

**A Qualitative Study on UT Students' Conceptualization of Mental Health: Do
Psychology and Science/Engineering Students Differ?**

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Abstract

Aim

Mental Health is an abstract term which can be defined in different ways. Whether someone considers themselves 'mentally healthy' is a subjective matter. Students are a group in society among which mental health issues are especially prevalent. Studies have shown that up to 66% of students experience "overwhelming anxiety", and 60% "tremendous levels of stress." Of these students, only 25% received professional care for their problems. It could be that students do not consider such complaints to be part of their mental health. The aim of this study therefore is to get insight in the students' views of the components of mental health. Additionally it is looked into whether Psychology students differ in their conceptualization from students in a technical major.

Method

In this exploratory study, semi-structured interviews have been conducted among 20 university students in the Netherlands, concerning their conceptualization of Mental Health. Two researchers both conducted 10 interviews in their native tongue, namely German and Dutch. These interviews were transcribed and translated into English. These were then coded, and a coding scheme was developed. This coding scheme was used by 2 other independent researchers, to check reliability. Krippendorff's c-Alpha-binary analyses resulted in reliability scores of .975 and .755.

Results

The concept of good mental health was generally described as a stable, happy state without too many complaints. Complaints were mostly defined as being in a persistently bad mood or large amounts of stress. Psychology students in particular held an accepting attitude towards their complaints, as opposed to the technical students. Psychology students in particular described the ability to deal with complaints as more important than the absence of complaints themselves. Anxiety was a topic that was largely considered not to be a part of mental health by all of the students.

Conclusion

Students tend to describe mental health more as a state of happiness, instead of putting a focus on complaints. They describe the importance of being resilient and dealing with the

setbacks and stress that stem from daily life. Psychology students in particular focus on the ability to stay happy in the long run, whereas technology students tend to focus on being in a general state of happiness. Since students do not regard their complaints as part of their mental health, they might be less likely to seek out professional help.

Introduction

Students are a group in society suffering greatly from mental health complaints. In 2016, according to the data of the American College Health Association (ACHA), about two-thirds of students reported having had overwhelming anxiety, about 60% of them reported stress levels to be “tremendous”, and 32% of them reported that their complaints endangered their functioning at their college or university. When it came to mental healthcare however, only 24% of the students who qualified for mental healthcare treatment, actually received help (ACHA, 2008). Blanco et al. (2008) found similar results, with 50% treatment rate for American students with depression symptoms, 20% for students with anxiety symptoms, and little to no treatment for students with symptoms of alcohol abuse disorder. Lack of help-seeking behaviour could partially account for the lack of treatment (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010) (Eisenberg, Golberstein & Gollust, 2007). While symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress are prevalent among this societal group, students are less inclined to seek out mental healthcare (Mitchell, McMillan, & Hagan, 2017). So far, research has been insufficient to point to a cause of this. It could be that students do not consider these symptoms as part of their mental health. It could also be that students normalize their complaints, and therefore do not engage in help-seeking behaviour. This research is aimed at how students conceptualize the term: ‘mental health’. This could give insight into the students’ view on the extent to which complaints are influential to one’s mental health. This understanding might form a foundation upon which further research and interventions can be based, in order to promote help-seeking and treatment in the future.

Mental Health

Being mentally healthy is traditionally defined as: ‘free from mental health issues.’ This has been the definition since the mid-19th century (Davey, 2008). Davey (2008) describes the development of the conceptualization towards the bio-medical model, which describes most psychopathology with biological reasoning. It categorises all mental health complaints under a variety of diagnoses, which are all caused by irregularities in the functioning of the brain (Davey, 2008). These irregularities can be caused by an excess or a lack of neurotransmitters, or brain damage for example. This is the biomedical model of mental health, which has been the most used model in medical practise until around 2000 (Davey, 2008). From the year 2000 onwards, a new field of psychology was introduced, which held a different view towards mental health and complaints.

Positive psychology is currently becoming the most dominant field of psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology is a discipline of psychology that focusses on living 'a good life'. Where the bio-medical model focusses on mental health issues positive psychology does not. Positive psychology reasons that mental health problems are the consequence of living a life that is barren and meaningless (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology focusses on being happy, feeling engaged in somebody's daily activities and finding meaning in one's being instead. It focusses more on how to work around problems and complaints, or accepting them as a part of life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Doing so, positive psychology regards problems in functioning in daily life as the problem, rather than regarding mental complaints as the problem. It tries to place the mental complaints in the context of the goal of living one's good life. This means that from a positive psychological perspective, the term 'mental health' does not focus on mental complaints, but rather happiness and meaning. This view gained enough recognition in 2018 for the World Health Organization to adopted a new definition of mental health that takes positive psychology into account: "mental health is not merely the absence of disease, but a state of well-being".

Students' Conceptualization Of Mental Health

The positive psychological perspective may also be helpful for students. Students have a high prevalence of mental health complaints, including depression and anxiety (ACHA, 2016), alcohol abuse (Curren et al., 2009), and suicidal thoughts (Lee et al., 2010). Auerbach et al. (2016) researched students from all over the world, and found that 20% of college students were diagnosable for any of the DSM-IV mental disorders. However as previously mentioned, there is little treatment for these symptoms among students (Blanco et al., 2008) (ACHA, 2008). Studies show inconsistent findings whether the complaints themselves have increased (Twenge, 2000; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). However Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) did find in their study a possible trend that has been decreasing over time: help-seeking behaviour.

Help-seeking behaviour is a term used to describe the process of interpreting symptoms and seeking help from others (Mitchell, McMillan, & Hagan, 2017). Usually people start with noticing the symptoms and then decide to seek out people in their inner circle to confide in, ask for their opinion, or to seek reassurance (Mitchell, McMillan, & Hagan, 2017). For students, this leads to a factor that might be prolonging poor mental health. The help-seeking behaviour students exhibit, is mostly limited to talking to somebody they are close to (Laidlaw, McLellan, & Ozakinci, 2016), usually a fellow

student. Laidlaw, McLellan and Ozakinci (2016) found that stress was commonly experienced as a mental well-being issue amongst students. However, stress was also perceived as 'normal' because all of their peers experienced stress. This causes students not to perform additional help-seeking behaviour, which in turn could lead to lack of treatment.

Furthermore, some students may be even less inclined to seek out professional help. An Australian study found that psychology students are particularly weary of engaging in professional help-seeking behaviour (Brimstone, Thislethwaite, & Quirk 2007). This is despite the fact that psychology students are trained to recognize mental health problems, to discern when stress and anxiety should be considered problematic, and they are trained in persuading people into performing help-seeking behaviour. They are unlikely to interpret their own complaints as disorders (Brimstone, Thislethwaite, & Quirk, 2007). When experiencing significant mental health complaints, only 35% of the psychology students would see the General Practitioner (GP), 15% considered the university GP, 51% would seek informal forms of help, and 9% would not seek any help at all. This suggests that psychology students may be normalizing the mental health complaints they experience themselves, and shows that they rarely seek help for their mental well-being. While trained in recognising a problematic amount of symptoms or complaints, this group of students is not more inclined to seek professional help.

This suggests that it is not the knowledge of complaints and symptoms that is important for professional help-seeking, but instead there are other factors that have an effect on this. One explanation as to why knowledge of complaints and symptoms has little or no effect on help-seeking behaviour could be that students do not consider their complaints as part of their mental health. In order for students to actively seek out, and actually receive suitable treatment, it is important to know what students themselves see as important factors of their mental health.

The Aim Of This Study

Students seem to normalize mental health issues, even while experiencing high amounts of complaints. It could therefore be that students only seek help when their mental complaints and well-being are becoming detrimental to their functioning and/or academic achievement. Emerging from this reasoning, the question arises whether students perceive mental health not as 'free of complaints,' but as 'free of diagnosis.' However, few studies have focussed on students' perspectives on their own mental health. Rather, research thus far has either focussed

on the mental health of students (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010), focused on complaints (ACHA, 2010) (Curran et al., 2009) or solely help-seeking behaviour (Mitchell et al., 2017).

In this study therefore the first research question is: How do students conceptualise the term Mental Health? A second research question is added, to get an indication to what extent knowledge of complaints has an influence on the conceptualization of mental health. The second research question therefore is: How do psychology students compare to lay students in their conceptualisation of mental health? More insight into the students' narrative about mental health, should function as the first step to improve treatment rates among students.

Method

Respondents

This study has been conducted among 20 students from the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Inclusion criteria were fluency in Dutch or German and studying either psychology or a technical study (for example Mechanical Engineering or Technical Medicine). The technical students are considered lay students when it comes to conceptualizing mental health and will from now on be referred to as such. The mean age of the respondents was 22 years old, ranging from 18 to 25. Half of the students were male, half were female. 10 students were psychology students, and 10 were studying a technical study. Furthermore, 10 of the 20 respondents were of German nationality, whereas the other 10 were Dutch. Respondents were recruited via the snowballing method.

Material

The data-collection was based on semi-structured interviews consisting of 11 main questions, which were based on the interview scheme used in Lamers et al. (2014). These include questions such as: "How would you describe the term Mental Health?" and "How would you describe a person who is mentally healthy?" In addition to the main questions, some helping questions were provided for the interviewer. These questions are aimed at promoting a better understanding, by asking for further explanations when an interviewee gives concise answers. At the end of the interview, in addition to the 11 main interview questions the respondents were asked some demographic information, such as age in years, current study and name.

Data Collection

All interviews were conducted in the students' native language (either German or Dutch) and translated back to English for the coding process. The two researchers divided the interviewees by their nationality, to be able to conduct the interviews in the interviewees native language. The interviews were conducted through video calls via a paid Zoom account to ensure privacy. Respondents were made aware of the general purpose of the study. The respondents were specifically informed that they were going to be asked about their conceptualization, and therefore there were no wrong or right answers. Lastly, respondents were asked about their informed consent, which they signed digitally before the interview. This was done to make sure the respondents were aware that their participation in the experiment was voluntary and to ask again for their permission to record the interview sessions. The average length of the interviews was 20 minutes. All interviews were conducted without any major disturbances.

Data Analysis

The overall qualitative approach was content analysis, in order to find themes and concepts in the transcriptions of the interviews. After the interviews were conducted all of them were transcribed, and translated to English. 5 interviews were randomly selected to be coded, and a coding scheme was developed. This was done by looking at every individual sentence, and discuss which themes were described there. These themes were then listed, defined and grouped together. This was done by differentiating between main-themes and first and second level sub-themes. Some sub-themes were grouped together under a term that had not been defined as a code itself, but instead functioned as an umbrella term to describe this group of codes.

All of this was done by the two researchers together, the codes and their definitions were discussed until both fully agreed. In order to make sure the coding scheme was free from bias, an independent researcher used this coding scheme to code the same 5 interviews. Then the inter-rater reliability was calculated using Krippendorff's c-Alpha-binary. In this process the steps and guidelines were followed as described by several literature, to ensure the validity of this study (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). The result of this analysis gave an inter-rater reliability of .975. This indicated a high reliability of the coding scheme and therefore revision of the coding scheme was deemed unnecessary. After that another 5 interviews were randomly selected out of the remaining 15. These were coded using the same coding scheme and another independent researcher was selected to code these 5

interviews. This was done to avoid a possible similar bias between the two main researchers, and the independent researcher. The inter-rater reliability was again calculated using the Krippendorff's c-Alpha-binary, which showed a reliability of .755. The reliability scores of .975 and .755 by two independent researchers shows that the coding scheme has good reliability. The remaining 10 interviews were coded using this coding scheme.

Results

Conceptualization Of Mental Health

The codes in the coding scheme were divided in 3 groups. Firstly there are 3 main themes, 12 first level sub-themes, and 19 second level sub-themes. Table 1 provides an overview of the 3 main themes and their first level sub-themes. Table 2 shows the first level subthemes in more detail and shows the second level subthemes that are grouped under these first level subthemes. Table 2 also provides quotes. These are direct citations from the interviewees to illustrate the descriptions given. With these quotations some additional information is provided. Firstly, the number of the interview, secondly whether this was a technical or psychology student, and thirdly the age of the interviewee is shown behind the citations.

Some of the codes were initially named differently from what they are called now as depicted in the tables. For example, while coding the theme 'functioning' was created. However, while analysing the results, it stood out that this theme was almost exclusively described in a negative context. The code 'functioning' was mostly described when students talked about situations where they were unable to function:

"People who are struggling in this context, students who are experiencing a lot of study-pressure, people who are just really like can't handle things right now." – I10, psy, 25

This has led to the renaming of two of the existing codes in the tables and figures. Specifically, Functioning was renamed and became Dysfunctioning, and Stability/Balance was changed into Instability.

Table 1*Overview and Frequencies of the Main Themes and First Level Sub-Themes*

	Total codes		Total codes		Total codes
Well-Being	354	General Complaints	226	View of Mental Health	54
Happiness / Life-Satisfaction	91	Specific Complaints	82	Personal	30
Resilience	94	Instability	61	General	14
Social Environment	86	Disorder	46	Invisibility	10
Self-Actualization	83	Dysfunctioning	31		
		Unspecified Complaints	6		

Table 2*Overview and Frequencies of the First and Second Level Sub-Themes*

Theme	Definition	Example Quote	Total fragments (n=634)
Happiness / Life-Satisfaction	Mentioning's of good mood, happiness or feeling happy, relaxed or other mentioning's of positive moods or states of mind. Also includes one's feelings of life satisfaction.	"I'm already satisfied with my life and my circumstances"- I12, tech, 22 "Regardless your environment, whether you are happy or not" – I4, tech, 19	91
Resilience	General mention of someone's ability to cope with situations. Or specific coping techniques that are not included in acceptance, adaptiveness or help-seeking	"mental health, I think that you just are able to bounce back if you like, have a setback. And that you possess the tools in your toolbox to just bounce back. That it does not like, leave a bruise on your wellbeing in general" – I6, psy, 21	34
Acceptance	Acceptance is focused around accepting a situation as it is, without having to like it.	Of course you always have a little fluctuation. But especially that you know you are ok with that – I6 Psy, 21	21
General Attitude	concerns general persistent and fixed attitudes, generalized optimism / pessimism	"a generally positive outlook on life with what you do." – I14, tech, 20	16

Adaptiveness	Adaptiveness is a coping technique that is about the process of altering ones attitude, choices or behaviour, to fit a new situation. Included in the technique is the general mention of the attitude	“being open to change”. “And are you able to adapt to things that you are going to face, I think that that is a strongly underappreciated aspect of it.” - I10, psy, 25	13
Help-Seeking	A coping style that focusses on the intention of seeking help from others. This includes both professional help (psychologist, councillors etc.) and non-professional help (friends, family etc.) Mostly in the form of support, reflection or feedback.	“And if something bad happens, then she’s obviously bothered by it. But after she talks about it a little bit, and after a little while, then she is more herself again.” – I8, psy, 24	10
Social Environment	General mentions of one’s social environment without specification of self-expression, sociability or communication.	“so the most important thing is probably simply the social factor that you have a social environment in which you feel comfortable” - I11, tech, 21	32
Sociability	The active behaviour of people to spent time with others, the extent to which a person enjoys the company of others, and the ability to connect to other individuals in a pleasing and satisfactory manner.	“If they've spent too much time by themselves, I definitely think that they'll get symptoms much faster”- I18, tech, 22	22
Communication	The ability and active utilization of communication. For example the ability to talk about one’s feelings or problems, but also the ability to give feedback.	“and then the person doesn't want to talk or withdraws completely, even for a long time, um, somehow doesn't	18

talk about their feelings, not even how she feels.”- I17, psy, 21

Self-Expression The ability to be one’s self with other people. Sometimes indicated as the quality of relationships, or the result of codes such as confidence. “that you have friends, or at least a contact person with whom you can be completely yourself without having to pretend”- I11, tech, 21 14

Self-Actualization

Autonomy The independence of a person, to be able to manage a situation on their own. “if you have a problem with something, for example, you feel able to handle it yourself” - I16, psy, 21 30

Self-Image The overall image an individual has about themselves, also specific behaviour, characteristics or mental states. “Mhh well, I would say that basically you get along with yourself” – I16, psy, 21 23
This code includes mentioning’s of confidence or feelings of confidence

Self-Reflection The ability or process of monitoring, evaluating and reflecting on their own behaviour, characteristics and mental states. “Mhhh, I think the most important thing is that you can reflect on your own feelings and thoughts, that you somehow notice what is the reason why you’re not feeling well and what you can do for it to get better” – I15, psy, 21 18

Life-Goals / Direction	Feelings of purpose or meaning Also includes mentions of life goals or aspirations	“but he is so totally grounded and has found his meaning in life.” – I18, tech, 22	12
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Specific complaints

Negative Mood	General mention of mood in a negative way	“He is like really spiralling down right know.” – I10, psy, 25	32
Stress	Mentioning of physical or mental discomfort caused by stress-related factors. Or general mentioning’s of stress.	“That is really bothering me, gives me a lot of stress.” – I10, psy, 25	21
Overthinking	Persistent thoughts, rumination and mentions of overthinking in general.	“What can also be mentally unhealthy is probably overthinking when you worry a lot about something, so when you actually think about the fact that many people ... think, oh, that could bother someone, but they actually don't care.” – I20, psy, 21	10
Pressure	Mentioning of feelings of pressure, experienced form work, school or life in general	“Experience a lot of study-pressure” – I10, psy, 25	7
Uncertainty	General feelings of uncertainty, for example towards one’s future, or current circumstances.	“No, well, eehm, no I think I do have some things like uncertainty what I have to do, and how I go on.”	7

