
Workshop Feedback Results

2014 - 2017

Foreward

Our ethos at Heads Above The Waves has always been that “one size doesn’t fit all”. There is no simple solution to a complex problem like self-harm. We believe that everyone’s path to recovery is as unique as the person themselves. These workshops that we’ve been delivering and refining over the last 3 years are intended to be a low-level support for young people who are struggling with self-harm, with a view to introducing positive, creative coping techniques, rather than necessarily looking to “fix” them.

While these results are a useful guide as to the effectiveness of our workshops, they’re only a snapshot. The activities we introduce across our short time with the young people won’t necessarily be for everyone. Even if we simply plant the seed in someone’s head that it is possible to recover from self-harm, and to replace a harmful coping mechanism with a creative one, then we’re doing something right.

This document uses terms like “data” and “respondents” but what we’re actually talking about are human beings.

Specifically young people who have complex lives and increasing pressures, and who are trying to find ways of coping with it. We should always remember to keep this at the forefront of any and all research in the field of mental health.

We also use the term “bad days” as a fairly all-encompassing term for difficulties with mental health; it’s not meant to trivialise the issue, but rather, be something that everyone can relate to, whether that’s severe clinical depression or struggling with every day life.

We consider our workshops a constant work in progress, taking the feedback from each session, along with other stories & experiences shared with us through HATW to try and improve what we do and be as helpful as possible to everyone we come into contact with.

We’ve been lucky enough to work with some truly inspiring young people over the last 3 years, and we’d like to thank them for their input in terms of feedback, and in terms of engaging with us week in, week out.

We’d also like to thank all of the schools, youth groups, and services who’ve had us in to work with them and their service users.

- Si Martin & Hannah Morgan
Directors, Heads Above The Waves

Data Used

Feedback gathered between December 2014 and July 2017

Total number of schools workshops delivered in: 4

Total number of schools worked in (including PSE Days): 8

St. Teilo's, Lewis Girls School, Corpus Christi, Llanishen High School, Cantonian High School, Hawthorne High School, Tonypandy CS, Tewkesbury School

Total number of other settings (youth groups, other agencies, etc): 7

Swansea Women's Aid, Eye to Eye, Going Public, Glyncoch, HATW Shop, Project Unity, RCT Positive Mental Health Youth Conference

Total number of workshop sets delivered (4 sessions per set): 11

Number of feedback sessions used for this data: 10

Total number of respondents for this data: 53

Ages ranged from 11 - 27 with workshops

25 students were given the original feedback questionnaire

28 students were given the updated feedback questionnaire

Workshop Overview

Workshops are delivered across 4 weeks within schools. The schools/ services identify students who are struggling with self-harm and refer them into the service.

Each workshop runs for about an hour and a half and is comprised of:

Practical activity

A creative coping technique, based on something that's helped someone overcome self-harm in the past (including art, music, writing, and meditation).

Discussion

To give students a chance to explore their feelings and experiences. Each discussion builds on the last.

Self-assessment

Students reflect each week on different aspects of their lives and identify where they are harming or caring for themselves. At the end of the 4 workshops, students are able to see their progress, and any persistent issues can be followed up by staff.

Literature

Following up on the activities and discussions from the week, and signposting students to further support.

After each set of workshops, students were asked to complete a feedback form anonymously. Not all students who attended the workshop set answered the questionnaires.

