



Unlocking the Secrets: Understanding the Elements Impacting Mental Health in Malaysia's Wellness-Driven Lifestyle

Nur Anissa Liaw Abdullah¹, Naturelle Taylor Ng Xi Lei², Dr. Logenthini Mariappan³

Raffles University

(202320063)nuranissalia.abdullah@raffles.university¹, (202320009) naturelletaylorngxilei@raffles.university², logenthinimariappan@raffles-university.edu.my³

ABSTRACT

Unhealthy living lifestyle are one of the contributor for mental health illness such as this, requires attention, treatment and acknowledgement. Though, intervention from organizations and governmental communities and societies involved, there still a sign of increasing even up to this day. Mental health illness are indispensable matter as the effects circulates around both healthy living and mental health diseases and its' affecting the other and vice versa. Mental disorders represent a major contributor to disease burden worldwide hence, it also affects to the economic development. Many individuals disregard of its danger to health lifestyle living. It disregard all demographics worldwide. The issues and challenges that take place in Malaysia is discovered on current issue that happen. We will solve the healthy living interaction in Malaysia by understanding the relationship that cause the upbringing of mental health issues. This article along with questionnaires was conducted by gathering information from individuals through their understanding on the issue on healthy lifestyle of mental health in Malaysia.

1.0. Introduction

Did you know that mental health problems are one of the main causes of the overall disease burden worldwide? As said being one, we must know to grow in order to fit into the society through complexion of "normal". It's easier said than done. Without an extensive findings and through the development of history in Psychology, we can never identify what mental health is all about. In order to operate fully functional, we must be completely nonappearance in diseases or illnesses and by being in equanimity within ourselves between physical and social upbringing (Sartorius, 2002).

Thus, as Yehuda et al. (1996) points out, that diverse psychological disorders, for example, anxiety and affective illness pertaining to clinical depression, were abnormal psycho-biological stress responses affiliated with such disorder (as cited in Halligan, 2000). Therefore, mental health plays a major role in productivity and well-being. It is a cardinal contribution to economic development including daily activities as well. The issues and challenge of mental health in Malaysia is explored to give a big picture of the current situation that happen today, mental illness can affect anyone regardless of age, income, social status, race, ethnicity, religion or background. Neuro-degenerative disorders such as Parkinson's disease, dementia, alzheimer, or any other mental disorders, this can halt the engagement of full performance even in terms of self-care. In dealing with mental health alone will not solve the problem it requires adoption, caring, and nurturing, and that's what makes a healthy psychological output.

It also depends on how we handle our lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle can promote the general well-being of mental health. Evidence has shown by Velten et al., (2016) it has a good advantage in the psychological sphere, ability to minimize depression along with anxiety (as cited in Scott et al. 2008; Xu et al. 2010), appreciate life satisfaction (as cited in Headey et al., 2013), and overall mental health self-care (as cited in Chaney et al; 2007, Hamer et al; 2009, Rohrer et al., 2005). Whilst, keeping good mental health in shape, our daily life activities such as work, education, and relationship with others are all-around important as well. In addition, university students, consultants are always there to give a hand, even better, lecturers actively participate by organizing a club or just a private meeting with students or even holding in-class activity as well because it's vital as stated Harding (2019 as cited in Kidger et al., 2012) several factors in the school environment have been linked to youth mental health. Harding (2019) further explain on ,as positive teacher-student relationships are able to reduce depression (as cited Kidger et al., 2012; Plenty et al., 2014). 3 years ago, Covid-19 gave a major impact on our lives. On March 18, 2020, Malaysia and the global, implemented drastic changes and measures such as MCO (Movement Control Order) to break the chain of spread. The rates are doubled for juveniles.

Guintella (2021) phrased that a population can be observed a rise in mental health disorders over the past decade (as cited in Twenge et al., 2019). Guintella (2021) explained further, stress leads them toward bingeing, especially comfort foods rich in sugar, defined as a "food craving" (as cited in Yilmaz and Gökmen, 2020) and it can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle. This is to tell us how important healthy living relates to mental health. Thus, it affects the mental health of a person and society as well. Fortunately, with government help and society as a whole, it could ease the burden for a while. So, it raises questions on how mental health issues can solve to reduce the statistics and improve their quality of life. We will uncover ways to help you to know what

mental health is and why living healthily leads to a promising future stress endeavor. You can manage your mental health and improve your overall being by maintaining good mental health.

