



INSTITUTE FOR
YOUTH RESEARCH
MALAYSIA



MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS



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MALAYSIAN^M YOUTH²⁰²³ FACTS & FIGURES MENTAL HEALTH INDEX² (MyMHI' 23)

INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH RESEARCH MALAYSIA
& UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND







**MALAYSIA YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH
INDEX 2023**



**FACTS &
FIGURES**

MyMHI'23

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Malaysia Country Office, 2024

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Mental Health Scenarios Among Malaysian Youth

2022 Youth (15-40 years)



Source: Institut Penyelidikan Pembangunan Belia Malaysia (2023).
Facts & Figures Kajian Profil Kesihatan Mental Belia Malaysia

2020 Youth (15-30 years)



Source: Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (2021).
Facts & Figures Malaysian Youth Index 2020

Executive Summary

The Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index 2023 Study is a collaboration between the Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Malaysia.

Malaysia has pioneered the development of the Youth Mental Health Index globally and in ASEAN.

Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index 2023 (M_yMHI'23) is an essential tool for assessing the mental health level of youth aged 15 to 30 in Malaysia.

It provides a helpful snapshot for policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and relevant stakeholders to understand the mental health landscape of Malaysian youth.

The M_yMHI'23 assesses the mental health of Malaysian youth on a scale of 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) across seven key areas (i.e., lifestyle, surrounding environment, personal characteristics, life experience, social support, coping mechanism, and healthy mind)

Notably, disparities are evident in the Orang Asli youth, indicating a pressing need for specialised interventions.

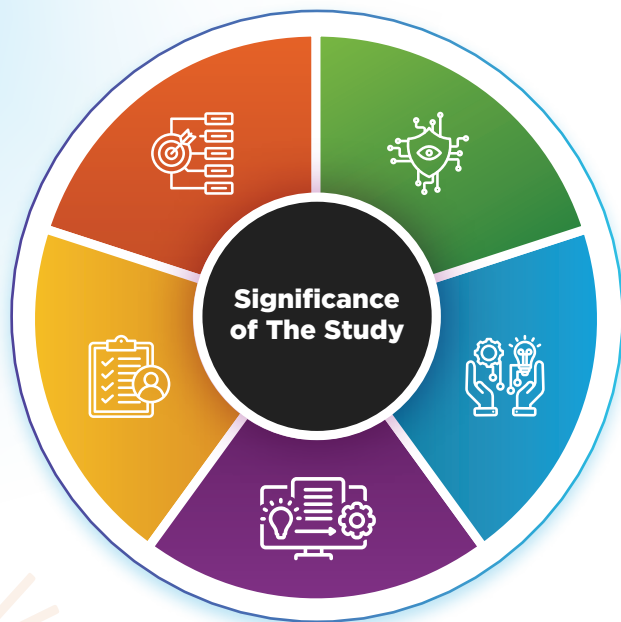
These findings call for an integrative approach backed by policy evolution, community mobilisation, and robust family support, mirroring the multidimensional framework advocated by UNICEF's 2021 report.

M_yMHI'23 71.91

Malaysian youth, as a whole, face a moderate risk of mental health issues



n = 5867 respondents



01

M_yMHI'23 as a benchmark for measuring Malaysian youth mental health.

02

Malaysia became the first country in the world and ASEAN to create the Youth Mental Health Index.

03

Produce a systematic assessment report for monitoring Malaysian youth mental health.

04

Provision of empirical input in the development of national mental health policies, strategies, and directions with the goal of improving the mental health of Malaysian youth.

05

Referrals for the planning and implementation of youth mental health-related programmes, initiatives, and interventions at the local, national, and international levels.

Objectives



To develop an index that can be used as a benchmark for measuring the level of youth mental health and can be monitored on a regular basis.



To create Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index core indicators and domains.



To gather perspective and input from youth development stakeholders in order to address and protect youth mental health.



To contribute to the development of action plans or policies that will address mental health issues among youth.

