

What has gender got to do with young people's mental health?

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have combined the transgender men/boys and transgender women/girls groups as the sample sizes of each group was very small.

Cisgender man or boy: someone whose assigned sex at birth is male and who identifies as a man or boy.

Cisgender woman or girl: someone whose assigned sex at birth is female and who identifies as a woman or girl.

Transgender: an umbrella term used by people whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. In our analysis, the transgender group only includes those who 'identified as a boy, or a girl, and this is different from the sex they were assigned at birth'.

Non-binary: an umbrella term describing gender identities that do not fit neatly into the man/woman (or boy/girl) gender binary.

a process of exploration by people who are unsure about their gender identity, still exploring their gender identity or concerned about applying a label to themselves.

Key findings

Social support

By social support, we mean how much support we feel is available from our relationships with others, and the adequacy of this support. Perceived social support is explored further in an earlier evidence briefing by the HeadStart Learning Team (Bear et al., 2021).

- Cisgender young people perceive having the most social support from community and peers.
- When it comes to support at school and home, young people questioning their identity report receiving the most support.
- Transgender young people report receiving the least support from home, community, school and peers.

Figure 2: Social support by gender identity

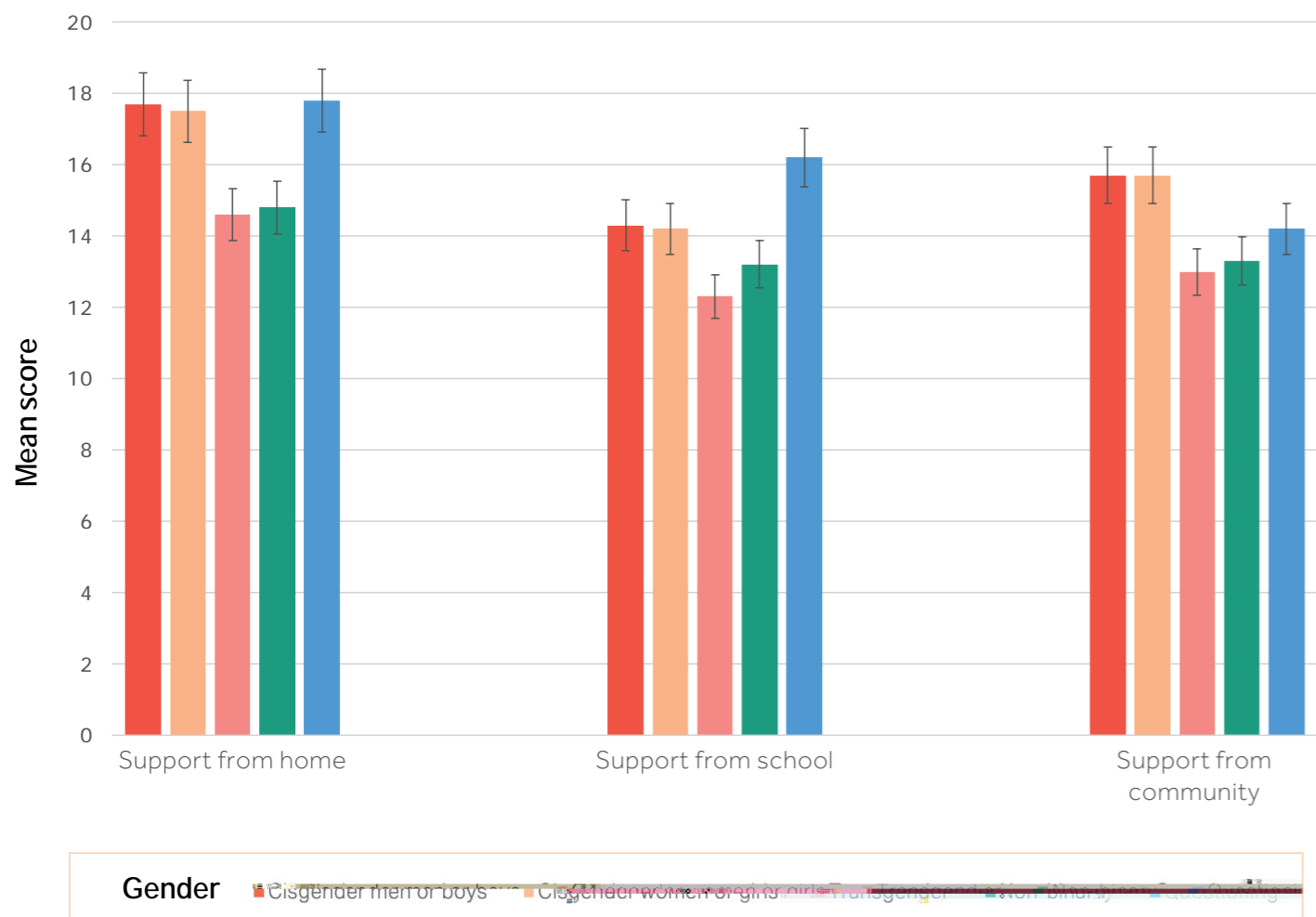
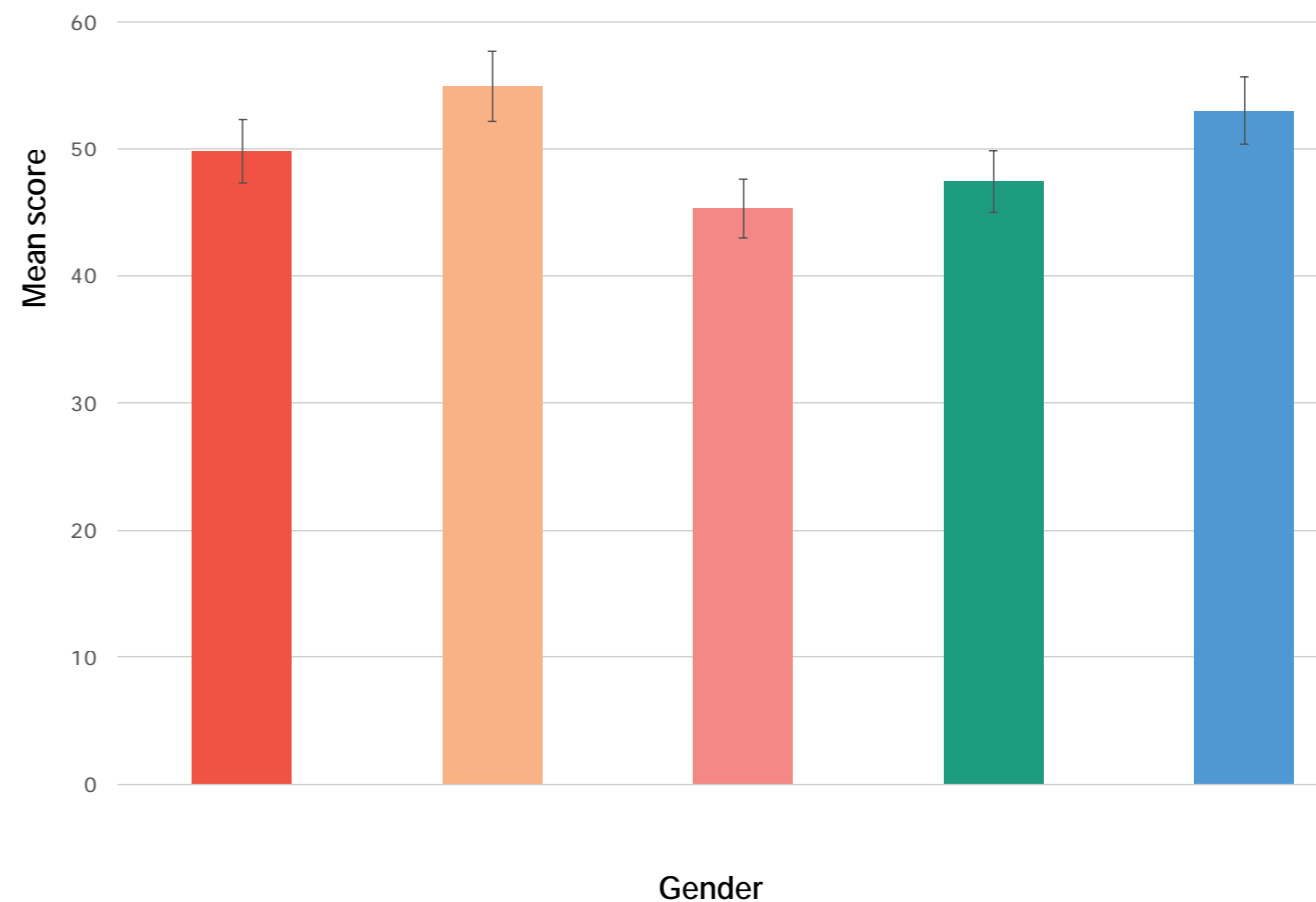


Figure 3: Peer support by gender identity



Discussion and implications

Our results show that cisgender young people are most likely to have higher subjective wellbeing and lower mental health difficulties and report having high levels of support. In particular, we found that cisgender men or boys reported the highest level of subjective wellbeing and the lowest levels of mental health difficulties and stress. On the other hand, non-binary young people, transgender young people and young people who were questioning their identity had lower subjective wellbeing and higher levels of mental health difficulties. Cisgender young people were more likely to report receiving social support. The results indicate the importance of social support for bolstering young people's mental health and of those providing interventions being mindful of young people's intersecting identities, arising from oppression, structural inequity and systemic discrimination (Meyer, 2015).

References

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