



## EMERGE YOUTH

Unlocking Potential, One Breath at a Time

### Empowering the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs through Stress Management Education in Youth

Project number: 2023-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-000175097

### European Report - Needs Validation – Trend Analysis

**WP 2/A3: Stress management in Youth survey Analysis**

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# European Report - Needs Validation – Trend Analysis

**Lead Author:** Atlantic Technological University

**Co-Authors:** VANILLEA, AKLUB, MIND THE GAME, TREBAG, AKNOW

**Text Review in English:** ATU

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## Executive Summary - Purpose and scope of the document

The EMERGE Youth project has been funded to raise awareness about stress among young people and develop their stress management skills through targeted educational resources. Good mental health and well-being are essential for young people's personal and career development, influencing their future opportunities and contributing to the broader societal context. However, today's youth face increasing stress from eco-anxiety, academic pressures, career uncertainties, financial instability, and socioeconomic disparities. These challenges can lead to marginalisation and hinder future productivity (European Commission, 2022; World Health Organization, 2016).

This European Report offers an in-depth summary of the findings and insights from the *Stress Management in Youth* national reports developed by each partner country. The report is intended to support WP2 project results by providing young people with education on stress management. This initiative supports enhancing their health, well-being, employability, and entrepreneurial skills, fostering an inclusive and sustainable future (United Nations, 2022).

### Project Overview

- Aims:**
- To provide personalised solutions for developing stress management techniques for young people.
  - To provide necessary tools as Open Educational Resources (OER) and include vulnerable groups in the training process, thereby improving critical stress management skills for their professional careers and mental health.

To achieve these aims, the project will develop an accessible online solution that improves educational opportunities for young people, especially those with limited access to training. Additionally, the initiative will also engage a wider youth audience interested in stress management.

**In the second Work Package**, a Methodology and Educational Pack will be developed to meet the training needs of youth across Europe. This package will include resources for educators, workshops, and activities designed to provide comprehensive tools and strategies for managing stress.

To support the development of the Methodology and Education pack, the project conducted surveys assessing the impact of stress on young people aged between 18-30 across Europe. The resulting survey analyses will be used to inform the development of stress management education, helping youth build skills for improved health, well-being, employability, and entrepreneurship. Insights from the surveys will also contribute to creating educational materials and a web app featuring best practices, training resources, and practical activities in stress management (Eurostat, 2021).

These surveys were a crucial first step in understanding and addressing the training needs of young people aged 18 - 30. Participation was open to individuals within this demographic, and the survey was conducted anonymously online. This report presents an analysis of the collated

results, representing youths from across Europe, located in Cyprus, Ireland, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Greece.

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**Title: EMERGE Youth - Empowering the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs Through Stress Management Education in Youth [Project: 2023-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-000175097].**

## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the EMERGE Youth - From Stress to Success – Report

The purpose of this trend report is to analyse the findings from a survey across the partner countries of Cyprus, Ireland, Hungary, France, and Greece. The aim of the survey was to gain an understanding of how stress affects young people across the partner countries. In doing so the project team aim to examine and identify participants' stress management needs, the effects of stress on their lives, and the coping strategies they employ.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the national findings and insights from the survey participants, serving to inform the development of the WP2 Methodology and Education Pack. This pack aims to enhance stress management practices and education for young people throughout Europe.

## 1.2 The EMERGE Youth - From Stress to Success – Report

The “From Stress to Success” trend report analyses survey data collected from 383 youth responses located across the EMERGE Youth project partner countries, Cyprus, Ireland, France, Hungary, and Greece. The surveys were conducted between August and September 2024, with each partner organisation adapting their distribution methods to suit local contexts. The survey distribution is summarized as follows:

- **Vanillea International, France:** 28 eligible responses from French residents, recruited through email, social media posting, social media direct messaging, and word-of-mouth.
- **Aklub Centrum Vzdelavani a Poradenstvi (AKLUB), Czech Republic:** 32 eligible responses gathered via personal communication or social networks.
- **Asserted Knowledge Eterrotythmos Etaireia (AKNOW), Greece:** 17 eligible responses collected through email and phone.
- **Trebag Szellemi Tulajdon- és Projektmenedzser Korlátolt Felelősségű Társaság (TREBAG), Hungary:** 29 eligible responses via an online questionnaire (Google Forms) distributed by email.
- **G.P. Mind the Game Development Ltd (MTG), Cyprus:** 38 eligible responses recruited through social media and word-of-mouth.
- **Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Ireland:** 239 eligible responses from Irish participants, contacted through the ATU Health Campus Wellbeing Student Staff support body.

This trend report aims to support WP2 outputs, specifically focusing on developing a Methodology and Education Pack for stress management education for youth in these countries.

## 1.3 Participants Demographics

### Country of Origin

All participants (n=383) provided informed consent to take part in the *"EMERGE Youth"* research study. The surveys were conducted by the EMERGE Youth partner consortium in each of their respective countries across Europe:

- **France:** n=28, surveyed by Vanillea International.
- **Greece:** n=17, surveyed by AKNOW.
- **Hungary:** n=29, surveyed by Trebag Ltd.
- **Cyprus:** n=38, surveyed by Mind the Game.
- **Ireland:** n=239, surveyed by Atlantic Technological University (ATU).
- **Czech Republic:** n=32, surveyed by Aklub Centrum Vzdelavani a Poradenstvi (AKLUB).



### 1.3.1 Participants' Age Profile

The analysis of survey responses from a total of 383 eligible European youths aged 18 to 30 years old revealed the following age distribution:

n=51 (13%) were 18 years old, n=59 (15%) were 19 years old, n=59 (15%) were 20 years old, n=27 (7%) were 21 years old, n=32 (8%) were 22 years old, n=23 (6%) were 23 years old, n=12 (3%) were 24 years old, n=26 (7%) were 25 years old, n=27 (7%) were 26 years old, n=22 (6%) were 27 years old, n=19 (5%) were 28 years old, n=13 (3%) were 29 years old, and n=13 (3%) were 30 years old. This breakdown is depicted in figure 1.1.

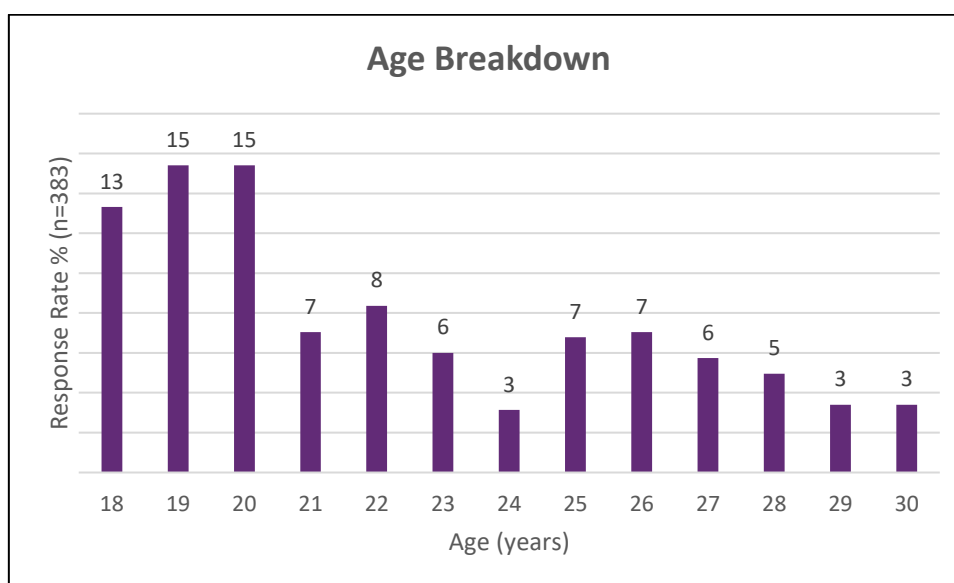


Figure 1.1.: Age breakdown of participants.

The overall age distribution presented shows that the most common age groups reported were 19, 20, and 18 years old (n=59, 15%, n=59, 15% and n=51, 13% respectively). The age distribution of participants is skewed towards younger individuals, with a general decline in the frequency of responses as the age group increases. This suggests that a younger demographic, possibly those in education or the earlier stages of their career, or both, are most interested in stress management. Comparably, the decline in participation as age increases suggests that with age individuals become less concerned about managing their stress. Another possible reason for this decline is that older individuals may have already identified and actively practice stress management techniques that they consider successful and are as a result of this not interested in furthering their knowledge on the topic.

### 1.3.2 Participants' Gender Profile

Figure 1.2.a. displays the gender breakdown of all survey participants (n=383). This pie chart illustrates that the majority of respondents were female (61%, n=234), followed by male participants (35%, n=133). A small number of participants identified as non-binary (1%, n=5) while 3% (n=11) preferred not to disclose their gender. Figure 1.2.b. displays the gender breakdown of participants within each partner country.

