the feedback has been summarised under the four walls of Hauora.

There were also other overarching comments about having a good lifestyle or good quality of life and being well or not being sick. Other general points included looking after yourself; visiting the doctor or dentist; being wealthy; having a good and long life; not harming others and being respectful, helpful and kind.

Physical well-being

Most feedback focused on physical health and particularly on eating healthily and being active.

Eating healthily – fruit and vegetables or 5+ a day were frequently mentioned. Other comments included eating less sugar or sweets, less fast food and drinking more water.

Being active – playing sports, being energised and staying fit were commonly mentioned. Other comments included looking after or feeling comfortable with your body and being strong. Some connected the importance of physical health and being active to mental health and that sports also provided social interaction.

Being in a healthy environment such as a healthy home, somewhere warm or reducing the risk of being polluted was mentioned by a number of people.

Hygiene and cleanliness was another area that was mentioned by a number of people. This included looking after teeth. Sleeping well was referred to by a small number of people and sexual health was also referred to.

A small number of people mentioned not being fat, obese or being skinny.

Mental and emotional wellbeing

The second most feedback related to mental health and emotional wellbeing. Having a healthy mindset and feeling the best they can or feeling happy were the most frequently mentioned.

Not being stressed and feeling safe were also mentioned by some people. Other comments included being able to concentrate, living in the present, using mind games to challenge the mind, not putting yourself down and making the right choices.

Social well-being

Many people referred to social health and having healthy and supportive relationships. Comments focused on having healthy and trusting relationships with friends and partners and being loved, cared for or supported by family.

Spiritual well-being

Several people mentioned the importance of spiritual wellbeing. This included having a growth mindset and challenging yourself, learning, being open to new perspectives or working hard.

Other comments included getting outside, saving the environment, fishing, being creative or involved with the arts.

Benefits of being healthy

Many people commented that being healthy meant that they had more energy and that they were less likely to get sick so they would live longer. This would also make them happier, more confident, able to take advantage of opportunities and productive, eg able to learn and study.

Being healthy would also help people to grow and to look and feel good – for example with defined muscles or being slim. It would help them to perform better in sports. A small number of people thought that being healthy would help to reduce the likelihood of them being called fat and being treated badly.

Being healthy would also help people to be calm, to manage stress and to sleep well.

How do you find your information on being healthy?

The ten most common sources of information (in order of frequency mentioned) were:

- Family
- Social media (instagram, facebook and youtube were mentioned most frequently)
- School or teachers
- Websites
- Friends
- Magazines
- Health professionals (eg doctors, nurses, dentists)
- Adverts or posters
- Books
- By their own experiences

Other sources of information included TV shows, fitness or PE instructors (including coaches), Google, phone apps, other people's opinions and the news or media. Some commented that that they particularly used social media to follow celebrities and role models while others were cautious of what they read online: *"Social media do portray 'healthy' and not in an always positive way, eg you must be skinny, become perhaps vegan, count calories, exercise a lot etc but being healthy is when you feel good about yourself as an overall person that can be defined by lifestyle and such,"* year 10 student.

What technology would you use if available?

The most frequently mentioned technology in order of frequency mentioned were:

1. App
2. Phone
3. Fitbit
4. Watch (eg Apple or Samsung)
5. Computer
6. ipad
7. Google
8. Website
9. Free wifi locally
10. Nike

The technology should be used for a wide range of health activities:

Physical health

- Sleep app
- Diet apps – weight loss, what to eat when, quantity of sugar in everyday food, water intake, barcode scanner to see how healthy food is
- Fitness apps – gym, step tracker, monitor movement, encouragement and challenges to try new things or increase effort
- Heart rate & blood pressure

Mental health and wellbeing

- Tracks emotional wellbeing and mood
- Mindfulness
- Activities to improve mental healthiness
- Stress management

Social wellbeing

- Tips on healthy friendships, lifestyle etc


Spiritual wellbeing

- Daily quotes, memes, pictures to increase wellbeing
- Challenges to try new things
- Alarms to stop you using your phone too long

“I would use an app that monitors my diet, exercise, and mental healthiness. It would offer advice for each meal and activities to improve my fitness and mental health”, In general, it was felt that any app should be safe, simple to use, colourful, easy to navigate, free and that the content should be short. Several people suggested that they would like it to be interactive / gamified (eg “..catch fruits in your mouth and they have the amount of water inside”) so that they could progress through stages and earn rewards. The tool should provide regular tips, daily goals and could include videos. Some people also mentioned that a technology solution could use artificial intelligence like Siri or Robot Levi while others thought it would be good to connect with a health professional or fitness coach for advice.

Existing apps mentioned were Sparx, Go Noodle, Sleep app, synergy and step counters.