Anxiety	General feelings of anxiety, fear or panic attacks. Can be coded together with other codes if anxiety is specifically caused by one or more other codes.	“uh, yes, anxiety attacks” – I4, tech, 20	5
Instability	The emotional stability of an individual, or the balance between positive and negative emotions or behaviours.	“I think the balance between pessimistic and optimistic” – I2, tech, 19 “No but eehm, eehm, let me think. Mentally healthy, eehm. A good balance between rationalizing and eehm, have an emotional view towards things so to speak. So eehm, not to much with your head, not to much with your body, or emotions.” – I6, psy, 21	61
Disorder	All mentions of mental disorders (e.g. depression, psychoses, burnout etc.)	“So, paranoid, uh, obsessive and neurotic about everything, depressed, uh dependent, so yes ...” – I13, psy, 21	39
Stigma	Social stigma, prejudices and judgement about mental health related issues and disorders Includes individuals being ashamed of expressing their feelings or problems, if caused by fear of social acceptance of those feelings or problems	“Mostly because there is a stigma on it, so they would not want to admit it.” – I10, psy, 25	7

Dysfunctioning	<p>The ability to function in everyday-life</p> <p>Includes mentions of ability to structure one’s life, one’s routine or balancing time management of different interests</p> <p>Mentioning’s of “struggling” with life’s aspects or situations is also considered functioning.</p>	<p>“That a lot of people will tell you that they also are or have been suffering from it” – I10, psy, 25</p> <p>“decent work-life balance and I have structured my day in such a way that I take about an hour for workouts, be it home workouts or just going for a walk” – I14, tech, 20</p> <p>“The has not found quite a balance in how to deal with it practically in functioning” I16, psy, 21</p>	<p>31</p>
Unspecified Complaints	<p>Other complaints that do not fit within the other codes.</p>	<p>“experiencing negative effects.” – I20, psy, 21</p>	<p>6</p>

View of Mental Health

Personal	<p>Every mention or description about mental health, as something everybody would describe differently. Or assuming that other people would think differently, because there is not 1 definition of the term.</p>	<p>“Hmm, that's difficult, because I think everyone defines mental health differently, but yes, the way I define it for myself, I know people who are mentally healthy from my perspective.” – I5, psy 21</p>	<p>30</p>
General	<p>Every mention or description about mental health, as something everybody would describe the same. Or assuming other people would think the same, because there is 1 definition of the term.</p>	<p>“I think that like me, al lot of people will say that feeling bad, feeling depressed, yeah that would be the most answered thing.” – I1, tech, 20</p>	<p>14</p>

Invisibility	General description of mental health, that describes mental health as something that someone can't see from the outside, something somebody does not generally notice, or disguised mental health problems.	“difficult to determine. Not noticeable or difficult to notice for outsiders.” – I14, tech, 20 “Mental stuff is something you can't really see from a distance, or sometimes at all.” – I1, tech, 20	10
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Well-Being

From the perspective of the students, Well-Being and General Complaints are two main themes that can be divided into two categories, namely positive and negative. The positives side is represented by the first main theme: Well-Being. This theme describes a general state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. This theme is comprised by the sub-themes: Happiness/ Life Satisfaction, Resilience, Social Environment, and Self-Actualization. These first level sub-themes together define the students' conceptualization of positive aspects of a good mental health. In short, if someone is mentally healthy, that person is happy, resilient, has a sufficient social environment and has a good state of self-actualization. Of the 580 codes that were either in the positive or negative category of mental health, 354 (61%) were in the positive category. This means that when asked about mental health, almost two-thirds of the answers given by participants were about well-being.

Happiness/ Life Satisfaction

Happiness/Life Satisfaction is a first level sub-theme, that is one of the factors of Well-Being. This first level sub-theme has been mentioned 91 times, which is most of all codes. This means that about 14% of their students mention being happy or satisfied when they were asked about their conceptualization of mental health. This would suggest that being happy is a large part of the term Mental Health.

Resilience

The second sub-theme of Well-being is Resilience. This first level subtheme has to do with one's ability to cope with situations and events. This code has four second-level sub-themes: Acceptance, General Attitude, Adaptiveness and Help-Seeking. The students considered this ability to be important to Mental Health, since it is unavoidable to go through rough times and experiences. Therefore it is important to have the ability to deal with them:

“mental health, I think that you just are able to bounce back if you like, have a setback. And that you possess the tools in your toolbox to just bounce back. That it does not like, leave a bruise on your wellbeing in general” – I6, psy, 21

As illustrated in this example, the code Resilience was only applied, when it was not specified which form of Resilience would apply. Instead, this was only coded when the student described being Resilient itself.

It is interesting to see that students described the coping style Acceptance most often, mentioning it 21 times (35%). This could contribute to the theory that students tend to normalize complaints. It might be that students deal with their complaints by simply trying to accept them, because they are a part of daily life. They see their peer students suffering from the same complaints, and therefore normalize the prevalence of them. The following is an example of how a student described being acceptant regarding his/her complaints:

“Because of course everybody feels stressed when they study for their exams, but I think everybody can put it in perspective like: yeah but next week everything is over, then I’ll be happy again, so I am happy now as well.” – I4, tech, 19

Social Environment

The sub-theme Social Environment is about the extent to which a person enjoys the time spent with friends and family and the ability to be themselves with other people. It has three second level sub-themes: Sociability, Communication and Self-Expression. The active utilization of the social environment as a support system is not included in this code, but is coded as Help-Seeking. Students describe their Social Environment as important to Mental Health, because often these are the people you live with as well. They also mention having a good base from where you can function and be happy as significant:

“Yeah I think if you, like I live in a student-home, and if everything goes well, and you live happily with other people, that contributes towards mental health” – I7, psy, 24

Self-Actualization

The last first level sub-theme contributing towards Well-Being is Self-Actualization. It has the following second level sub-themes: Autonomy, Self-Image, Self-Reflection and Life-Goals/Direction. Generally Self-Actualization can be seen as the ‘highest psychological development stage’, which is aimed at the utilization of one’s talents and potentials. This sub-theme seemed to be a concept that fitted as an umbrella-term for the feeling of one’s autonomy and life’s direction. As well as the feelings of confidence, and capability and the ability to self-reflect. Students describe this term mostly in the context of feeling in control:

“a feeling of control and that you are just happy about who you are and how you are and you develop, either physically, through workouts, or mentally, saying "hey, today was a great day, keep it up" – I14, tech, 20

General Complaints

In contrast with the positive main theme of Well-Being, the main theme General Complaints was constructed. The first level sub-themes are Specific Complaints, Instability, Disorder, Dysfunctioning, and Unspecified Complaints. This theme covers the negative aspect of the term Mental Health and the described consequences from having bad mental health.

Specified Complaints

The first sub-theme of General Complaints is Specified Complaints. This first level sub-theme consists of six second level sub-themes, namely Negative Mood, Stress, Overthinking, Pressure, Uncertainty and Anxiety. Sub-themes Negative Mood and Stress were described most by the students, which indicates these as the most mentioned specific factors that are part of (bad) Mental Health. This was unsurprising since these are amongst the most prevalent in students. Anxiety is largely prevalent in students as well, although surprisingly Anxiety has only been mentioned 5 times by students participating in this study. Furthermore, the code Anxiety has been mentioned least of all codes in the coding scheme and when mentioned, it is considered almost exclusively as something that is always there, and only a problem when it is severe enough. In addition it is described as part of something else, such as self-expression or influential to one's mood, rather than being described as a complaint on its own:

“Yes, for example if... well I think the fears would be the same, it would really depend... on the strength, I think. If it is so strong, this fear, let's say it is self-doubt or something like "I have the feeling that I cannot express myself or people don't understand me", that it goes so deep at some point that you are afraid of having to express yourself, so that you no longer feel good .”

– I11, Tech, 21

Instability

This code could also have been a contributing factor towards well-being, or even a “neutral” main theme on its own. However, the code was mostly used in context with complaints. The students mention stability in combination with the effects on one's mental health when they are unstable. Specifically, it was mostly mentioned with the codes Mood, as in mood swings, or with the codes Stress and Pressure. Therefore it was decided to group this code as a sub-theme under the main theme: General Complaints. However, since this is the most mentioned code after Happiness/life satisfaction, it is considered a very important part of mental health.

The students tend to describe the effect it has on someone if they are unstable or lack balance in their emotions:

“And also like just, a lot of serious changes in her emotions, and how she feels I think. I do think that that shows that she has like the highs and lows, that those could be quite extreme .”

– I6, Psy, 21

Disorder

Disorder is a sub-theme that contains the second level sub-theme Stigma. Apart from literal mentions of disorder, the students described this sub-theme mostly in combination with Negative Mood in the form of depression. Disorder is often mentioned as the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about bad Mental Health. For example, when asked whether the student could name components of the term Mental Health, this particular student mentioned specific disorders:

“You have 2 sides to that I guess. Temporary stuff about how you feel, depressions. And you have permanent “mental illnesses” to put it like that. Autism and other forms of those I suppose.” – I1, Tech, 20

The second level sub-code Stigma was mentioned relatively few times, namely 7 times total. This has been categorized as a second level sub-theme under Disorder, because it has exclusively been used when participants described a disorder or when they mentioned people (supposedly) suffering from a disorder. An example is the following student’s answer, when he/she describes how many people are currently mentally healthy:

“But you also have people who are like, a little crazy by themselves. Like they’re weird, even though they can’t help it.” – I3, Tech, 18

Dysfunctioning

The students were most likely to describe functioning as a measurement of the severity of complaints. Stating that students who experience symptoms of for example stress or mood, are not able to function properly anymore. This has been described in several ways such as literally mentioning the perceived effects of dysfunctioning while studying or at work. Other times it was described in ways such as struggling or being unable to handle things:

“I have to say that when you say mental health, I immediately think about people who are not doing well. People who are struggling in this context, students who are experiencing a lot of study-pressure, people who are just really like can’t handle things right now” – I10, Psy, 25

View of Mental Health

Lastly there is one other main theme contributing directly towards Mental Health, and that was the code about the general view of Mental Health, more specifically whether students mentioned Mental Health as a term that is defined the same by everybody or determined on a personal level. These citations do not mention components of mental health. Instead they mention how students perceived the term mental health itself. There are three first level sub-themes that contribute to this theme: Personal, General, and Invisibility. Interestingly, about two-thirds of the students seem to think of the term Mental Health as something that does not have an objective definition, but as something that is seen as very subjective. The students describe many factors to account for the difference in definition. Examples of these are differences in life experiences, study-major, or even phases in life.

“Mhh, I think it depends on who you ask, there are many different views. I think it depends a lot on how often you deal with something like that (e.g. through your studies) or on your age, I think, for example, the generation of our parents would say very different things than we do. Well, I do believe that there are very different views.” – I17, Psy, 21

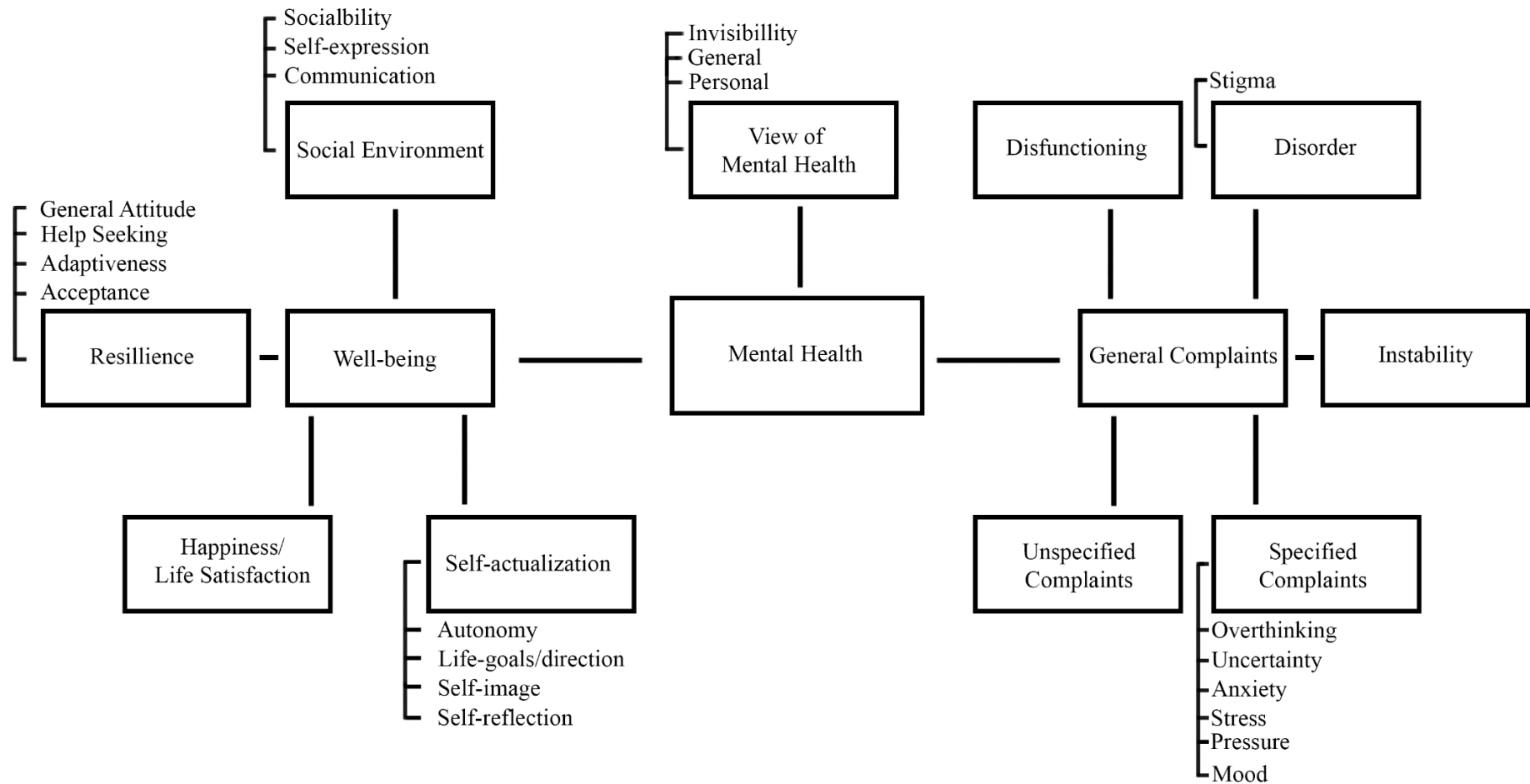
A relatively simple reasons for this is for example that people themselves have different things that make them happy, so certain aspects of Mental Health could be unimportant for some people, whereas they are essential for others. Another reason that is given is that people would most likely define it in relation to their past experiences, for example their experiences with mental illness. Some students describe the second level sub-theme: Invisibility. They describe how mental health is something personal, and especially signs of bad mental health are not visible to outsiders generally:

“How you feel is an important example, next to mental illnesses or how they are called officially. Mental stuff is something you can’t really see from a distance, or sometimes at all.”
– I1, Tech, 20

Figure 1 shows a schematic overview of all the Main Themes and the first and second level sub-themes. They are shown in this way to illustrate the flow of contributions of all the themes and sub-themes towards the term Mental Health.

Figure 1

Visualization of the Themes and Codes



Differences between Psychology students and lay students in their Conceptualization of Mental Health.

To get an overview of the differences between Technical students and Psychology students Table 3 shows an overview of all codes. In this table the total mentions are divided by the study-majors of the students, grouping them in either Technology studies or Psychology.

Table 3

Frequencies of Codes Divided by Study major

	Psychology	Technology
Acceptance N=21	10	11
Adaptiveness N=13	1	12
Anxiety N=5	1	4
Autonomy N=30	17	13
Communication N=18	17	1
Disorder N=39	19	20
Functioning N=31	18	13
General N=14	8	6
General attitude N=16	9	7
Happiness / Life-Satisfaction N=91	34	57
Help-Seeking N=10	9	1

Invisibilty N=10	3	7
Life-Goals / Direction N=12	8	4
Mood (Negative) N=32	12	20
Overthinking N=10	5	5
Personal N=30	12	18
Pressure N=7	4	3
Resilience N=34	26	8
Self-Expression N=14	4	10
Self-Image N=23	11	12
Self-Reflection N=18	14	4
Sociability N=22	8	14
Social Environment N=32	11	21
Stability / Balance N=61	40	21
Stigma N=7	6	1
Stress N=21	8	13
Uncertainty N=7	4	3

Unspecified Complaints	3	3
N=6		
<hr/>		
Total codes	322	312
<hr/>		

Generally, it is interesting to see that there is little difference between the total amount of codes when comparing lay students with psychology students. When looking at some of the specific codes more closely however, there are some interesting differences. Resilience and social support seemed more central in psychology students' perspectives on mental health, while engineering students described a more individualistic approach of adapting their own attitude towards problems they faced. Help-seeking for example, was almost exclusively described by psychology students. While Adaptiveness for example was almost exclusively mentioned by technology students.

