

Abstract

Our project is to create a website that helps students to cope with their stress in different ways. This project is aimed mostly at Secondary One students from Hwa Chong. Our website also has resources that help students find out if they are stressed and also provide a platform to connect them to counsellors if needed. This website aims to help students identify stress and how to cope with it. With less stress, the students can have a better and more enjoyable life in Hwa Chong. We hope that through this website, we can encourage them to openly seek help when needed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The transition from Primary 6 to Secondary 1 is a tough one. Many students will face large amounts of stress during Secondary 1 as they try to cope with Secondary School life. According to our survey results, 71.1% of students said that they felt stressed in school. Also, 62.5% of students said that they would not feel comfortable seeking help from a counsellor. Thus, our project aims to create resources that can educate Secondary One Hwa Chong students about how to manage their stress and connect them to a counsellor if professional help is needed.

1.2 Objectives

Project De-stressing for students aims to

- Help students identify stress
- Help students find ways to cope with their stress/ de-stress
- Help students seek help if needed

- Destigmatize the belief that seeking help from counsellors is something that is shameful

1.3 Target Audience

Our target audience is the Secondary One students in Hwa Chong. We have chosen the Secondary One students as they will encounter a lot of stress transitioning from Primary 6 to Secondary 1. Secondary 1 students may also be unfamiliar with stress and how to cope with it.

1.4 Resources

The resources we have created are a website. Some of the things in the website include an educational comic, digital posters and quizzes to identify anxiety and depression. Our website aims to help students identify stress and manage it. We also aim to use the website to clear the misconception in students of visiting counsellors, there is nothing wrong with seeking help from a counsellor.

2 Review of current school practice

Currently, the school has implemented 3 main ways to educate students about stress.

1. Posters. The school has put up posters all around the school talking about what is stress, symptoms and signs of stress, and how to combat stress. However, most students simply walk right by the posters without reading them. In an interview with a school counsellor, he estimated that the posters were only 5% effective.
2. Assembly talks. The school has also held numerous assembly talks on stress. However, these talks are very long and content-heavy, causing many students to not pay

attention. Students may also be unfamiliar with how to apply the content covered.

3. iEMB. Lastly, the school has also sent out some messages on iEMB regarding stress and other mental wellbeing issues (from the Counsellor's Couch). However, this is not the best medium of communication as some students don't check their iEMB, and others merely skim over the contents. The counsellor also mentioned that iEMB may not be very effective.



Dear Gentlemen,

There is wisdom in different cultures and this week I share one from the school of Japanese aesthetics: **Wabi-sabi**.

Put simply, **Wabi-sabi** is "the view or thought of finding beauty in every aspect of imperfection in nature."¹

It is based firstly on the realisation that **all natural beings and objects are imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete**; secondly on the wisdom of **accepting the imperfections in Others and Self**; and finally having the insight **to appreciate the beauty of the imperfections**. As illustrated in the image, the imperfections in shape, lines and colours draw our attention to the authenticity of the human craft in creating the pottery. It is this authenticity that is beautiful.

More than just an aesthetic concept in Japanese culture seen in its pottery and landscaping, **Wabi-sabi** is also a philosophical guide in regarding the Self and World. It is a reminder not to be blinded by commercial, competitive and idealised notions of perfection that are unachievable and unnatural.

In **Wabi-sabi** being imperfect does not mean being inadequate or less than beautiful; it means that we share a common trait with all natural things. The challenge is for us to accept this imperfection, not allow ourselves to be despondent because of it, and to live mindfully with the imperfection as we strive to live more purposefully and meaningfully.

Wishing you the wisdom of self-acceptance.

Above: One of the iEMB "from the Counsellor's Couch" messages

We have also read about articles on stress management, and find that delivering our tips to manage stress in a simple, more entertaining way can help to bring across our message effectively. Hence we have made posters, and used different

quotes from notable celebrities for our tips to be more effective.