Domains and Indicators In MyMHI'23

01

Lifestyle

Level of health
Food intake
Financial
Risky behaviour
Social relationship
Life balance

02

Surrounding Environment

Social media
Physical environment
Safety
Social expectation
Family environment

03

Personal Characteristics

Self-worth
Autonomy
Life purpose
Emotional regulation
Spirituality
Resilience
Self-efficacy

04

Life Experience

Abuse
Bullying
Stigma and discrimination

05

Social Support

Friends
Family members
Significant others
Experts

06

Coping Mechanism

Stress management

07

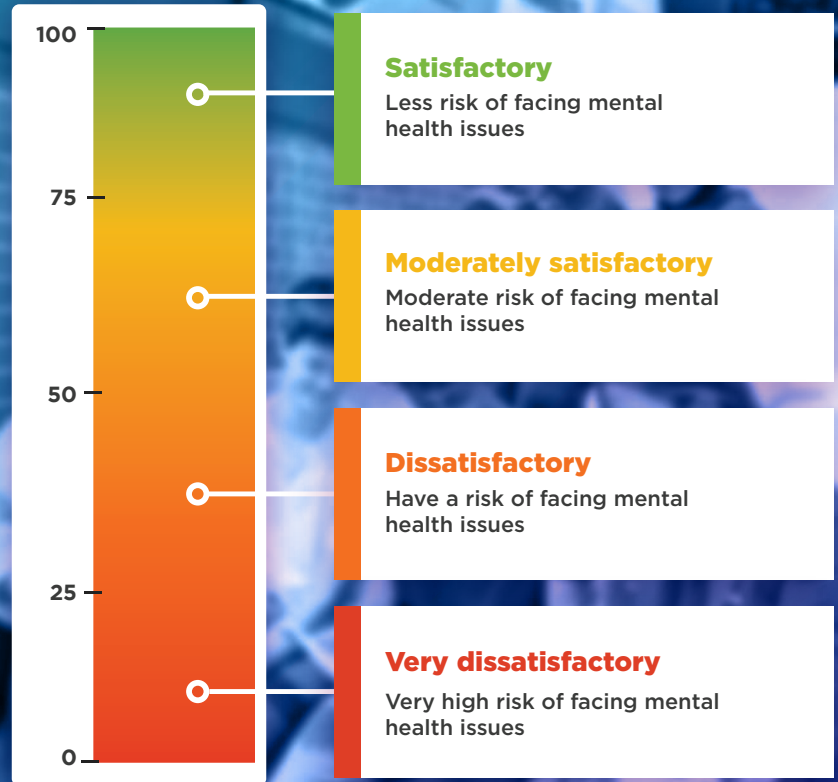
Healthy Mind

Depression
Anxiety



Classification of MyMHI'23

The MyMHI'23 score reported findings using values ranging from 0 to 100, where a score of 0 is the lowest possible score and 100 is the highest possible score. The higher the score, the lower the risk of youth facing mental health issues. In contrast, the lower the score, the greater the risk of youth facing mental health issues.



Research Methodology



Research Design

Quantitative approach via questionnaire



Sampling Method

Disproportionate stratified random sampling



Target Population & Sample

- Target population (9.66 million youth aged 15 to 30 years)
- Eight youth target groups:
 - Youth at large
 - Youth groups
 - Career youth
 - Youth in higher education
 - Youth in school
 - Youth at risk
 - International Malaysian youth
 - Marginalised and minority youth
- 13 Malaysian states and 3 federal territories
- 6,400 respondents (targeted sample size)

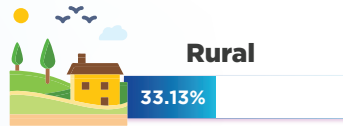
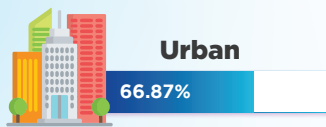


Data Collection Period & Approach

- Data gathering process (Oct - Nov 2022 and Mar - Apr 2023)
- Using IYRES Survey System
- 113 IYRES Community Enumerators

Respondents' Profile

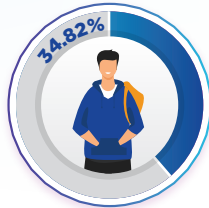
Gender



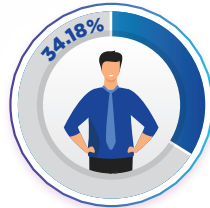
Early Youth (15-18 years)