Another interesting difference is that lay students tend to describe mood and happiness as a bigger part of mental health than psychology students do. On the other hand psychology students tend to describe more codes that are associated with the sub-theme Self-Actualization. Codes such as Autonomy, Self-Reflection and Life-Goals/ Direction are mentioned more often by psychology students. Apart from the code Self-Image, which is quite balanced, all of the other codes that together form the sub-theme Self-Actualization are over-represented by psychology students. This could be explained by the prior knowledge and education. The term self-actualization is not something people generally talk about, but is much more familiar to psychology students. However, it appears to be the case that psychology students tend to focus on components of happiness such as Autonomy and Self-Reflection, instead of on happiness itself.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find out how students conceptualize mental health, and whether psychology students differ from lay students in their conceptualization. Students generally seem to describe Mental Health as being happy, and to be able to cope with the usual setbacks and disappointments that come with life. The results of the inability to deal with these setbacks are described in the form of complaints: Negative Mood and Stress. The severity of complaints is mostly described as the level of dysfunction in daily life or education. This

indicates that students do not think of their complaints as complaints in itself, but rather see their complaints in the context of their study or daily life. It depends on one's ability to deal with these setbacks in order to be or stay happy, since these setbacks are largely seen as a part of life. This ability to deal with complaints is described as being 'Resilient'. The majority of students see Mental Health as a concept that is personal for everyone, and the meaning differs based on personal experiences or values in life. Anxiety is something that is hardly mentioned by students as being part of one's mental health. This view of mental health is in line with the current views of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the WHO (2018). They stimulate not to focus on a state of well-being when describing mental health, rather than to focus on complaints. It is interesting to see that students indeed describe complaints to be problem itself, however that they are part of life, which is in accordance of what Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) describe.

Lay students more often described good Mental Health as being and staying happy, despite the usual setbacks of life. Psychology students on the other hand mention the possibility of feeling unhappy occasionally, and needing help to get through things more often. Psychology students tend to describe the ability to seek help when you don't feel well and being resilient as important. Not feeling well (for a short period), is described to be normal and is considered less influential to the general mental health, as long as you are "stable" over time. In short: Lay students describe mental health as being happy, whereas psychology students describe it as the ability to be and stay happy. This would suggest that psychology students are more inclined to reason that when unhappy, one does not experience too much complaints, but rather has insufficient coping mechanisms. This is in accordance with the study from Brimstone, Thislethwaite, and Quirk (2007), who argue this neglect of the complaints itself, to be one of the reasons why psychology students are less likely to seek out professional help.

Implications

Students need to be addressed and educated differently regarding their symptoms and complaints. Currently they do not seem to regard all their symptoms and complaints as part of their mental health. This might be a reason for students not to seek out professional help, which subsequently leads to the lack of treatment (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010) (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Gollust, 2007). Especially the results on the topic of anxiety could and should be researched more intensely based on this study. According to the ACHA (2016), two-thirds of students

reported overwhelming levels of anxiety, yet Anxiety is hardly mentioned when asked about components of mental health. More information on why students do not think of anxiety when asked about mental health, could result into better interventions aimed at getting students professional help. Just providing information about mental health would not suffice. The fact that psychology students are even less inclined to mention anxiety as part of their mental health, implies that knowledge of the symptoms and complaints does not result in students considering anxiety as part of mental health. It implies the opposite, which is in line with the research done by Brimstone, Thislethwaite and Quirk (2007). Their study showed that students who study psychology are less inclined to seek out professional help for their mental health than lay students. This implies that in order to get students to see complaints as part of their mental health, and get professional help when necessary, a different approach is needed to inform students and create interventions for their mental health. The absence of anxiety in students' conceptualization of mental health, could directly be taken into account by healthcare professionals. Before additional research has been conducted as to why students do not see anxiety as part of their mental health, healthcare professionals could actively seek out anxiety symptoms in students. A University counsellor or GP could directly ask to the experienced anxiety when interviewing students for example.

A possible reason that students do not see their (some of their) complaints as a big part of their mental health, could be the general shift of focus in the psychological field. With positive psychology came a focus on functioning and living a good life, instead of a focus on complaints (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In this field of psychology it is stimulated to accept stressors for example as part of daily life, where acceptance is seen as a coping strategy (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Dunn, Iglewicz, and Moutier (2008) for example, proposed a conceptual model of the well-being of medical students, and came to the conclusion that there were multiple stressors that depleted a student's 'coping reservoir'. When students were unable to deal with the stressors, it would lead to a burnout. Their view (and also the view of positive psychology) is to improve the student's coping ability to prevent a burnout, rather than to reduce the stressors (Dunn, Iglewicz & Moutier, 2008) (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). One of the reasons students are less inclined to seek out professional help for their mental complaints, is because they seem to normalize complaints (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010) (Mitchell, McMillan, & Hagan, 2017). Students compare their mental problems to their peer students. And because most of the students experience similar levels of complaints, students might view their complaints as normal (Mitchell, McMillan, & Hagan,

2017). Combining this information with the current view of positive psychology on mental health complaints, it could be that this tendency to normalize complaints is increased. When the focus of mental health is also shifting away from complaints and more on functioning, it could have led to an increased neglect of mental health complaints by students. Of course this is hypothesizing, rather than a direct outcome of this research. However this could prove to be a valuable insight for future research.

Limitations And Strengths

Firstly, it needs to be mentioned that these interviews were conducted during a lockdown in the Covid-19 pandemic in the Netherlands. This could have greatly influenced the results. For example, Pan et. al. (2020) found that the pandemic has a detrimental impact on the mental health of people already suffering from depression, anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder. It could be that themes such as Social Environment were overrepresented, since it is likely that students are missing their friends and family, whom they could not visit during the lockdown. Another thing that could have been influenced by the pandemic is the fact that feelings of negative moods, pressure and stress could possibly have been mentioned more often than they usually would have, as they are possibly experienced more frequently during a lockdown. However, this study does provide a unique insight into the priorities of students during a pandemic.

Secondly it seems advisable to standardize the way of conducting the interviews, and training the researchers beforehand. Both researchers who conducted interviews had certain characteristics in their transcriptions, that could have been standardized. For example, the extent to which participants were asked to further explain their answers was different in the transcriptions. The transcriptions of the interviews of one researcher contained 41% more relevant data than the interviews of the other researcher (371 codes vs. 263 codes), where relevant data is defined as the number of codes in the interview. This could be due to differences in questioning, and could be prevented with training the method of interviewing.

The results of this study need to be validated in larger groups to test the generalizability. Because this is not a quantitative study, it is not possible to check for quantitative significance in the general conceptualization among students. However, these results should be considered as guidelines to the conceptualization of mental health and as a starting point for quantitative research.

One of the major strengths of this research is the fact that the coding scheme is considered very reliable with Krippendorff's c-Alpha-binary scores of .975 and .755 (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). This coding scheme could therefore be used when researching other study-majors, and maybe even among other (western) nationalities. When researching other study-majors it would be interesting to see how the different themes deviate. When researching different nationalities however, it should be taken into account that similar cultures should be researched. When researching other nationalities it could very well be that different themes would be described, and a new coding scheme should be constructed.

Conclusion

Conclusively it can be said that this research has provided a unique insight into students' conceptualization of Mental Health. Foremostly the students described Mental health as being happy. Whereas psychology students described Coping to be most important to be happy in the long term. Mental Complaints were seen as problematic when interfering to much with daily functioning. Anxiety was a complained that was generally not described when asked about Mental Health. This insight can function as a foundation for future interventions and research to help stimulate Help-seeking behaviour, subsequently increasing treatment rates, and ultimately increase the mental health of students.

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Appendix A. Interview scheme

Dear interviewee,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research project.

The topic of the study I'm working on is mental health. I am interested in people's opinions on this topic, how they see it personally. The interview questions are not about testing your knowledge, but about getting an idea about your own opinion.

The Interview will take about 10-35 minutes, your participation is voluntary and you are free to stop the interview at any time. If you don't feel comfortable with a question, you do not have to answer it.

Some questions may seem similar, nevertheless I would ask you to answer all of them in order to get as much information as possible about your ideas and opinions on mental health. Of course, if you don't understand a question, please tell me and I'll explain it to you.

The whole interview is anonymous and confidential, so none of the information you will give me will appear in the context with your name.

If you don't mind, I will record the interview and take some notes in order to remember your answers correctly. After the end of the project, I will delete the recording. Is this okay for you?

As I already said, I am interested in your personal opinion, so please tell me everything that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers, every answer you give me is equally important and will help me to get a better understanding of your perspective on mental health.

Do you have any questions?

If you don't have any further questions, could you please fill in the informed consent? (*Fill in informed consent*)

Okay, so if you are ready, we will start with the interview.

I am now starting the recording.

Interview Questions

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (*If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations*)

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)*
 - a. *(SUB-Q1: If interviewee cannot think about anybody in Q3)* If noone comes to your mind, can you imagine a person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(go on with Q5)*

4. Can you think of another person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(If interviewee needs help: another person that comes to your mind, this person does not have to be similar to the first one)*

5. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)*
 - a. *(SUB-Q1: If interviewee cannot think about anybody in Q3)* If noone comes to your mind, can you imagine a person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(go on with Q5)*

6. Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? *(If interviewee needs help: another person that comes to your mind, this person does not have to be similar to the first one)*

7. Among the aspects you mentioned *(Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health),* which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? *(Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)*

8. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you?

Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

a. Which components would be the most important for them?

9. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (*if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide*)

10. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

11. How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

Helping questions:

What do you mean? What do you mean by that?

Can you give me an example please?

Can you describe / explain that further?

What kind of relationship it has with mental health? How would you relate what you just said to mental health?

Appendix B. Coding Scheme

Codes	Definition	Example Quote
<u>Wellbeing</u>		
happiness / life-satisfaction	<p>Mentioning's of good mood, happiness or feeling happy, relaxed or other mentioning's of positive moods or states of mind.</p> <p>Also includes one's feelings of life satisfaction.</p> <p>Also includes mentioning of wellbeing mentioned in a positive way.</p>	<p>"I'm already satisfied with my life and my circumstances"- I12, tech, 22</p> <p>"Regardless your environment, whether you are happy or not" – I4, tech, 19</p>
Resilience	<p>General mention of someone's ability to cope with situations.</p> <p>Or specific coping techniques that are not included in acceptance, adaptiveness or help-seeking</p>	<p>"mental health, I think that you just are able to bounce back if you like, have a setback. And that you possess the tools in your toolbox to just bounce back. That it does not like, leave a bruise on your wellbeing in general" – I6, psy, 21</p>
Acceptance	Acceptance is focused around accepting a situation as it is, without having to like it.	Of course you always have a little fluctuation. But especially that you know you are ok with that – I6 Psy, 21
General attitude	concerns general persistent and fixed attitudes, generalized optimism / pessimism	"a generally positive outlook on life with what you do." – I14, tech, 20
Adaptiveness	Adaptiveness is a coping technique that is about the process of altering ones attitude, choices or behaviour, to fit a new situation. Included in the technique is the general mention of the attitude	"being open to change". "And are you able to adapt to things that you are going to face, I think that that is a strongly underappreciated aspect of it." - I10, psy, 25
Help-seeking	A coping style that focusses on the intention of seeking help from others. This includes both professional help (psychologist, councillors etc.) and	"And if something bad happens, then she's obviously bothered by it. But after she talks about it a little bit,

	non-professional help (friends, family etc.) Mostly in the form of support, reflection or feedback.	and after a little while, then she is more herself again.” – I8, psy, 24
Social Environment	General mentions of one’s social environment without specification of self-expression, sociability or communication.	“so the most important thing is probably simply the social factor that you have a social environment in which you feel comfortable” - I11, tech, 21
Sociability	The active behaviour of people to spent time with others, the extent to which a person enjoys the company of others, and the ability to connect to other individuals in a pleasing and satisfactory manner.	“If they've spent too much time by themselves, I definitely think that they'll get symptoms much faster”- I18, tech, 22
Communication	The ability and active utilization of communication. For example the ability to talk about your feelings or problems, but also the ability to give feedback.	“and then the person doesn't want to talk or withdraws completely, even for a long time, um, somehow doesn't talk about their feelings, not even how she feels.”- I17, psy, 21
Self-expression	The ability to be one’s self with other people. Sometimes indicated as the quality of relationships, or the result of codes such as confidence.	“that you have friends, or at least a contact person with whom you can be completely yourself without having to pretend”- I11, tech, 21
Self-Actualization		
Autonomy	The independence of a person, to be able to manage a situation on their own.	“if you have a problem with something, for example, you feel able to handle it yourself” - I16, psy, 21
Self-image	The overall image an individual has about themselves, also specific behaviour, characteristics or mental states. This code includes mentioning’s of confidence or feelings of confidence This code also includes the ability to handle feedback	“Mhh well, I would say that basically you get along with yourself” – I16, psy, 21 “Also maybe how confident you are” I8, psy, 24

Self-reflection	The ability or process of monitoring, evaluating and reflecting on their own behaviour, characteristics and mental states.	“Mhhh, I think the most important thing is that you can reflect on your own feelings and thoughts, that you somehow notice what is the reason why you’re not feeling well and what you can do for it to get better” – I15, psy, 21
Life-goals / direction	Feelings of purpose or meaning Also includes mentions of life goals or aspirations	“but he is so totally grounded and has found his meaning in life.” – I18, tech, 22
<u>General Complaints</u>		
Unspecified complaints	Other complaints that do not fit within the other codes.	“experiencing negative effects.” – I20, psy, 21
stability / balance	The emotional stability of an individual, or the balance between positive and negative emotions or behaviours.	“I think the balance between pessimistic and optimistic” – I2, tech, 19 “No but eehm, eehm, let me think. Mentally healthy, eehm. A good balance between rationalizing and eehm, have an emotional view towards things so to speak. So eehm, not to much with your head, not to much with your body, or emotions.” – I6, psy, 21
Disorder	All mentions of mental disorders (e.g. depression, psychoses, burnout etc.)	“So, paranoid, uh, obsessive and neurotic about everything, depressed, uh dependent, so yes ...” – I13, psy, 21
Stigma	Social stigma, prejudices and judgement about mental health related issues and disorders Includes individuals being ashamed of expressing their feelings or problems, if caused by fear of social acceptance of those feelings or problems	“Mostly because there is a stigma on it, so they would not want to admit it.” – I10, psy, 25

functioning	<p>The ability to function in everyday-life Includes mentions of ability to structure one’s life, one’s routine or balancing time management of different interests Mentioning’s of “struggling” with life’s aspects or situations is also considered functioning.</p>	<p>“That a lot of people will tell you that they also are or have been suffering from it” – I10, psy, 25 “decent work-life balance and I have structured my day in such a way that I take about an hour for workouts, be it home workouts or just going for a walk” – I14, tech, 20 “The has not found quite a balance in how to deal with it practically in functioning” I16, psy, 21</p>
General complaints		
Mood (negative)	General mention of mood in a negative way	“He is like really spiraling down right know.” – I10, psy, 25
Stress	Mentioning of physical or mental discomfort caused by stress-related factors. Or general mentioning’s of stress.	“That is really bothering me, gives me a lot of stress.” – I10, psy, 25
Overthinking	Persistent thoughts, rumination and mentions of overthinking in general.	“What can also be mentally unhealthy is probably overthinking when you worry a lot about something, so when you actually think about the fact that many people ... think, oh, that could bother someone, but they actually don't care.” – I20, psy, 21
Pressure	Mentioning of feelings of pressure, experienced form work, school or life in general	“Experience a lot of study-pressure” – I10, psy, 25
Uncertainty	General feelings of uncertainty, for example towards one’s future, or current circumstances.	“No, well, eehm, no I think I do have some things like uncertainty what I have to do, and how I go on.”
Anxiety	General feelings of anxiety, fear or panic attacks. Can be coded together with other codes if anxiety is specifically caused by one or more other codes.	“uh, yes, anxiety attacks” – I4, tech, 20

View of mental health

Personal	Every mention or description about mental health, as something everybody would describe differently. Or assuming that other people would think differently, because there is not 1 definition of the term.	“Hmm, that's difficult, because I think everyone defines mental health differently, but yes, the way I define it for myself, I know people who are mentally healthy from my perspective.” – I5, psy 21
General	Every mention or description about mental health, as something everybody would describe the same. Or assuming other people would think the same, because there is 1 definition of the term.	“I think that like me, a lot of people will say that feeling bad, feeling depressed, yeah that would be the most answered thing.” – I1, tech, 20
Invisibility	General description of mental health, complaints, disorders or other codes, that are described as something that you can't see from the outside, something you don't generally notice, or disguised mental health problems.	“difficult to determine. Not noticeable or difficult to notice for outsiders.” – I14, tech, 20 “Mental stuff is something you can't really see from a distance, or sometimes at all.” – I1, tech, 20

Appendix C. Interview Transcriptions

Interview 1

Gender: Male Age: 20
Dutch

Study: Mechanical engineering

Nationality:

12. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Well, your health but not your physical health I guess. Physical health is like your body, wounds and being sick. Mentally is your mind, the health of your mind. How you feel is an important example, next to mental illnesses or how they are called officially. Mental stuff is something you can't really see from a distance, or sometimes at all.

13. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

You have 2 sides to that I guess. Temporary stuff about how you feel, depressions. And you have permanent "mental illnesses" to put it like that. Autism and other forms of those I suppose.

14. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Eehm, describe?

Yes, what about this person does make you feel he/she is mentally healthy?

Oh man, good question. Eehm, you don't really notice anything about it. It is hard to describe because you don't notice. Somebody who you do not notice about them feeling worse, who is just feeling fine, feeling happy, and just being like he always is I guess.

15. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Somebody who not feeling happy, maybe down. Somebody who is in general not feeling ok. In addition stuff that are "abnormal" so to say. But that can be also personality, that's difficult to see often.

16. Among the aspects you mentioned (*Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health*), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (*Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned*)

In the end the most important thing is how you feel. It is most important that a person is feeling good. Because in the end, being healthy is the most important thing. And how you feel is a big part of that, so that most important. That you feel well, that you feel good.

17. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I think that like me, a lot of people will say that feeling bad, feeling depressed, yeah that would be the most answered thing.

a. Which components would be the most important for them?

I think that that could differ actually, but eeh, yeah I think so.

18. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (*if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society*)

Too little. I think because of the corona-crisis, to many people, people and I can't name percentages, I really don't know. But that too many people do not feel well, or not normal. Because they are taken from social connections. That results in feeling not well as a person. Little things such as meeting people is very important. I know from my own situation that you don't get out of the house a lot, except for the necessary stuff. And that results in the whole day sitting in your room of your house. And that will not make you happy. And eehm, that will make you feel worse, and that will affect your mental health.

19. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

I think I am doing ok I guess, because I have a lot of people hanging around in the house. And these I meet then. Also I go sometimes to the university and the study association, where I also meet people, so I do have some social contacts. But I do notice that there are way less than before. And I do feel fine, and I can imagine very well that some people are just not used to that. Because eeh, a little free or loosely hanging around your room or house could break you. So I feel fine, but I will be glad if we are allowed to go back later. And are allowed to do

the normal stuff again, because that is a lot more fun.

20. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Yeah, for mental health you quickly get to the GGD?, but I thought you had to have a referral form a doctor, but I think that if you feel bad the first step is family, and then you quickly arrive at doctor who refers you to the ggd, or something else, the facility you have to

21. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

Yeah I think if you feel bad, which you don't want, and then you go and get help. At least I guess that the average person will get help if he/she feels bad. And then you go through those phases. And if you temporarily feel bad then you probably seek comfort from your friends and family, and if it continues for a while, then you get to the GGD?, or a doctor, even a psychologist if it comes to that.

22. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

I think the Dutch mentality is that we should wait a while. We shouldn't be at the doctor's all together daily of course. So in general you have to like, if you feel bad temporarily, that's part of life, if you feel bad for a day, if you get out of bed all grumpy, you shouldn't get to a doctor right away. But if that stays for a longer period of time, a week minimum, then you should see a doctor, or it will stay otherwise.

23. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

I think that depends heavily on personality. I think that a lot of people think that, like, not getting help. That is a personality trait of people, that you don't get help. And further, eehm, thinking it's not that bad. Or not liking to go to a doctor. Yeah that prolonged the time it takes to actually go to a doctor.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

Well maybe yea, I am not a person who sees the doctor immediately. Maybe first to family or something. But further, I think that I would watch things go for a while, how long things last, but eventually you should seek help.

Interview 2

Gender: Male Age: 19
Dutch

Study: Biomedical Technology

Nationality:

- 1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)**

Yeah I think just being satisfied and being happy etc. Just like doing fine, just being happy.

- 2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?**

I think that it is important that you, let me think. I think it is not dividable into aspects. It is very different per person. One might consider social contact very important. That person might need that to be happy, other people other things. I guess it comes down to where you get your satisfaction from. Playing sports is important to many people, music also. Just thinking right now. Yeah the thing you think is important, where you get satisfaction from, and I think that differs for many people.

- 3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)**

Spontaneous I think. Eehm, maybe sociable also, always positive.

- a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?**

Yeah, but I don't think you would want to have the word: "chill" in your paper? Eehm let me think, just easy going, relaxed I think.

- 4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)**

Yeah I think a little pessimistic or something.

- 5. Among the aspects you mentioned (Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)**

I think the balance between pessimistic and optimistic.

6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I think the same as me. I guess a little standard answer?

a. Which components would be the most important for them?

Also the same I guess.

7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society)

I don't think a lot. People, like you see that people care about things that don't actually have a positive influence on their own self-image. For example their own health and also physical. I think that a little I guess.

Can you elaborate upon that?

Well if you look at social media, there are a lot of people who care a lot about social media, about the amount of followers is very important to them. Also maybe a standard example. But I think that these don't have a positive influence on your self-image, all the time you spend on that.

8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

Yeah, eeh, there is always room for improvement, but I guess I do.

9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Just psychiatrists and psychologists.

Just psychiatrists and psychologists?

Yeah I think so.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

If you run into something, that they can fix for you.

What sort of thing would you run into?

Well if you are something like depressed I guess.

When would you describe someone as depressed?

Well that differs of course, but I think like if you don't get any joy out of anything. Just having negative thoughts.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

The same I guess.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

Well, I think that you would like, have to give up your ego. That you would have to admit to yourself that you can't do it by yourself.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

Well, I don't think they apply to the extreme.

Interview 3

Gender: Female

Age: 18

Study: Technical medicine

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Eehm, yeah I think about, eehm, how mentally ready, as in, how ready you are for stuff so to say. So eehm, if you are capable of studying by yourself, or just being mentally ready for a certain step in life. Or something like that. And I think that if you are able to make your choices yourself, and that you know you make the right choices. That you are mentally healthy. Whilst if you are struggling with that, or if you make the wrong, well that sounds a little weird, but if you make the wrong choices you are still mentally healthy. But if you are like, less sure and then, and then I do think you are a little less mentally healthy rather than if you are just yourself, and feeling good. Yeah that's what I think.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

Eehm let me think, mental health. Though question, I think that that's about it. That just eeh, yeah that's it.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Well I think rather a lot of people. And then, well for example my mom or brother or sister. I see them just doing their own thing, making their own choices, and also eehm, able to handle feedback. And also giving people feedback. They state their opinions, and take initiative to do things. And also don't mind it, like, if other people say like: not now. Also just being positive, just yeah, being sociable.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Eehm yeah let me think, yeah a friend of mine, I think she is mentally healthy. She's just, eehm, she had like, she couldn't make a choice for her study but didn't think of that as something negative. She saw the possibilities in the fact that she had a gap year, so she went to Spain. And she like, despite being unsure, not being able to choose. She still chose to do other things that are super fun. So I think being open to other things, that makes you mentally healthy as well.

4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Eehm, let me think. Eehm, yeah my dad then. And he, eehm, is a little less open to changes. And eehm, he wants things to be organized, or planned. And he is more like, if something goes wrong, he thinks more about the fact like: oh crap, things went wrong. And he is not looking at it like how can I fix it? Like he comes to me and tells everything. Then I am like: well, what can you do, how can you fix it? And he is like, oh right, I haven't thought about that. So yeah I guess, that is more of a way you think I guess, that you can't go the other way anymore.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?

Eehm, tough one, I guess not.

5. Among the aspects you mentioned (*Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health*), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (*Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned*)

Eehm, I think that eehm, being open to change is, is what I think is the most important aspect. Eehm, also feeling good. And for the less important, eehm, I think a little that it differs per person, but being able to handle and give feedback. And ideas, but that is also a little character-specific I guess. But yeah, I think feeling good is one of the most important aspects.

6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I really wouldn't know I guess. Like everybody looks at it their own way. Mental health, no, I really couldn't say.

7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (*if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society*)

Eehm, in the Netherlands, I think it is quite a little amount actually. I think like, maybe 60 percent is mentally healthy. And that the other part of people are not mentally healthy.

Can you explain why you think that?

Yeah I think about burn-out and too much stress and such. Especially in this period a lot of people suffer from that. That, like, if you would look at the numbers. But you also have people who are like, a little crazy by themselves. Like they're weird, even though they can't help it. But I do think that there are a lot of people who are, like especially in this period, but also because of work pressure, and a little the society, that people are a little less mentally strong. That they can't handle it.

8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

Yeah I think so. It's a little hard to say, but I do feel good, so I think so.

9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Eehm, well firstly I think of eehm, seeking out a psychologist or something. Just somebody whom you can talk with, and share stuff. Share stuff which you can't share with your direct circle of people. Maybe even medication but I don't really believe in that. But well of course it is, it is help seeking. But I do think that especially professional help, yeah like somebody to talk with, somebody who is knowledgeable, and knows how to deal, like how to deal with people who are struggling.

You mention stuff you can't share with your direct circle of people. Can you tell me what kind of stuff, and why you can't talk about it in your direct circle of people?

Eehm yeah I guess problems. Actually I wouldn't know, because I do share everything myself. But I could imagine that there could be problems that you would, like struggle to talk about because... Well I suppose it is easier with somebody who you see once a week. To tell that person a lot, or well, some specific things, and you don't see him/her otherwise. While you, for example, if you tell stuff to your friend or parents, or family, you see them a lot more. So I do think that they then know something, well I don't, I wouldn't not tell something quickly, but it is a way in which you put yourself out there, makes you vulnerable. And I think some people might find that difficult to do.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

Eehm, well when daily life gets disturbed I guess. And when you don't really, well function sounds like you are a machine. But if some things in daily life are bothered by it, and your environment also seems like, your not that well. I think that would be a moment you should get help.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

Yeah I think they would answer the same. I do think that everybody well, thinks it logical that you should seek help if you can't cope anymore.

What do you mean with can't cope anymore?

Well that is again a good question. Well that you recognise that it's not going well, but you don't know how to get out of it, or how to solve it so to say. That you really are like, shit, it's not going well. And you also don't know what you can do to make it go better.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

I think fear. Just thinking it's hard to be confronted with it. Because you do admit it then, and I, it's something that is not discussed generally I think. Like a little, like more stuff. But mental health is something that is not discussed a lot in society. And I do think that if you admit like, I need some help, that you fear standing out or something. Like some kind of group pressure, I don't know. Like wanting to fit in, but that you are different if you seek help.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

Well, I don't think so. Well, not like, to not do it, but I would think about it. But I do think that if I think I should need to seek help, that I would. And I also think that in the back of my mind would be like, what would others think? But I generally don't give much thought to what others think, so, I guess I would just go and seek out help.

Interview 4

Gender: Female

Age: 19

Study: Technical Medicine

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Yeah, eehm, mental health. That you eehm, yeah the question if you feel good or not, like in your head. It's a little vague, but that you eehm, anyway that you feel a little stable or not. And eehm, if you, well the things from the outside, how well you handle them. Like how you handle certain things, like when stuff happens, that can be impactful. Well if you are mentally healthy that you are able to, like handle them well. Regardless your environment, whether you are happy or not.

2. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Eehm, yeah a friend of mine who is always, like regardless of whether she is busy or whatever. She can put things in perspective, eehm, so eehm, yeah she does not get consumed by all the stress things bring with them. Eehm, and eehm, yeah like just convince yourself in your head that things will work out, or just take it easy now. I don't know, like in your head, like bargain with yourself in your head whether you are ok or not. And influence yourself in that way. That you don't eehm, oh it is a very busy time now so I am stressed. But she doesn't have that, she can convince herself.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Eehm, let me think. Eehm. Yeah, well, my parents I guess. Or my dad anyway. He eehm, I am thinking about, like, he doesn't have any ups or downs. My dad is like, eehm, eehm, not not feeling well. I don't know if it should be taken into account whether you want to show that to your kid though. But anyway when I think of him, seems really steady, in eehm, the way he feels. So it seems to me that that could be considered mentally healthy.

3. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Eehm, well, another friend of mine who, eehm, who does let herself get influenced by her surroundings. So stress if she is busy, then she is like, consumed by stress. So she can't really put things into perspective, then she is just like the opposite of my other friend. Eehm, so yeah, and like the opinion of others mean a lot, or have a big influence on how she feels. While yeah, that opinion could just as well not have been there, and she would have felt better then. So she is like, easily influenced.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?

Eehm, yeah I can, well, eehm, my sister who is eehm, has been depressed for a while. So she still takes antidepressants. I don't know if you just can say well, she is then still mentally unhealthy, because you are mentally, well, yeah you are mentally influenced by it so to say. While on the other hand, how she is acting, she looks eehm, like just mentally healthy. But I don't know if you can say like, because something is influencing her still she is mentally unhealthy. And you don't know how she would behave if she didn't take those things, those antidepressants so to say. So I doubt that sometimes.

4. Among the aspects you mentioned (*Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health*), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (*Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned*)

Eehm, yeah, I think stability is the most important thing I guess. Even though you can say like, if you don't go up and down a lot, sometimes it is nice to have an up. And if you are just stable all the time, that can be boring as well. But I do think stability, that you always, yeah just. I don't really know how to explain, but that you know how you feel, and it does not change unexpectedly out of nowhere.

5. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

Well I guess when other people think about mental health, eehm, well you are mentally healthy if you are feeling good, or if you are feeling happy. Eehm, but I think that a little odd, it can be said to be a little odd. Yeah I don't know, feeling happy is like, eehm, anyway, yeah. A little weird. I don't know how, well of course if you sometimes feel happy. But that you eehm, that you just in some moments and the pursuit of happiness, I think it's a little stupid or something.

Can you explain that for me?

Yeah well, the pursuit of happiness. I think it's a little, on one side a little, like how do you do that anyway you know? That you, I wouldn't know how to do that or anything. I think that if you, if you focus on just feeling well, that that is happiness on itself in a way. so yeah, if you like feel generally well. That's something you do have power over directly, like yeah feeling good that something you can, that's like manageable to influence. But happiness itself, to pursuit happiness, I think that's to abstract.

Can you explain to me what the difference is between feeling good generally and being happy?

Eehm yeah, eehm, well I just think that there is not necessarily a difference. Because if you feel good, than I think you could feel happy you know? Or call it happiness. Eehm, but I think that's why, that's why some people like, eehm, say I want to feel happy, and they seek

something higher than feeling good. They see something more, and is think, like, I don't know, I wouldn't know how to pursue that.

- 6. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society)**

Oeh tough one, well, eehm, yeah because you never know what's happening in somebody else's head. So somebody can seem happy, he doesn't have to be. On the other side you don't then know, if somebody doesn't seem particular happy, whether he is very satisfied anyway. But I do think rather a lot actually, like 75 percent.

Can you explain why you think 75 percent?

Well, because eehm, I think that for a lot of people, if something is really wrong, like really really wrong. That only then they'll call themselves unhappy. And eehm, so the majority, like if things are just going their way, that they will call themselves happy. Eehm, but that is maybe looking at it very positively. Because you can also say, like, if I don't feel that much at all, I might not be happy. But anyway that's how I would think about it. But anyway, feeling like you don't really mis anything if you feel happy then.

You mentioned when something is really wrong, what do you mean by that?

Eehm, yah, eehm, that some things are, like, if something really impactful happens. Or that, eehm, well, something is more than temporary. Because ofcourse everybody feels stressed when they study for their exams, but I think everybody can put it in perspective like: yeah but next week everything is over, then I'll be happy again, so I am happy now as well. If it is more then temporary, that you really feel like you can't get out of it without something external.

- 7. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?**

Yeah, definitely, yeah. Yes.

- 8. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?**

I think about eehm, that you eehm, like. That you see a psychologist or psychiatrist. I think for a lot of people eehm, that's quite a step. So I think that it is like, you do that only if something is really wrong. So what I said earlier. But on the other side it is like maybe very nice for a lot of people to go and see a professional, to have somebody to talk to. So it doesn't have to be when something is really wrong. It could also be beneficial for a lot of other people.

Could you explain why it could be beneficial even though there isn't something really wrong?

Well, I think everybody has it's issues anyway. And eehm, it could be nice to get some reflection on that. Or anyway, to get to know them that that is a thing of yourself. Sometimes you just assume everybody thinks like that, but then you find out that that isn't true at all, and you can see thing very differently, or anyway from another perspective. Because of course all things are things in your own head, so you don't know how others experience it. So I think everybody could use some reflection on like, their mental part.

9. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

Yeah I think when something is really wrong, that's the most important reason. Eehm, but yeah there are probably, yeah I don't know. There could also just be regular people who, eehm, without something going on, could really like to have somebody to talk to. Eehm, but I think that that's something that a lot of people don't really think about initially I guess.

10. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

Eehm, I think that they think it is unnececerry or something, that they think like, I'm not that sort of person that needs a psychologist. Those are different people. So a sort of, yeah, shame can be also a reason, yeah, that can be. I think also mostly the first one, that people don't recognize their own problems. So they don't see the severity of it. And like it is still to big of a step, so time goes on, and you know, you don't do anything about it.

You mention people thinking: I don't want to be that sort of person. What do you mean by that sort of person?