3.1 Needs Analysis

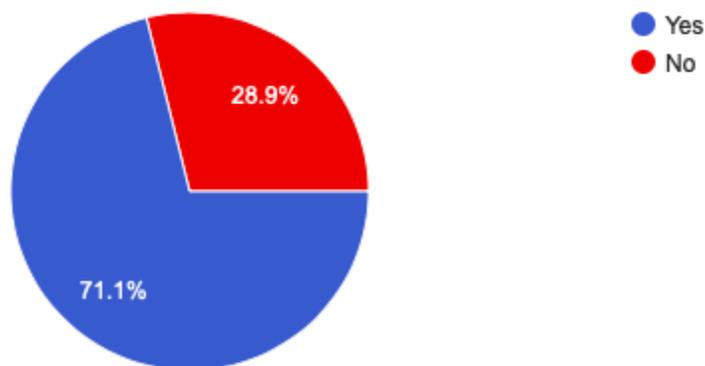
Secondary One students are stressed. This is due to a variety of reasons, including homework, project work, examinations, and difficulty comprehending the content taught in class. Secondary 1 students may be unable to cope with this stress and thus their life may be affected.

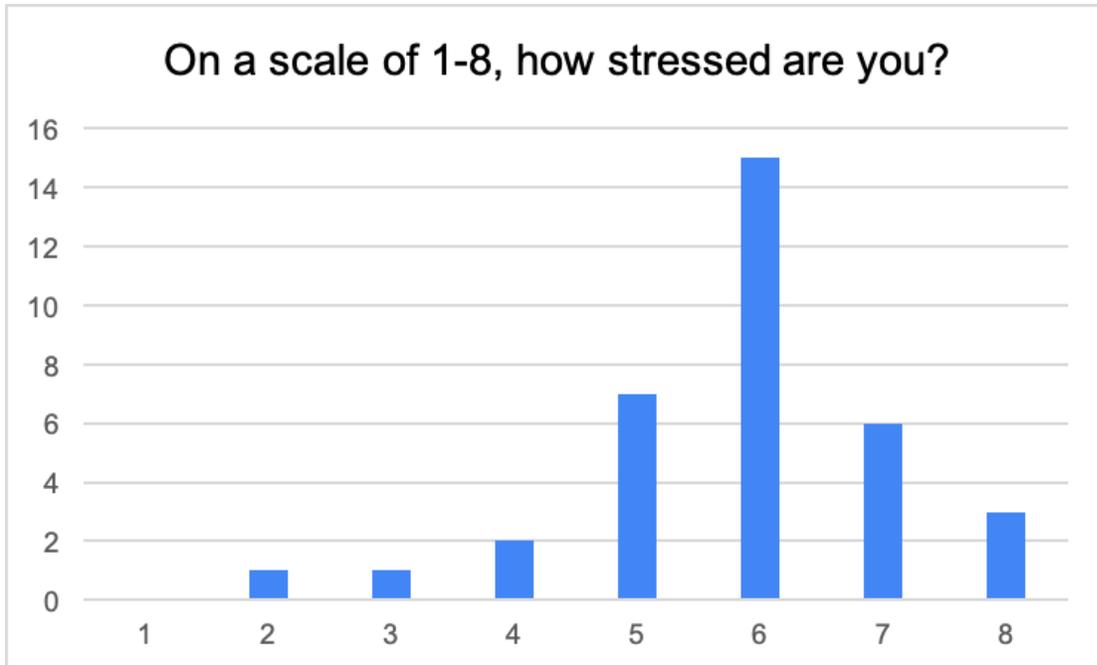
In addition to that, in light of recent events, such as the River Valley High incident, it is evident that many of the youth today experience struggles with mental health, and dealing with stress around them as a whole. Hence, resources are needed to help them to deal with their stress timely.