Student Satisfaction

Questions asked:

1. What were you hoping to get out of the workshops?
2. Do you feel like you got what you hoped for? Yes/No

8/28 said they were looking for alternative coping techniques

8/28 said they were looking to talk/get advice

“ Just to be able to take control over my emotions and handle my self-harm

“ To be a different person and get advice

“ A strategy to cope with my emotions other than harming myself

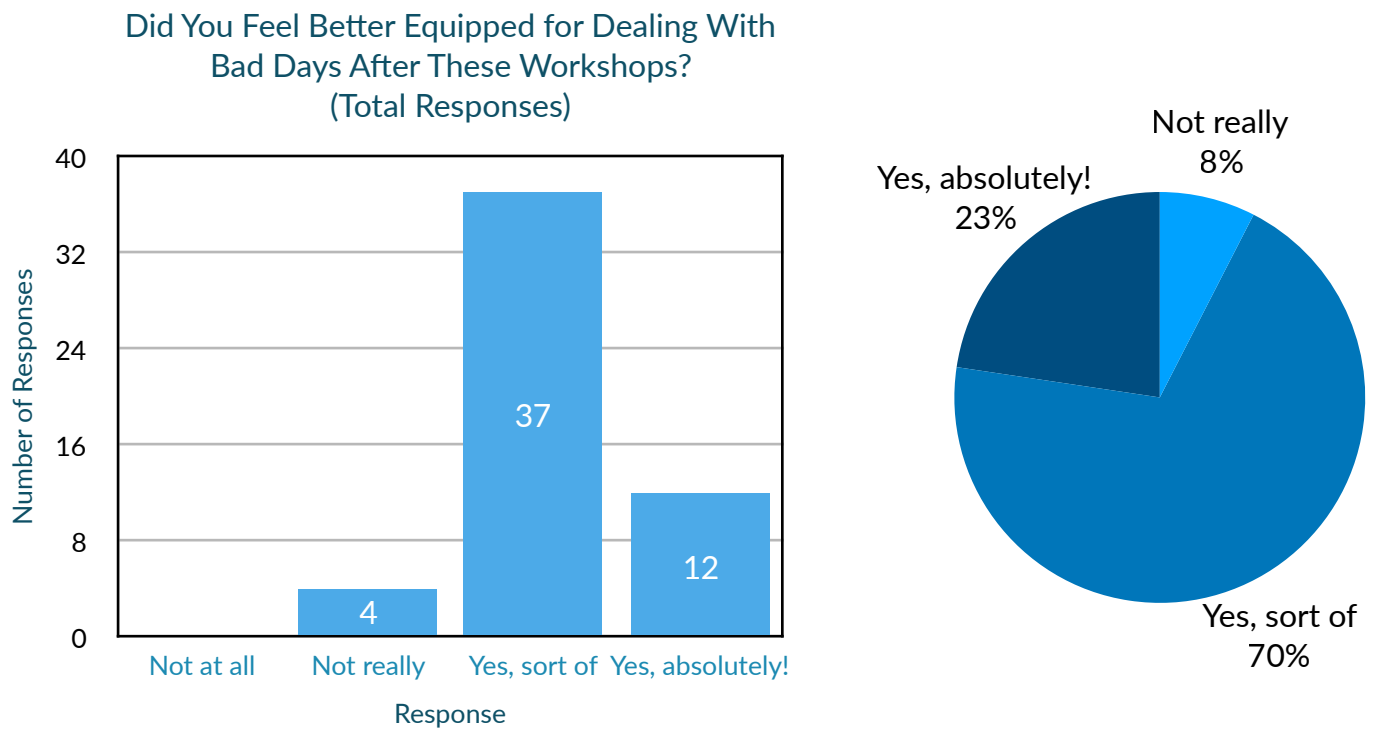
20/28 said they felt they got what they'd hoped for.

8/28 were not answered.

*These questions were only asked in the updated feedback form (28 respondents)

Have you felt better equipped for having bad days since starting the workshops?