Somebody who needs another person's help to be, eehm, like, mentally healthy. I think that eehm, yeah for physical problems it is very logical to go and see a doctor. But I think that for mental problems, it's like, an attitude of, no I would rather fix that myself or something. That a mental illness is not regarded as a physical illness.

Can you explain why that is?

Eehm, well, because you, I think, because you don't see what the other person could have. And with physical problems it is more visible I guess. While it is definitely there. So I think that it is just more often, it is in your head and a little more in the background for everyone. I think that it is like, a little, more vague. So that how you, how you, like don't show because you might fear you are the only one.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

Well I am quite curious I guess, like if I am able to estimate the severity whether I should seek help or not. Because I would say to everybody, to anybody, like other people you could address that problem. To say, you should seek professional help, but I think that I am a little more weary when its about me. Like I would think probably, I can still fix this myself. And I think estimating for yourself what a good moment is to seek help, that that's very difficult.

Can you explain why it is different for other people than for yourself?

Well because if you tell somebody else, you don't have to execute anything. So that makes it easier to say to others per definition. And yeah, I think that there are, like the attitude that I would like to fix my own problems. So I guess I am a little, how do you call that, I don't know the word. But I'm a little stubborn, that's the word, that's what I meant. So I would think for myself, I should try myself first.

Interview 5

Gender: Male Age: 18
Dutch

Study: Biomedical Technology

Nationality:

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Eehm I would say mostly it is about how satisfied you are with yourself and everything around you. How happy you are.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

Eehm yeah that, and eehm, yeah how to phrase it? Satisfaction with your social contacts around you. I think that is an important part of it. How satisfied you are with your whole situation, where you live for example, how you are doing with your studies. Or that you can be yourself, I think that's also an important factor. That you don't have to do stuff forcibly that do not make you happy at all. And also that you just have some time for yourself to do stuff or something, I think that is also important.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

I think most people are. Well for example my housemates I guess, I guess I have a good connection with them. A connection as in I know them reasonably well I think. And they all seem to have their things together, and they seem satisfied with where they are in life and what they are doing currently.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

No, I don't think I know somebody else.

4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?

Well I hear from somebody, not going to name him. But he is like struggling with himself a little. She is like satisfied about, eehm, like, her studies and all. But she struggles with being herself, and being happy with herself. And I think that is a sign that things are not going that well. Even though it seems as if she is just happy, she does not always feel that well.

- 5. Among the aspects you mentioned (*Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health*), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (*Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned*)**

I think foremostly contact with others is very important. I think that if you always have to force yourself, like to be somebody else if you are in contact with other people. Or if you do not have any contact with other people at all, that you go quickly, or well that it goes the wrong way concerning your mental health. And that it might be less important for example, yea of course it is nice if you have your own nice student room for just yourself. Where you just can sit nicely. That comes in handy, that might make you happier. But even if you are in like, a really stupid small little room, you could still be mentally healthy. Especially if you have nice housemates. So I think that that is the most important thing.

You say that if you lose contact with other people, thing might go the wrong way. Can you elaborate on that?

Well like getting lonely, that after a while you don't put in any effort anymore to go out with other people and having a nice sociable time. You get more and more to yourself, seeking out contact even less and less. That you might get stuck in your own world so to speak.

- 6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?**

I think that they would tell the same, maybe some people might mention some specific things, but generally I think most people would agree.

- 7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (*if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society*)**

Yeah well, especially with, like, with the uncertainty with the Corona virus and all, that that causes some problems for people. Because it is still unclear how dangerous it really is exactly. And also not what you best can and can't do. And I think this uncertainty is really could cause a little worse mental health for some people. But I think generally that people are doing pretty well. Because there is still personal contact between people, and the togetherness, yeah like the feeling of being together. I have that with my roommates for example with whom I am still together. So I think it's going well. But of course there are people who can't handle it. Who need that kind of physical contact to feel good I guess.

- 8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?**

Yeah, yeah.

9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Yeah, I think about a psychologist right away I guess. Just somebody with whom, who is like knowledgeable of how, like certain things affect your mental health, and who can help you to deal with those.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

I think it's best to talk with somebody you trust. Because I think that if you hear something from somebody else, just talking about it, that it gives you a new angle to look at things. That the other person also can help you think how to deal with things. That's what I should do, like talking it over with somebody. And of course it depends what the problem is then. If you struggle with finding a new hobby or something, I don't think that you, I don't think you should seek professional help or anything. But firstly talk with other people what their hobbies are, like orientating yourself. But if it's about yourself mentally, that you struggle with yourself, I think that you need to schedule a conversation quickly. Because, well, yeah, that can't hurt anyway.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

Yeah I think that you just especially if you don't like, if you are just not happy with yourself, that you struggle with yourself, that you don't really know what you want or anything. How you would, or who you are I guess. Like an identity crisis.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

Eehm, because they feel insecure, they don't really want to talk. I think that that is the most important thing. Because it's like, if you immediately talked about. No I think the image for other people is also important. Like just saying, like if other people find out you are seeing a psychologist for example, that you get help there. Then people might think differently of you or something, like lesser of you, as in not mentally well. And that they will treat you differently, and that person would not want that.

You mention people treating you differently, even lesser, if they know you see a psychologist. Can you tell me why that is?

I think mostly because, if you think of a psychologist, you immediately think about the worst cases, of people who are really, really, people who are really struggling psychologically or have some kind of disability. Or that you start thinking about a TBS client or something. And that is a very big step, which make you unable to see the sides, well there are a lot if things in between with mental health. But that is not what you think about, you start thinking about really bad cases.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already)

included in the previous answer)

Eehm yeah well its, it contributes towards the line you have to cross before you get help. That is of course like, you go from, I would just go and see a psychologist if I am not feeling fine for a while. But that is not supposed to be that way. But if I am really struggling, than I would not really be bothered what other people would think, because it's about yourself and that is pretty important.

Interview 6

Gender: Female

Age: 21

Study: psychology

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Hmm, what I think when it comes to mental health. I just think, eehm yeah, a sort of balance I guess between well, eehm, that you have a good balance between negative feelings and yeah, well, positive feelings. And that when you like, of course it can fluctuate, but that those are not that big of fluctuations. So eehm, instead of very deep lows and very high highs, that it's all a sort of yeah, a sort of goes to a middle ground, without to much of like, extremes. And eehm, mental health, I think that you just are able to bounce back if you like, have a setback. And that you possess the tools in your toolbox to just bounce back. That it does not like, leave a bruise on your wellbeing in general.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

eehm yeah I think when it comes to mental health that you eehm, that you eehm, I think it's good that eehm, to really listen to how you feel in the moment. And eehm, that you are also ok with that, if you, like are mentally healthy then you, like accept in general how you feel in the moment, generally speaking. And eehm, that makes that you are able to deal with it better, and that you are letting it be there. For example you feel depressed, or whatever at that moment, that you eehm, yeah that you know that it is ok to feel that now. I think that that a healthy way is of dealing with how you feel at the time. Because if you like, have that on the long term, that you are also like, I am missing something, I don't feel well mentally. But eehm, yeah what more, eehm, maybe that you feel a little space to eehm, to talk about it, about your feelings. That can be when you feeling happy, but also when you are feeling bad, and that you are ok with talking to your loved ones about that. I don't know, if I look at myself I always do that, a little bit communication. If I am feeling better, that generally is easier than when you are feeling worse, so that can also be an indication of how you feel mentally.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

The first thing that comes to mind is: he doesn't go to therapy. No but eehm, eehm, let me think. Mentally healthy, eehm. A good balance between rationalizing and eehm, have an emotional view towards things so to speak. So eehm, not to much with your head, not to much with your body, or emotions. And eehm, good communicative skills, so eehm, like ok, I don't feel like this or that today. Or I don't have time today, also being clear about what's going on in your head. And eehm, just doing what she thinks is the good thing to do for herself. I think that might be another important think, to be yourself.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Eehm, I think that eehm, the enthusiasm or the energy that she radiates. I think the level of which she does, that eehm, that is not something a mentally unhealthy person would have. And a likeness towards life, and eehm, sort of a lust for it so to speak.

- 4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)**

Eehm, I think that eehm, the fact that things from outside herself have a big influence on how she feels, behaves, and how she sees herself. I think that that, that doubt that is caused by that, that that is not very, eehm, yeah that you are not very stable mentally speaking. So that outside influence, that like the world has on her, and eehm, that also changes her. And also like just, a lot of serious changes in her emotions, and how she feels I think. I do think that that shows that she has like the high's and lows, that those could be quite extreme.

- a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?**

Eehm, well, firstly is that I know that that person has like a mental disorder of which she, like suffers. The has not found quite a balance in how to deal with it practically in functioning. And I notice that it influences her confidence, and how she sees herself. And that, also, like certain fears and depressive complaints stimulates. So eehm, I wouldn't say that that wouldn't pass as like, mentally healthy.

- 5. Among the aspects you mentioned (Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)**

Mental health, well I do think the most important is the stability that you feel yourself. Of course you always have a little fluctuation. But especially that you know you are ok with that. And that you have a sort of foundation from which you like, live your life. And that you are able to function a little. I do think that that is the most important thing is when I think about mental health. And some less important, yeah eehm, I think that they are all sort of connected. Self-image could always, or it doesn't have to be very high to feel mentally stable, or just ok. But I do think that in any way, you need to be like neutral in that. In order to mentally feel a little. Anyway I think they are all important, but balance is the most important.

- 6. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?**

No, no that is a pity. But on the other hand I already know that I am working on that. Like the things that I have mentioned I do know of them, oh I am working on that, and I know that. So therefore that it pops up in my mind maybe. But at the moment I would say not, no.

7. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Eehm, I think about the GGZ. And I think about the, well firstly that you make an appointment with the general practitioner, and he can refer you to a POH or a basic-psychologist. Or you might do an intake, and then you look what is possible. Possibly you are really really struggling from, eehm, I don't know psychoses or something. Then maybe you get institutionalized or something I don't know. Or you have well, there are several mental problems for which you would want to be institutionalized. Anyway if I think about mental help, I do think about those. And that there are multiple options that go for a certain person. And that you have to look very seriously to see what fits you best I think. Yeah, those are the first that come to mind.

8. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

Well that you are struggling with something, I think that is reason enough. If you struggle with something mentally, and you notice that it does not go away if you talk about it with people, or you don't even dare to talk about it with people. Then I think you are, that I would think like, ok, consider a conversation with an professional. See what you think about it.

You mention struggling with something, can you tell me what you mean by that?

Yeah that could be super-broad, but I think now, eehm, yeah I think about. Its very difficult to grasp mental problems in 1 sentence. But if you notice you are like down, or lack a lust for life, or you notice that you have struggles with your eating habits or self-image. Or maybe in your relationship, in your home situation, or even at your workplace. That you have problems there, even though you don't really know, well maybe even in terms of disorders that you notice things and like, maybe I should have let this be checked. Or maybe that you notice that there is a very big difference between how you feel now and how you felt before, and in a negative way of speaking. Those are all things you just, where you could raise alarm.

9. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

I think that in general there is this idea of that your problems have to be severe before you, yeah that they have to be very severe and serious before you should ask for help. With like problems with concentration at school, that that's not serious enough for example. Or that you are like, I want a new job, but I don't know if I could handle that. Then that would not be a problem for which you like, go for a counseling session. Or, and I know that this happens a lot with people with a disorder, that people think their complaints have to get worse before they can get help, or like: but some people have it way worse than me. Yeah I don't know, I think a little of people are very firm with themselves.

10. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

Yeah eehm, maybe thinking it is not severe enough, or there could be a fear for the judgement of a psychologist, who might think that it's not severe enough. Or another healthcare worker, who might be like, this is why you are wasting my time? That could be a fear, or maybe not getting help because they one or more negative experiences, and they lost

trust a little. Fear for judgement of the environment also, especially with the older generation. That eehm, mental help still is a little taboo, that is it still quite the step.

- a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)**

Yeah I think there is indeed a fear for judgement of the health-care worker, that my problems are just whining or something. But I do have experienced that if you talk about those fears that you can have a meta-conversation about it. That you talk about, what's happening then here, during this conversation. But that's like the next step. Anyway, yes. Yes.

Interview 7

Gender: Female Age: 24 Study :Psychology Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

With the term mental health, I firstly think about how you feel. Do you feel well, do you feel badly. And if you have a good mental health, than you would probably feel good, you know what you want to do, eehm, yeah those are the first things that come to mind.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

Well if I compare with myself, I sometimes have days where I feel good, some days are a little less. And if I feel less well then it's also a little like restless, or knot knowing precisely what to do or how to start something. Yeah then I would probably describe it as less at such moments. And if I feel good at some days, which I generally have, don't worry, then I generally have a plan in mind, I know what to do and how to do it. Also have confidence that things will work out. Other less direct influencing factors are, eehm, like, I have to think really hard I notice. Yeah I think if you, like I live in a student-home, and if everything goes well, and you live happily with other people, that contributes towards mental health. Also if things goes well with your family, and relationship, if all those things go well, it will also benefit your mental health. Because if you have like struggles with people around you, your studies or with your work, then I think that that will impact how you feel negatively, so also your mental health.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Well the first thing that comes to mind is, eehm, well like my sister for example. She yeah, is able to compare things very clearly, and look very clearly at them. If things are difficult or unclear, then she is mostly the person who is able to look at it differently. And I think that is, for her anyway, that she is mentally very much ok. She is not really stressed or disturbed quickly or anything. Able to let things go, and they work out very easily, oh and she helps the people around her a lot.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Yeah, do I have to tell names?

No that's ok, it's merely about the aspects of mental health.

Yeah ok, so yeah. I do know somebody else, and eehm, I going to tell anyway, that talks way more easily. It's about my god-parent. She has a very special way of seeing life, and she knows how to tell that to other people. Not in a way like: you should look at it this way. But more like, if you would look at it this way, how do you see it then? And that helps you form a clearer image of the situation. And I think that you are mentally healthy if you can help other people, and explain things to other people clearly, and let them see things from a different perspective.

4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Eehm, yeah, I can do that. Well, eehm, that person had a lot of destructive thoughts. And she keeps being bothered by them, I do not know how she, how she could change course so to speak, to get her life back on track. And eehm, yeah that shows also in her behavior, she is agitated quickly, takes comments wrongly easily. She is just struggling with herself a lot, and I think that that is an important aspect that shows that things don't go to well mentally.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?

Yeah, this might be a little a different category. It's about my grandma, and she is struggling from dementia and aphasia. So she can't really talk anymore. I don't know if that is more considered mental health, but how it shows, she sits all day, like just staring. Even though she is not that old, you wouldn't necessarily expect that this age, that she is like that. Yeah it's a little sad to see, but it has been like this for a long time, and it is what it is. So I think that she could be considered that I guess.

5. Among the aspects you mentioned (Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)

Eehm, I would think that mental health, that number one would be how you feel. Because that is mostly about yourself, how you view things, and how you think about things. So therefore I would say that that is number one. And little less important, well, it might be an important sign or something, but how you behave and how you treat other people would be a little less important. Maybe because it is caused by, so to say.

6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I think it matters when you asked psychology students or non-psychology students. I think that non-psychology students would think whether you feel happy, or sad or something. That that's one of the firstly mentioned things that are named, while psychology students, because they might be more informed about the topic, a little easier name different aspects of mental health.

a. Which components would be the most important for them?

I don't think they would not necessarily differ. Because I think it always comes down to how you feel or how somebody else is feeling. And maybe that would be the first thing that people would associate with that.

7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society)

Yeah I think generally that this corona crisis does influence everybody, some people a little more than others. So I think that everybody does feel worried in any way, in varying levels of course. Yeah that's a tough question, because I am thinking about that range, and you are never all clear, and I think right now a lot of people are worried. Or a lot of people do have time to overthink while they are at home, so I think generally people are like in the middle of the range. It's very hard to clearly describe, or to give percentages, because I see it like a range you know?

8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

Oh, that's a difficult question. Because when you first mentioned mentally healthy people I was thinking, yeah geez. There are so many people who are experiencing things that make the daily life more difficult or whatever way you would describe that. And I, eehm, I think that there is a sort of range in mental health. You have on the one side the completely mentally healthy, on the other side completely mentally unhealthy, then I would say that from the point somewhere in the middle, to the mentally healthy side, you could all call them mentally healthy. And I think that there are almost no people that are completely at the end of the range, that there are almost never things that are wrong, or thing with which they struggle. But I do think that I would be within the range of mentally healthy.

9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Eehm, tough question, hmm, professional help, I think about somebody who has studied for it. But the first thing I would think about is talking with your inner circle. But that's not

professional I suppose, well unless you have like psychologist friends. But yeah, I think that I firstly would go to the general practitioner to see whether it is significant. And if so the GP can refer you to an institution or organization to get to know you. Not that there is immediately wrong with you of course, but just to see, to which degree does my mental health differ from others, and would this cause me any trouble.

You mention that your mental health differs, and this would cause you trouble, can you elaborate on that?