3.2 Survey results

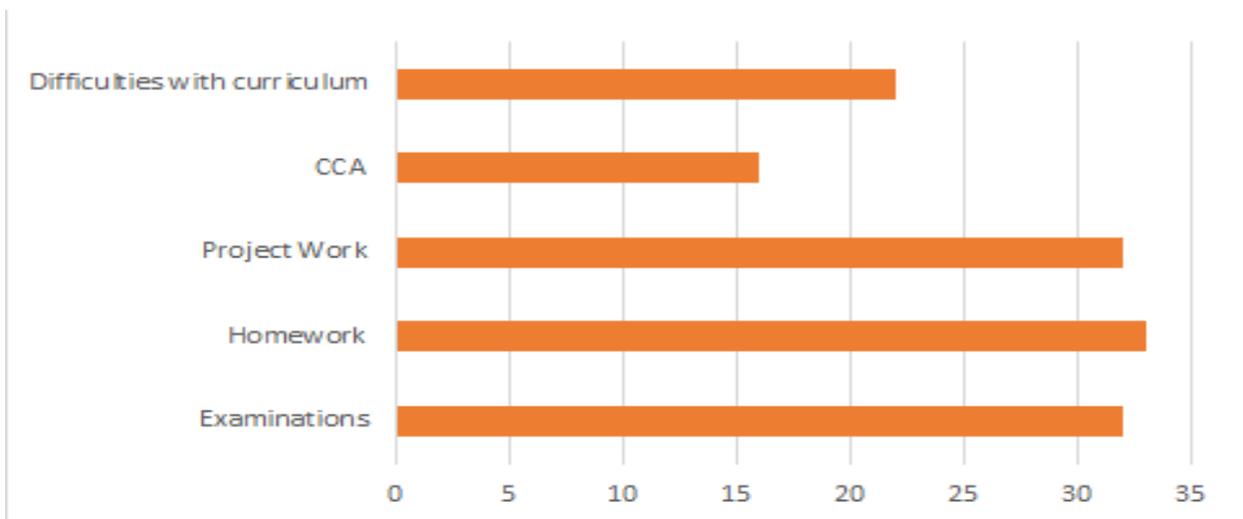
Are you stressed in school

45 responses



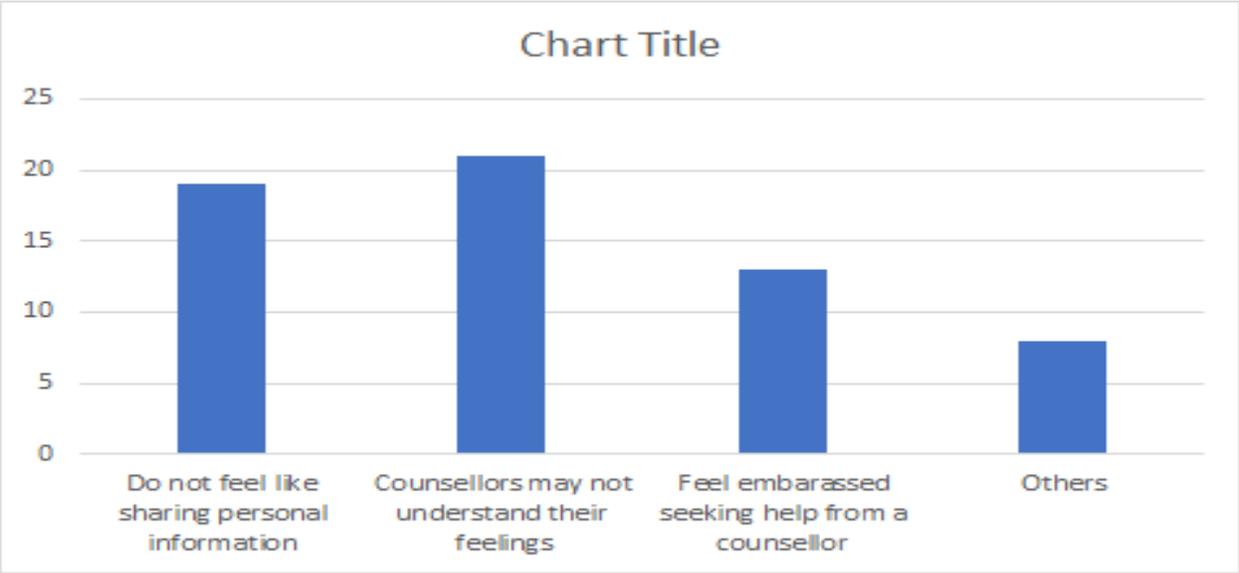
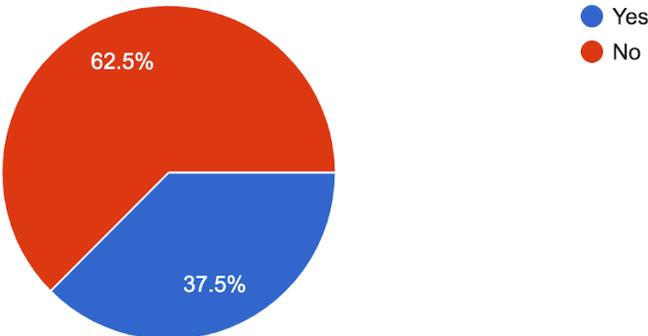


As you can see here, the majority of Secondary Ones we surveyed are quite stressed, which can be worrying especially since this is their first year in Secondary school, and it will only get harder as they progress along.