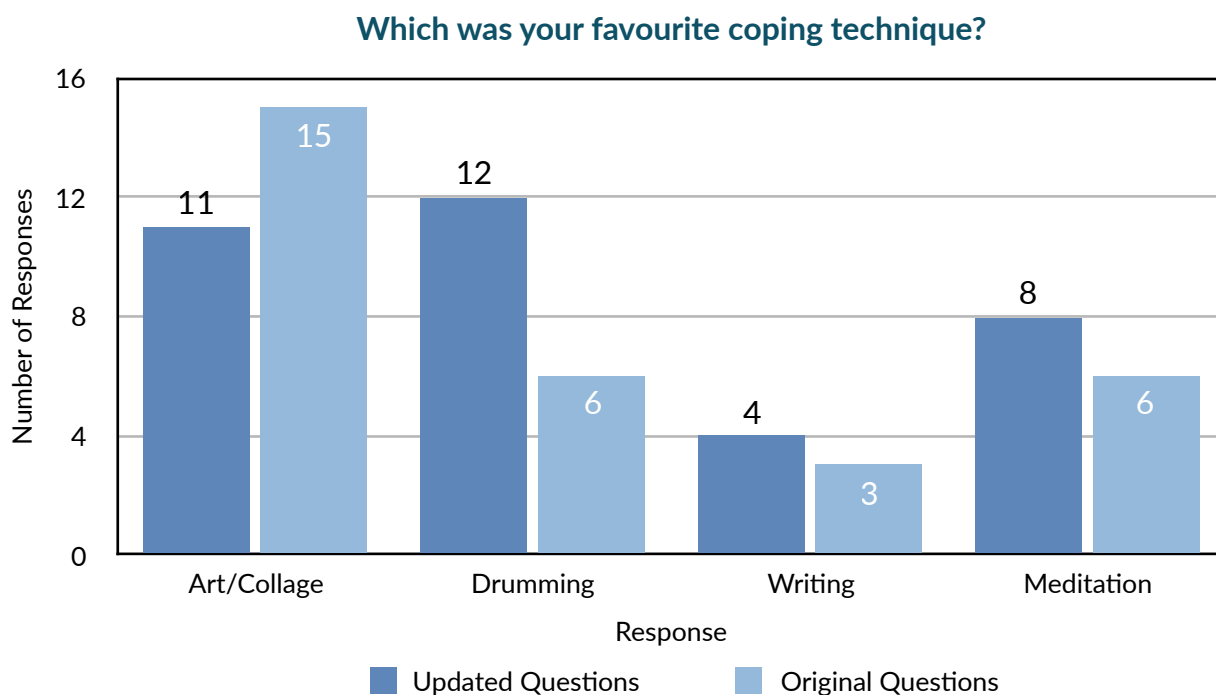
We understand that these coping techniques introduced across 4 short weeks aren't going to necessarily change people's lives, but we want every student we engage with to feel better equipped moving forward to cope with bad days.



The vast majority of respondents felt partially or totally equipped to deal with future issues, using either the coping techniques introduced through workshops, techniques of their own, or by talking with people they identified through completion of their own action plans.

Coping Techniques

Each standard set of 4 workshops contains 4 different creative coping techniques: art/collage, drumming, writing, and meditation.