How can you do it? By eating well, performing daily routine exercises, having a good quality sleep, also, avoiding all sorts of harmful substances that can damage well-being. This review will delve into our understanding of mental health and the factors that Malaysian encountered along with the study to indicate the overall adaptation and the relationship to able us to shed light on different perspectives and the outlook on mental health and healthy living.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Eating well for healthy living

In conjunction with mental health, eating well is part of a healthy living lifestyle. A healthy, balanced diet can aid us to be consciously alert and have mental clarity, increasing concentration and attention span. What we eat can affect the whole system of the body and deprive of that, will starve us as well. It also can affect our emotions, and increase our anxieties due to the body's lack of certain nutrients to be able to garner strength to overhaul daily stresses. Due to that, we are unable to withstand environmental impacts such as easily falling sick, migraines, and excessive sweating causing social anxiety, this is because of a lack of nutrients to build immunity to support the process of circulation within the body. In order to function at high capacity, it is unquestionable that food intake is essential. Diet deprivation will lead to sluggishness, inability for decision-making, apathy aggravation, and eventually stress and depression. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2019, estimated around 50 million Malaysians acquired depression symptoms, including aged 5-9 years old, accounting for 1 in 20 children along with 1 in 8 adolescents aged 10-19 are likely to suffer mental disorders as well conjuring it to be a primary contributor to disability and health loss in Malaysia (Murugesan,2022). It is undoubtedly that consuming a healthy and balanced diet will lead to healthy living and the sustainability of mental health. To strengthen your mental welfare, prioritize an adequate amount of fruits and vegetables accompanied by meals containing high sources of omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon. Furthermore, consuming dark green leafy vegetables is essential to the brain, they are like a sheath guarding the brain. In addition, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils are highly favored for brain power as well (Sutter Health, n.d.).

2.2 Benefits of quality sleep

Quality sleep aids in mental health as well. Good quality sleep is the ability to fall asleep the moment when getting into bed, not experiencing any sleep defects such as insomnia, and waking refreshed the next morning. In order to ensure that sleeping routines are well taken care of, plan a schedule and follow through. For example, set a time for every day including weekends, and be consistent. This is to ensure that the circadian rhythm is not disrupted likewise for waking as well. As explained by Adams et al.(2017), disruption in the circadian cycle and transmission signal can cause alterations in cortisol levels, which may further contribute to the overall central and peripheral mechanisms which subsequently produce health-related mental disorders. Sapolsky et al (2000) interjected that "cortisol has important regulatory effects throughout the body and brain, impacting arousal, energy and metabolic processes, immune and inflammatory system functioning, and mood and sexual behavior" as cited in Adams et al.(2017) which indefinitely promoting mental health issue if not aware. In addition, maintaining a clean bedroom environment from allergens that can infect internal lung respiration and can cause an individual prone to frequent sickness. Furthermore, maintaining conducive environment, it is optional to use dim lights to ensure that the body perceives the environment of the night light and will eventually fall asleep. Circadian rhythm intolerance to light, therefore, Ohayon (2016) said exposure to greater outdoor nighttime lights will subdue melatonin secretion, and slow down sleep onset. Also, avoiding the use of gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops or even watching tv before bed. It is essential as the harmful rays can cause eye strain and will keep awake and alert, skipping unhealthy meals before bed such as fats, caffeine, sugary meals aids promoting sleep better. Indulging in unhealthy sleep hygiene will subsequently, leads to depression, anxiety, insomnia, and all sorts of complications to health problem as these can affect the normalcy of sleeping further.