It appears that a main cause of stress in students is activities and things related to school, which shows that these parts hence need to be targeted especially. Thus, we see a need to educate students on how to relieve stress.

If you are stressed, would you feel comfortable seeking help from a school counsellor?
48 responses



A large number of respondents would also not feel comfortable seeking help from a school counsellor if overly stressed. This is due to a variety of reasons shown above. Therefore, we feel there is also a need to clear up the stigma surrounding counselling and encourage students to seek counselling when overly stressed.

3.3 Resource development

Website:

<https://sites.google.com/d/144vkFLS8YAtOP1Hkkt-I9i06IzA6fhp5/p/1i14KmdeldsYEh9DDytr26iYI3-o7G0ub/edit?authuser=1>

We also created a website that provided support for people who were stressed, or overall just felt that they needed some support or help.



Enter site name

Home

Information on stress ▾

Detection

Treatment

Stories ▾

More ▾

Stress In Students

What is this website about?

- How to identify stress in yourself
- Learning how to deal with the negative effects of stress
- Understanding that seeking help from counsellors is nothing to be ashamed of.

- Our home page shows our purpose



What is stress?

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed and/or being under mental or emotional pressure/tension.

It is a normal human reaction almost or if not every, single human being will experience at some point in their life, when you face changes or challenges, your body produces physical and mental responses. This is stress. In low amounts, stress is not necessarily a negative or undesirable thing as it helps you to adapt to changes around you and keep you motivated and alert.

However, too much or too long can be bad, causing wear and tear on your body. It can cause you to feel more tired, and pressured. This is a negative thing, and we can avoid these negative symptoms by dealing with stress appropriately.

There are many symptoms of stress that can affect your mental health, bodily health, your relationships, and your overall well being.

- Some of our pages provide useful information on stress, such as what is stress and some of the symptoms of stress



Treatment

This page teaches you how to handle stress.

Stress is very common in our everyday lives. Most of the time, it goes away by itself. However, we need to know what to do when the stress is too great for us to handle. Too much stress **has negative impacts** on us.

So: What can we do to alleviate our stress?

Exercise

- Exercising does take up time, which may seem counterproductive especially when you're stressed because of a deadline. However, exercising lowers your body's stress hormones, thus alleviating some of your stress. Secondly, exercise also boosts your sleep quality, which is affected by your level of stress and anxiety.
- This page provides some common methods which can help alleviate stress



Quote 1

"Asking for help is always
a sign of **strength**" -
Michelle Obama

"A counsellor is somebody that has no preconceived perceptions of you, doesn't know who you are and has no prior connection to your life. It was with this in mind that I sought a counsellor and was put on a waiting list."

This is a story told from the POV of a student.

When I started my second year of university, I knew that something wasn't quite right. It was only as the weeks progressed that I began to become aware of what was going on. I felt tired during the day, I didn't enjoy being around people as much as I had done previously and although I had always been emotional and prone to crying, suddenly my tears were uncontrollable. I needed help. I began to feel as though I was merely existing each day and not living them. I felt an overwhelming sense of sadness and I wasn't sure why.

After realising that I wasn't myself and that the first term was slipping through my fingers, I decided to make a positive move by seeking a university counsellor. My parents were unable to help me (although they tried), my friends were confused by my incessant crying and I couldn't explain to anybody what it was that was making me feel so lost.