Eehm, yeah let me think, yeah well if it differs from the average so from the standard. Then you could be classified like, there might be something wrong with you. But on the other side there would be like a whole range of where you could be, wo if you differ from the average it is not necessarily bad. But I do think that if you have something that differs so much, that it would cause problems in daily life. But it doesn't have to be problematic on its own.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

Well sometime it could be like, that you do that for your environment. That you think for yourself: I just have to deal with it, and fix it myself. While it could be causing a lot of emotional harm to your loved ones, and that could also be a reason. Like for them I would seek help, that will help them to.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

I think other people would say that if you are struggling with yourself, and you don't know how to fix it. And maybe also if they think about it how destructive it for their environment.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

Well maybe they would think like, this is my thing, so I should fix it myself. Maybe also shame, that they think like, I am not seeking help. Because there might me like a label on it or something. A little as some general reason a little denial, and yeah that you feel like you can fix it yourself.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

Well I do recognize in myself thinking like, let's try myself first. Lets try to fix it myself first. Maybe also to talk with my friends or family first, that I also would be a little cautious. I haven't been in that situation luckily, but I could imagine that these reasons could also apply to me.

Interview 8

Gender: Female

Age: 24

Study: psychology

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Yeah I think about whether you feel happy, not physically, but more like your emotions or your mood. Also whether you are resilient after you have experienced something. So whenever you have a setback, how quickly you are able to get back from that. Also maybe how confident you are, that you are able to handle, well not criticism, but more like feedback without eehm, what's the phrase, freaking out or something. Eehm yeah, mental health, yeah. On the good side of the spectrum, that you feel good and happy, that you are on a nice flow of life. And on the negative side that when you have a poorer mental health. That you are bothered by mood swings, or you don't feel happy generally.

2. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Yes, eehm, that person she, eehm, she is very confident. And if something bad happens, then she's obviously bothered by it. But after she talks about it a little bit, and after a little while, then she is more herself again. And eehm, yeah, well in anyway you don't notice about her that she is still bothered by it. Maybe I'm wrong, but it generally passes quickly with her, and she is also not that unstable emotionally.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Eehm, yeah that person generally has a very positive view of life. Also if something bad happens, she is also bothered by that. But she is very able to rationalize like: this has no further influence on me, or I can let it go. And also if something good happens, she is able to transfer positive energy to other people. And she is mostly very stable, so it's more like who she is.

3. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

I think that person is just like, unbalanced. I think that that person is bothered by mood swings, and is also quickly looking more towards things that do not go her way. Is like consumed by them, and is not really resilient to get back up again. And is more sensitive to (constructive) feedback, she really takes it to herself, and in influence a whole day by that, or maybe even the day after. So I guess not that confident, and a little unbalanced.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way not Mentally healthy?

Even though that person really tries, and I know that that person suffers from psychological disorder, even though that person really tries his best, it sometimes doesn't work out. And he gets himself into a rock-bottom, for days on end. And this person also pulls the people around him downward with him. And she is also unbalanced, finds it difficult to handle negative events or feedback. That will result in feeling like, down for a few days. Also not handling criticism very well, taking it very personal immediately.

- 4. Among the aspects you mentioned (*Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health*), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (*Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned*)**

Yeah I think that balanced is the most important. Like if you have a little less downs, that that directly influences your general mood. So I think the other factors are a little less important because being balanced is influencing them. I wouldn't know what would be less important, because I think it is all connected I guess.

- 5. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?**

Yeah I wouldn't really know about that, because I study psychology, then I am quickly it has something to do with this and that. But other people might generalize very quickly and think along the lines of: if you are mentally healthy you are not seeing a psychologist, or you are not taking medicine. Because if you are mentally healthy, then you don't need that.

- 6. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (*if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society*)**

Eehm, yeah I think like in the Netherlands more than half could be considered mentally healthy. But not necessarily flourishing or something, but more like above the zero point of what could be considered mentally healthy. Yeah that would be the only guess I could make, I don't know.

And why would you think about half?

I think that people would be like, how to put it, I think that most people are always like struggling or busy with their own stuff. Like from the outside it's hardly ever visible whether somebody is feeling well. But I don't know, I just feel like about half would feel well, and the

other half doesn't. I don't know, I am very bad at estimations. It could also be thirty or eighty percent.

7. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

At this point I would say no. Yeah I guess I don't feel like, balanced. I suffer from mood disorders, and eehm, yeah I am just thinking a lot generally. I take things very personal. And that's something I wouldn't associate with someone who is mentally healthy.

8. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Then I think about people who are ready to receive help, but also people who are given help with a little resistance. For example people who are a bit unmotivated to take on such a program to receive help. But also therapy, talking with psychologists or the GGZ. Self-reflection, getting to know yourself. Growing as a person. Like if the person is open to that. Professional guidance, guidance as in that the person is not just doing the work for you, but you take your own steps towards self-improvement, but with guidance. But also that in the best-case scenario, that it doesn't have to take long, and that with a little help, you are able to do things yourself.

9. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

I think that when people do not get the social support from their direct social circle. Or that the problems are severe enough that talking with a neighbor doesn't cut it anymore, so that they need professionals in order to take further steps. Or a combination of like, behavioral therapy, or medication, or like, well yeah, that mostly.

10. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

When they feel like it. Or maybe their direct environment feels that it is necessary.

When would somebody feel like that would be necessary?

When somebody isn't able to function properly. Can't do their daily things. But also when they get feedback from their environment, and only then they think like, shit, I need help. And that they found a way to deal with things themselves, but that their behavior disruptive is of their environment.

11. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

I think mostly shame, like the stigma that there is still around the professional care, and around therapy. And there is a general stigma on mental health, that you are not supposed to talk about that. So yeah, fear about what other people would think. Especially when it is not that common, or supported in your direct social environment. When people are unknowing

about the topic, they might, unintentionally, make stupid comments about it. Also the costs, that if it is not covered by your insurance, that you can't afford it. Also the time you have to invest in it, including the time travelling to and from appointments. Also bad experiences, or hearing about bad experiences that might scare off people. Maybe also different kinds of therapy do not fit well with some people. Like face-to-face therapy, but you also have online, chatting or via e-mail or something. And if somebody has had one form, and didn't like it, that they do not try others.

- a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)**

Yeah definitely, I think a personal bond with the professional is really important. I have to admit, other than face to face, I haven't tried other forms of therapy. But also the costs would really matter to me, because I don't work yet so everything is expensive, being a student. The university provides a school-psychologist, but they offer only like 6 sessions. So you do work like towards a goal to solve something for yourself, but you can't really build towards a working relationship. That could also work less motivating, because I won't see this person after a couple of sessions. Furthermore for me, traveling time would matter to me, because if I would feel bad, feel tired and don't feel like anything, then I wouldn't want to travel a couple of hours. So yeah, that would be all I guess.

Interview 9

Gender: Male Age: 23

Study: psychology

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations)

Yeah, I think it's of it as less stigmatizing as a year ago. A year ago I thought of it as like, mental health, that has to do with willpower in that way. Like within people's own control to be and stay mentally healthy. And now I think of it more as health, as in general physical health.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

Yeah I would look at it as a scale from 0 to 100, and at 100 is not like somebody who is totally healthy. But more like somebody who is completely at peace with how is up here *points at head*, like mentally. It shows in the way you function, do you struggle. But you could also compare it to the masses. What is average behavior, do you differ significantly, unhealthily significant.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

No I don't think so, no.

If you would make up a mentally healthy person, what would his/her characterize?

Then I think of somebody, of a person, but its fake. Its not real. So a complete picture of a human that is functioning one hundred percent correctly, but I think everybody has something that lacks. But to go back to the one hundred per cent person. That's a person who is happy, one hundred per cent in balance, satisfied with himself, a real peopleperson.

4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that?

Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Yeah then that would be everybody.

Can you think of a specific person? And why would you think of this person when we talk about mentally unhealthy?

Well I guess the person I am now thinking of is like, dependent of other people, more dependent than other people.

5. Among the aspects you mentioned (Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)

I think functioning well, that would be the most important.

Are there less important factors?

Well maybe functioning well and being balanced may be both equally important. Because on the one hand, functioning well shows that you are able to deal with daily life, and you fit in with society and are able to deal with what society asks of you. And on the other hand stability, is more like the individual aspect of it, and let's see what's less important, the others I guess, I already forgot about them.

6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I think there is a very big stigma on this I guess. What they would answer, well that could be like that it has to do something with willpower. A strong person with a strong will is mentally healthy, period. And a person who is mentally unhealthy is like, well he did that himself.

7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society)

I think almost nobody. Well it depends where you put the border. Like I think that somebody is healthy is there is like nothing wrong with a person. But I think that everybody has something, I am convinced of it.

8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?

No.

9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?

Yeah not just psychologists. But also like there are a lot of different forms of help. Yeah you have like a crisis, you are stuck somewhere. And through therapy, you get closer to yourself, to a special form of yourself.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

That could be a lot. Like depression, personality disorder not so much actually. Well maybe reasons, like when somebody is really like aware of it. That you notice that you function less well than before, or with other people. Yeah that you start to compare with other people. And maybe let me think, yeah like before I was happy, now I am unhappy, how did this happen. I am different than before, is this a normal development process, or is this unhealthy? Just like people who want more clarity.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

Yeah I think a little the same as me. Like if you get stuck to keep it short, yeah.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

Hmm, yeah good question. Yeah I think it's the stigma mostly. Well maybe the stigma, it shamefull. Maybe even distrusting, like in the way that people might think, this doesn't help anyway. Or they think I am going to a psychologist with a problem, and suddenly I have a diagnosis, I didn't want that, I just wanted something practical.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

No, no I am not that distrusting. Furthermore, the stigma doesn't interest me that much. Yeah I believe in the effectivity.

Interview 10

Gender: Male Age: 25

Study: Psychology

Nationality: Dutch

1. What comes to your mind when you think of mental health? (*If interviewee needs help: whatever comes to your mind; say words, sentences, images, associations*)

I have to say that when you say mental health, I immediately think about people who are not doing well. People who are struggling in this context, students who are experiencing a lot of study-pressure, people who are just really like can't handle things right now. But also personal problems around that. And that's like the first things that come to mind. Yeah if I would explain that, like. If I look at myself, how people are feeling, that's a problem, how do we handle that. How do I handle things myself, that's the things I think about.

And what do you mean with this context?

I mean like the university itself.

What do you mean the university itself?

Well not just the university, but more like "as a student", and I mean the context of students and mental health. Specifically because I hear from a lot of sources that I think, like that's not how I would like to see things. And that a lot of people are struggling with problems and work-pressure and that sort of things. So that the direction in which my thoughts are going.

2. Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

Yeah a part of it is of course well-being. How do you feel, how are things for you at the moment. Also a part like how happy you are. But for me there is also a point like, how well are you able to deal with the challenge that you are going to face. Are you avoiding this or something. And are you able to adapt to things that you are going to face, I think that that is a strongly underappreciated aspect of it. And there is like a component that's like, not sure if it is exactly mental health, but some sort of planning, like to be organized in your head. That you have a general idea, what you are going to do, how you are going to do it, and why you want to do that.

3. Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (*If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him*)

yeah, she always gives a really relaxed and healthy impression, but also they really know what they are going to do, and know how they are going to do that. They are also not that bothered by the way how they are going to do it, or how they are supposed to do it. At least not bothered by internal factors.

a. Can you think of another person who is in the same, or a very different way Mentally healthy?

Well that person had a lot of shit going on, had a really tough time. But that is somebody who, who despite everything that came his way, he is still living a very good life, and is able to continue with that. He had a lot of emotional blows, and was able to handle it well. And from my point of view, well I wouldn't want to say it only made him better, but it definitely did not make him worse.

4. Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain? (If interviewee needs help: you don't have to name the person, just think of her or him)

Yeah, I can also do that twice, there the opposites of the people I mentioned just now. I know someone who had some major setbacks, and he is definitely less now. He is like really spiraling down right now. He might get back up on his feet, but we'll have to see how things go. And the other one just does random things. He has faced some of the consequences of that, and is going to face a lot more I think.

5. Among the aspects you mentioned (Help the interviewee by summarizing her / his points: To summarize what you just said, for you X, Y and Z are components that belong in your opinion to mental health), which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health? (Interviewer should take notes of the earlier answers in order to help interviewee remember about the aspects they mentioned)

I think mostly that resilience is like the most important, I think that's number one. Less important, I think maybe being relaxed, that might be more of a consequence of it. Wellbeing is also one that is very important. But I also think, is that more of a consequence or does it cause it? But if you are going to measure things, then I think wellbeing one of the most crucial things, mentally anyway. Well the others, are not like very important, like to tell which are really crucial. But if I have to scale down to two factors if you are going to measure mental health, then I guess the two factors would be resilience and wellbeing.

6. What would other people associate with mental health, if they were asked like you? Would they mention different or similar components than you did?

I think the wellbeing anyway, is like something that's mentioned immediately. I also think that ehm, maybe the resilience, maybe in lesser amounts, but that it's mentioned. And if I think back to conversations I've had with people. I think that people talk a lot about stress and factors that influence that negatively. But not necessarily name the well-being itself I guess.

a. Which components would be the most important for them?

Mostly stress, and maybe ehm, no mostly stress. But also for a large part a lack of clarity, well in this context a lack of clarity. If you think about the university, and also with corona in

addition to that. That there is a lot of uncertainty about what is going to happen. And what can I do tomorrow? And I think that that's something that gets named by a lot of people. That that's a point of which people say that is not beneficial for their mental health.

- 7. Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy? (if interviewee needs help / asks, respond: just in general / worldwide/ in their society)**

When do you interpret mental health, as in people who are mentally healthy are not experiencing any problems. Or would you like to know my estimate about how many people would call themselves mentally healthy?

That's completely up to you, to your interpretation.

Would you like to know for which interpretation I choose?

Yes please.

Well then you get a whole different answer. For the people, if you look at the people who are telling that they don't experience any problems, that would be a lot of people. Mostly because there is a stigma on it, so they would not want to admit it. I also know a lot of people who I talk about, they tell about stress, but if you talk a little more to them. You get the idea that they tell you that they think it's really hard right now, then you get the impression that it's all part of it, and it's just the way it is. And that's more like, if you talk to people who are telling my mental health is suffering, or that specifically mention. That you arrive at 10-15%, but if you talk to people, and look who are experiencing negative effects. Effects such as not being able to sleep, losing hair because of stress, restlessness in your limbs or fingers. That a lot of people will tell you that they also are or have been suffering from it. It doesn't necessarily be continues, but it's kind of dangerous. And that's a lot higher, like if I only look at the people who told me that alone. Like it wasn't anything like continues, but it is something that is like, they have a lot during busy periods.

- 8. Taking into account everything that we have talked about, would you describe yourself as mentally healthy?**

No, well, eehm, no I think I do have some things like uncertainty what I have to do, and how I go on. That is really bothering me, gives me a lot of stress. And that's not good for my mental health, like I mentioned sleep for example. And that makes me feel pretty bad sometimes, or my fingers, bad concentration. Those are some things that are in the back of my head, with which I am not really able to deal with things. If you would ask me before like: are you mentally healthy? I would answer yes. But if you take everything into account I have just told. I would be lying I guess. So yeah, but I have to say I don't feel mentally unhealthy. But if I think about it now, then I do see that I am not fully mentally healthy.

- 9. What comes to mind when you think of professional help for one's mental health?**

Well the first thing I think about is a psychologist, psychiatrist, counselling, that sort of things. Eehm, I think that how I also would think like, study-advisor or just teachers, that could also be if you think about getting information. That you don't have to guess, but you get some things more clearly. I think that works really well if you talk about that, speaking from experience of several people. Just the social environment, your peer students. That you are able to talk to them about it. I think that that also really helps if you can share what's troubling you.

10. What would be reasons to seek professional help for mental health?

If people find out that things don't work out anymore, that they then like ring a bell, things are going wrong. That could be a different point for different people. That could be not finishing a module, because of high amounts of stress, not being able to handle it. For other people it could be not feeling well mentally for a couple of weeks. That could also take 10 years. That's personal and different for everyone. So when they reach a sort of breaking point, and that could be different for a lot of people. But they won't seek help before they reach that point.

11. What do you think others think about when he/she should seek professional help for his/her mental health?

Yeah I think a variation on what I said I guess. I see a lot of people that are like, yeah if I notice that things are not going well anymore. But you are able to also call that a breaking point I guess. Maybe some people might mention that other people urge you to seek help, I can imagine that people might tell that as well.

12. If a person fulfills one or more of the reasons you have mentioned in the previous two questions, what would be reasons not to seek professional help?

I think people are afraid of the stigma that is on it. I think people are also frightened, by all the costs that they think that accompany it, or that might even be there, that's differs per person. But I do think that people think it costs more, or that it costs anything, even though that doesn't have to be the case. And I also think that eehm, sometimes you see people that have tried once, that failed, and they won't try ever again. Like bad experiences, then they stuff things back, and lock it tight, never to open it again.

a. Do these reasons also apply to you personally? (ask if not already included in the previous answer)

I think maybe only a really bad experience would have a great impact on me.

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Um, first of all I think the negative things you associate with it, that is, depression and maybe burnout. So somehow such negative consequences that you notice in other people, or simply have contact with through the media ... and uh, I don't know. So, what also comes to my mind is psychologists and that you could talk to them, or uh, even meditation.