2.3 Advantages of daily routine exercises

Exercise plays a major role in mental health promotion as well. In dealing with daily life stressors triggers, as mentioned by World Health Organization (2022), "physical activity enhances our thinking, learning, and judgment skills". Our body thrives via the circulation system, and routine exercises can offer great benefits. Its advantages are cardiovascular circulation by strengthening the heart pumping mechanism and increasing metabolism to aid in burning calories. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022), it intensifies brain well-being, weight management, lessens the complications of the disease, reinforces skeletal muscle, and improves the ability to perform daily activities. Thus, it is advisable for all ages to assign exercise as part of their routine lifestyle. With the uprising technology during the Covid-19 period for the past 3 years, instant gratification is becoming part and parcel in our lives, such as easy payment via online, food and beverages delivery services, online learning options, e-books, and e-library, and so forth. These benefits are the contributor to a sedentary lifestyle and declination in mental health thus, promoting health issues in the long run. In accordance with WHO (2022), statistics show in Malaysia, 81% of the male population with adolescents (aged 11-17), 35% of adults (18 and above), and 50% of adults (aged 70 and above) living physical inactivity whereas female populations, 91% adolescents, 43% adult (aged 18 above) and 59% adult (aged 70 above) respectively. It is very important to note the hidden danger for mental health and if ignored, it will devastate the economy due to immobility and the increased death rate. Eventhough, job opportunities are available ubiquitously, mental health can also affect performance in any given job leading to the development of work stress, financial burden, and health issues within the family, if the acknowledgment of causes and effects that

could bring about mental health issues is ignored. It is determined that physical activity has the ability to de-stress and constitute mental clarity therefore, mental health issues can be handled with utmost care.

2.4 Harmful Substances on mental health

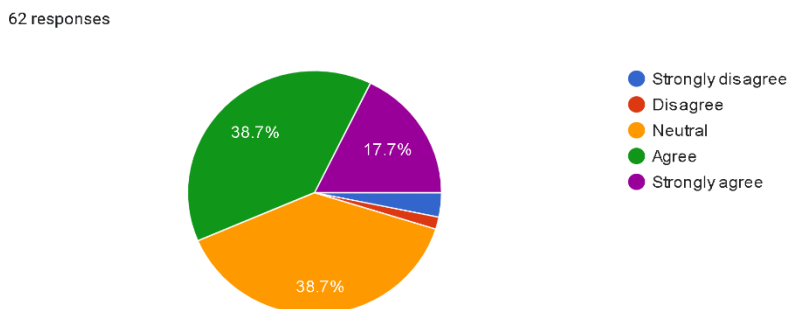
Lastly, harmful substances can affect mental health indirectly if not, well aware of their nature. The temporary elation for the mind and body can bring more harm than good and the main reason for this influence is the social community and work stress. These toxins can affect the overall well-being and may even worsen the pre-existing ones leading to substance abuse. Substance use disorders can have the ability to make a person abuse or misuse drugs and due to this, they are urged for treatment followed by rehabilitation, therapy, and medications. For mental health and substance use disorder relapse clients, will find that behavioral and cognitive therapies can be most beneficial (National Institute of Mental Health, 2023). It shows that even up to this point, children can get involved in doing drugs because of the heavy influence from peers and parents. Males are in the top chart of drug users for age 40 and above, and adults aged 25-29 are experiencing an increase amounting to a total of 17268. Whilst for females, with a lower amount of 937 respectively (OpenDOSM, 2023). Preliminary action can improve outcomes and aid relapse clients effectively. For the enhancement of the treatment, An integrated dual disorder treatment (IDDT) model that reinforces the quality of life for clients with a severity of relapse mental illness and substance use disorders by incorporating together substance abuse and mental health services (Case Reserve Western University, 2023). There are no telltale signs that excluding one of these can ensure the stability of mental health. It is a vast subject and every point mentioned above are interrelated and critical. All factors can contribute to the decline of mental health unless precautionary action and awareness bring it to the least harmful path.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design. 5 Likert scale were used in survey questionnaires and the samples were chosen at random. A total of 60 participants responded the questionnaire and the total score with percentage was presented in the findings of study.