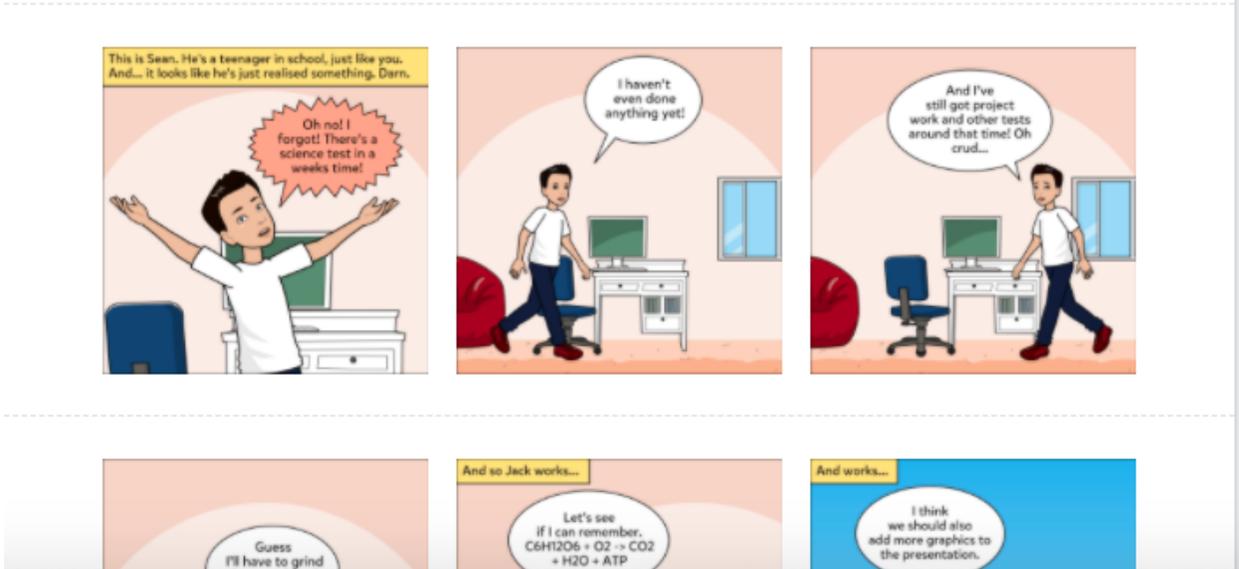
A counsellor is somebody that has no preconceived perceptions of you, doesn't know who you are and has no prior connection to your life. It was with this in mind that I sought a counsellor and was put on a waiting list. As each

- Our website also has an assortment of quotes and stories pertaining to stress as well as seeking help from a counsellor. Some of them are also about various mental disorders, such as anxiety.

Comic

This is an educational comic on stress

For a better view of the comic, click [here](#).