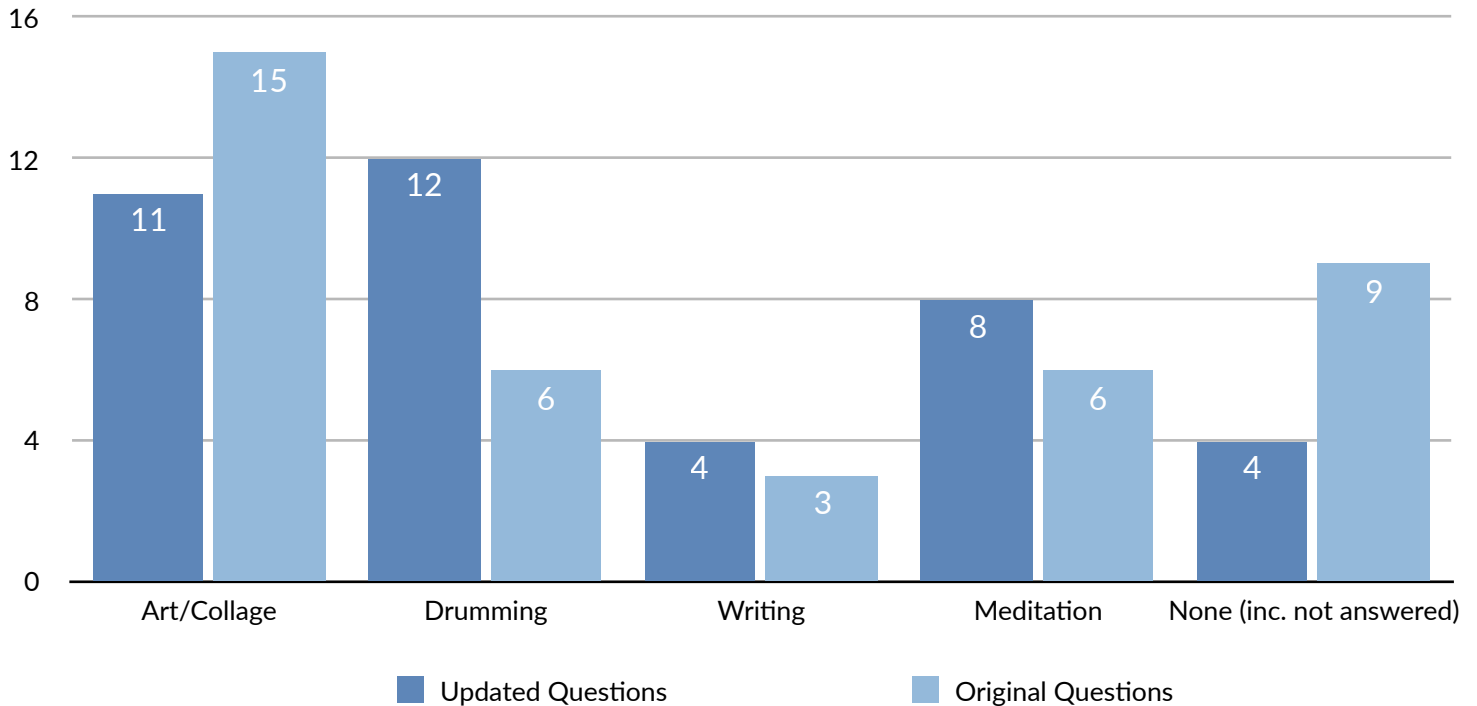


Art and music are consistently popular activities - potentially because some of the students we engage with already enjoy them anyway.

Writing was the least popular, so we updated our approach to the writing session - making it more about each student writing positive things about each other in their notebooks they were given

NB: Figures for Favourite Coping Technique are slightly skewed because some students put more than one answer, and one group of respondents (6 students) did a second set of workshops containing different activities (tie-dye, circus skills, organisation)

Which of the coping techniques have you used at home?



One of the most important things we wanted to measure was whether service users were using the techniques outside of the workshops. The collage is notably one of the most popular, because of it being so easily accessible and creative, while drums (specifically: practising simple rhythmic patterns or rudiments) were noted as being a good short term distraction for students to take their minds off of things.

Service users are given notebooks to take away from the sessions and write in, which proved popular during the sessions, but less so outside of the sessions.

For the meditation workshop, HATW suggest a few apps that service users could use at home as well, including *Calm*; *Stop, Breathe, Think*; and *Pacifica*.

Discussions

Did you find the discussions each week helpful?

Updated questions: 28/28 said yes

Original questions: 24/25 said yes (1/25 said "sometimes")

Why/Why Not?

Common themes were knowing that there were other people going through/who had been through similar experiences, and feeling able to talk freely without being judged.