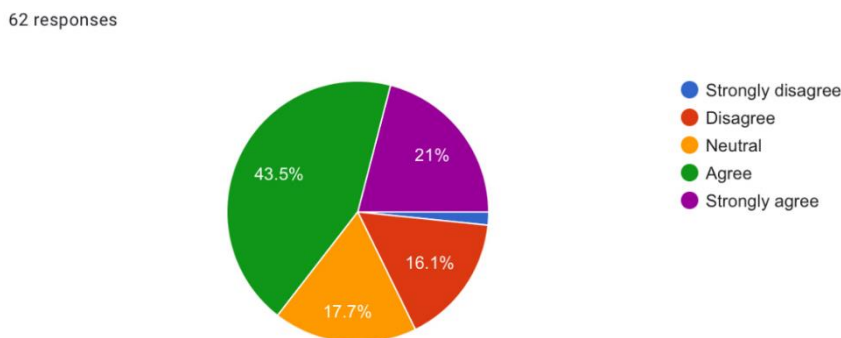
4.0 Research Findings

Figure 1 : Individual preferences on their outlook of life



According to the figure 1, the highest percentage for individual comes in term of agreement with their outlook of life is 56.4% while, 38.7% uncertain about it their outlook in life especially regarding with mental health, only 4.8% disagree on these preferences.

Figure 2 : Individual preference on well-balanced diet in adding fruits and vegetables into dishes



Based on figure 2, a total of 64.5% agreed that well-balanced added with fruits and vegetables in their dishes, both are 17.7% being neutral and in disagreement respectively.

Figure 3 : Confident in handling challenges

62 responses

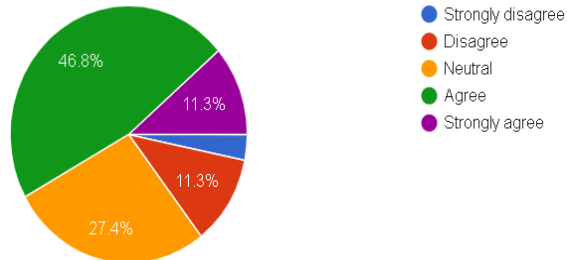
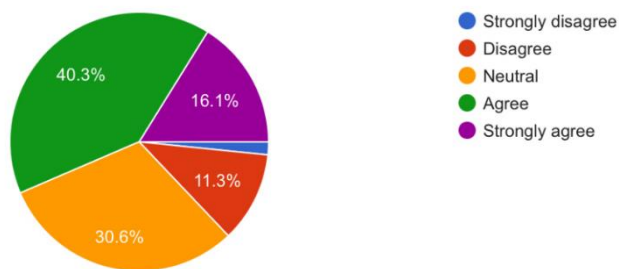


Figure above show that the highest percentage are 58.1% on those who are confident in handling challenges, unlike the opposed, gaining to just 14.5%, giving the sheer uncertainty for the neutrals with 27.4%.

Figure 4 : Individual preferences on meditation and deep breathing exercises

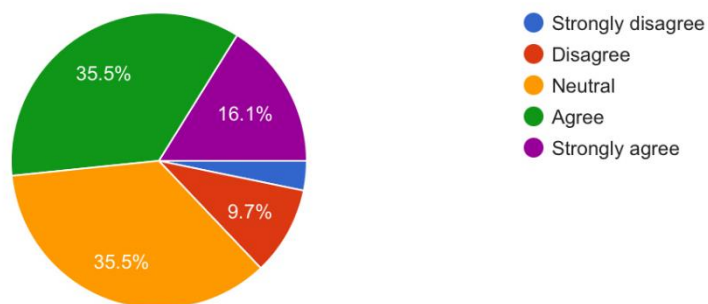
62 responses



In figure 4, 56.4% on those who are agreeing, understood the essentials of practicing meditation and deep breathing exercises, meanwhile, 30.6% neutral individuals still stay with the ideas of not engaging such a peaceful activities.

