

What's going on for girls' mental health – and what can schools do to help?

Student Wellbeing Hub webinar presented by Dr Lyn O'Grady

Held on October 25, 2022

The recording of the webinar is published on this page:

<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/webinars/>

The team will follow up on suggestions for upcoming webinars. Subscribe to the Newsletter for more details: <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>

Issues and challenges faced by girls in school in the current times

The following resources and URLs were mentioned by participants in the Chat space within the Student Wellbeing Hub webinar on this topic. It should be read as a user-generated response to the webinar conversation rather than as a stand-alone resource.

Issues/challenges that girls are presenting with at school

Mental health and anxiety

- Social anxiety, Self-perceived anxiety
- Social and academic pressures
- Self-harm
- Perfectionism, academic performance anxiety
- Girls and autism and/or ADHD (often girls present very differently from boys)

Social aspects

- Making and maintaining friendships, sense of belonging and who they connect to
- Toxic unhealthy friendships- competitiveness leading to anxiety and distress
- Lots of friendship issues and social issues in year 6
- Girls and boys in relationships using threats to control each other's behaviour

School environment

- Attendance issues impacted by feelings of anxiety and/or friendship issues

Technology and social media

- Navigating social media groups and friendships, contributing to bullying and gossiping
- Sexting
- Understanding the permanence of a digital footprint



Pornography (being shared by boys with flow-on effects to girls)

Girls impacted by boys following misogynist influencers

Family

Family arguments and conflict

Other sociocultural factors

Gender identity

Body image and/or eating disorders

Vaping

Experiences of sexual assault

How can I choose a mental health program that has an evidence base?

The [Be You](#) Programs Directory is a searchable database of mental health and wellbeing programs for learning communities. It is designed to help educators choose programs to implement in their learning community.

Strategies that schools are using to help deal with girls' issues in schools

The following strategies were suggested by participants – this is not an exhaustive list and readers should be aware that some of the programs are fee-for-service programs.

- “We work with Resilience Project and also Reach Youth Foundation as well as implementing the 4Rs- resources [Rights, Responsibilities and Respectful Relationships](#), all of which are fabulous.” (Note that most states and territories have a local Respectful Relationships program that explores a range of topics including gender, consent, assertiveness etc)
- “[Dogs connect](#)”
- “I’m using Strengths and Motivational profiling to support families and schools in understanding young peoples’ needs, challenges and motivational level”
- “In Real Life- which is an 8 week program for girls”
- “[I am mindful Program](#) for Yr 7 and 8 Students to help support social and separation anxiety.”
- “[MindUp!](#) socio-emotional learning program running in small groups with identified girls who will benefit.”
- “Zones of Regulation and giving student voice also helps
- A program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls

