

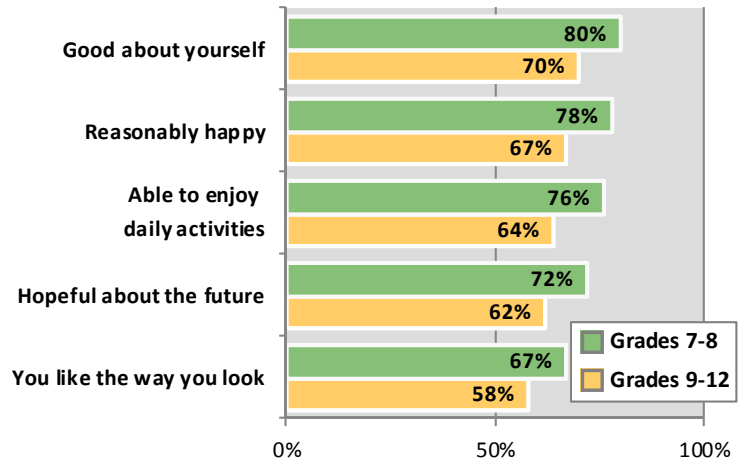
TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Emotional Well-being (Part 1 of 2)

- Survey questions about students’ emotional well-being were included for the first time in the TDSB’s 2011 Grade 7-12 Student Census. This Census Fact Sheet describes students’ emotional health and associated challenges, and how they relate to some of the demographic variables.
- A subsequent Fact Sheet (Part 2, *2011-12 Student & Parent Census: Issue 3*) examines this topic in relation to other factors such as students’ school experiences, out-of-school experiences, self-perceived abilities, and achievement.

Positive Feelings about Oneself

- According to the 2011 TDSB Student Census, the majority of Grade 7-12 students felt positively about themselves all the time or often. However, the proportion was higher for Grade 7-8 students than for secondary school students.
- For instance, while roughly three quarters (72% to 80%) of the Grade 7-8 students said they felt good about themselves, happy, and hopeful about the future, the corresponding proportions for the secondary school population dropped by about 10 percentage points.
- Fewer students reported that they were comfortable with their appearance. Further analysis shows this was particularly the case for female students. Only half (51%) of the female secondary school students said that they liked the way they looked all the time or often, compared to about two thirds (64%) of their male counterparts. This gender gap among the Grade 7-8 students was somewhat narrower (63% versus 71% respectively).

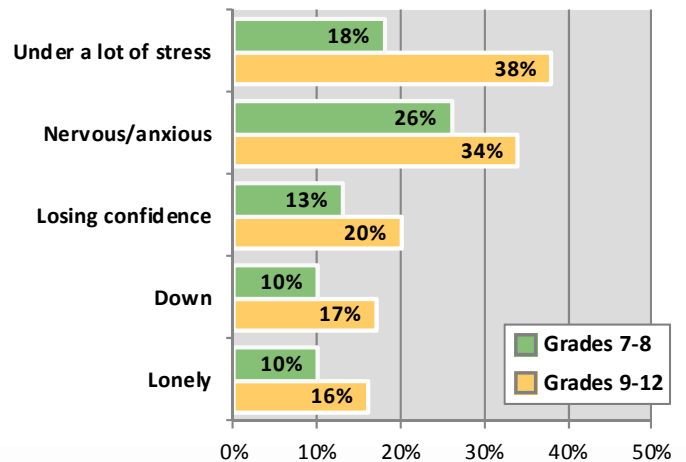
Positive Feelings: Grades 7-8 versus Grades 9-12
(% feeling “all the time” or “often”)



Emotional Challenges

- Secondary school students were more likely to report experiencing emotional challenges than middle-school students in Grades 7-8.
- For instance, while over a third of the Grade 9-12 students said they were under a lot of stress (38%) and nervous or anxious (34%) all the time or often, the respective percentages for the Grade 7-8 students were 18% and 26%.
- As well, whereas 16-20% of the secondary school students reported losing confidence in themselves, feeling down or feeling lonely, the corresponding percentages for Grade 7-8 students was 10-13%.