“ I felt like I wasn't alone

“ Because whenever I felt alone it helped me see I wasn't

“ Because it's nice being able to talk about things with other people who understand

“ Because I got to talk about my feelings without being judged

Literature

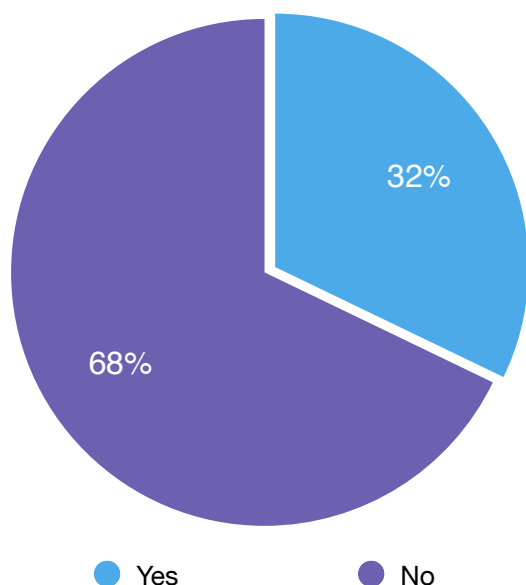
Students are given literature at the end of each session, that follows on from the discussion and offers further advice: Identifying when you've been triggered, Talking about self-harm, Alternatives to self-harm, Who to talk to.

All students on the updated questions said they found the literature each week helpful

Additional Support

Have you had help for self-harm before HATW?

Have you had help for self-harm before HATW?



The majority of students (around 2/3) had not received any previous help for self-harm.

Those that replied yes, had previously been (or continued to be) in contact with school counsellors, private counsellors or CAMHS.

What was different about HATW?

The main themes that came up about what was different about the HATW workshops compared to previous support was the lived experience of the HATW staff:

- “ It was the fact that they had been through the same
- “ Talking about what they have been through and being open minded
- “ Because it was a group of us and people with experience
- “ Different because they did activities, less pressure of a one-on-one because it's in a group

Have you found anything else that HATW has done helpful?

Facebook was the most frequently identified additional helpful resource, along with the website (hatw.co.uk) and Instagram (@headsabovethewaves) with positive quotes and coping techniques identified as particularly helpful on these platforms.



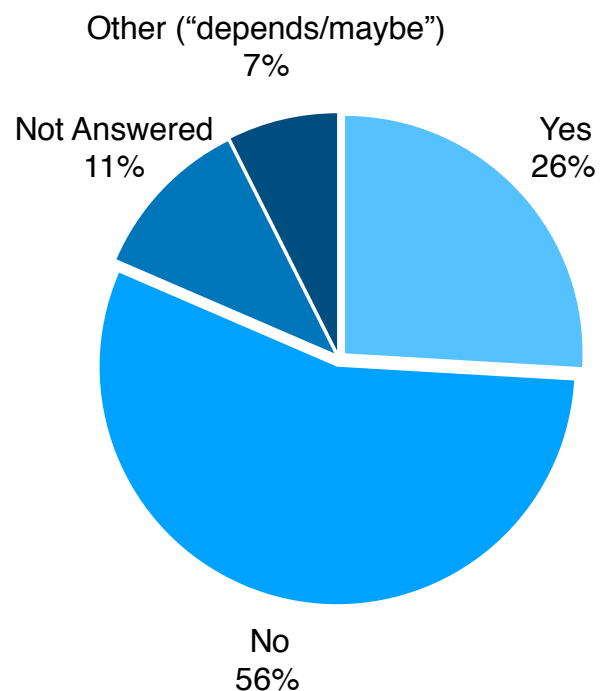
Workshop Improvement

Would you have preferred to speak to someone one-to-one?

In the updated questionnaire, we asked whether service users would prefer a one-to-one setting than a group setting for the support from HATW.

One-to-one sessions were trialled in one school as an additional level of support for students who wouldn't be suitable for a group setting.

Ultimately, different people with different personality types will benefit from different forms of support.



What else would you liked to have seen from the workshops?

More activities relating to art (drawing, painting, etc) was mentioned 12 times

More music related activities was mentioned 6 times

Other suggestions for additional workshops were exercise based activities, day trips & cooking.