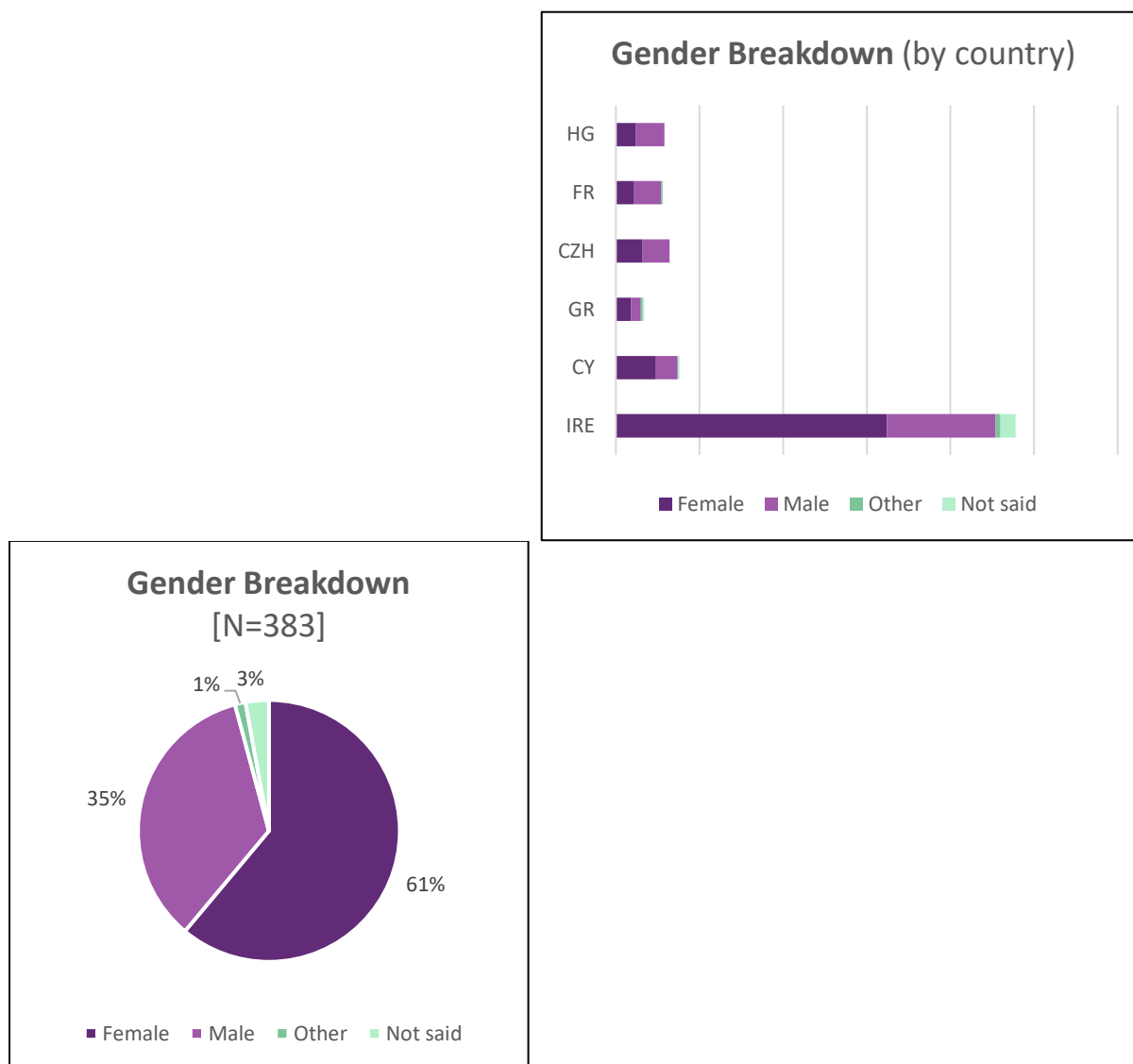


Figure 1.2a. Participant gender breakdown (n=383).

Figure 1.2b. Participant gender breakdown by country.

The gender breakdown of participants indicates a notable gender imbalance. The majority of respondents were female (n=234, 61%) while male respondents accounted for a smaller proportion of responses at 35% (n=133). This breakdown suggests that females, in comparison to their non-female counterparts, are most interested in stress management. Figure 1.2b. provides further insight into the gender breakdown of participants throughout partner countries. Though overall the majority of respondents were female, this was primarily as a result of the large number of responses gathered from

Ireland. In other countries, such as Hungary, France and Czechia, a gender imbalance amongst respondents was less apparent. Contrary to the responses from Ireland, more males than females completed the survey in these locations. Though overall the gender distribution of respondents suggests females are more interested in stress management than non-females, further investigations revealed that this varies across countries and is not necessarily applicable throughout Europe.

### 1.3.3 Participants' Employment Status

Participants' employment status was collected using a multiple-choice question format, with responses depicted in Figure 1.3.a. Among the n=383 responses, n=185 (48%) identified as students only, n=66 (17%) as employees only, and n=84 (22%) reported being both students and employees simultaneously. A smaller proportion reported themselves as trainees (n=16, 4%), entrepreneurs (n=16, 4%), or not in employment, education, or training (NEET) (n=13, 4%). n=3 participants selected "Other", n=2 reported that they were currently job searching (JS) and n=1 reported being on maternity, or birth leave (GYES).

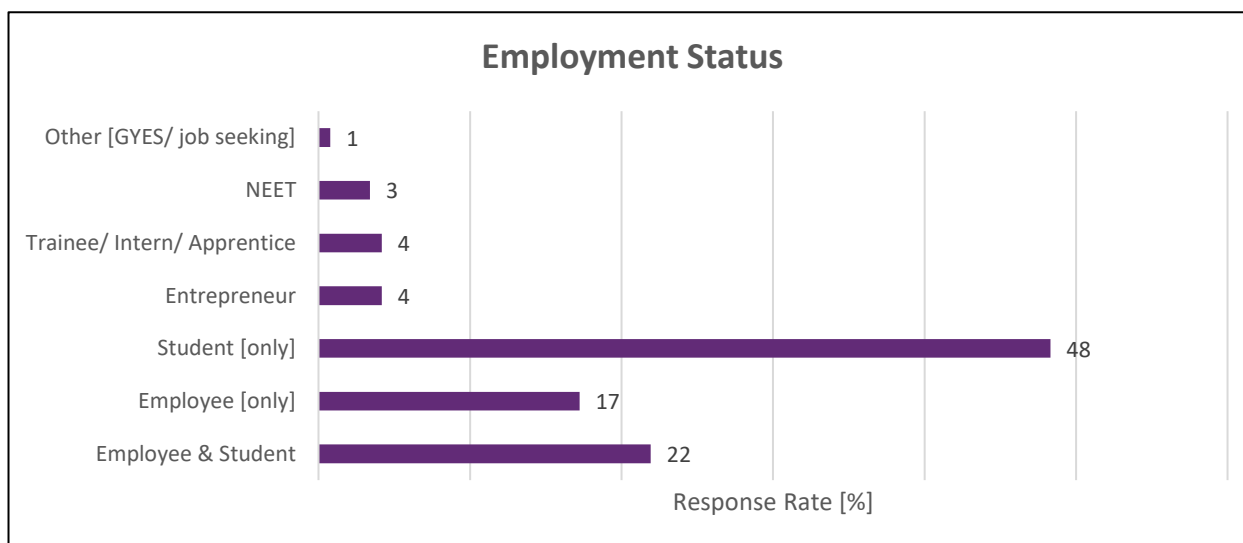


Figure 1.3.a. Participants employment status (n=383).

The employment breakdown of participants reveals that a diverse range of situations exist among the n=383 respondents. The majority of respondents (n=185, 48%) identified as students only. This represents nearly half of the entire cohort of respondents. This large student-only cohort suggests that those in education are most interested in stress management, and potentially feel a heightened amount of stress in their lives compared to the other cohorts. This may be useful information for the future when deciding where, and to whom, to focus stress management education and training.

## 1.4 The Impact of Stress on Participants' Life across Europe

### 1.4.1 Participants' Stress Levels at the Time of the Survey.

A total of 383 respondents from Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were asked to assess how stress was impacting their lives. Participants rated their current stress levels on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The distribution of these self-reported stress levels is shown in Figure 1.4, providing a clear overview of the stress experiences among the surveyed youth.

The results reveal that out of 383 respondents most experience moderate to high stress levels. Level 3 (n=183, 35%) and Level 4 (n=110, 29%) were the reported most indicating moderate to moderately high stress amongst participants. A smaller proportion chose Level 2 (n=82, 21%), while some participants (n=51, 11%) reported the highest Level 5 stress, emphasising the severity of stress in this young group. Furthermore, only 4% (n=17) reported the lowest level of stress at Level 1, highlighting the need for preventive interventions.

- Level 1: (n=17)
- Level 2: (n=82)
- Level 3: (n=183)
- Level 4: (n=110)
- Level 5: (n=41)

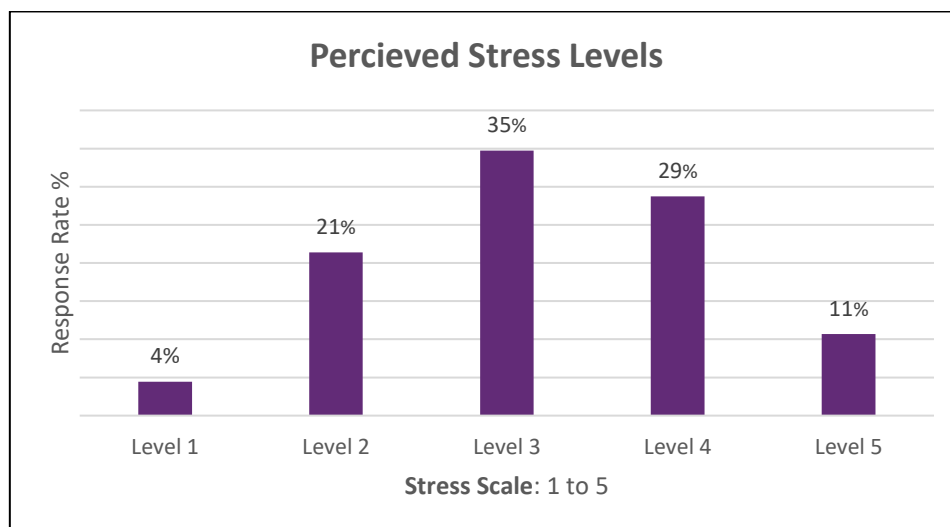


Figure 1.4. Participants' stress levels at time of survey participation (n=383).