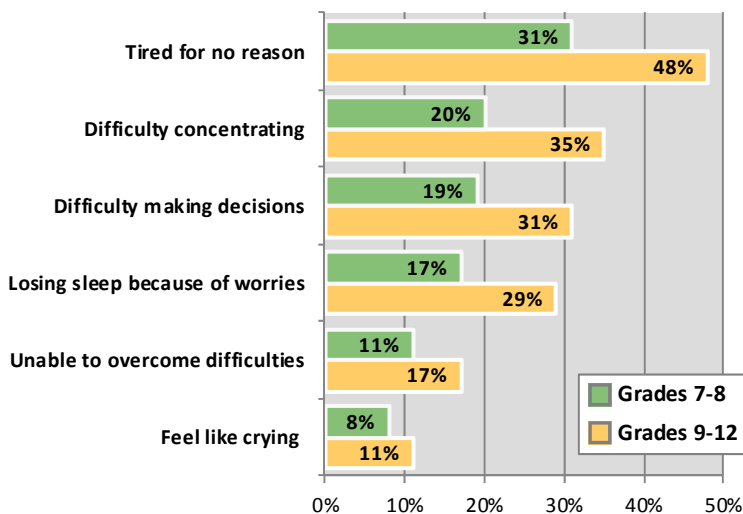
Emotional Challenges: Grades 7-8 versus Grades 9-12
(% feeling “all the time” or “often”)



Physical and Emotional Symptoms

- Nearly half (48%) of the secondary school and less than a third (31%) of the middle-school students reported being tired for no reason all the time or often.
- Regarding other symptoms such as having difficulty concentrating or making decisions, and losing sleep because of worries, again secondary school students tended to respond “all the time” or “often” (about a third versus about a fifth).
- Although fewer students reported feeling unable to overcome difficulties, still about 1 in 6 (17%) of the secondary school students and 1 in 10 (11%) of the middle-school students said that they had such feelings all the time or often.
- While 11% of the Grade 9-12 students and 8% of the Grade 7-8 students said that they often felt like crying, female students were three times more likely to say so than male students (16% versus 5%), regardless of grade.

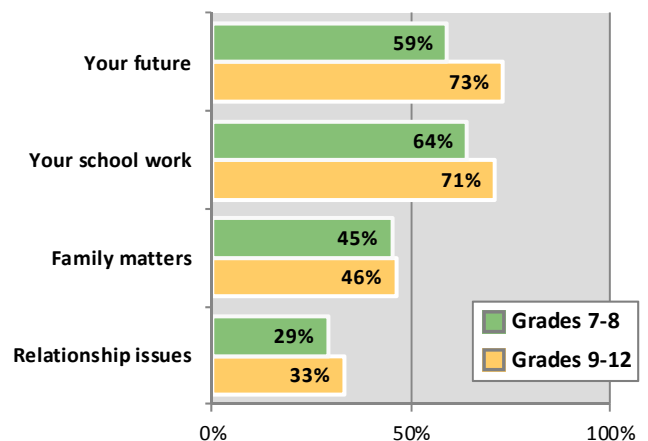
Physical and Emotional Symptoms: Grades 7-8 versus Grades 9-12
(% feeling “all the time” or “often”)



Students' Worries

- The majority of students worried about their school work and their future all the time or often. This was particularly the case for secondary school students, with almost three quarters showing concern about their future.
- Nearly half of the Grade 7-12 students also reported worrying about family matters all the time or often. Further analysis indicates that students whose parents were from the lower socio-economic status (SES) sectors were more likely to feel this way than their peers from higher SES backgrounds (50% versus 40%).*
- About one third of the Grade 7-8 (29%) and Grade 9-12 (33%) students also said that they often worried about relationship issues such as fitting in or making friends.

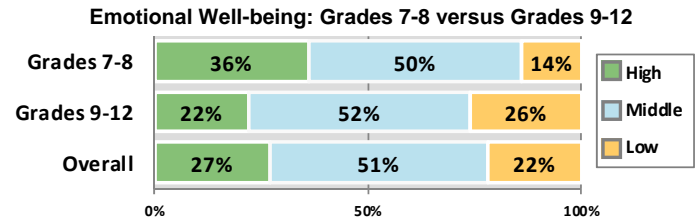
Students' Worries: Grades 7-8 versus Grades 9-12
(% feeling “all the time” or “often”)



*Lower SES sectors include parents of the Grade 7-12 student population who work in skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled clerical and trades occupations, and parents who are non-remunerative, including homemakers, unemployed, or retired. Higher SES sectors include parents of students working in professional and senior management sectors, and parents working in semi-professional and middle management sectors.

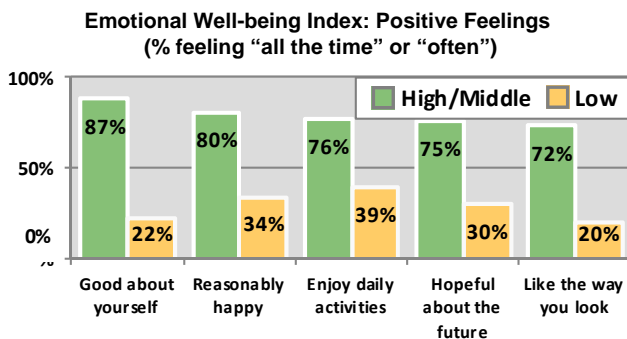
Student Emotional Well-being Index

- A composite index, based on six items about how students felt about themselves, was created to indicate students' overall emotional well-being – high (positive), middle, and low (negative). These items, which were identified with the use of Principal Component Analysis, include three positive emotions (feeling good about oneself, being hopeful about the future, and liking the way one looks) and three negative emotions (feeling nervous or anxious, down, and lonely).
- While the majority of students were at the high and middle emotional well-being levels, about 1 in 7 (14%) of the Grade 7-8 students and 1 in 4 (26%) of the secondary school students were at the low level.



