CONCEPT AND RESULTS SHEET

The concept of the wellbeing gallery is based on the format of an art gallery.

This document is a summary of the themes created by peer researchers for Authoring Our Own Stories, 2024, after coding and theming the data for the wellbeing gallery. Each person who did the activity was given a Wellbeing Gallery template. Some of the frames in the gallery template had examples of positive activities that young people could do to support their mental wellbeing. The empty frames were filled in with drawings or writing, by young people, with their own personal examples.

The peer researchers delivered sessions to six focus groups at youth projects in London over the summer of 2024. Groups spent approximately 20 minutes completing their galleries then feeding back their responses. One of the key findings from the data is that young Black and Asian people have high resilience and the personal resources to support their mental health. However, this result suggests that the youth sector could do more to support their needs.

THEMES AND PERCENTAGES OF FEEDBACK AT A GLANCE.
WE RECEIVED 332 RESPONSES TO THE FRAMES IN THE WELL-BEING GALLERY

- SELF-CARE - 22%
- CREATIVITY - 19%
- COMMUNITY - 16%
- FOOD - 11%
- SOCIAL-MEDIA/GAMING - 11%
- NATURE - 5%
- OTHER - 5%
- SPIRITUALITY - 4%
- HOLIDAYS/TRIPS - 2%
- ALONE TIME - 1%
- INTIMACY - 1%
- MOTIVATORS/INFLUENCERS - 1%
- THERAPY (E.G. PSYCHOTHERAPY -) 1%
- GOING TO WORK EDUCATION - 1%
- DOCUMENTING ONE'S LIFE - 0.3%
- VISIONARY - 0.3%

THE BOLD HEADINGS ARE THEMES AND COMMENTS, THE PEER RESEARCHERS AND PROFESSIONALS CREATED AFTER CODING THE DATA

Writing in italics are quotes from research participants.

SELF-CARE (examples of self-care)

- Sense of self-agency is reflected in the galleries generally
- ***'Moving away from negative people' (research participant)***
- It requires some energy and effort to support your mental health
- It requires effort to lift yourself out of something negative
- Sleeping. Sleep came up a lot!
- Doing one's hair is a very empowering activity for young Black women
- Beauty and healthcare are really significant to the support of young Black and Brown women. Particularly in a society where they are not always seen as beautiful. Is this narrative changing? This should be explored further
- Finding positive people
- Haircare, beauty treatments (lip care) and exercising, acknowledging personal growth, ***'living with no regrets so everything I do builds my character'*** *(research participant)*
- Self-care included *'pictures on the wall documenting my life' (research participant)*
- Positive self-talk and acknowledging personal growth
- We need to encourage people to talk about their emotions (especially boys and young men). They are telling us it helps them
- ***'Being hopeful'***
- ***'SELF LOVE' (research participant)***
- ***'Cry it all out' (research participant)***
- ***'Looking in the mirror' (research participant)***
- ***'Being zen with one's self' (research participant)'***
- ***LIVING WITH NO REGRETS SO EVERYTHING I SO BUILDS MY CHARACTER'.*** *(research participant)*
- Activities for well-being are quite balanced between connecting with the outside world and connecting with one's inside world

FOOD

- **57% of examples of food people gave were fast foods, cakes and fizzy drinks.**
- Food chosen was sometimes fast food which can give a dopamine hit but not necessarily good for mental health. However , the social aspect of being out at a venue like Nandos with friends or family, eating socially can support mental health
- Burger, pizzas, chicken wings were the most commonly used examples that participants ate when going out for food
- Some participants did give the example of baking

CREATIVITY

- **Different forms of creativity is one of the most popular activities that young people of Black and Asian heritage said they do to support the mental health**
- Creativity included music, watching movies, and visual art
- Participants gave examples of doing activities together with people and doing things alone. Examples included painting, drawing, going to galleries
- ***'Listening to positive music'***
- Anime is very popular

COMMUNITY

- More of the examples shared involved being in a physical space and having human face to face time than being online. But virtual spaces are key too
- Community and connection in all its facets are shared in the data
- The role of peers is key. Sometimes there is pressure for friends to support beyond what they have the capacity to do. Nonetheless friends are key to good mental health
- Community generally involved everything from being out with family and friends to playing board games together and going to the funfair, as well as talking
- Would more young people feel the need to CONTRIBUTE TO A RESIDENT'S HUB IF THEY KNEW HOW?
- USING TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL.Very few young people cited large civic spaces like town halls as places that supported their sense of belonging and mental health. They were more likely to give smaller community spaces or cultural spaces such as museums, galleries, community halls and dedicated youth spaces as examples
- Shopping was seen as a form of therapy (retail therapy). It generally seemed to be linked to feedback from Wellbeing Galleries that we suggest (from other responses on the same gallery) were by young women

NATURE

- Three people mentioned 'walks at night' (unusual pursuit)

ALONE TIME

- People need alone time too
- Walking alone at night - provides a freedom not experienced whilst walking during the day...a different form of liberation/contemplation

SOCIAL MEDIA/GAMING

- Given how much media attention is focused on young people being so reliant on their phones (and people generally), it's interesting to see that factors such as 'Community', 'Creativity And 'Self-Love' were more prevalent in the feedback. Than being online
- 'Playing Roblox' is a popular pastime.

SPIRITUALITY

- Although only 4% of participants cited an organised religion as being key to their mental health. Spirituality, in a broader sense, seemed to be referred to more often. For example, it was referred to in the form of having 'hope' , finding 'peace' in meditation or being outside at night because of being liberated in the darkness. All of these examples suggested that a belief in a higher power was of great importance to a larger percentage of young people than 4%

HOLIDAYS/TRIPS

- Only 2% of the young people that completed the Wellbeing Gallery said that they went on holidays or trips to support their mental health. Is this, in part, due to economics?

INTIMACY

- Only 1% of the participants cited intimacy with a partner as supporting their mental health but a greater number gave examples such as 'hugs', 'love' in a more general sense from family and friends as supporting strong emotional well-being.

OTHER

- Using traditions and knowledge from elders that have a social, ancestral connection as well as a practical purpose - knitting, sewing, crochet
- 'Other' included being of age (18+)
- Culture has only come up once as a specific example in the wellbeing galleries but it came up more frequently in the podcast discussions. This was another activity delivered during the same focus group

DOCUMENTING ONE'S LIFE

- One young person cited documenting their life as an example of supporting their mental health. However, several young people talked about journaling experiences when they discussed mental health in other focus group activities, in particular 'Kelly Story'. Kelly's Story is a writing, problem solving activity about a young woman experiencing clinical depression*

VISIONARY

- Young people spoke directly and indirectly about the importance of looking ahead to the future, not holding on to the past and having hope, as being important to support their mental health

MOTIVATORS/INFLUENCERS

- Only 1% of the young people who responded to the Wellbeing Gallery said that they sought support from a mentor. Mentors were cited in the podcast discussions as being valued to share problems with but of less help in terms of solving problems as they have little to no power to bring about change in young people's lives. This was echoed in feedback from participants in focus groups from year two (Children in Care Council, Southwark)

THERAPY (E.G. PSYCHOTHERAPY)

- 1% of young people said that they go to a therapist to support their mental health. In the podcast discussions several young people cited the difficulties they experienced with waiting lists. They also cited barriers to access by not being able to work with a therapist from the same cultural background as them and also being excluded from accessing services because of the costs or not having information about what services are available

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