

The Reading List

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Introduction

- Multidisciplinary
- Variety of ages
- Variety of ethnicities



Contents of presentation

- What our project is
 - How we went about our project
 - What are the results
 - Our final product
 - What were our difficulties
 - What does the future hold for our project
-

Our project: creating a Reading List for Freshers

Why did we choose this project?

- Freshers are a risk population for mental health issues- 87% have difficulties coping with social or academic aspects of university(1).
- We wanted to help provide prevention

1. UPP Annual Student Experience Survey [Internet]. UPP Annual Student Experience Survey. 2018 [cited 6 June 2018]. Available from: <http://www.upp-ltd.com/student-survey/>



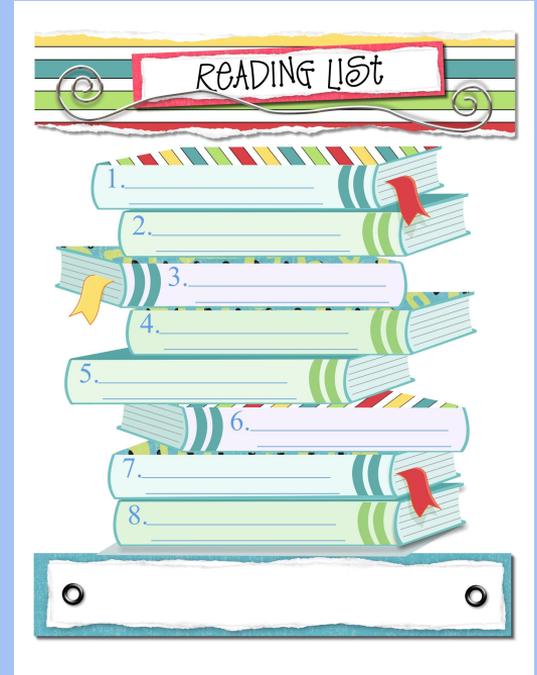
The benefits of reading

- Readers are more likely to live longer (1)
- Reading helps to maintain cognitive status- keeps your brain sharp (1)
- Reading can reduce depression (2)
- Reading transforms us. It can change how we view ourselves and experience emotion (3)
- Therapeutic reading is a form of therapy in itself and has been recommended by clinicians as an alternative to face-to-face therapy (4).

1. Bavishi A, Slade M, Levy B. A chapter a day: Association of book reading with longevity. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2016;164:44-48.
2. Dowrick C, Billington J, Robinson J, Hamer A, Williams C. Get into Reading as an intervention for common mental health problems: exploring catalysts for change: Figure 1. *Medical Humanities*. 2012;38(1):15-20.
3. Djikic, M., et al. (2009) 'On being moved by art: how reading fiction transforms the self', *Creativity Research Journal*, 21(1):24-29.
4. Mcardle, s. et al. (2001). 'Fiction, poetry and mental health: expressive and therapeutic uses of literature'. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 8(6); 517-524.

Creating the reading list

- 1) designing the survey
- 2) data collection
- 3) data analysis
- 4) creating the shortlist
- 5) refining the list



Books and Well-being

The aim of our survey is to gain an understanding of which books have helped with the general student populations' mental health and well-being, particularly in relation to the first year of university. We will later be converting some of this information into a reading list aimed to assist those entering first year.

Email address *

Valid email address

This form is collecting email addresses. [Change settings](#)

University of Exeter (Grand Challenges)

Questionnaire produced by Grace, Weronika, Krishina, Lois, Isabella, Mia, Paige, Eloise, Megan and Katerina for the use of the aforementioned persons.
For any questions contact Isabella Barclay at ib319@exeter.ac.uk

Please select all of the following that you understand and agree with so we know if we have your full consent:

- Your answers will be anonymous and are securely stored
- You consent to your answers being anonymously used to create leaflets, bookmarks and posters, to be handed out to
- You can withdraw your answers before 12 noon on the 6th of June (as this is when we will be compiling our results)

What book have you read that makes you feel good? Please include the name of the author. *

Short-answer text

Please summarise this book in a few words. (Optional)

Short-answer text

On which well-being issues, if any, does this book touch? (e.g. Anxiety, physical health problems, etc) Choose all options which apply to your chosen book: *

- Anxiety and panic disorders
- Depression
- Personality disorders
- Body dysmorphic

Designing the survey

- First question was ensuring we had their consent
- We then asked if they had a book that made them feel good
- We got some basic demographic information (age and gender)
- We asked what topics the books covered and whether they enhanced their general well being.