These results highlight the relevance and need for the EMERGE Youth Erasmus project to focus on stress management, as youths are experiencing significant stress. The data suggests a pressing need for resources and strategies to help alleviate stress, particularly for those feeling overwhelmed.

## 1.4.2 Participants' Main Sources of Stress in Life

All participants identified (n=383, 100%) their primary sources of stress through a multiple-choice question, as shown in Figure 1.5. The top stressors reported were financial issues (n=154, 14.8%), current job or job searching (n=155, 14.7%), and academic or study related concerns and pressures (13.2%, n=139). Other significant sources included personal or family relationships (n=141, 13.4%), mental health challenges (n=136, 13%), and concerns about the future (n=105, 10%). Youths also identified social interactions 'being around other people' (n=86, 8%) and physical health (n=42, 4%) as stress factors. Less frequently mentioned stressors included world conflicts (n=42, 4%), climate change (n=19, 1.8%), and sexual orientation (n=18, 1.7%). Those that choose 'other' did not identify the source (n=13, 1.2%).

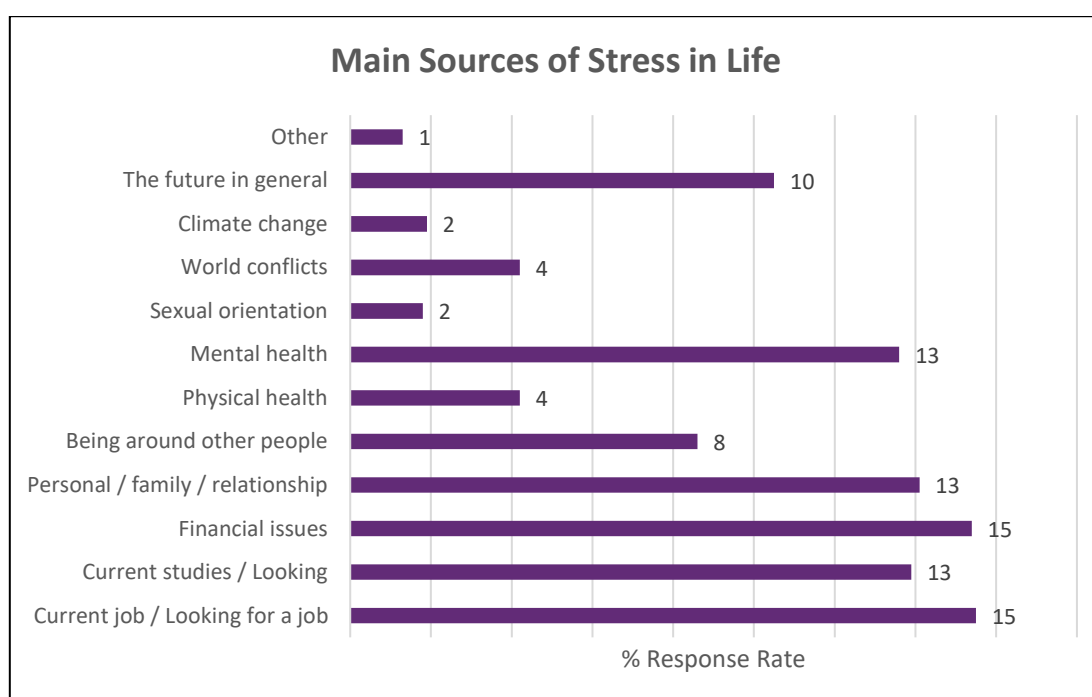


Figure 1.5. Perceived main sources of stress in participants' lives.

The distribution of primary stressors amongst participants in this study highlights the array of concerns impacting their lives, most notable current jobs or job searching (n=155, 15%), financial issues (n=154, 15%), and academic or study-related worries (n=139, 13%). As the majority of respondents were female and identified as students only, this data is most reflective of the stressors of this cohort. It is apparent that individuals in this situation are predominantly concerned with their education, career path and finances, areas which are closely intertwined. Additionally, interpersonal connections and mental well-being scored highly (n=141, 13% and n=136, 13% respectively). This suggests that the academia and financial stressors on individuals may bleed into their personal lives subsequently impacting their social connections and mental wellbeing. In developing stress management education and resources, it is critical to include information on the various potential stressors in life and how these are not separate issues to tackle, but instead interplay with one-another.

### 1.4.3. The Impact of Stress on Participants' Daily Lives

Participants were asked to indicate how stress typically affects their daily lives. They were presented with potential areas where stress might have an impact and were asked to select the three areas they believed contributed most to their stress levels. The results are illustrated in Figure 1.6.

The leading impacts of stress reported by participants were as follows: Increased anxiety (n=228, 22%), Difficulty sleeping (n=166, 16%), Difficulty concentrating (n=136, 15%), Difficulty socialising (n=100, 10%), Difficulty making decisions (n=112, 11%), Emotional regulation difficulties (n=95, 9%), Loss of appetite (n=70, 7%), Overeating (n=64, 6%), Rapid heart rate (n=50, 5%), and Other (n=15, 1%) including responses such as procrastination and decreased motivation).

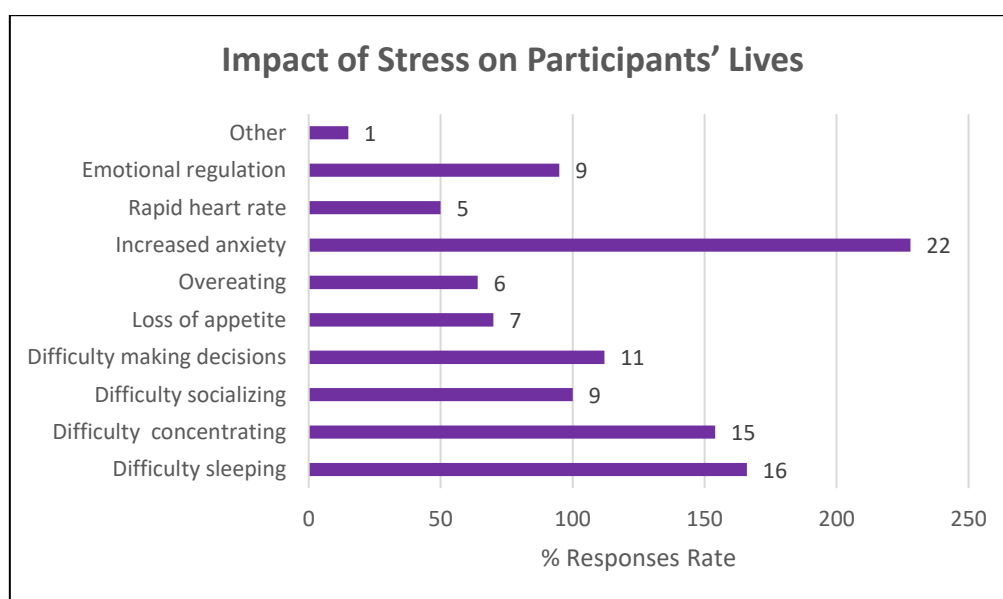


Figure 1.6. Impact of stress on participants' lives.

The distribution of stress impacts reported by participants highlights that though stress manifests in a variety of ways throughout participants' lives, it most often results in increased feelings of anxiety (n=228, 22%). Following this, stress regularly manifests as sleeping difficulties and troubles with concentrating (n=166, 16% and n=136, 15% respectively). Participants previously highlighted their education and career paths as sources of stress in their lives. These stressors and their impact can have a downward spiralling effect whereby stress hinders academic performance and a decrease in academic performance results in heightened stress levels.

### 1.4.3 Stress Hindering Youths Ability to Perform in Professional or Academic Settings

As shown in Figure 1.7., participants reported their perception of stress on their performance in professional and academic settings. The majority, 57% (n=220), indicated that stress hindered their performance. In contrast, 13% (n=51) stated that stress did not negatively impact their performance. Additionally, 27% (n=104) were unsure of its impact, while 2% (n=8) selected "other," and stated that the effects of stress were situational. One participant mentioned viewing stress as 'a sign of hard work and success' but acknowledged that this perspective is not necessarily positive.