More/longer workshops were also frequently mentioned.

An important point that a few respondents mentioned was the idea of doing workshops specifically tailored to the individuals in each workshop - on a case by case basis.

This could be done by having a large catalogue of potential workshops ready, meeting with the school & students before the first workshops and discussing which would be the best for the group.

Limitations

It's important to note that we're still working with relatively limited numbers, and drawing any definitive conclusions can't really be done until we've worked with more students.

The workshops themselves only run for 4 sessions - at an average of approximately an hour and a half per session, this is only 6 hours of contact time with students. In an ideal world, we'd be able to spend much more time with students, or at least provide follow up drop-in sessions.

The activities won't work for everyone. These sessions are particularly geared towards more creative activities, and simply won't be right for some people. An improvement suggested by students was to figure out a unique set of workshops based on each individual group - though this brings it's own limitations with it.

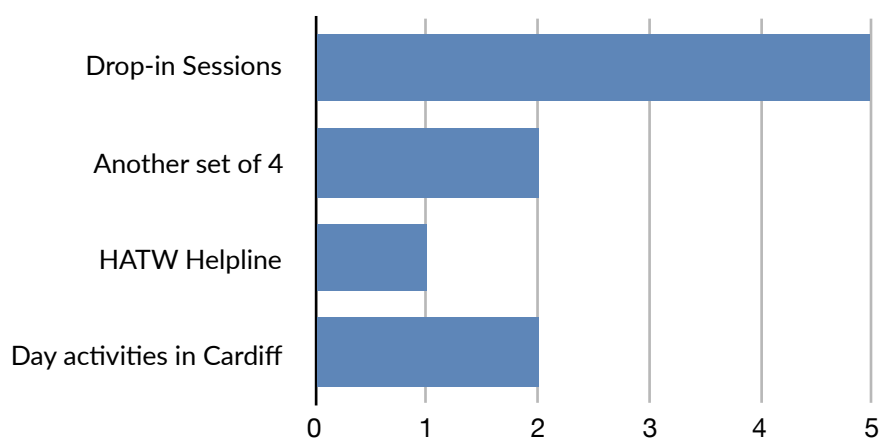
Each of the feedback sessions, and the weekly self-care spectrums, are potentially more of a snapshot of how the student is feeling on that particular day, rather than indicating any long term impacts.

These sessions are also simply meant to introduce positive coping techniques to students, and requires the students to want to try them and be ready to stop self-harming.

Follow Up

One year on, we did a short follow up survey to check in with students in Lewis Girls School that we had previously worked with. There were only 6 respondents, which means drawing any hard conclusions is difficult, but it's interesting information nonetheless.

Which of these would you like to see us do to keep supporting you after the workshops have finished?

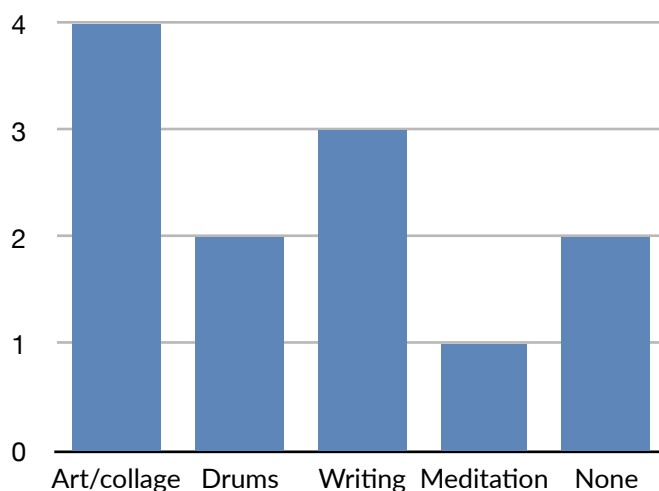


The most desired option for follow-up support was drop-in sessions, which could be the easiest to implement, but also have the highest risk of students not turning up every week.