Data collection

Issie Rose Barclay
23 hrs · 🌐

Hey guys, for Grand Challenges this week i'm in a group looking at the treatment gap in mental health, as part of this we are developing a list of books on a leaflet to give to freshers that will contain topics that they may struggle with during their time at uni. if you have read any books during or before uni/know of any books that deal with these issues, or are just feel-good books please can you fill out this survey. Thanks.

Books and Well-being

The aim of our survey is to gain an understanding of which books have helped with the general student population's mental health and well-being, particularly in relation to the first year of university. We will later be converting some of the information into a reading list aimed to assist those entering first year.

*Required

Email address *

Your email

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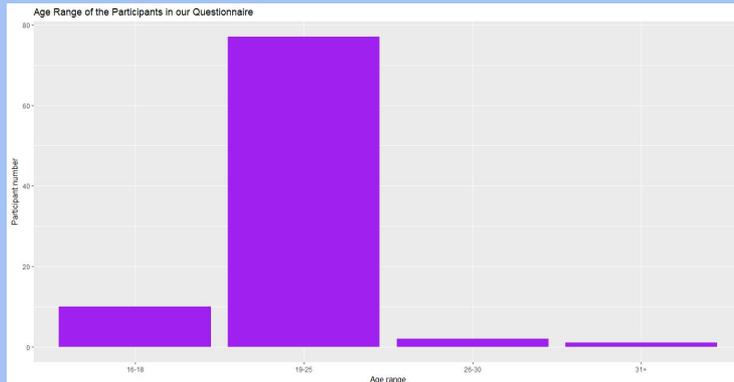
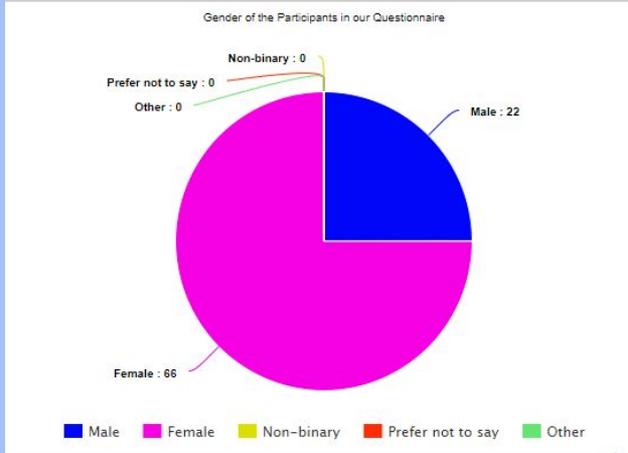
DOCS.GOOGLE.COM
Books and Well-being
The aim of our survey is to gain an understanding of which books have...

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍❤️

- Survey distributed online, via social media. Participants asked to complete a survey on “reading and wellbeing”.
- No deception involved.
- Had to indicate consent by ticking 3 boxes
- Were told they could withdraw their data up to noon on the 6th of June 2018

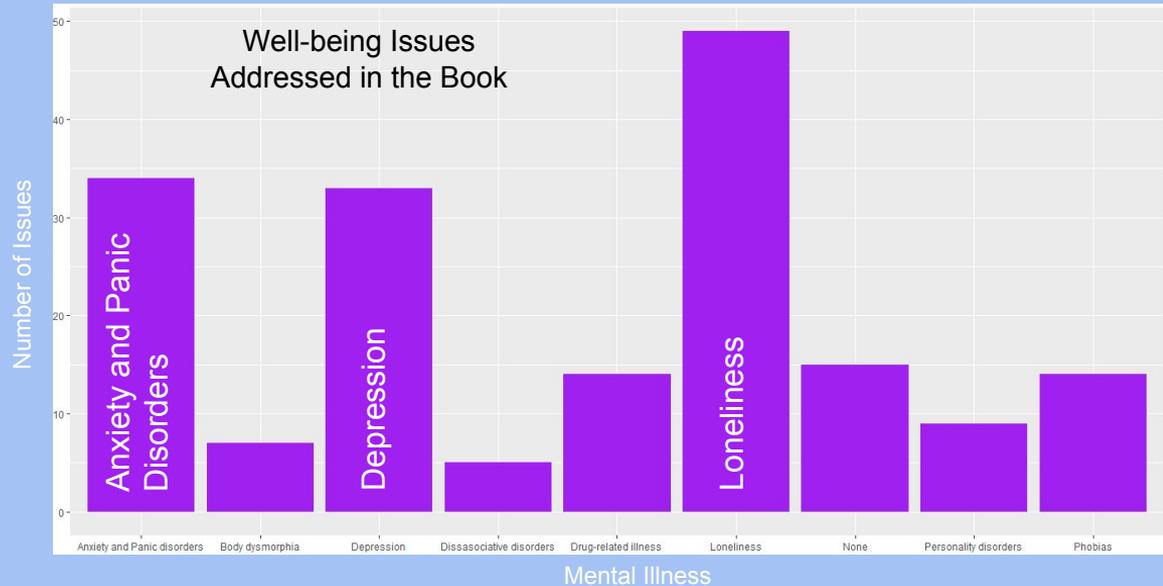
Analysis and results



- In total, we collected 89 responses.
- We looked at repeated admissions, gender, and age when considering admissions.
- We excluded one response-not given full consent.
- 75% female and 25% male in our sample
- Most common age range was 19-25