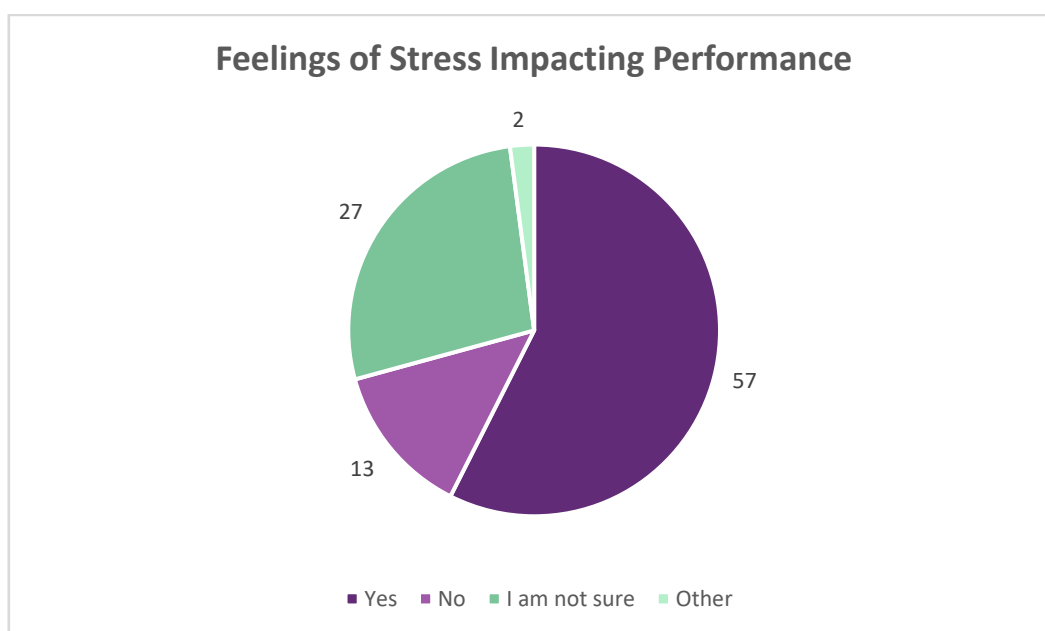


Figure 1.7. Participants' feelings that stress impacts professional and academic performance (n=383).

As highlighted in Figure 1.7., participants of this research reported that they felt, for the most part, that stress does have an impact on their performance, regardless of whether that be in a professional or academic setting. This suggests that stress is in general recognised as detrimental in working and studying environments. n=51 (13%) reported feeling that stress has no impact on their performance. It is possible that these individuals thrive under stress or conversely, they may already employ successful stress management strategies. A portion of individuals were either unsure of the impact of stress on their performance (n=104, 27%) or responded "other" (n=8, 2%). This could reflect varying experiences with stress where in some instances it supported performance while in others it hindered performance. Additionally, this may suggest that respondents experienced times when they could effectively manage their stress but also times in which they could not, resulting in decreased performance.



### 1.4.4 Participants' Descriptions of Stressful Situations Hindering Performance

Out of the 383 respondents, statements about situations where stress negatively impacted their professional and/or academic performance were collected from youths in Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The details of their experiences are presented in the table below.

The resulting quotes from this question highlight that stress has a detrimental influence throughout youth. Among the n=383 respondents, a significant number reported that stress had a negative impact on their performance either in an academic or professional environment. In Ireland where 90% of participants were students, most participants reported that stress adversely affected their academic performance, leading them to defer exams, socially isolate themselves, and overall receive lower grades. This pattern was also seen in Cyprus where stressors such as procrastination and high workloads were prevalent among youth. Hungarian data also revealed similar stressors, with individuals from Hungary highlighting that they experienced anxiety around exams and also when interacting with professionals. Participants from Greece highlighted that stress had a negative effect on their emotional regulation and on their ability to concentrate. This resulted in lower exam results and a decrease in professional performance. Additionally, the Czech respondents described that exam anxiety and stress in general considerably reduced their performance abilities. Altogether, these findings highlight the need for stress management education to support youth in their academic and professional growth and to help them in managing their overall emotions and well-being. The cross-country similarities in stress experienced by individuals involved in this research suggests that these issues are not location-dependent but are instead seen throughout Europe.

**Table 1.1.:** Sample of quotes on how stress hindered performance.

Org.	ID	Quote	Common theme
<b>IRE [ATU]</b>	P1	Deadline, task and time management, and confidence in certain situations. Sleep and ability to want to get up in the morning	Deadline motivation
<b>IRE [ATU]</b>	P4	Becoming overwhelmed with big tasks, being anxious thinking about them in the back of my head all the time so my "off" time isn't really "off time". Then I can't fully relax, and when it comes to doing the task I am stressing about it before it even starts, and it ends up being of lower quality than I would like	Exam Preparation
<b>CY [MTG]</b>	P10	"Stress affects my focus at work, making tasks take hours longer than they should..."	Concentration, Longer task completion
<b>CY [MTG]</b>	P11	"I manage stress by procrastinating, which leaves little time to complete tasks and affects my performance."	Procrastination, Study
<b>Trebag Ltd, [HG]</b>	P3	"Loss of concentration during lessons and learning difficulties at school."	Study, School
<b>Trebag Ltd, [HG]</b>	P7	"Job crafting, interview with my boss, job interviews, negotiating with clients."	Job stress
<b>AKNOW [GR]</b>	P1	Having fight with my girlfriend, usually results in difficulties concentrating to studies	Personal conflicts
<b>AKNOW [GR]</b>	P11	Lack of sleep due to stress has a negative impact on my studies as I cannot concentrate during lectures or do assignments of higher quality. These have led in more stress.	Workload - academic

work

performance

deadlines

workload

anxiety

procrastination

social

immobilization

job

stress

friendships

study

overwhelm

time

conflicts

relationships

relaxation

personal

school

issues

motivation

management

bullying

exams

relations

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### 1.4.5 Participants' Description of Situations where Stress Helped Performance.

Out of the 383 respondents, statements about situations where stress helped their professional and/or academic performance were collected from youths in Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The details of their experiences are presented in the table below.

Participants throughout Europe When asked to describe situations where stress helped their performance explained that stress can sometimes exist at a level which is helpful. This exists when stress levels are high enough to motivate individuals to study and complete work tasks but not so high that individuals feel overwhelmed by their workload. Specific instances Mentioned include. Times when strict deadlines were approaching. When individuals had increased responsibilities in their workplaces. Or when individuals needed to boost their focus in order to complete a task in short timeframes. At these moments, stress was a catalyst for productivity and supported them in completing their tasks to the standards required. Across all participants there was a consistent recognition of the importance of maintaining this optimal level of stress rather than. Becoming overwhelmed by stress to a point that. Performance decreases and workloads are no longer manageable. These findings highlight the need for youth to develop strategies to manage their stress so that they can identify the level of stress optimal for them to achieve their tasks without resulting in them feeling overwhelmed and unable to complete work.

Table 1.2.: Sample of quotes on how stress hindered performance.

Org.	ID	Quote	Common theme
<b>IRE [ATU]</b>	P131	"Alternatively, stress has helped me before and during exam times as my stress motivates me to study, at times it can be overwhelming but majority of the time it pushes me to get the task at hand done"	Exam Preparation
<b>IRE [ATU]</b>	P191	"Can push me to finish a project/homework, once I'm at a safe level of stress"	Optimal Stress Levels
<b>CY [MTG]</b>	P6	I work well under pressure, as mentioned above I tend to procrastinate which then leads me to perform at a high level under stress	Avoid Procrastination
<b>CY [MTG]</b>	P10	Projects that have strict deadline allow me to use the stress and pressure that creates to gather my work ethic and focus on completing them the best way I can.	Strict Deadlines, Work Ethic
<b>Trebag Ltd, [HG]</b>	P2	sports competition	Sport
<b>Trebag Ltd, [HG]</b>	P4	"Sectoral exams...exams, at a university exam I did better, though I did not believe in it"	Exams
<b>AKNOW [GR]</b>	P4	I usually work well under pressure and cannot be fast and efficient when i am relaxed.	Focus Under Pressure
<b>AKNOW [GR]</b>	P5	The urgency created by a deadline increased my productivity and creativity, helping me complete tasks efficiently.	Increased Productivity
<b>AKLUB [CZH]</b>	P5	Well, when I have little of a good stress if is quite helping with me working smoothly and quickly.	Positive effects of low-level stress
<b>AKLUB [CZH]]</b>	P20	I prepare a lot so I stress less and tend to organize my time. I also feel good when overcoming a stressful situation.	Proactive stress management

<b>Vanillea [FR]</b>	P11	I need a minimum amount of stress to work. I've always had a lot of work, and that's my rhythm. When I don't have enough work and therefore no stress at all, I have trouble concentrating and motivating myself.	Stress as a personal motivator
<b>Vanillea [FR]</b>	P22	In certain 'urgent' situations, stress can promote greater team cohesion and better efficiency, but only under two conditions: the rarity of these events and having a united and supportive team."	In urgent, situations

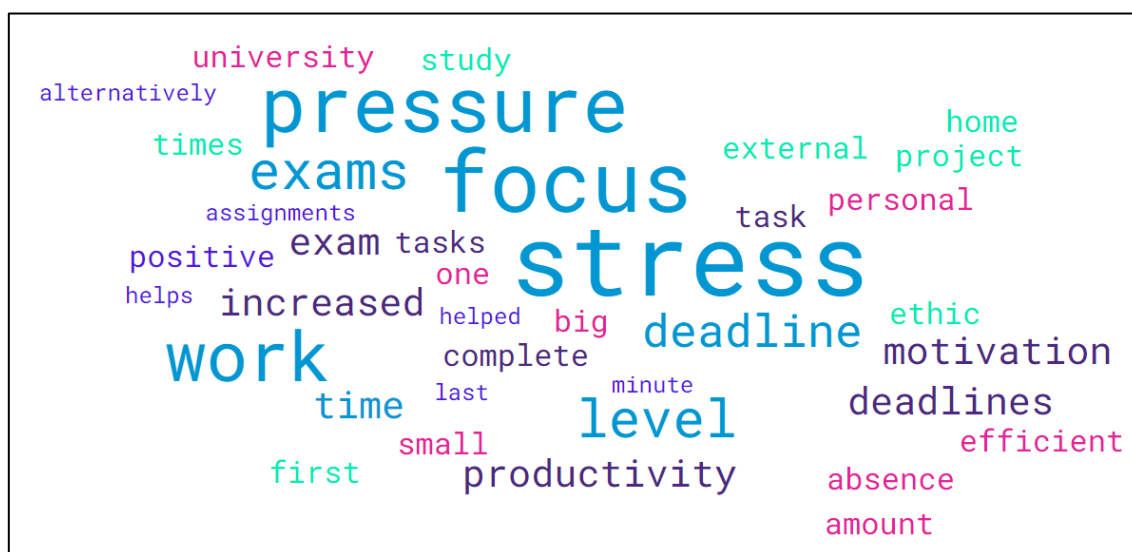


Figure 2.2.: Common themes word cloud from all respondents' answers.