Figure 5 : Often affected by stress and anxiety

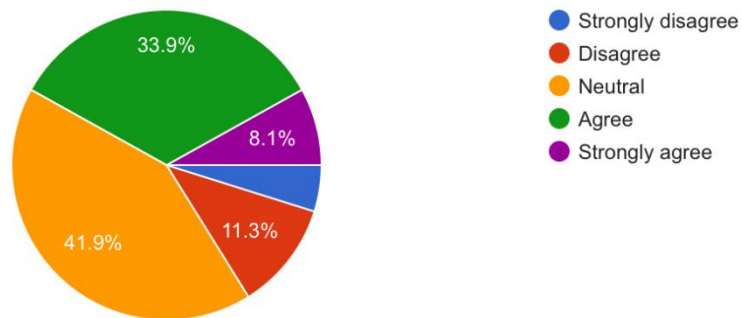
62 responses



Above figure correspondent seems to agree strongly by 51.6% on how often they are affected by stress and anxiety, meanwhile, 35.5% being neutral in knowing that there maybe stress inhibition, and 12.9% are disagreeing the nature of stress being present in daily lives.

Figure 6 : Individual daily work-life balance

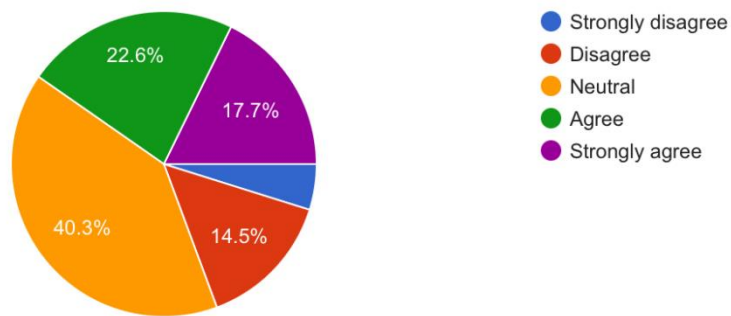
62 responses



According to figure 6 findings, 42% is the highest percentage who agrees with the ability to have a work-life balance despite challenges occurrences, neutral individuals making “agreeable” less than expected by 41.9% while 16.1% disagrees with the thought of work-life balance.

Figure 7 : Individual stress management efficiency

62 responses



Based on figure 7, we can see that both neutral and agreeable individuals matched up with total of 40.3% respectively indicating the efficiency of their stress management while putting disagreeable individuals to 19.3%.

Figure 8 : Assigning good sleep quality in maintaining good mental health

62 responses

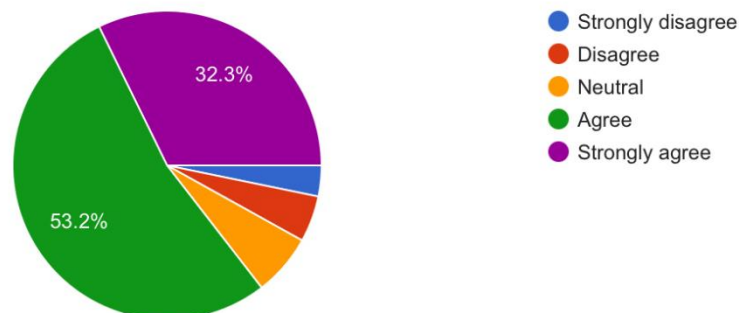
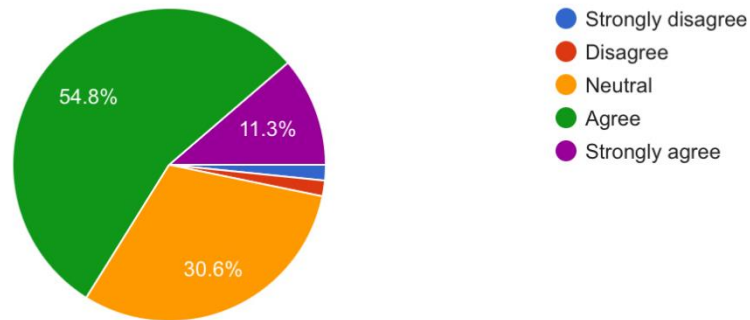


Figure 8, 85.5% is the highest percentage are in total agreement through good sleep quality can maintaining good mental health, while 8% individuals disagreed in that fact, and 6.5% being unsure whether that this method are working well for them.