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Uhh, okay, so something like depression is an aspect right?
- Mhhh, yes, I think what is meant by the question is mental health, so what does a person need to be mentally healthy? So, what aspects mental health made of?
- Aaaah okay, um ... so the most important thing is probably simply the social factor that you have a social environment in which you feel comfortable. First of all, where you live and simply that you have people with whom you can speak, who help you with problems and whom you can trust. Yeah, trust probably, people you can trust are very important.

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yeah, I would say so
- Okay! And why do you think that? Can you explain why this person is mentally healthy?
- Um, well I would say with every friend I know better now, of course, at some point you will also know their problems and talk about them, because everyone has problems somewhere, but I would say some of my friends are mentally healthy because just ...the fears they have and the problems they have are not as essential that you have no more motivation for your life, or uh, generally somehow lose the meaning in your life.
- Okay, what would be the essential things then?
- Um, how do you mean?
- Uh, what you just said, that your friends don't have those essential fears or something like that
- Yes, for example if... well I think the fears would be the same, it would really depend... on the strength, I think. If it is so strong, this fear, let's say it is self-doubt or something like "I have the feeling that I cannot express myself or people don't understand me", that it goes so deep at some point that you are afraid of having to express yourself, so that you no longer feel good.

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mhh, I think so, yes.
- Okay, can you tell me a little bit about the person? So why do you think they're not mentally healthy?
- Um, I think the person is not mentally healthy, because ... uh ... there are behaviours, I think that one uses, for example, any substance, so no hard drugs, that could be something like eating, to sort of make your feelings go away and... yes... I think it's just this substance consumption so that you don't have to think about your feelings. So, alcohol or something like that ...

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- I don't think so... now that I think about it, I think it's kind of difficult to assess, so maybe my assessment is completely wrong...
- No, there is actually no wrong and right, that's just ... so I'm only interested in what you think ... Can you imagine a person who is mentally not healthy?
- Yes, I think so.
- Okay, tell me then!
- I don't really want to repeat myself, but firstly I would say the things that I have already said, these fears that go deep, so deep that it becomes really essential, where you become completely insecure ... and then substance abuse, so I always quickly connect that with mental health and I believe that if you have a passion in your life ... no hobby or job, it doesn't have to be that this is what you mainly do or that your work is you completely fulfilled, but at least that you have something to look forward to ... if you do not have that, I could imagine the person might be sick

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- I think ... that you have friends, or at least a contact person with whom you can be completely yourself without having to pretend, so where there is no judgment, where you know, everything I say is okay, no matter what I think, I can say that.

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- I think... well, I would say that there are probably two sides to this, that is, that when you hear mental health you tend to think of positive aspects ... and now I've been thinking of the negative more. So, I think that if people tend to think in the negative direction, things like I said might come up, like depression or something like that and if someone thinks positively about it, then probably not.

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Mhhh... hard to say, I would definitely say about half or a little more.

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- So mental health now in the sense of being really healthy, in a good sense, or mental health as a generic term?
- Mhh, rather in the sense of being mentally healthy

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

I thought it was...well, I don't have any improvement suggestions, so I thought it was really good

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Um, I think how content I am. So, just at that particular moment, or generally the satisfaction.

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Uhh, I think it starts the way I experience my everyday life, whether I generally get up well in the morning and can fall asleep calmly in the evening and yeah ... generally my mental state

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- I think I'm relatively mentally healthy.
- And can you explain to me what is mentally healthy about you? Or why are you mentally healthy?
- So, all in all, of course you have ups and downs and that's not that nice, but uh, generally I'm already satisfied with my life and my circumstances ... yeah

Q4: Do you know anyone else who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Uh, yo. I have a buddy who got cancer 2 years ago or so and um, I have to say in spite of that... he doesn't have such simple circumstances, but he is still pretty stable and in a really good mental state...

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Wow ... uh, yeah a girlfriend somehow ... it's on a physical level ... she has quite a few problems with her body because she does not like the way she looks, which is expressed by the fact that she becomes more shy, does not trust herself and feels uncomfortable more often ...

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- I can't think of a person right now, no.
- Okay, could you imagine someone who is mentally unhealthy?
- Well, there are certainly many people because of depression, which is also due to illness.

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Uhh, so what is very important for me personally is the moment, so that I am happy in the particular moment. Of course, there are also many fears about the future or something ... but they are not that important to me personally, because first of all, I ... so I have no direct influence on them. And what is happening at the moment, I can influence that pretty well myself, so a lot of things where I can change something are important to me ..

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- So I think that one can certainly see it in a similar way, but surely everyone defines it somehow differently and yes, I don't know ... so there are certainly people who find other things more important or who tend to notice other things they care more about ... yes.

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Around the world now ... then I would probably say the mentally healthy people are maybe 30% ..

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Mhh, as a rather individual problem, or a rather individual thing that can, uh, really differ a lot due to a wide variety of factors ..

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

Uh, I enjoyed the interview. I have to say, I think I have, uh, generally relatively little input myself, because I think relatively little about mental health myself. Be it my own or that of other people, that is not a topic that I am actively concerned with, but yeah...I don't know which questions I would have missed

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Um, when I think of mental health it actually comes to mind when one is mentally ill or actually the opposite um and then...yes, mental illnesses immediately come to my mind

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Um, mental health...so that first of all that one is just healthy if one is not mentally unhealthy, um and that, mhh, exactly, and that one should keep this health up & that it might be difficult, or that mental health is always difficult to maintain

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, I would say it is actually impossible to be mentally completely healthy, so no haha.

SUB-Q a: If no one comes to your mind, can you imagine a person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, yeah maybe a person who is white, male and grew up privileged, in a wealthy parents' house and gets everything he wants hahah.

- Then why do you think that he is mentally healthy?

- Um, because he, the man, has every resource available to maintain this health

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yeah ...

- I would just think of a particular person now: Why do you think they are not mentally healthy?

- Um, well, they just have ... this person has mental disorders and, um, is in no condition to lead his life and that's why yeah, he is now in a psychiatry

- And what kind of characteristics does this person have? So, can you explain that a little more in detail?

- Mhh the unhealthy thing, or..?

- Yes, just how they behave, or what exactly is unhealthy about their behavior.

- So, paranoid, uh, obsessive and neurotic about everything, depressed, uh dependent, so yes ...

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yep hahah

- Why do you think that? Can you explain that?

- He needs medication in order not to fall into psychosis or deep depression, so he is drug dependent.

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Um, that one understands, um, that it is unbelievably ... that it is actually more or less almost impossible to be completely healthy at all times and that you then notice or see that, um, when you are not feeling well that it.. so now I am speaking from my perspective: ok you are mentally really exhausted and not at all healthy, that you still, um, understand that compared to what others go through, who are really mentally unhealthy, because of their habitat and experiences cannot build up this health at all and that it is actually quite easy for us to somehow move our mental health back in the right direction.

- Okay, so you think that there are less important and more important aspects of mental health?

- Yep

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Um ...

- Would they see it in a similar way to you, or do you think that they would see it differently?

- They would probably see mental health more generally because, based on my experiences with my circle of friends, where I immediately think of mental illnesses because they are or were mentally ill, uh, and I believe this topic is not so present in other circles of friends, that's why I think that when other people think about mental health, they are more likely to think about general things like feeling good in your body and so ...

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the

reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Mentally healthy people? Um, I think that there are not really mentally healthy people, so I would see the percentage closer to zero, but of course there are people who are healthier, or are mentally healthier than others and I would say around 20% are somehow on the right track

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Um ... as a psychological state in which you feel comfortable in your current situation and also want to keep this feeling

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- Um, yes it was a good interview ... um ... I don't have any recommendations, I thought it was good that you read this text out loud at the beginning....no, it was good & yes ... yes .. hahah

- Okay thanks haha

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Do you mean mental illnesses or in general what you do to stay mentally healthy?
- I mean like associations, any words, for example depression or so or therapy or in general what you think of first when you hear mental health.
- Yes okay, I would definitely say uh depression, uh, burnout, I would also say stress in general, therapy, mhhh ... restricted life, then ... that's difficult. Partial loss of control, I would say, or a lack of motivation, um focus... .uhhhm... that you have to focus very much, um, on what you are doing, or try to somehow get your day under control by either planning it completely, or that you, um, stay up late into the night and then hate yourself the next day for only getting 4 hours of sleep.

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Umm ... difficult to determine. Not noticeable or difficult to notice for outsiders.
- Oh, you mean mental illnesses now?
- Yes, exactly, so when someone has a mental illness, be it depression or something else, it can be difficult to first determine that for yourself, but also that when others see you, it can also be difficult for them to recognize
- Okay, and um, can you think of any aspects of mental health? So not of illnesses but of a good mental condition?
- Um, enthusiasm, energy, um... willingness to... yeah, not work but... .a feeling of control and um, that's difficult to describe now... that you are just happy about who you are and how you are and you develop, either physically, through workouts, or mentally, saying "hey, today was a great day, keep it up"

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- I would just spontaneously say myself
- Okay, what is it about you that is mentally healthy? So how do you pinpoint that mental health?
- Um, I try to have a fairly decent work-life balance and I have structured my day in such a way that I take about an hour for workouts, be it home workouts or just going for a walk. Um, I have a relatively well-developed sleep structure, which means I always get my 8 hours of sleep and um, generally I feel good in my body, but also in my surroundings.

Q4: Do you know anyone else who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Uh, I would say my friends
- Alright, and why?

- Because ... it's difficult to say why someone is mentally healthy ..
- No, not why, but what is mentally healthy about them
- Oh, a generally positive outlook on life with what you do.
- Okay, so in general to have some kind of perspective on ones future life?
- Exactly, also having fun with what you're doing. Yes, I mean everyone has bad days ... but that doesn't mean that the whole week is gonna be completely bad.

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, difficult to say ... I would say yes, but I'm not 100% sure.
- Okay, and why would you say so? And what makes you think that?
- Bad or negative self-image ... uh, yes, anxiety attacks, or generally also partly negative thinking about actions and also thinking like that “I don't deserve what is happening to me now”, uh, yes..

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- So, when I think about it now - no.

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Hold on, of those I just mentioned, which is the most important?
- Yeah, and which of them is perhaps the least important.
- Okay, I would actually say that everything is equally important, um ... on the one hand because I can't decide, on the other hand because every aspect somehow contributes to being mentally healthy and you can't say “hey, that you are structuring the day and taking an hour aside to do workouts is less important than that you have a positive outlook on your future, so I think ... it is difficult to prioritize. I would therefore say that everything is equally important, or um, at least in their own way contributing to being mentally healthy and therefore I can't prioritize.

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Uh, I would say that some of them say something different ... I think some would really state cliché associations with it, i.e. depression, or positive thinking ... or, I can even imagine that in general the population tends to associate mental health with the negative aspects, for example illnesses.

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Um, I find it difficult to answer, simply because I don't know the people, but for the people I know, I would estimate it is around 60% and the majority of the 60% also in not very developed countries.

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- An important part of life ... which can have a positive but also negative effect on you or on your development and, um, that is more important than a job or, um, work in general. And that a lot of people don't see it for what it actually is. So that they don't find it as important as it should be.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- I thought the questions were good, um ... personally, I would have wished that the questions weren't necessarily a bit more specific, but that you explain some words, or explain directly in the question, so that you know what to expect, but otherwise I thought it was good

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Mhh, mental health for me is that you are mentally...that you are simply satisfied with yourself, that you know, okay, there are somehow bad days and that is nothing bad, that you are not completely living a black and white life, but that you just know, okay, there's something in between

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Mhh, I think somewhat the perspective that you have on yourself, how you see yourself, how you perceive your mood yourself, um, which then goes hand in hand with how you somehow feel as a complete person, also in society

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Hmm, that's difficult, because I think everyone defines mental health differently, but yes, the way I define it for myself, I know people who are mentally healthy from my perspective.
- Okay, and then what makes them mentally healthy and why do you think that?
- Mhh, because when things go bad they have strategies so that they feel better again, that they know how to deal with such stress and bad and negative emotions, without it getting too dominant, that you just know "Okay, yes well, now I'm feeling like that, I have these and these things that I can do to make it better"

Q4: Do you know another person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yeah, I was just thinking about my best friend, I'm just thinking about it. Yes, well, I think for most of the people around I would describe it in a similar way, simply that they know how to help themselves when they are not doing so well

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mhm.
- Okay, can you explain that in more detail?
- Um, a friend of mine has an eating disorder and that's not mentally healthy for me, because what I notice from her is that she thinks a lot and that is super, super exhausting for her too, and yes, for herself that just somehow affects everything, in her social life and she's not doing well with it.

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yes, it doesn't necessarily express itself in a disease that can be diagnosed, but the person is just super pessimistic, so you can't please him and no matter what happens, everything lets even then don't talk to yourself is bad and the whole world is pretty much against him an he never lets anyone talk to him about it. So, there's no insight at all in this way.
- Okay, so do you think communication is an important factor?
- Yeah, I think so

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Mhhh, I think the most important thing is that you can reflect on your own feelings and thoughts, that you somehow notice what is the reason why you're not feeling well and what you can do for it to get better and that you also communicate it. So, I think communication is really important here. What is less important now... ..hm - I find it difficult. Maybe ... ummmm..mh. I don't know exactly hahah

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Mmh, well I think the people I have to do with now would see it similarly. But, I also think that not many really deal with it, so that's why I think there are also a lot of differences.
- Can you imagine what kind of image of mental health the people who are not so concerned with it have?
- Maybe just that you are not mentally ill .. so just this .. as long as you are not diagnosed, you are mentally healthy ..

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Oaaah... woah, that's... first of all, I'm really bad at estimating
- Hahah that's okay

- I would say ... I don't know exactly, it depends a little ... so that's a subject that everyone can define for themselves as they want and that because some might not deal with that much, they think that the majority of people are somehow healthy, because in front of others you still act a little differently than you really feel, that's why it's super difficult to say...and there is also the high grey rate that are not recognized at all .. But I would say mentally healthy ... wow can't even say whether it's over half or under. Purely guessing, I would say 40% ?!

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Mhh, I would define it as the ability to get out of bad situations yourself, and also that you can somehow deal with stress and that kind of things, that you somehow find ways for yourself and know how to compensate for that, but also not pushing it away. So this “oh no, everything is great for me and I feel great every day ... everything is positive, that doesn't work either. So somehow there is a good middle ground to find ..

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- Mhh, no, so I thought the questions were good, so of course you have to think about it for yourself first of all, what you think of it at all. Yes, I thought it was good. Also that it was not some online test where I just had to tick boxes, but I could talk freely
- Yes, I'm do a qualitative study, that doesn't include as many numbers, which I like better
- Yes, yes, I think that's good
- okay! Then that's it

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Mhh well, I would say that basically you get along with yourself and you can deal with your emotions well .. yes and you can cope with problems yourself

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- I somehow don't know exactly what that means hahah
- Mhh, components of mental health, so what aspects does a mentally healthy person need to make them healthy?
- Yes, I would say something like I said before, that if you have a problem with something, for example, you feel able to handle it yourself and deal with different feelings and so on ... and, I don't know

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- I think mental health is somehow a spectrum on which you never completely arrive at mental health, but basically I do believe that many people in my environment are mentally fairly healthy, but I believe that everyone has their struggles with it from time to time

Q4: Do you know another person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Hahah, yes I don't know, so ...
- You can just think of a specific person, what kind of character traits they have ... of course you don't have to name them or anything
- Mhh, yes, I know people who are mentally healthy, so I would just say that their character traits really are that if there are problems, that they get help themselves and can cope with it... yes ... basically .. no idea, i have the feeling that i'm repeating myself a lot
- that's fine!

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yes, definitely
- And why do you think that? Can you explain that?
- Why do I believe that some people are not mentally healthy?

- Mhhh, well I think I would go into it a bit more specifically: you can just think of a person who you think is mentally unhealthy and then I would like to know why you think that they are mentally unhealthy
- Wow, I think about how I define mental health for myself the whole time ... that's why I find it very difficult, but I would say if I just think of a person who I would say is not completely mentally healthy, I would say that the person just finds it extremely difficult to master certain everyday things because they often get in the way of their own thoughts, but then they need help to organize things for themselves

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- mhh, well i think i have already said everything i can think of, i know a lot of mentally not healthy people, but with them it is mostly like i just said

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- mhhh, I think, um, that maybe it is important that you are self-reflective, so that you really understand when things go bad, otherwise you can't somehow improve yourself, but that you have this self-reflection and realize that you maybe Need help
- okay, something that you don't consider as important?
- Mhh, I don't know now

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- I can imagine that many people think very differently about it, simply because everyone somehow may have different backgrounds themselves or deal with people with a different mental health in their environment ... um, but yes, I can't say exactly what their definition maybe would be, but I do believe that the answers could be relatively different

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- No, I don't know exactly. So I find it very difficult to estimate, basically how I generally think about it, is more that I don't think that you get somewhere where

you say oh I'm mentally healthy now and it stays that way ... well, wow, the percentage... that's really difficult. So I would have to say right now, at this moment ... so tomorrow it could look completely different again because someone4 ... comes across problems that he cannot deal with because he has never had to deal with them yet..