Our Results and Analysis

- Loneliness, Anxiety and Panic Disorders, and Depression were the main issues highlighted in books



Creating the shortlist

- We split all the book titles between the group. Each member of the group considered the following:
 - What is the content? Does it touch on mental health, if so does it have a positive message or could it be distressing? Does it depict mental health issues accurately?
 - Could it enhance general wellbeing?
 - Is it gender biased? What is the reading age?
 - Intentions of the author?
 - Is it mainstream?
 - Reviews online.
-

Refining the shortlist

- We then had a group discussion and considered survey data. For instance, in terms of frequency and whether it improved participants' general well being.
 - We then shared our own opinions on the books to decide on the final 12.
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Our final choices: The Fresh List

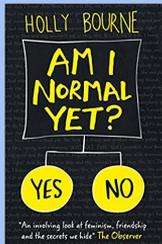
87% of people in our sample on Instagram agreed this was a good name!



OUR FINAL CHOICES

Fiction:

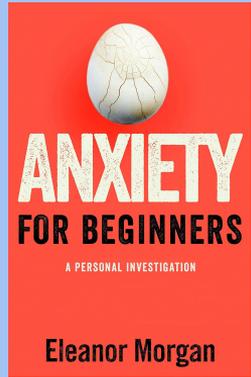
1. Fangirl- Rainbow Rowell
2. Siddhartha - Hermann Hesse
3. Bluets- Maggie Nelson (poetry)
4. Am I Normal Yet?- Holly Bourne
5. The Humans - Matt Haig
6. Night Circus - Erin Morgenstern
7. The Strangest Secret- Earl Nightingale
8. The Catcher in the Rye - J. D. Salinger
9. A Court of Thorns and Roses- Sarah J Maas

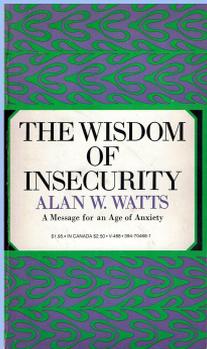
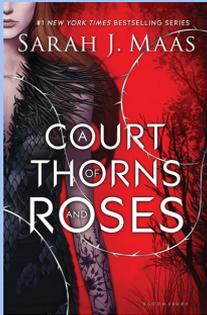
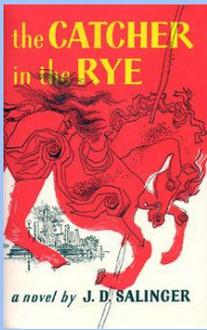


Non-Fiction:

10. Anxiety for Beginners- Eleanor Morgan
11. The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for An Age of Anxiety - by Alan Watts
12. How to Ruin Everything - George Watsky

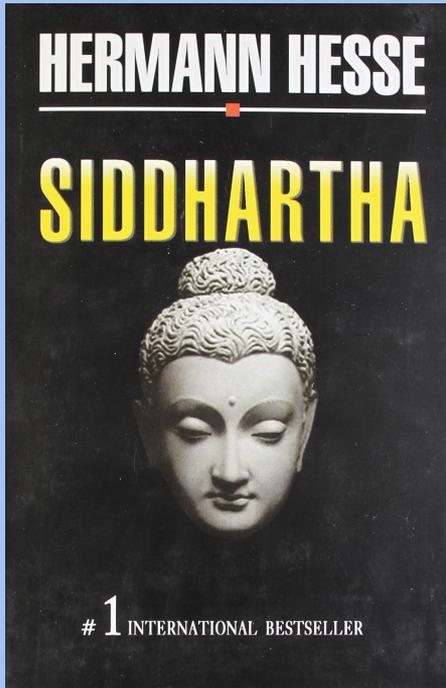
On the leaflet we will be indicating a little information about these books e.g: the themes explored, such as transition, mood boosting, and mental health





Why did we choose...