Figure 9 : Adaptability to new situation and changes that occurs

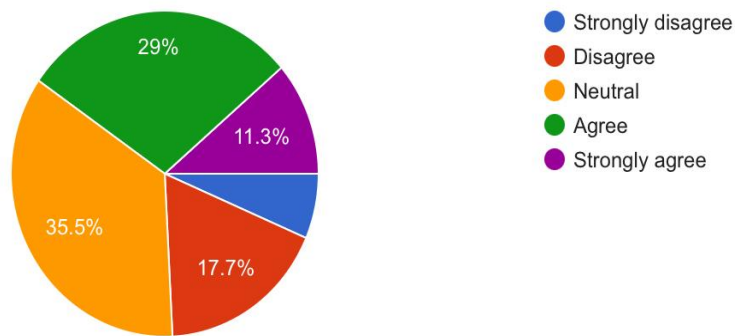
62 responses



In figure 9, the highest percentage is 66.1% who agrees to be able to adapt changes, while 30.6% are facing challenges quite differently and to reject on adaptability, and 3.2% disagree on this.

Figure 10 : Individuals preference on self-care

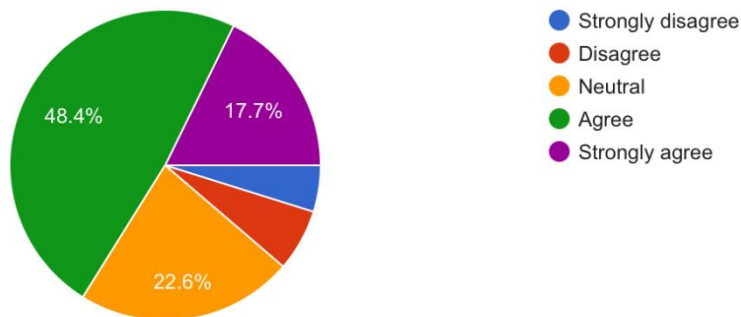
62 responses



According to figure 10, the highest percentage is 66.2% who agrees on prioritize self-care for maintaining mental health, meanwhile, to neutral, only 22.6% unsure whether is workable and 11.3% disagree that self-care would mean anything to maintain mental health.

Figure 11 : Exercise and Nutrition for a healthy lifestyle maintenance

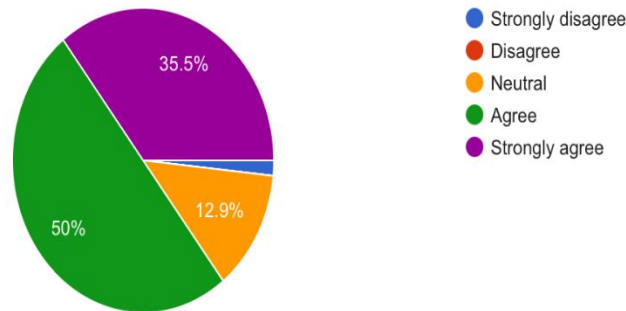
62 responses



According to figure 11, 40.3% agrees that exercise and nutrition are to maintain healthy lifestyle unlike neutral individuals given uncertainty to the idea with 35.5%, and, disagree individuals who rejecting these ideas.

Figure 12 : Positive impact on interaction among friends and loved ones

62 responses



In figure 12, 85.5% agrees on the positive impact on interaction within society, and 12.9% are not sure are these is part of the reason for affecting mental health? Lastly, 1.6% only who disagree.

Figure 13 : Communication efficiency to others

62 responses

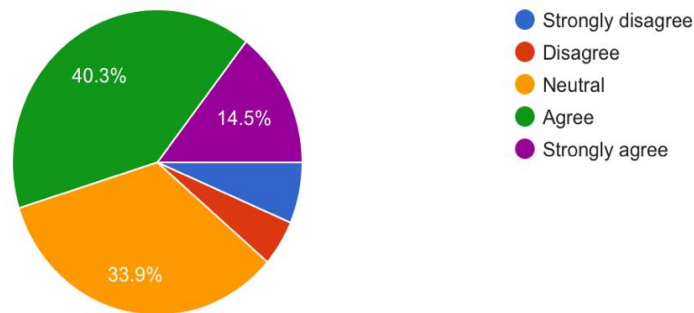


Figure 13 shows, that 54.8% individuals that agrees, meanwhile, 33.9% neutral individuals unsure about this, 11% who disagree these as a contribution factor for the means of mental health.