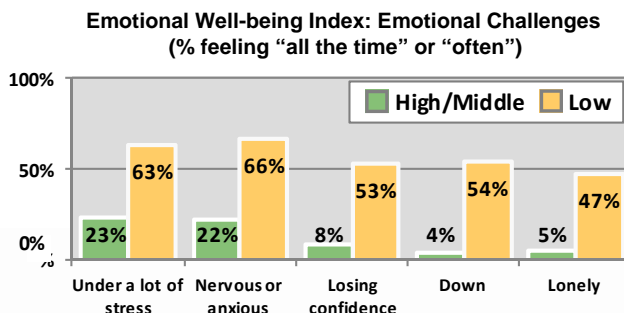
Students with low emotional well-being were much less likely to have positive feelings about themselves

- While most students (72-87%) with high or middle emotional well-being reported feeling good about themselves, happy, and hopeful about their future, the corresponding percentages for students at the low emotional level were much smaller, especially about their self-worth and self-image. Only a fifth of the latter students said that they felt good about themselves, or liked the way they looked all the time or often.



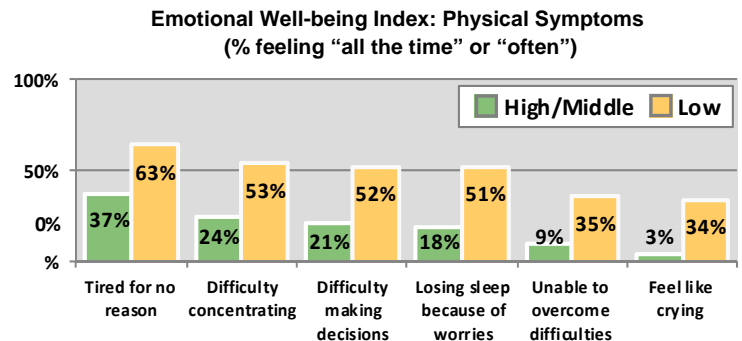
Students with low emotional well-being were much more likely to experience emotional challenges

- Compared to other students, those who were at the low emotional health level were about three times more likely to experience nervousness, anxiety, or stress. The gap was even greater regarding feeling down (54% versus 4%) or lonely (47% versus 5%), and losing confidence in themselves (53% versus 8%).



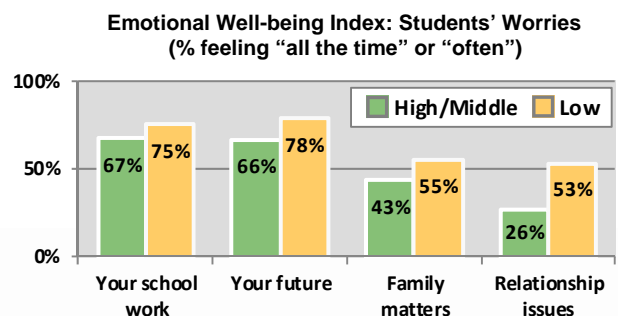
Students with low emotional well-being were much more likely to manifest physical and emotional symptoms

- The majority of students with low emotional well-being tended to feel tired for no reason, have difficulty concentrating or making decisions, or lose sleep (51-63%) all the time or often; for other students, the likelihood was significantly lower (21-37%). Also, about a third of the students at the low emotional level often felt unable to overcome difficulties or felt like crying, compared to less than 10% of the other students.



Students with low emotional well-being were more likely to worry, especially about relationship issues

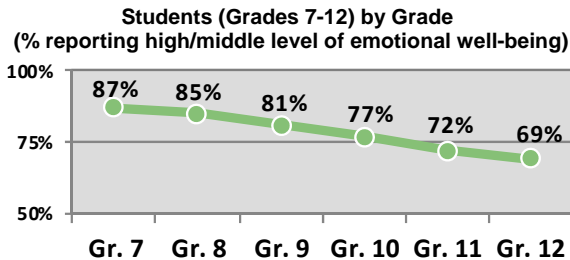
- While most students were worried about school work and their future, those with low emotional well-being worried more about these things. The latter students were also somewhat more likely to worry about family matters, and were about twice as likely to worry about relationship issues.