## 1.5 Participants' Identified Coping Mechanisms

### 1.5.1 The Strategies or Techniques Participants use to Manage Stress

Participants helped identify useful coping mechanisms through their diverse perspectives and needs, revealing the strategies employed by youths (n=383) across Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, as presented in Figure 1.8.

Among Irish respondents (n=239), the most common strategies included engaging in mindful activities like reading or playing games (n=107) and exercising or playing sports (n=98). However, procrastination (n=106) was also prevalent, reflecting their tendency to delay tasks, which may increase their feelings of stress over time. Many participants also reported isolating themselves (n=99), contributing to loneliness and heightened stress. Additionally, some youths engaged in unhealthy behaviours such as overeating (n=67) and alcohol or drug use (n=59).

Respondents from Cyprus (n=38) often turned to talking and meeting with family and friends (n=23) to cope. Other positive strategies included therapy or coaching (n=19), exercising (n=15), and creative activities (n=15). Procrastination (n=18) was the most common negative coping mechanism identified compared to the healthier options reported.

Hungarian respondents (n=29) also prioritised social connection, talking or meeting family and friends (n=13) being the most common strategy. Other methods included engaging in creative activities (n=11), exercising, playing sports (n=9), reading, and playing games (n=8). Meditation and breathwork (n=5) were also popular ways to manage stress.

For Greek respondents (n=17), the most frequently reported strategies were healthy habits such as exercising or engaging in sports (n=6) and talking or meeting with family and friends (n=7). Therapy or coaching (n=6) was also used, while less constructive strategies like procrastination (n=5) and isolation (n=5) were reported by a smaller group.

Respondents from France (n=26) most frequently reported strategies included healthy habits such as exercising or engaging in sports (n=20), activities like reading or playing games (n=13) engaging in meditation and breathwork (n=10), creative activities (n=10), and talking or meeting with family and friends (n=8). Auto coaching (n=1), and Therapy or coaching (n=3) was also used, while less constructive strategies like procrastination (n=7), eating (n=7) and isolation (n=4) were reported by a smaller group.

For Czech respondents (n=17), the most frequently reported healthier strategies included talking to family and friends (n=20), exercising or engaging in sports (n=15), activities like reading or playing games (n=14), engaging in creative activities (n=13), meditation and breathwork (n=9), and Therapy or coaching (n=5). Less constructive strategies like procrastination (n=18), isolation (n=14), addictive behaviours (n=13), eating (n=11) and self-medicating (n=7) were reported.

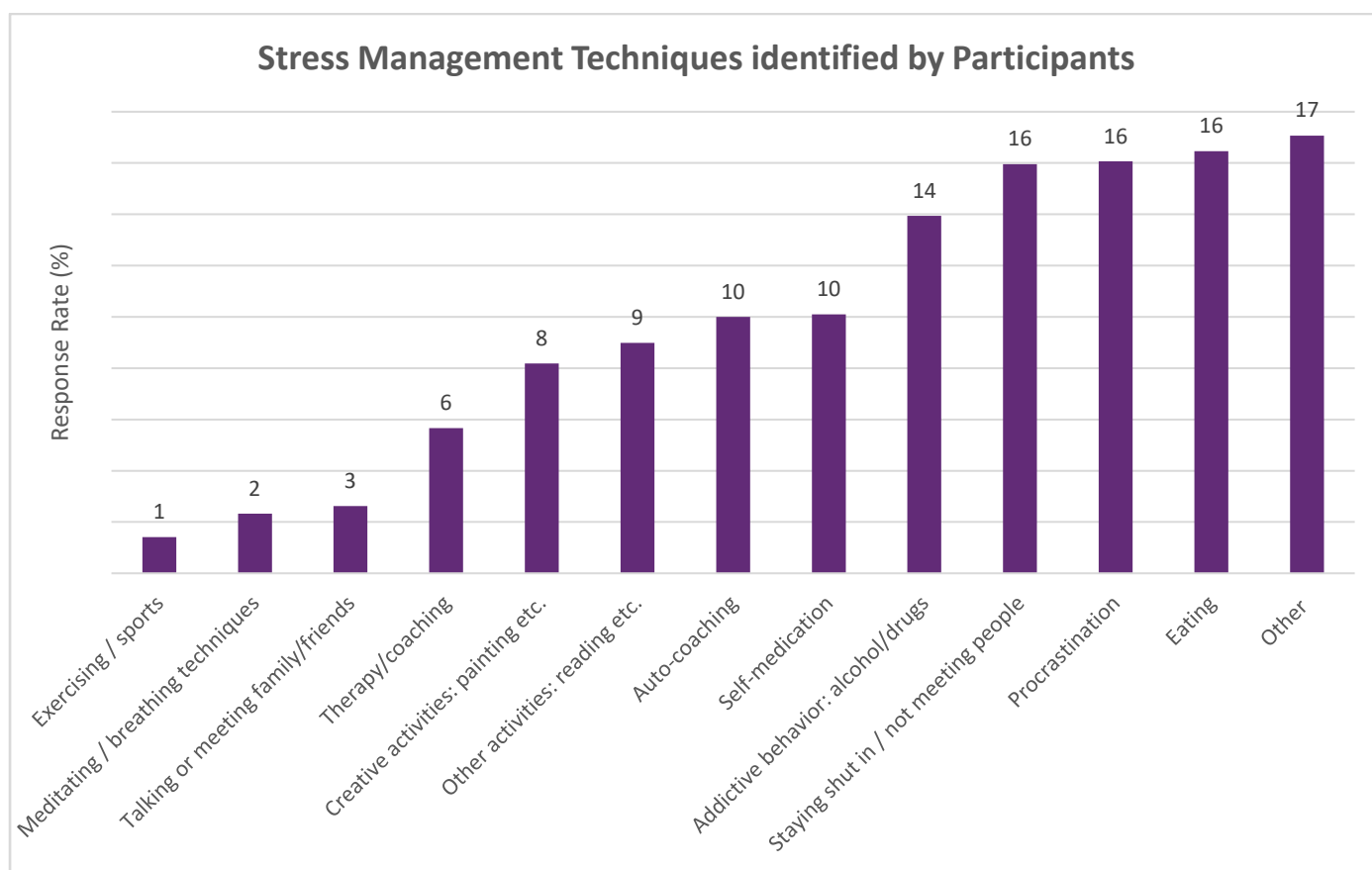


Figure 1.8. Strategies or techniques participants identified for manage stress.

This data suggest that youth across Europe have a high degree of awareness in relation to various stress management techniques. In general, socialising and partaking in activities (physical or other) are respondents favoured stress management strategies suggesting a high recognition of their beneficial effects. However, procrastination and isolating behaviour also garnered much attention. These are unhealthy coping strategies which rather than alleviating stress, may instead exacerbate it. With the similar reporting of healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms, it is critical that this cohort receives education on the strategies which successfully alleviate stress.

## 1.5.2 Participants' Effective Strategies for Managing Stress

Following their reporting of the most used coping strategies for stress, participants were asked to indicate how effective they believed these strategies were in easing stress. As illustrated in Figure 1.9., 19% (n=75) found their stress management strategies to be “very effective”, while 62% (n=229) deemed them “somewhat effective”, and 18% (n=68) reported that their strategies were “not effective at all”. Additionally, 1% (n=3) indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

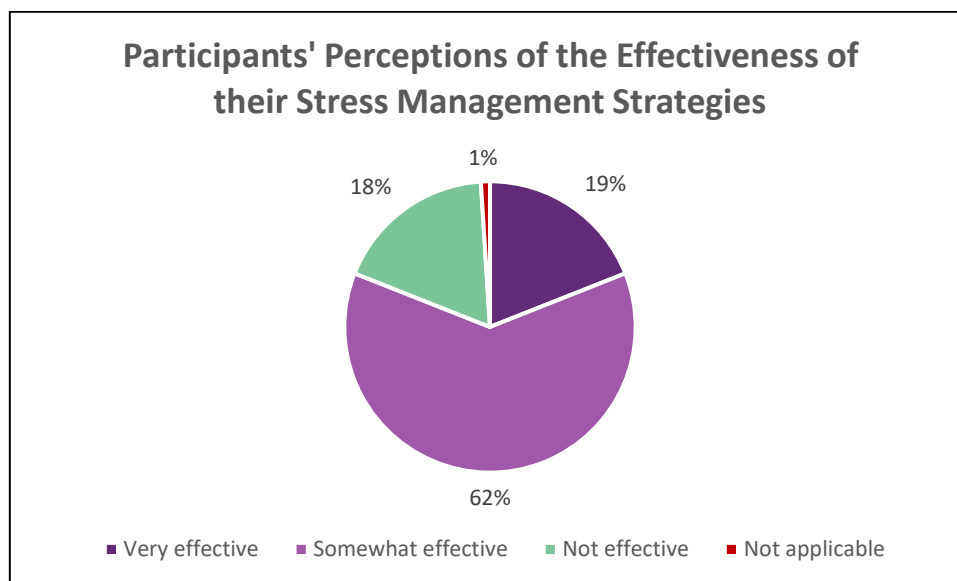


Figure 1.9.: Participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of their stress management strategies.