Figure 14 : Abstinance to bad habits like smoking and drinking

In figure 14, highest percentage those agree is 72.6%, secondly, 21% being neutral as some unsure with it, lastly, 6.4% disagree as some are non-abstinance to these substances.

62 responses

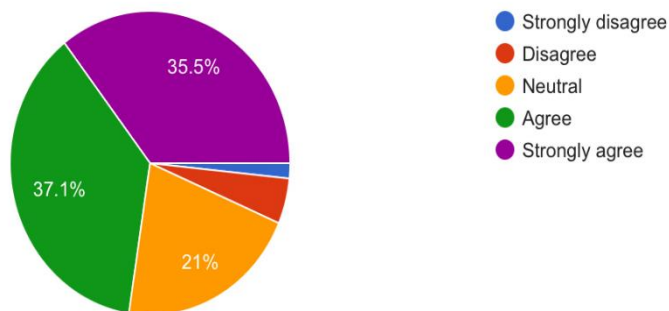
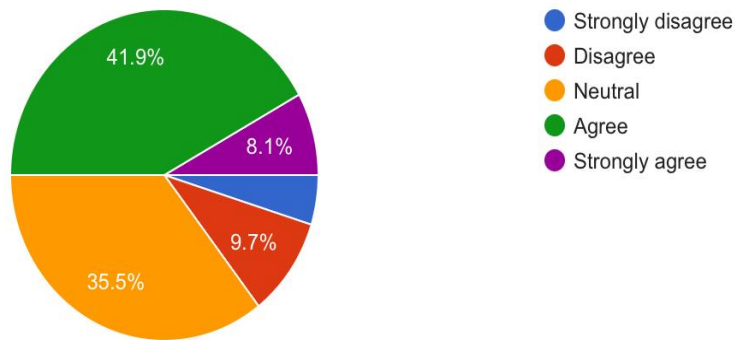


Figure 15 : Handling setbacks and failures

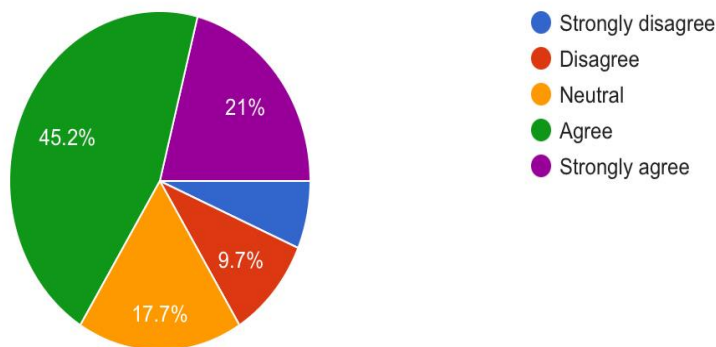
62 responses



Based on the info given in figure 15, individuals who agrees (50%) to be able to handle setbacks and failures while 35.5% neutrals are referring a certain situation that causing them inability to handle certain setbacks and failures leaving 14.5% to individuals disagreeing on it.

Figure 16 : Seeking therapy to improve mental well-being

62 responses



According to the above mention, 66.2% agrees using therapy for mental health improvement, neutrals feeling unsure with these ideas, while, 16.2% disagree seeking therapy is best way because they are some are able to enjoy life goodness without the need of therapy.

Figure 17 : A sense of belonging to the community

62 responses

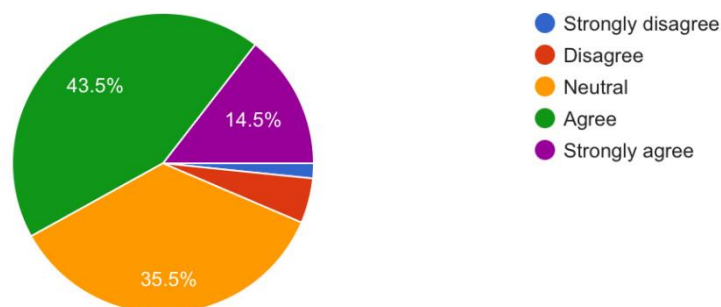


Figure 17 shows a highest percentage of 58% agreed having a sense of belonging, neutral individuals are 35.5% unsure and 6.4% to disagree.