Student Emotional Well-being and Demographics

Age and Grade

- Students' emotional well-being declined by grade. The proportion of students at the high/middle emotional well-being levels dropped from 87% in Grade 7 to 69% by Grade 12, with greater declines over the secondary school years.

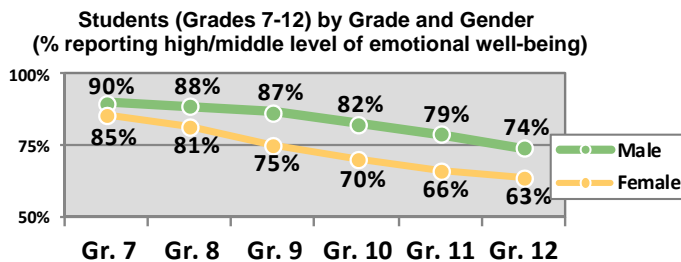


Ethno-racial Background

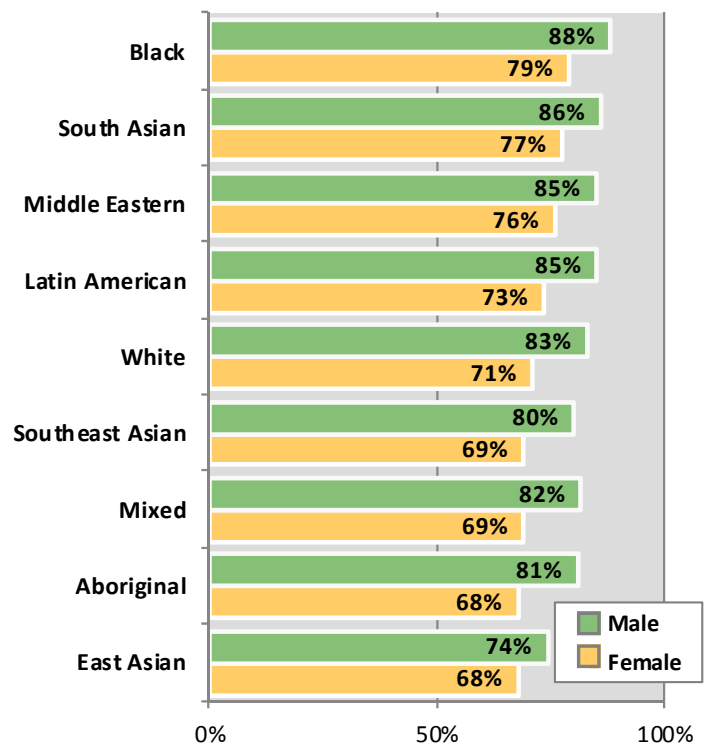
- The ethno-racial groups that were most likely to be at the high/middle emotional level were Black, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latino students (80-84%), followed by Aboriginal, Mixed, White and Southeast Asian students (75-77%). As a group, East Asian students were least likely to be at the high/middle emotional level (71%).
- Further analysis also reveals gender differences in emotional well-being within each racialized group. The largest gender gap (12-13%) was among students who identified themselves as Mixed, Aboriginal, Latino, and White, followed by Black, South Asian, Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian students (9-10%). The gender gap among the East Asian students was narrowest (6%).

Gender

- Male students were more likely than female students to be at the high/middle emotional well-being level. This gap widened with each grade, ranging from a 5% difference in Grade 7 to more than a 10% difference during the secondary school years.

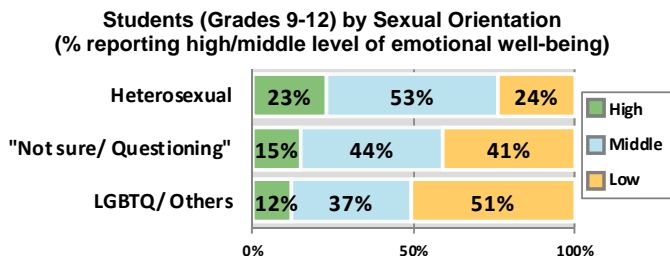


Students (Grades 7-12) by Ethno-racial Background
(% reporting high/middle level of emotional well-being)



Sexual Orientation

- A quarter of the Grade 9-12 students who identified themselves as heterosexual were at the low emotional level; the proportion was double for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited) students, and 41% for those who answered "not sure" or "questioning" about their sexual orientation.



The proportion of students with low emotional well-being was similar regardless of family background

- Further analysis of the 2011 Student Census data shows no significant associations between students' emotional well-being and their parents' socio-economic status (SES), educational level, presence at home (e.g., two-parent versus mother-only households), or immigrant background.
- Rather, as will be discussed in a subsequent Fact Sheet (Part 2), students' relationships with others - including parents, peers and school adults - have strong ties with their mental health and emotional well-being.