The distribution of participants' perceptions relating to the effectiveness of the stress management strategies they employ reveals that, for the most part, participants believe their strategies somewhat successfully alleviate stress (n=229, 62%). A smaller cohort of participants (n=75, 19%) believed their strategies were very effective, followed by n=68 (18%) who reported believing that their stress management techniques were completely unsuccessful. These findings suggest that though some individuals are seeing success with their stress management strategies, there remains a large amount of room for improvement. Ideally, participants would be confident that their employed strategies successfully alleviate stress.



## 1.6 Participants' Knowledge of Coping Mechanisms

### 1.6.1 Stress Management Techniques Mentioned but not Experienced by Participants.

Insights were gathered from 383 respondents across Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic regarding stress management techniques they are willing to try and incorporate. The key techniques mentioned are summarised below.

The most commonly mentioned techniques included therapy or coaching, meditation, relaxation breathing techniques, mindfulness practices, body, and mind practices (such as yoga and Pilates), journaling, and relaxation techniques like aromatherapy. This indicates a strong interest in exploring diverse strategies for managing stress effectively. The findings indicate a strong interest in holistic approaches to stress management, particularly among Hungarian youths. While some participants are eager to try new strategies, others could benefit from greater exposure to a wider range of options. Providing additional information on these techniques may encourage more individuals to explore effective methods for managing stress.

**Table 1.3.:** Sample of quotes on stress management techniques mentioned but not experienced by participants.

Org.	ID	Quote	Common theme
CY [MTG]	P28	Therapy	Therapy
CY [MTG]	P32	Journaling. It seems to work for many people in dealing with stress but I haven't had time to try it yet.	Journaling
Trebag Ltd, [HG]	P1	Meditation, sleep	Meditation, Sleep
Trebag Ltd, [HG]	P4	Yoga, Pilates, meditation	Body mind
AKLUB [CZH]	P5	The urgency created by a deadline increased my productivity and creativity, helping me complete tasks efficiently.	Increased Productivity
AKLUB [CZH]	P5	System and order. But I think that I have some form of ADHD, so this is difficult for me.	Organization, ADHD
Vanillea [FR]	P12	Yes, journaling, meaning forcing myself to write about what is going well and what is not. Many athletes incorporate it into their mental preparation, and I think it could be beneficial for a lot of people, including myself.	Journaling/organizational tools
Vanillea [FR]	P22	Being organized through to-do lists	Journaling/organizational tools
ATU [IRE]	P27	Meditating, I've read about it a lot but couldn't try due to my fast moving day and I am almost all the time out of the house	Meditation
ATU [IRE]	P163	Meditation and breathing, I believe in them fully, but I also believe anyone trying to sell them to me is a trickster or a con artist	Meditation





Figure 2.3.: Common themes word cloud from all respondents' answers.

## 1.7 Participants' Interest in Stress Management Education

### 1.7.1 Participants' Interest in Learning more about Stress Management Techniques

Participants identified their interest in learning more about stress management techniques in Figure 1.10., illustrates that a total of 383 expressed a “Very Interested” response 38% (n=144), chose “Somewhat Interested”, 55% (n=212) and 7% participants indicated they were “Not Interested” (n=27) in learning about stress management techniques, emphasizing how worthwhile such endeavours initiatives would be given the general overall interest amongst participants.

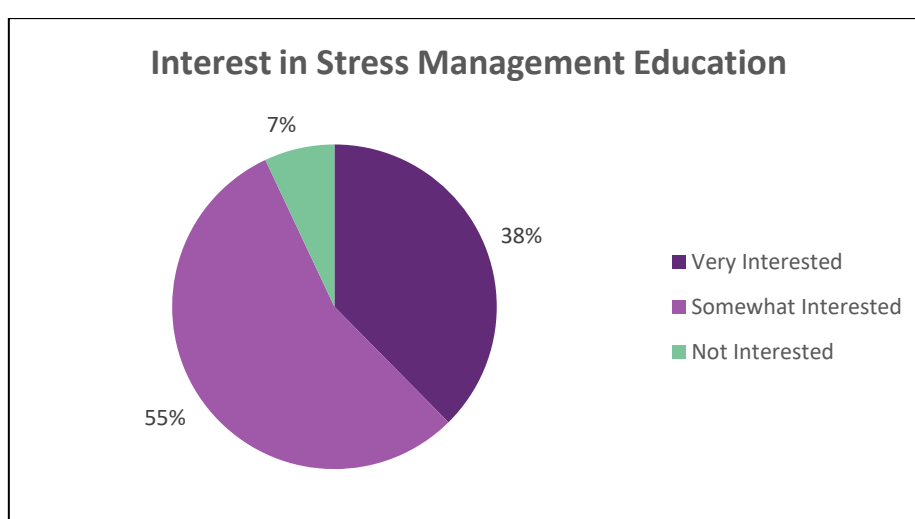


Figure 1.10.: Participants' interest in learning more about stress management techniques.

Participants have a high level of interest in learning about stress management, with a total of n=356 (93%) participants reporting being either “very interested” or “somewhat interested” in this education. Overall, this suggests that initiatives and resources aimed at educating individuals on stress management are likely to be well-received and garner much attention. This information also further highlights that a current gap exists in youth stress management education and that a clear opportunity to improve education in this area remains.

## 1.7.2 Resources Participants Would Find Helpful for Learning How to Manage Stress

Participants were asked to identify the types of resources they would find most helpful for learning about stress management techniques. The results, as shown in Figure 1.11., indicate that social media (n=123, 32%) was the most preferred method, followed by workshops (n=118, 30.8%), and web apps (n=117, 30.5%), and videos (n=108, 28%). In contrast, online courses (n=67, 17.5%, and mobile apps (n=66, 17.2%) were reported as the least favourable options for learning about stress management. Those that choose 'other' did not identify the source (n=9, 20.9%).

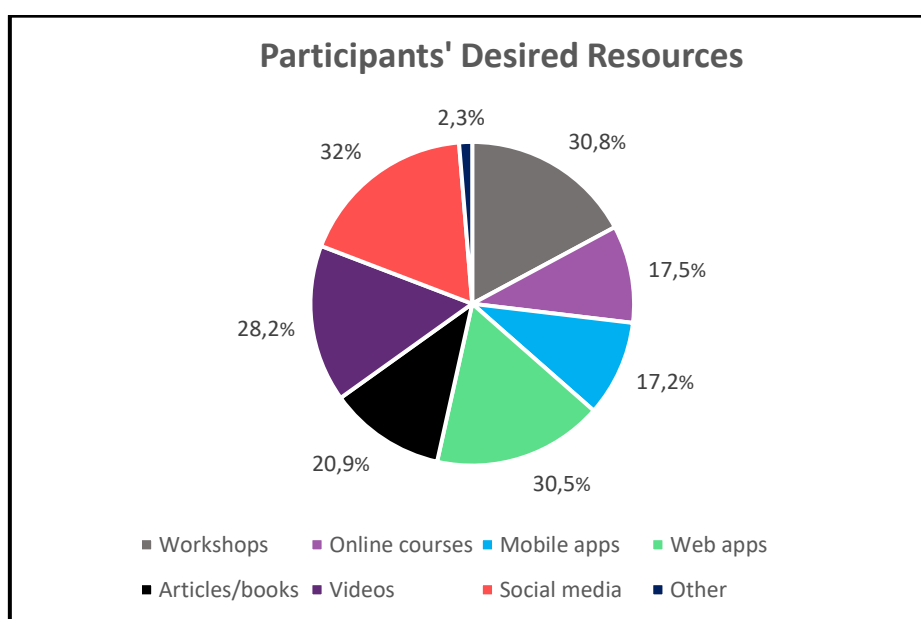


Figure 1.11. The types of resources participants would find most helpful for learning how to manage stress.

The distribution of preferred resources to be used in stress management education indicate that interactive and easily accessible platforms are highly desired. Resources such as social media posts (n=123, 32%), workshops (n=118, 31%) and web apps (n=117, 31%) were the most desired resources. Comparably, online courses scored poorly (n=67, 18%). These results suggest that youth would prefer resources which can be used flexibly rather than being tied to a specific timepoint, and those which allow for engagement with others (such as with other learners through online communication or with other attendees of workshops).

### 1.7.3 Participants' Interest in Free Workshops or Courses on Stress Management.

Participants expressed varying levels of interest in attending free workshops or courses on stress management. As illustrated in Figure 1.12., 31% (n=118) indicated they would be “very likely” to participate, while 46% (n=176) reported they would be “somewhat likely”. In contrast, 23% (n=89) stated they were “not likely” to engage in a free stress management course or workshop.



Figure 1.12.: Participants likelihood to participate in a free workshop or course on stress management.

This high level of interest indicates that offering free workshops or courses on stress management could attract a significant number of participants. It also highlights the demand for accessible, structured learning opportunities, reinforcing the project's mission to provide valuable tools and resources for managing stress.

## 1.8 Participants' Shared Opinions

### 1.8.1 Participants' Belief in Stress Management's Role in Achieving Goals

As illustrated in Figure 1.13.a. and 1.13.b., when asked if they thought better stress management could help them achieve their personal and professional goals, 74% (n=285) responded "Yes," 15% (n=42) were "Not Sure", and 11% (n=56) answered "No".



Figure 1.13.a.: Participants' belief in stress management's role in achieving goals (n=383).