Figure 18 : Open up to discussion and awareness including lessen stigma on mental health issues

62 responses

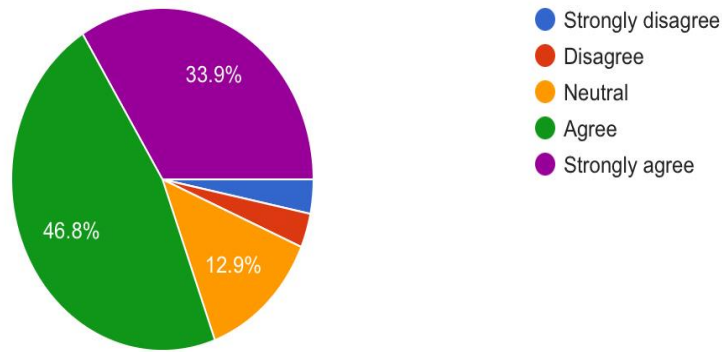
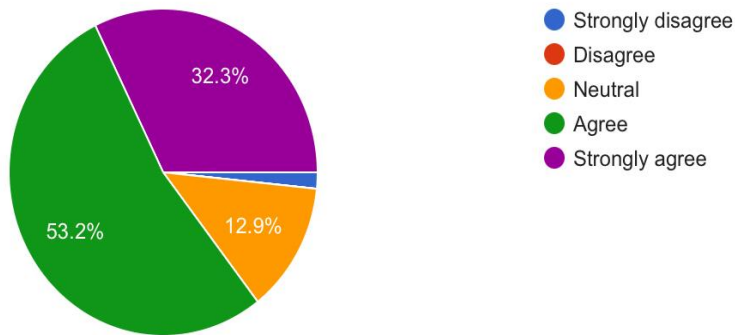


Figure 18 represents the highest percentage who agrees of 80.7% to open up to discussion and awareness while neutral individuals are at 12.9% uncertain with these ideas and 6.4% to disagree.

Figure 19 : Getting an affordable in equivalent to good quality service cater to mental health

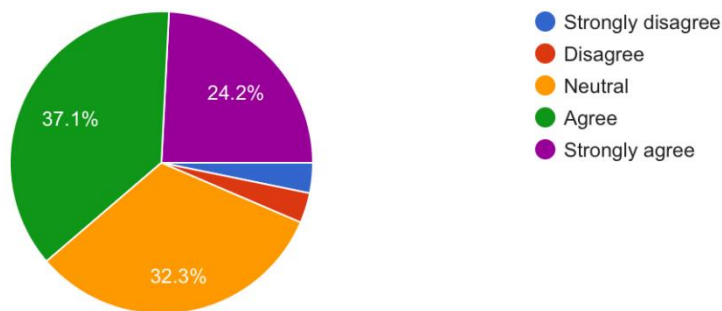
62 responses



In figure 19, 85.5% agreeing for the affordable equivalency quality services, while 12.9% on neutral individuals and 1.6% disagreed the relation of these regarding mental health.

Figure 20 : Always be aware of mental health

62 responses



Info depicted from figure 20, show the highest percentage is 61.3% agrees of the awareness of mental health, While, 32.3% in neutral and that gives the disagree members unaware of their health 6.4% to disagree.

5.0 Recommendation & Conclusion

In conclusion, mental health is a different experience for each individual person, it significantly impacts their overall well-being and day-to-day life. The survey conducted for this investigation has brought out tons of different ways people may use to bring positive energy in their lives and their awareness of both physical and mental health. As recommendation, its crucial to use accessible resources like education to integrate mental health talks into school curriculum, community programs and workplaces. By showing accurate information about mental health, individuals can develop an understanding and empathy towards those who experiences mental illness. Secondly, efforts would be made to fight back the stigma around mental health by sharing personal stories, highlighting successful people who have overcome mental health and promoting open conversations can help debunk myths and encourage people to seek help. Furthermore, having easy access to mental health resources is needed, it involves improving its affordability of its services, establishing helplines that offer information and self-help tools.

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