Which of the coping techniques are you still using at home?

We were interested to see whether students were still actively using the coping techniques introduced in the workshops. Art being the most continually used technique is in line with it being the most popular of the workshops.

The fact that 2 students replied with "none" could mean that either they don't feel the need for the coping techniques, or that they are using different techniques.



Have you found any coping techniques of your own?

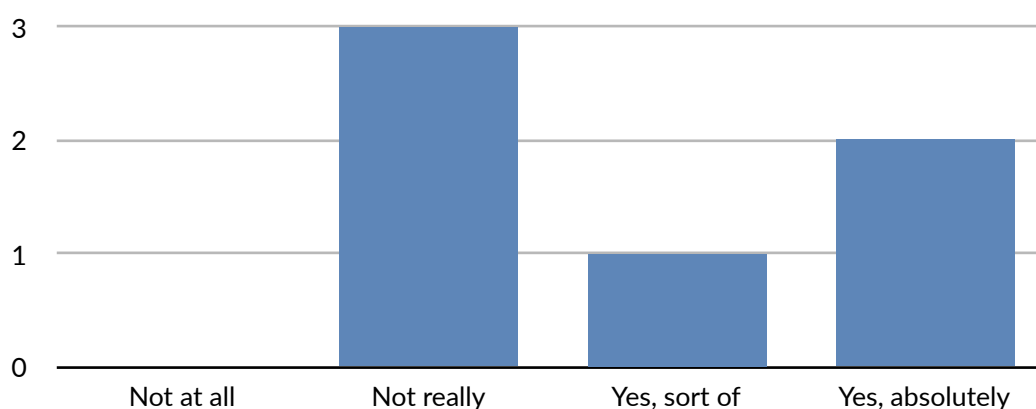
“ Long walks

“ Talking to myself

“ Throwing wet tissue at the wall

“ Sports

Do you think you're in a better place now than when you started the workshops?