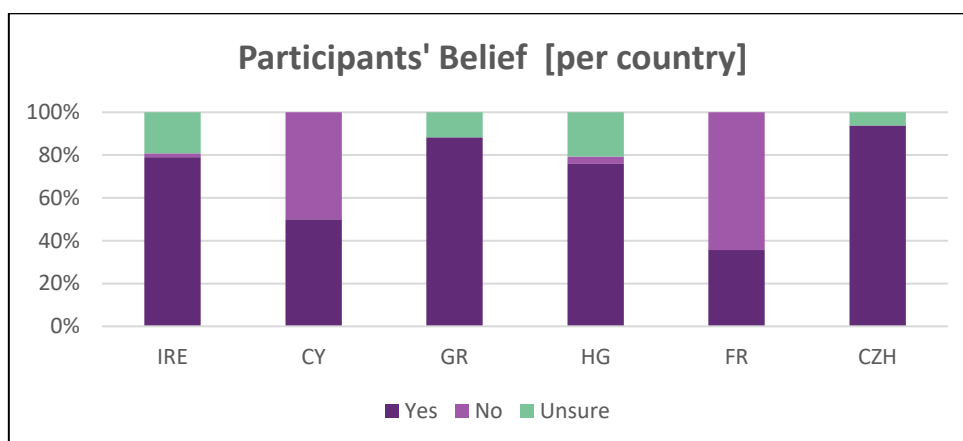


Figure 1.13.b.: Participants' belief in stress management's role in achieving goals, country breakdown.

These findings show that youth acknowledge the positive impact of stress management strategies and indicate that a lack of awareness is not a barrier to their use. The results reflect a clear demand for stress management tools and resources to help achieve their goals. This strong belief highlights the importance of the EMERGE Youth project focus on stress management education, suggesting that providing resources and support in this area could empower participants in their personal and professional lives.

## 1.8.2 Areas for Improvement Through Better Stress Management

Participants highlighted several areas where they wanted to see improvements through better stress management. As shown in Figure 1.14, these areas included physical and mental health (n=210, 31%), education and training (n=173, 25%), personal and family relationships (n=153, 22%), and career (n=146, 20%). Those that choose 'other' did not identify areas (n=3, 1%).

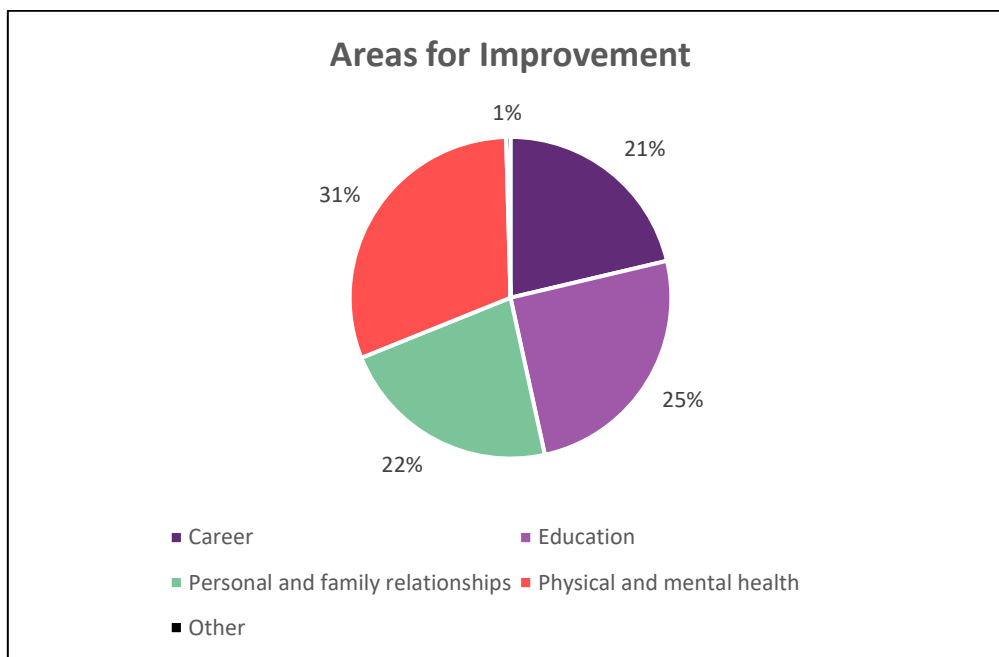


Figure 1.14.: Areas of life participants identified wanting to see better stress management improvements.

The most frequently cited area for improvement was physical and mental health (31%), indicating that stress significantly affects participants' overall well-being. There was also a strong focus on education, relationships, and career, showing that participants understand how stress impacts both their personal and professional lives. The emphasis on improving personal and family relationships suggests a need for stronger support systems, while the focus on career highlights participants' awareness of how stress influences their job performance and satisfaction. Addressing these areas through effective stress management could lead to meaningful improvements in participants' overall well-being and life satisfaction.

## 1.9 Participants' Wishes - Stress Management Resources.

### 1.9.1 Desired Features for a Stress Management Web App

Insights were gathered from respondents across Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic regarding key features they wanted in a stress management web app.

As shown in Figure 1.15., the most desired features were personalized plans (N247, 45%), progress tracking (n=227, 42%), self-improvement tools (n=181, 33%), educational content (n=165, 30%), and interactive elements (n=133, 24%). In contrast, rewards (n=118, 22%) and community support (n=102, 19%) were the least preferred features.

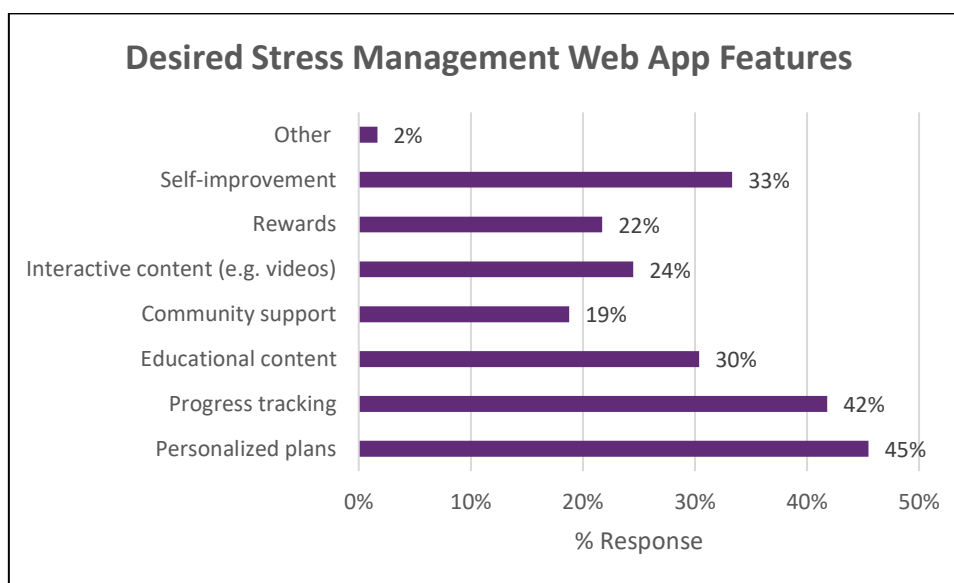


Figure 1.15.: Participants desired features for a stress management web app.

Participants valued progress tracking and personalised plans, indicating a preference for tailored approaches and measurable outcomes. The demand for self-improvement tools and interactive educational content shows a desire for a customizable, engaging platform. Prioritising these features in the stress app development could enhance user engagement and help achieve better stress management outcomes.

## 1.9.2 Perceived Frequency of Using a Stress Management App Tailored to Participants' Specific Needs

Youths (n=383) indicated how often they would use a stress management app tailored to their needs. As the question allowed multiple-choice responses, the total response count was higher (n=394). As shown in Figure 1.16., the most common response was weekly (n=180, 46%), followed by daily (n=101, 26%), monthly (n=32, 8%), rarely (n=32, 8%), and never (n=35, 9%). Over half of the participants indicated they would use the app at least weekly.