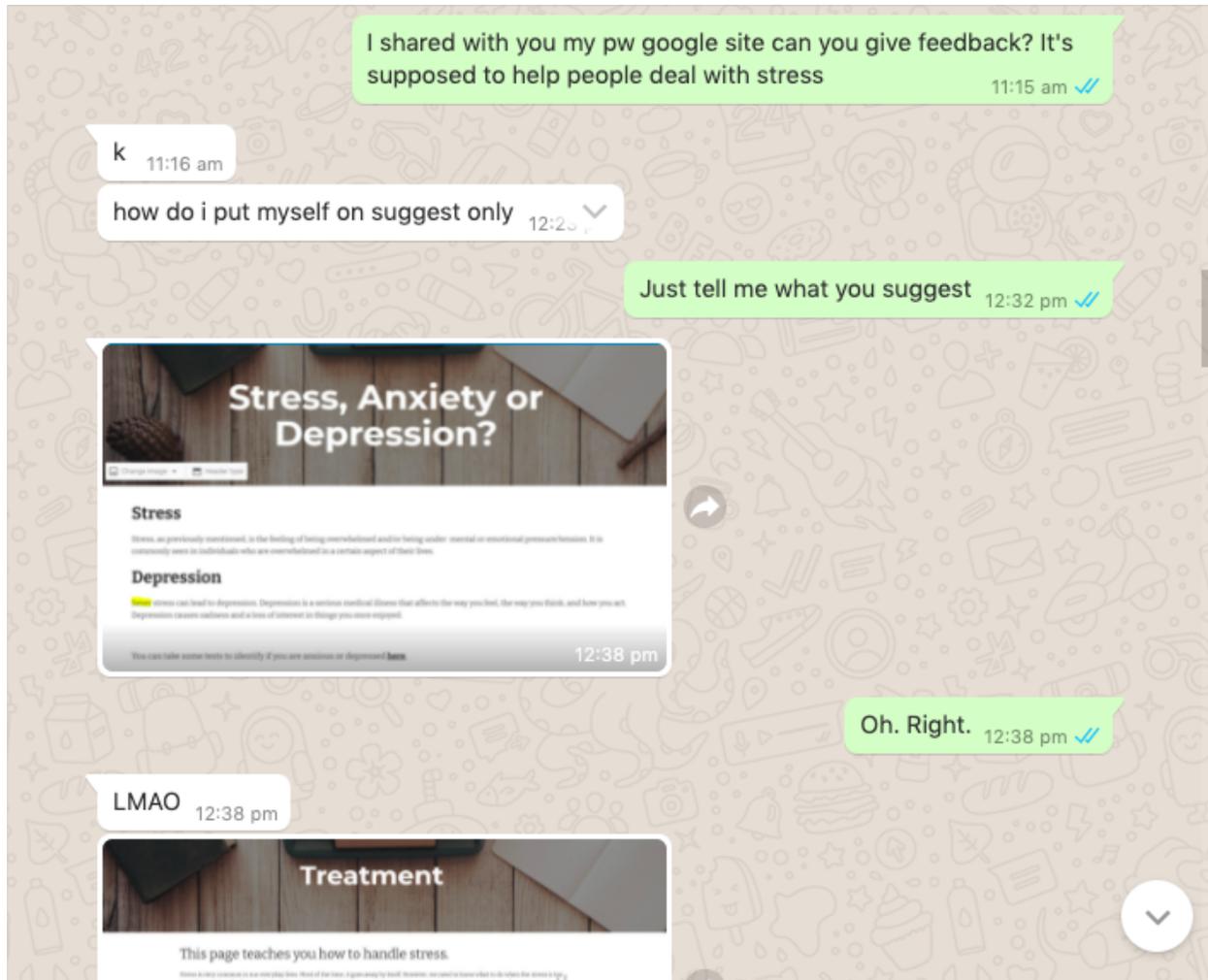


- Our website also contains an educational comic, which we hope might provide a more entertaining and content-light way of educating students about stress.

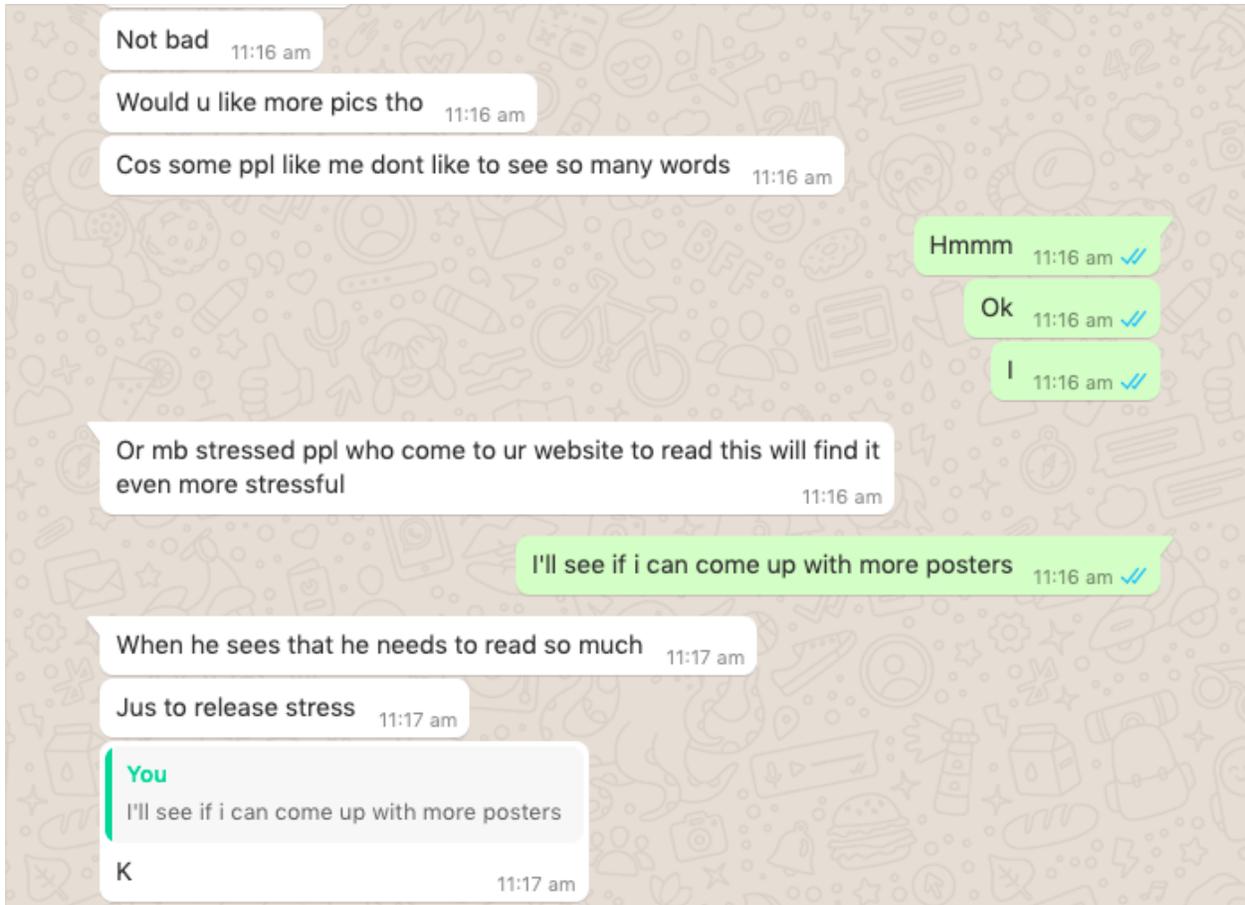
3.4 Pilot Test(feedback/effectiveness)