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Um, yes, I would say that mental health means that you are self-reflective about how you feel and how you deal with things and are able to seek help and that you are able to talk to people when you're not doing so well.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- No, I thought the interview was good, I find it difficult to define for myself what mental health exactly is, because I'm afraid that, in an hour or so there would have been something I might come up with something I should have mentioned, so i don't know if i found the perfect definition for it
- But that is completely fine!
- Generally, I think that it's a complex topic and not so tangible

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Um, that a person is completely fine in their life, um, that they have no illnesses somehow .. mhhh, yes, those are the two main points that come to my mind. Just think that you are really doing well and that life is not determined by any illness, that you don't have ups and downs all the time, that you are not only okay now because you are in a good phase or something, but that you really feel good every day.
- Okay, so basically you mean happiness?
- Yep

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- What aspects?
- Yes. What does mental health consist of for you, what are...?
- Okay, so happiness, like I just said, I would say something like a stable environment. Something like a support system that you somehow have around you, whether it's family or friends. That you are satisfied with your own life... .mmmmh. Yes, satisfaction, happiness, something like that.

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Wow, that's hard to say ... I would say yes, but I'm not 100% sure either.
- Okay, then why do you think this person is mentally healthy? What's that about?
- Mhhh, because at least outwardly she has creates the impression that she is happy and that she has no mental problems. So, she just doesn't show it to the outside, which of course doesn't mean that it doesn't have it, but ... that's how it seems to me
- Okay, so do you mean that she functions like ... in life, in a social context?
- Yes!

Q4: Do you know another person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Hahah, yes I can think of a few people
- Okay, and if you now imagine a different person who is mentally healthy, but in some other way than the other person?
- Well, I can't really think of anything else to be honest

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yes!
- Okay, and what is wrong with this person mentally? So, can you describe that?

- Um, well I would say that with her you can really see that she has phases, ups and downs, that there are phases where you could think oh she is doing well now and then the next day that's fully changed ..and then the person doesn't want to talk or withdraws completely, even for a long time, um, somehow doesn't talk about their feelings, not even how she feels. Well, I think that's the most blatant thing, these ups and downs.

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, yeah. Yes, definitely...
- Okay, tell me.
- Wow how should I describe it .. I find something like this very difficult to explain
- Take your time.
- Okay, with her I would say that's more like .. not this up and down but she generally suppressed a lot and is not talking about it at all, mhhh ... and then there are sometimes moments where suddenly everything comes out ... So, it's pretty uncontrolled and that doesn't seem so healthy somehow. Yes, that's how I would describe her somehow.

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Um, first of all being happy for me, just ... that it's lasting and not somehow just for a short time, I would say, is the most important aspect

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Mhh, I think it depends on who you ask, there are many different views. I think it depends a lot on how often you deal with something like that (e.g. through your studies) or on your age, I think, for example, the generation of our parents would say very different things than we do. Well, I do believe that there are very different views.
- Okay, can you explain that a little bit more in depth?
- Um, yes ... well, I think there are also many who cannot define it at all, who do not even recognize it as a disease, I think there are many of them

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Wow, absolutely mean question, dude ... how many percent of the whole world are healthy?
- Yep
- It is absolutely difficult to say, because it is also a question of definition where illness starts and ends at all... .Mhh, well I would definitely say less than half. I don't think it's many people ... I would say about 25%.

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Hahah, as I said in the beginning.
- Hahah okay, can you summarize for me again?
- Okay, so for me mental health is, on the one hand, satisfaction and happiness that you simply have good relationships with people that you value and with whom you are satisfied ... I don't know, so for me it doesn't mean that you are every day, simply that you have some basic happiness and not that you have to work every day and run around happy, that's not what I mean by that.
- So in general some kind of satisfaction?
- Yes, exactly, that you are simply satisfied with your own life, but you are also aware that there are bad days. That has nothing to do with the fact that you are not mentally healthy then.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- I thought it was great, I think especially for people who don't study this, it can give rise to some thought and questions. I mean, if you study that now you are more or less often confronted with thinking about it ... Well, a couple of questions were just double, but you said that yourself, well, everything was fine.

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- So, when I think about mental health, I always think that you are satisfied with yourself and what is very important to me is that you can cool down. So, I have the feeling that I am mentally not so healthy if my thoughts are circling all the time and I somehow cannot fall asleep in the evening, for example, that would be an indication for me.

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Yes, then, for example, that you don't sleep ... so I'll give you examples of a bad mental health...Or that you somehow withdraw and don't want to do anything with your friends anymore, or that you are too energized and stressed the whole time ... um, yes and just not satisfied with yourself ... so, yeah..

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yeah, haha, I hope so.
- Okay, then tell me what makes the person mentally healthy in your opinion?
- Well, I know several people, but I know one person who seems totally healthy and he is totally at peace with himself, he has found his way, already has a real job and totally flourishes in it and is always totally calm. Well, I've never noticed that he was somehow angry or something, but he is so totally grounded and has found his meaning in life.
- Okay, yeah that sounds good
- Yeah, jealous hahaha
- Hahaha

Q4: Do you know anyone else who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Umm, I would say my parents, because they never complain about anything ... yeah
- Okay

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yeah, uh, a good friend of mine who thinks a lot about everything, so she can then...she says that herself...get unbelievably worked up about things. If it's just something external, then she notices something about her nose and then she really gets into it at night and can't sleep because of this one thing, so really extreme ... uh, yes, and she suffers from because of corona, it wasn't good at all with the lockdown
- Yes, I can definitely understand that
- Hahah, but it's getting better
- Okay, nice hahah

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Yes, I got another friend. So, for her it is because she is in a totally stupid relationship and has a lot of stress and everything
- So, you would rather say that it is more a matter of circumstance, what life looks like right now, which makes you mentally healthy or unhealthy, or somehow makes you more susceptible to any symptoms?
- I definitely think so, I think if you have any kind of stress at university or at work you are definitely more susceptible to it, but I also believe that some people have a disposition, maybe from childhood.
- Yes!
- If they've spent too much time by themselves, I definitely think that they'll get symptoms much faster
- Okay good

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Switching off mentally!
- Switching off? So, that you can distance yourself a little from your own thoughts?
- Yeah, exactly, so what I always had really badly was that I got worked up about something when I was stressed and then ... or when I somehow had an argument, I thought about it so much ... what really helped me though was ... or is the next question what I did about it? Hahah
- Naaah, I wasn't supposed to ask such personal questions hahah
- Okay, otherwise I would have answered that now
- I mean, if you want to tell me, please. It can only help!
- Okay, so what I've trained myself is that I actually always write everything down when I notice that I ... or as a computer scientist, that's just the same when you have to write a program, and you get stuck and only have errors the whole time hahah, that's so awful. If you just write down these problems then you don't think about them that much anymore, because what I also had quite often is that I uh jumped back and forth from one thought to the other all the time and never thought to the end. And that drove me crazy.

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- I think I am still describing it as relatively ... um, yes unproblematic, so not that bad, but I think some of them have the connection with depression and that sort of thing ... but I don't associate that with it because I haven't really experienced it.

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Hmm, that's a tough question hahah. I wouldn't even say that many ... I think half / half would be almost too much, I think especially in the younger areas it is more and more common that young people do not feel good, so I would almost say 30-40% . But especially now because of Corona ... of course it makes it even worse.

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Well, I would say mental health is always something subjective, everyone defines that for themselves ... and at the core, however, it is how comfortable you feel with yourself.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- No, so I mainly found the questions ... that you asked whether I know other people who are either healthy or not, I think that's really good, because that's something I wouldn't have thought about otherwise

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- I would say that you feel good. So now, for example, when you have too much to do or you are totally overwhelmed, you do not feel mentally healthy. The same is also, I would say, for me in the family circle, too, that you feel healthy there, yeah .. So just that you are satisfied with yourself and with the situation too.

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- So you mean something like I just said for example family, the environment, what you are doing right now like your work or study ...
- Exactly
- Mhh, anything else? No, I'll leave it at that
- Okay

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mhh, should they be permanently or temporarily mentally healthy? So temporarily I know several, but ... completely mentally healthy I think I only know one.
- Okay, what is this person like? So what makes them mentally healthy in your opinion?
- That she has a damn positive attitude towards life, no matter what ... she always sees the positive.

Q4: Do you know another person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- You have practically already answered the question ... How about the people who you said are only temporarily mentally healthy? How does that show in those persons?
- Ummm, wait, my mother is calling. WHAT IS IT? (mother is talking in the background) I told her to be quiet 5 minutes ago.
- Hahaha, all good.
- Sorry, what was that question again?
- Um, do you know another person who is mentally healthy and how it ... Well, you said you also know people who are temporarily mentally healthy ... and how does that express itself within them?
- Mhhh, I would say through stress, so with the people I know, it is mostly like that when you come up with a little something, they react aggressively or upset, for example
- Wait, but we're talking about being mentally healthy right now

- Yes ... So I would just say that you notice how a person behaves ... Well, some are aggressive, others are more sad, overwhelmed and stressed ... yes, that's how I would say it
- Okay and what would be a mentally healthy response in that? So uhm...
- Of course, it could also be that I'm completely wrong here ... hahaha
- Oh, there is no right or wrong here, it's just about personal opinions
- What did you just say again?
- Okay well, I think I understood you. I'll just ask you the next question.

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mhh, yes.
- Okay and why do you think that?
- That's a bit more specific... but that's because uh... she's not completely satisfied with her overall situation and that partly affects her in terms of compulsions...
- Okay, so compulsive behavior?
- Exactly, and that by doing this she ... well, has acquired behaviours that now appear compulsively and, um, yes, I would say that it is not mentally healthy.
- Any other aspects that are not mentally healthy about this person?
- Mhh, yes that that, uh, weighs heavy on the person too. That she is in a bad mood, depressed, then suddenly happy again and then depressed again ... yes, kind of back and forth.

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mh, yes.
- Okay, what about that person?
- Mhh, well, she studied psychology hahah..in Enschede...and everything didn't go as it was supposed to and I know that her parents are insistent that she should study and her only wish was to study psychology. However, that didn't work out with the selection process and with the uh, that if you don't pass, you will be exmatriculated at some point. That was the case with her, but now the next thing that would somehow apply to her would be an apprenticeship .. but now she is studying to be a teacher and yes .. I notice that she doesn't like it. And this whole situation, weighs her down now .. and that uh .. yes.
- And how does it pull her down? Because you mean that this person is not mentally healthy. How exactly do you notice that in this person?
- So I had talked to her about it and she said that ... um, everyone is looking forward to finally finishing their studies and finally earning money and this future version that one imagines ... and for her it is like "Why should I look forward to it, I don't even feel like it?"
- Okay, I see

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Definitely family and that you are satisfied with it.
- Okay, so a good social environment?
- Yes, both your own family and maybe a partnership or so ... yes, that is very important. And otherwise if you work full time I would also say that work is pretty important. Now of course not with someone who works 6 hours a week, but with 40 hours it does.

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- I would also say similar, but the focus on how important what is to one is different. Some have nothing to do with the family, of course then family is not important to them in that sense. Uh as well partnership. I am in a good partnership and that is important to me ... then others will probably answer differently, right?

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- 5? Hahah

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Mhhh, nice, finding a final sentence. Um ... mental health for me describes the state of a person depending on various factors ... um
- **Okay, can you describe those factors a little more?**
- Mhh, the environment, environmental influences ... um, also attitudes towards life, attitudes to various aspects, um ... yeah. and the people around you.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- Mhhh, maybe the only one with mental health .. you could have made a distinction between temporarily and permanently mentally healthy, but otherwise ... nope, all good!
- **Okay, thanks, we're done now!**

Q1: What comes to your mind when you think of mental health?

- Um, the first thing I would say is depression

- Do you have any words, pictures or associations in your head?

- To depression or mental health?

- Mental health

- Um, spontaneously now the first thought would be the classic sitting at the psychologist's and talking about mental health. So that you just talk a bit about how you feel

Q2: Going more into detail, what components of mental health can you think of?

- Um, so of course I would say on the one hand that you just uh, oh god that's ... uh ... on the one hand you have to listen to yourself, that you make sure that you can stay mentally healthy yourself, but also often have to look for help, because ... oh that's a complex topic and often ... you are concerned with your mental health yourself, at least I am, and often you can ... often have you just get the feeling that you are turning in circles and then you need a bit of input from the outside. And I think it's a bit like being with a psychologist .. and uh, then yes ... that you shouldn't be afraid in any case, which you definitely have to work on, to open up somehow ... uh you uh shouldn't be somehow, I don't know, ... you shouldn't be embarrassed that you somehow have problems with your mental health ... um and ... well I mean you should always try that you maybe also ... you shouldn't neglect yourself and just try ... so you can't always be happy, but trying to have a good balance between phases in which you are not in a good mood and in which you are in a good mood. I hope that helped a bit.

Q3: Do you know anyone who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Mentally healthy? Whew, hahah. I don't know, so my personal attitude is that everyone has some crack in their mental health and I mean good, okay, you don't talk to everyone about it now, but most of the people I know tend to have problems with it, so I would .. no idea I would rather say no.

SUB-Q a: If no one comes to your mind, can you imagine a person who is mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, so I can imagine that the person probably has to work constantly on himself, but not like this: oh my god, somehow sit somewhere for 6 hours every day and think "I have to get better", but, I dunno, makes sure that one notices stuff like "that bothers me, I would have to work on it, that just kind of wears me down", that on the one hand you are very self-reflective, but that you also keep talking to other people about it, whether it's with a

psychologist or with friends, uh .. and that you then get information or opinions from other people, and that you then keep coming back to new, uh, aspects where you think "that's bothering me right now" , somehow appeals to the fact that one is also very open and can also open up. And then probably also have a good circle of friends who then won't go to everyone else right after you open up "oh yes the person ... did you already know ...?"

Q5: Do you know anyone who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- yes hahah

- why do you think that? Can you explain that?

- Um, on the one hand, mainly friends of mine have mental struggles and I talked to them about it ...

- And what is it about them ... so what's so ... how do you notice that?

- Ugh, so from the outside ... it always depends a little on the situation, but when I think of my best friend, who in some situations one is a little withdrawn, and tends to keep to herself... So not that every person who is withdrawn always has problems, but just like that .. if a person is actually quite open, but then a little more withdrawn, that maybe that a sign of mental problems

Q6: Can you think of another person who is not mentally healthy? What makes you think that? Can you explain?

- Um, yes ... So can you also take yourself?

- Yes, of course, but you don't have to name anyone or just, um, that we get an idea of what can be mentally unhealthy about a person.

- Ah, yes, then I also know another person. What can also be mentally unhealthy is probably overthinking when you worry a lot about something, so when you actually think about the fact that many people ... think, oh, that could bother someone, but they actually don't care. You probably wouldn't care about other people yourself, but you're just very self-critical and I think that's a big point that contributes to mental unhealth.

Q7: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Um, so the most important thing I would say on the one hand is that you have to work on yourself. Second most importantly, seek help, because that's the way it is most of the time, at least personally, I think that if you don't get other opinions, you really don't get any new input. You have mental problems and without new input .. you won't get rid of them from

now on and if you only talk to yourself you will only see the opinions that you already have and then you will not get rid of them.... uh, which aspects did I mention again?

- Um, you said that you often think in circles and um, that you ... you also mentioned the stigma of mental struggles, that you could be ashamed if you had any mental problems now.

- Mhh, yes I mean well ok, I could not identify really unimportant things now. Being ashamed is also important, but well ok, that is a bit connected to seeking help from someone else. I think if you are ashamed, you tend to go to someone else less, that's why it is relatively connected ... so I would say there are actually few, at least from the points that I mentioned, few unimportant points where I say would "that's something I could overlook.

Q8: Among the aspects you mentioned, which ones do you think are more important and which ones are less important components of mental health?

- Um, so I think that it um, so on the one hand many others see this in a similar way, but I could imagine that others think that happiness belongs to mental health .. so of course, I would agree, but you can be mentally healthy and still be sad, that doesn't mean that they are mutually exclusive, that's why I think other people sometimes just think that I'm mentally healthy when I'm happy and then stop when I'm sad. I can imagine that other people think that way.

Q9: Think aloud please while answering the following question. I am interested in your personal opinion and hearing everything that comes to your mind as well as the reasoning behind your answer. Overall, at this point of time, can you estimate what percentage of people in general are mentally healthy?

- Um..whew, well I would not estimate a high percentage, well I would say about 10-15% ..

Q10: Taking into account everything that we have talked about, how would you describe mental health?

- Um, I would say, that on the one hand you should try to achieve it, then, um, that you should maybe be at peace with yourself, maybe also with how you are, how you act, that you are self-reflective and that you can also stand by yourself.

Q11: How did you find the interview? Do you have any recommendations? Do you think these questions capture your understanding of mental health well enough or should we ask differently?

- um i thought the interview was really good. Wow, I'm always bad at giving feedback for improving things, that's why I tend to give less good tips, but in general I found the interview very good, very well structured, easy to follow, that you can get from the beginning to the at the end, which built up a bit, but not in huge steps, so that you have to refer to the first

question when you're answering the the last question. But you still have the chance to ask questions again and again, so yes, I think that's actually quite good.