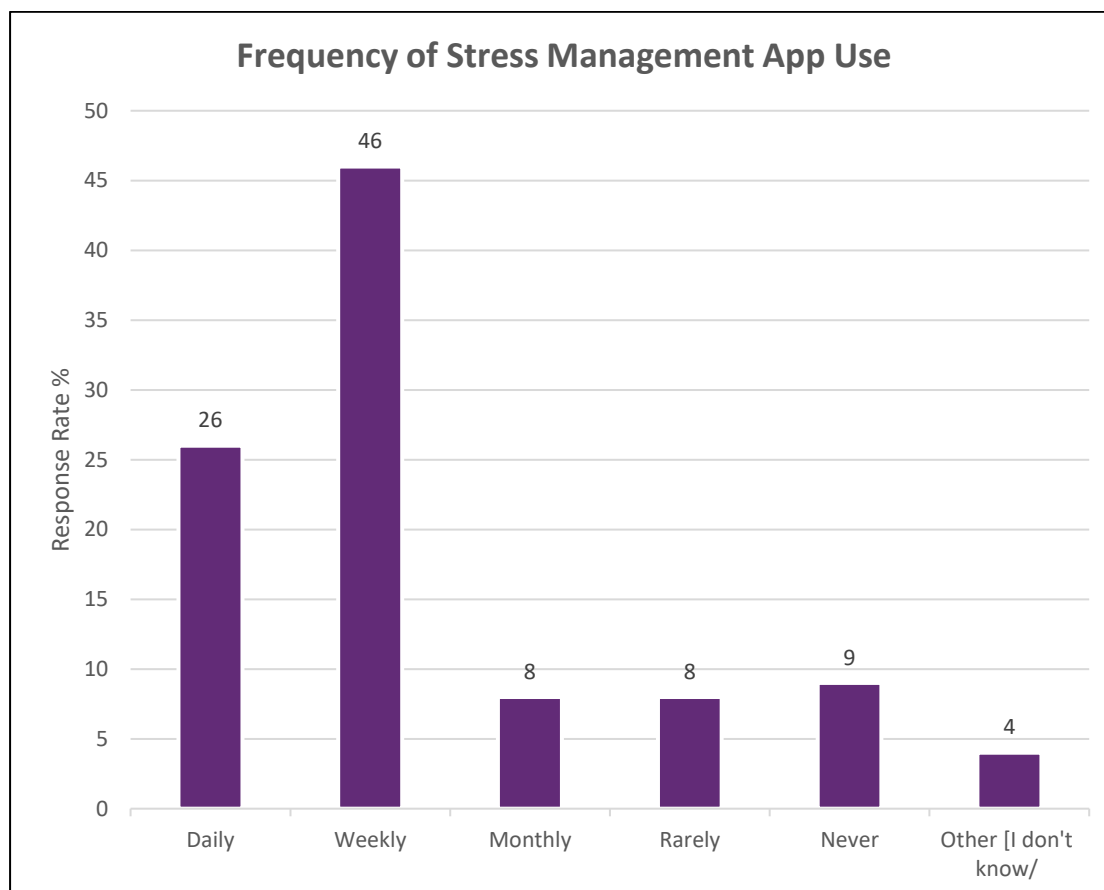


Figure 1.16.: Participants perceived frequency of using a stress management app.

This suggests a strong potential for regular engagement with a personalised stress management app, highlighting the importance of ongoing support. The frequent use interest points to the app's ability to become part of participants' routines, especially with tailored content and features to enhance its effectiveness.



## 1.10 Participant Engagement and Community.

### 1.10.1 Preferred Engagement Methods for an EMERGE Youth Stress Community.

Youths (n=383) from Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic identified their preferred methods for staying engaged with a stress management community. The question allowed a multiple-choice response; the total response count was higher (n=458). As shown in Figure 1.17., over half preferred social media groups (n=233, 51%), followed by regular meetups (n=98, 21%), forums (n=79, 17%), newsletters (n=47, 11%), or other (n=11). However those that chose 'other' did not state an alternative preference.

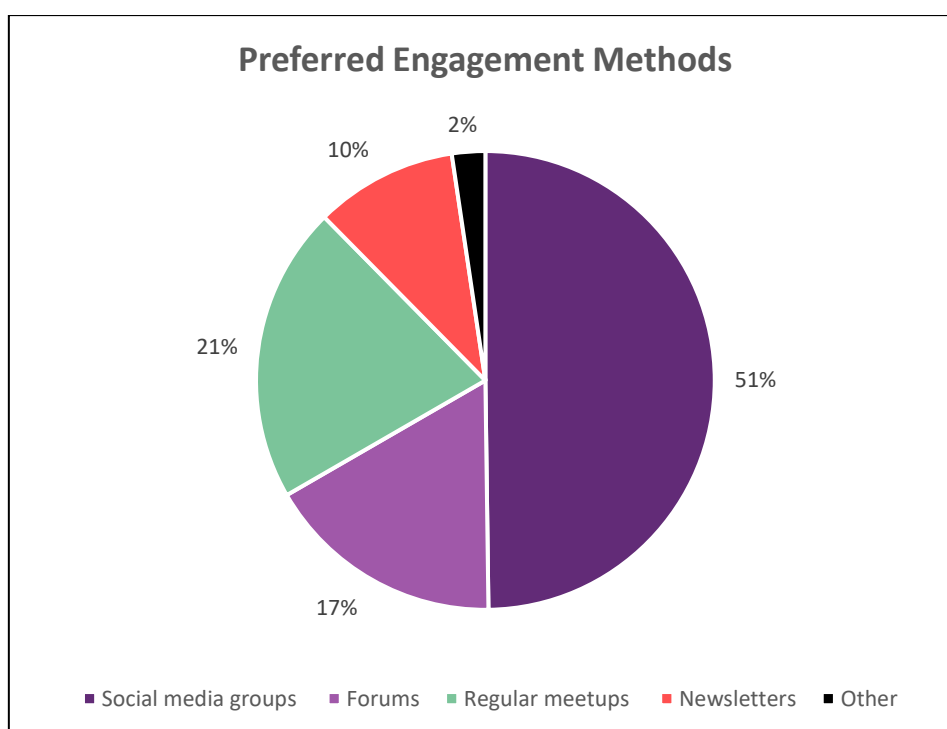


Figure 1.17.: Participants preferred methods to engage with the EMERGE Youth stress management community.

These results indicate a strong preference by youth for digital engagement via social media due to its convenience and flexibility. However, the interest in regular meetups highlights the importance of personal interaction for community building. Combining social media engagement with periodic meetups could foster a more connected, supportive, and dynamic community environment while preventing potential online fatigue.

### 1.10.2 Additional Information or Insights Shared by Participants

Additional Insights were gathered from respondents across Ireland, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic provided additional information or insights. Key Findings include:

1. **Interest in Stress Management:** Many participants expressed a keen interest in learning more about stress management techniques and exploring them in the future.
2. **Need for Emergency Contacts:** Participants recommended including emergency contact details in project materials to increase awareness of immediate support services.
3. **Stress and Anxiety Link:** Several respondents highlighted that their stress is often linked to anxiety, suggesting that both areas should be addressed in the project's content.
4. **Generalised Apps:** Mental health apps were appreciated for their accessibility, participants suggested adding personalized features and specialist input to improve effectiveness.
5. **Commercialisation Concerns:** One participant voiced concern about commercialisation of mental health resources, advocating for a non-commercial, altruistic approach.

These insights suggest that while many participants are open to engaging with stress management tools, personalised and comprehensive approaches, as well as non-commercial motivations, will likely be key to the project's success.



Figure 2.4.: Word cloud of additional feedback gathered from participants.

## Final Conclusions and Identified Trends

This report provides insights into the current stress management levels of youth participants aged 18-30, based on a total of 383 survey responses from *the EMERGE Youth* European research participants. The findings indicate a significant interest in stress management among young people, which will inform the development of targeted resources to enhance their well-being across Europe. The analysis will guide the creation of educational materials, and a free web app aimed at promoting best practices in stress management education, ultimately helping youth build skills for better health, well-being, employability, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The survey reveals notable variations in stress levels and primary stressors across the surveyed countries. In Ireland, academic pressure is a predominant stressor, while financial concerns are more significant in Greece and Hungary. Coping strategies primarily involve social support and physical activity, with mindfulness practices gaining traction. However, procrastination a less positive strategies was commonly reported amongst youths when coping with stress. Participants express a clear need for educational resources, mental health support, and skills development to manage stress effectively, suggesting a demand for tailored interventions.

Despite cultural differences, commonalities exist in stress levels, stressors, and coping mechanisms among youth across partner countries. Young people face similar challenges related to academic pressure, financial concerns, and employment worries, all contributing to their overall stress. The frequent use of social support, physical activity, and mindfulness techniques underscores shared experiences and strategies for managing stress. These similarities highlight the potential for collaborative approaches and shared resources to effectively address stress management across Europe.

However, the results also illustrate significant differences in stress levels, stressors, coping mechanisms, and management needs among youth across the surveyed countries. Geographic and cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping these differences, emphasising the potential need to localise stress management approaches. Understanding these variations can inform targeted interventions and resources tailored to meet the specific needs of young people in diverse European contexts.

## **Key Recommendations Include:**

**Develop Personalised Stress Management Resources:** Given the strong interest in stress management and preferences for digital solutions, it is essential to create a platform that offers personalised stress management plans, progress tracking, and interactive content. This will enable young people to engage with tools tailored to their individual needs, effectively helping them manage stress and improve their well-being.

**Incorporate Community-Based Support and Workshops:** Since many respondents expressed a preference for engaging with stress management communities, it is recommended to facilitate both online and offline interactions. Offering workshops, whether virtual or in-person, alongside digital community platforms, would foster peer support and provide ongoing opportunities for learning and sharing best practices in stress management.

**Conduct Educational Workshops:** Implement workshops focusing on stress management techniques to educate participants about effective coping strategies. These workshops should emphasize educational content, as there is a significant demand for knowledge-sharing through in-person sessions.

**Create Educational Videos:** Develop a series of educational videos addressing common and useful stress management techniques, the effects of stress, and the relationship between a healthy lifestyle (including diet) and mental well-being. These videos should target youth to enhance their understanding and engagement with stress management practices.

**Focus on Specific Needs and Content:** Tailor content not only around mental health improvement but also regarding career-related stressors, deadlines, and the effects of procrastination. This dual focus can address the complex interplay between stress, academic pressures, and professional aspirations.

In summary, the findings underline the need for tailored stress management resources for young people, aligning with the EMERGE Youth project's goals to provide personalised solutions and tools for developing stress management techniques as Open Educational Resources (OERs). Future actions will involve follow-up surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented educational resource pack and further research to address the specific stress management needs of young people in Ireland and Europe. Developing an accessible online solution will expand educational opportunities, particularly for individuals with limited access, while engaging a wider youth population in stress management. Ultimately, these efforts aim to enhance essential stress management skills in their lives, improving their overall health and future opportunities. Addressing these needs, the project will not only enhance the mental and physical health of young people but also improve their employability and entrepreneurial opportunities across Europe.