We conducted a pilot test on our website. We sent the website link to our friends and asked them about their thoughts on our website. Mostly, our respondents were from HCI's Secondary One batch, though some were also Secondary One pupils from other

schools. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we did not have enough time to conduct an in-depth survey of the effectiveness of our website.



Some of our respondents pointed out that there were grammatical errors, and thus we had to fix them.



Other respondents mentioned that they thought the website was too wordy. As a result, we decided to add in an educational comic and a poster to deliver information in an easy-to-read manner. Lastly, our project work mentor looked at it and asked us to make a few changes, such as re-arrangement of content as well as checking the relevancy of some of our stories on stress.

4 Outcome and Discussion

The feedback we received from our peers was mostly positive, besides a few of them pointing out flaws in spelling and grammar. However, some of our respondents mentioned that our website had too much text. Thus, we decided to add some posters as well as a comic for lighter reading. We feel that websites are mostly

too wordy and packed with information, thus we tried to condense our information and make a clear organisation of information in our website.

Some limitations we faced in this project were, not having a large enough sample population, time constraints, and not being able to conduct face to face interviews and surveys. We tried to sample a large population by sending the surveys to our classmates, however, not many people responded. It would have been better if the COVID situation allowed us to conduct face to face interviews or surveys. Also, because of this, we weren't able to get in touch with people we know in real life with experiences related to our project work. In the future, we hope to be able to engage in a larger scale surveying and be able to receive much more feedback from peers, incorporating their opinion along with ours. Also, we hope to be able to incorporate more stories from our fellow Hwa Chong peers to encourage our other peers.

Future research

We feel that we can expand this project by looking to cover more levels of students or different schools. Different students from different schools could face different factors affecting their stress levels and the way they cope with it. We could also partner up with the counsellors to use this website as a medium for students in Hwa Chong. We hope to be able to talk to people with related experiences, listening to their side of the story

5 Conclusion

This project was a difficult one. We had to think of creative ways to present this topic of stress to students and build on the original

practices used by the school. We also had to spend many hours compiling all the information that we found on the internet and arranging it into a coherent website with a clear purpose. Other tasks that posed challenges were arranging meetings with the counsellors to seek professional opinions. Through this project, we have learned a lot about the topic of stress. We used to think that stress was something simple, but we had not realized we had only scratched the surface of what stress truly is. Through this project, we have learned that stress can be used as a motivator to students. However, too much stress is harmful. We have also learned ways that we can identify and manage this stress. We have also learned about the stigma surrounding counsellors. We hope to use our project to debunk this stigma as counsellors are really trained professionals that are able to help students deal with their stress and improve their mental wellbeing.

This project was really a learning experience for us as we learned how to work with each other, using our different experiences to contribute in different ways towards our project work. We also had the fruitful experience of doing extensive research, to deeply understand our topic, and make a project that can benefit others around us. Working on a project is not easy, and we had to persevere through to complete our final product.

6 References

Quotes from celebrities:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/celebrity-therapy-quotes_n_5981e1cce4b0353fbb33f42b

<https://www.goalcast.com/2018/10/10/celebrities-share-their-personal-struggle-with-mental-illness/>

Methods for relieving stress:

https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/16-ways-relieve-stress-anxiety#_noHeaderPr
[efixedContent](#)

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/tips-to-control-stress>

<https://www.ddfsocialelearning.com/control-anxiety-abdominal-breathing/>