The development of an app was explored in more detail with students from Birkenhead College. Their designs have been combined into the following ideas:

<p style="text-align: center;">FITR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Get fit today!</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="button" value="Sign up"/> <input type="button" value="Gmail"/> <input type="button" value="Facebook"/> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FITR or Wellbeing 4 You!</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;"> Mental Stress relief Study tips Free counselling </td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;"> Social Friends Meet ups eg run clubs </td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;"> Physical Diet Exercise Water intake Sleep Body fat </td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;"> Spiritual Religion Meditation apps links </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></td> </tr> </table>	Mental Stress relief Study tips Free counselling	Social Friends Meet ups eg run clubs	Physical Diet Exercise Water intake Sleep Body fat	Spiritual Religion Meditation apps links	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>				
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Social media

Some students felt that Instagram would be more convenient for most teenagers as apps would waste space on their phones and would be easily ignored. Others suggested setting up a website or using other social media tools like snapchat. Similar points were made around what content these accounts would provide and how they would be set up.

Exploring social media with students at the face to face sessions identified that there is no single social media tool that all students use so a multi-platform approach would be needed. Facebook was seen as having better functionality such as the ability to set up groups and that it was more interactive but not many students were using it. One suggestion was to get a famous local to encourage people to follow it.

Other technology

Suggestions were made by some about how to integrate this within their school life – for example having information boards or a hologramic board in the school. One suggested having a *“helpful, informative healthy website as the front page of all school web browsers. Therefore kids will be forced to be informed about being healthy...”*

It was suggested that technology could be used to help organize youth group fitness and activities and encourage people to go outside.

In addition, video games, exercise machines, computer games and console were also mentioned.

Other suggestions

More skate parks, playgrounds for exercise and exercise machines in the parks, more turf or more places for youth to go and hang out were also suggested by some. Some commented that they preferred *“physical copies like magazines better than technology like apps and websites because it is easier to find and access.”*

What one thing would help you to be healthier?

More sports and exercise was the most frequently mentioned. Many people felt they just needed to motivate themselves better while others felt that more school-based options would be good and that having a range of options that suited different people would be good including yoga, zumba and stretching as well as team sports. School holiday programmes, community sports days and outdoor activities were also mentioned by some as was access to a personal trainer or technology that would encourage and motivate people to be more active.

A healthy diet was the second most frequently mentioned. Many people felt they could eat more fruit and vegetables and less junk food or sugar. Several people suggested improvements to the food available at school with more access to healthy options including no sugary drinks and a good variety of fruit. Some commented that healthy food should be provided free of charge at school at breaks, for example free yoghurt. One person suggested that fruit and vegetables should be grown within the community for the community. A few people thought that there should be a sugar tax or that healthy food should be made cheaper while unhealthy food is more expensive.

More information and education about being healthy was the third most mentioned idea – this could be through school, online or in the community. Comments included:

- *“One thing that would help me be healthier would be more information on how to be healthy, foods to eat and how to live a better life”,*
- *“More school lessons about a person’s hauora – and how we can live healthy and the effects of it if we don’t”,*
“more information on mental health would be good”,
- *“Information on the actual calorie density of foods – I was personally extremely shocked at how unhealthy so many common foods are..”*
- *“I think more awareness in school of the resources available around me - are we allowed to see the counselor at any time? Are there condoms available at the nurse? I feel like these sorts of questions are what my peers are interested in; however, I don’t think they have these resources set in place for their healthiness”*
- *“...there are lots of fake news claiming like eating 99 strawberries will give you diabetes and some people believe the articles and there are also friends on diets so popular diet trends are coconut, almond milk...”.*
- *“..I think a big part of the problem in mental health is people being unaware and not understanding. Even someone [who] does not have problems with mental health.. should be able to know how to help their friends or peers who do, and make them feel and know that they are just as normal as anyone else”*

Another comment was that school education on health could be improved and that it needed to be less of the old repetitive stuff from the 80s and 90s. Other suggestions about information and education were cookery classes, persuasive articles and quotes to help motivation as well as advice from trusted sources.

Other ideas were:

- Lower cost or free and easier access to health and wellbeing support including health professionals
- Having good relationships with friends and family
- Having a new or open mindset
- Something that helps you be more relaxed and to help manage stress such as less tests / homework
- Mindfulness / good mental state of mind

- Being happy
- More sleep
- Technology such as apps, website or bot support
- Internet detox or limiting screen time
- Improved waiting lists
- Staying clean
- Less poverty and having enough food
- Getting a dog as a motivator to exercise
- More water fountains
- Drones
- Using skin products that are organic, cruelty-free, chemical-free and natural
- Food stalls which provided healthier options (less fat and more protein)

Recommendations

1. Carry out a more detailed review of what technology tools and support is available for young people to identify what gaps there are in terms of websites, tools, information and apps. Use this to scope the development of an app or multimedia resource that is integrated with social media and is freely available to young people.
2. Work with schools to provide teaching resources and to ensure that students have access to healthy food and drink options at school.
3. Work with Auckland Council to increase the availability of water fountains in community settings such as parks, community facilities and town centres.
4. Work with providers to consider what other health and wellbeing activities could be made available or facilitated to support the health and wellbeing aspirations of Kaipatiki young people in the first instance.
5. Identify opportunities to carry out a similar consultation in other areas of the Waitemata District Health Board area.

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Acknowledgement

Many thanks to Sonia Nerheny and Nam from the Kaipatiki Community Facilities Trust for providing access to the children's panels within the Kaipatiki Local Board Area and for their support in transcribing the feedback received.