- The Catcher in the Rye:
 - Dealing with loneliness, change, loss, growing up, and learning to accept others. It also came up multiple times in our survey.
 - A Court of Thorns and Roses:
 - Escapism whilst exploring depression and PTSD
 - The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for An Age of Anxiety:
 - Help deal with daily worry, providing comfort and reassurance
-



Siddhartha vs. Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, and The Strangest Secret

- The Strangest Secret has heavily Christian tones, which led us to include an alternative religious novel
 - Two alternative religious novels were presented in the survey
 - Siddhartha was chosen as it was more widely available and known about
 - Was important to break away from western literature
-

Our Outcomes

Leaflet

Bookmark

Poster

#TheFreshList



Reading
everyday
may
keep the
doctor
away...

THE READING AGENCY
READING WELL

- The Strangest Secret** – Earl Nightingale
- The Catcher in the Rye** – J. D. Salinger
- A Court of Thorns and Roses** – Sarah J. Maas
- Am I Normal Yet?** – Holly Morgan
- The Humans** – Matt Haig
- Night Circus** – Erin Morgenstern
- Fangirl** – Rainbow Rowell
- Siddhartha** – Hermann Hesse
- Bluesets** – Maggie Nelson
- Anxiety for Beginners** – Eleanor Morgan
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- How to Ruin Everything** – George Watsky

#TheFreshList

12 Mood-boosting books to get you through the year

5 Proven Health Benefits of Reading...

- ✓ Book readers are more likely to live longer.
- ✓ Helps you maintain cognitive status, keeps your brain sharp.
- ✓ Promotes empathy, social perception, and emotional intelligence.
- ✓ Enhances vocabulary, concentration, and critical thinking skills.
- ✓ Reduction in depression.

12 Mood-boosting books to help you get through your year.

- Transitional books
- Mood-boosting books
- Mental health books

#TheFreshList

Every fresher's most important reading list.

- **Transitional books**
- **Mood-boosting books**
- **Mental health books**

1. **Fangirl** – Rainbow Rowell
A contemporary young adult novel about a teenager starting at university and adjusting to a new life. It's a hilarious, heartwarming, and empowering read about overcoming social anxiety and finding your voice.
2. **Siddhartha** – Hermann Hesse
Exploring the topics of self-discovery, happiness and self-achievement, this book is full of wisdom and inspirational messages for young adults to live their life to the fullest.
3. **Bluesets** – Maggie Nelson
In this beautiful book of experimental poetry, Maggie Nelson combines prose and lyrics to create a collection of short and unconventional poems, exploring the fragility and beauty of life.
4. **Am I Normal Yet?** – Holly Morgan
A hilarious and relatable YA novel about a teenager who is struggling with anxiety and depression.
5. **The Humans** – Matt Haig
This classic coming-of-age story follows a young boy's journey through his struggles to deal with the complex world of adulthood.
6. **Night Circus** – Erin Morgenstern
This magical epic tells the story of two children who are raised for an immense game against each other through the world of the circus.
7. **The Strangest Secret** – Earl Nightingale
Nightingale proposes that an individual believes in their own success. If you believe whatever they think, you will achieve whatever they think.
8. **The Catcher in the Rye** – J. D. Salinger
This classic coming-of-age story follows Holden Caulfield through his struggles to deal with the complex world of adulthood.
9. **A Court of Thorns and Roses** – Sarah J. Maas
This fantasy trilogy invites readers into the world of Feyri lands. From classic tales like Beauty and the Beast to Greek myths such as Percy Jackson's adventures to the underworld, there are plenty of new worlds to explore.



UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
STUDENTS'
GUILD

THE
READING
AGENCY

Our collaborations:

'THE LIST LOOKS FAB- A REALLY INTERESTING RANGE AND SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.' - DEBBIE HICKS

- Exeter Library - discussed getting all books on the reading list available to borrow
 - Exeter Student Guild - putting the reading list in Fresher's packs
 - The Reading Agency - promoting and supporting our reading list <https://readingagency.org.uk/>
 - Belinda Bauden (social sciences) -
 - The FXU (Penryn Campus) -
-

What issues did we face and how did we overcome these?

The majority of respondents to our survey were female (75 %). However, when creating and refining the list we tried to make sure that the collection included something for everyone.

Many of the books were suggested repeatedly by the respondents (and so popular mood-enhancing choices) were too mainstream and did not fit our idea of “The Fresh list”. For example, Harry Potter came up multiple times but we did not include it on the list.

How could we extend our project?

- Had feedback that our survey was not completely clear
 - More specific in our survey, clearer questions
 - If we had more time we could have produced another survey to see whether our demographic agreed with our choices
 - We could set up reading groups or a discussion forum for students to share their thoughts
-

Summary

Our final product is a reading list designed for freshers, to help with the transition to university.

Key themes touched by the books are mental health, transitions, anxiety as well as escapism.

Our reading list has generated great interest of individuals both within the university and outside of it.