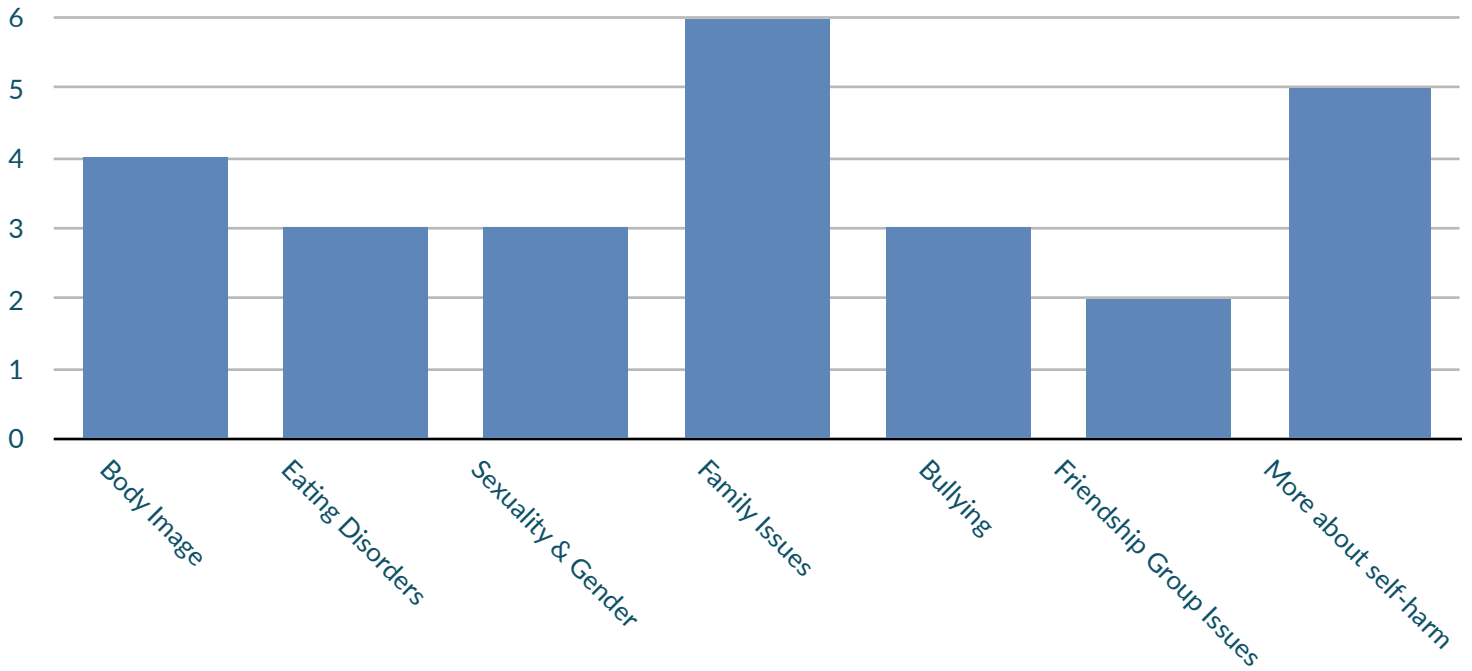


It was interesting to note that an equal number of students said they did not feel in a better place one year on, to those who said they did. This could be due to particular issues still feeling unresolved, or things that are beyond the scope of the HATW workshops.

What do you think we should talk about more during the workshops?

We were interested to see what other issues we should be discussing in the workshops - and perhaps this question should be added onto the regular feedback forms too.

What do you think we should talk about more during the workshops?



Family issues, talking more about self-harm and body image were the three top issues the students most wanted to talk about more during the sessions. This will be used to influence the next iteration of the workshops.

How can we best share positive content with you?

Snapchat and Facebook were the most popular choices of ways to continue sharing positive content with the students after the workshops, with Twitter, Instagram & Events in a joint 3rd place. Snapchat is not a platform we currently use, but definitely should be! The additional suggestion of YouTube content was also one we'd like to explore more.

How can we best share positive content with you?

Choice	No. of selections
Twitter	2
Instagram	2
Facebook	3
Snapchat	4
Email	1
Events	2
Other (YouTube)	1



Have you had a friend/family member go through a hard time since the workshops?

Have you given them advice/support based off of what we shared with you in the workshops?

The final question we asked was to look at whether students were then passing on their learnings from the workshop to help others.

5/6 respondents said they had used what they learned through the workshops to help others.

This is encouraging to hear; that the content of the workshops has the potential to reach more than just the students we come into direct contact with. But it's worth remembering that half the students said that they themselves didn't feel they were in a better place now vs before the workshops. While it's good that they are helping other people, we need to be making sure they're able to help themselves first.

Workshop Feedback Form

We'd really appreciate your thoughts on the workshops, so we can make them even better for next time. Please be as honest as possible !

1. What were you hoping to get out of the workshops?

2. Do you feel like you got what you hoped for? Yes / No

3. Which of the 4 coping techniques was your favourite, and why?

4. Which of the techniques have you used at home? _____

5. Have you felt better equipped for having bad days since starting the workshops?

Not at all Not really Yes, sort of Yes, absolutely!

6. Did you find the discussions each week helpful? Yes / No

7. Why/why not?

8. Would you have preferred to speak to someone one-to-one? Yes / No

9. What did you like about the way Si and Hannah were?

Please turn over



Appendix 1 - Updated Questions Feedback Form

10. What do you think we could do better?

11. Have you had any help for self-harm before seeing Heads Above The Waves? Yes / No

12. If yes, how was Heads Above The Waves different?

13. Are there any other activities you think we should include in the future?

14. Did you find the literature we gave you each week helpful? Yes / No

15. Have you found anything else that HATW has done helpful? (e.g. website/Facebook/Instagram)

16. What else would you like to have seen from the workshops?

Thank you for being a part of these workshops!