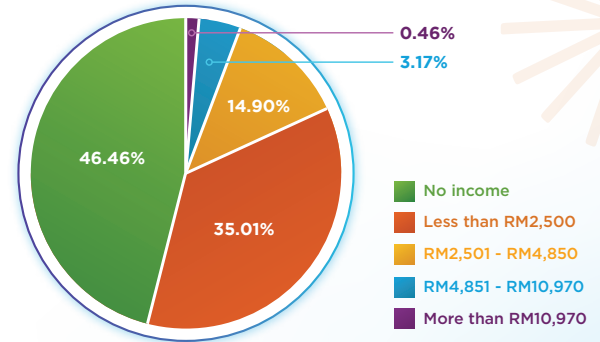
Middle Youth (19-24 years)



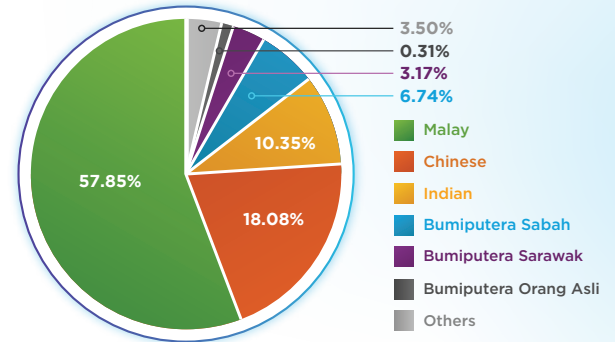
Late Youth (25-30 years)



Income Amount



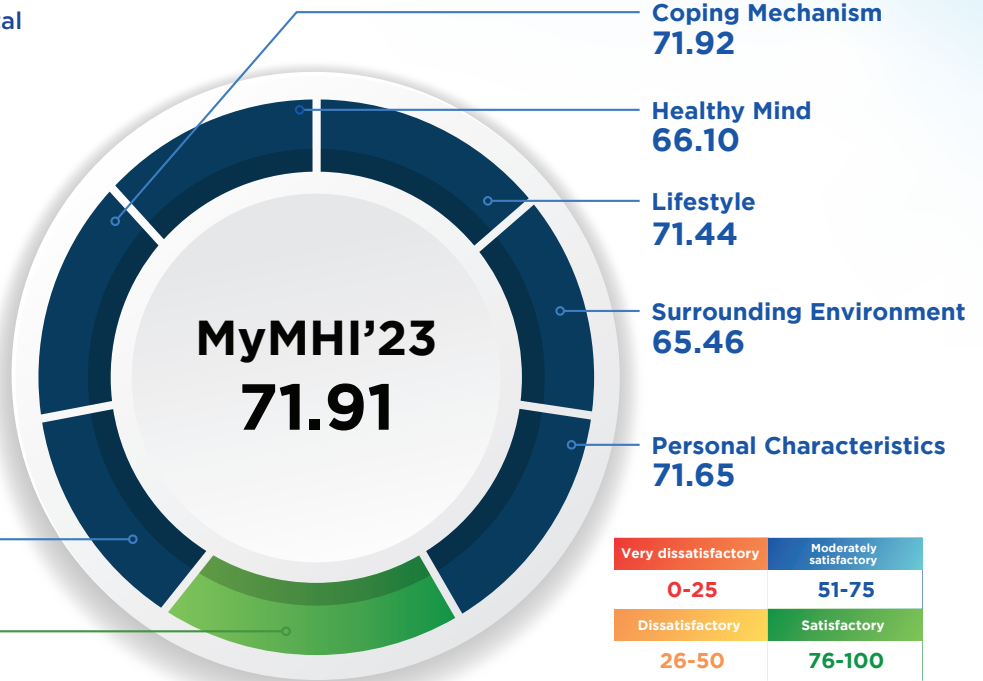
Races



Overall MyMHI'23 Score

A score of 71.91 indicates that the youth's mental health is rated as moderately satisfactory.

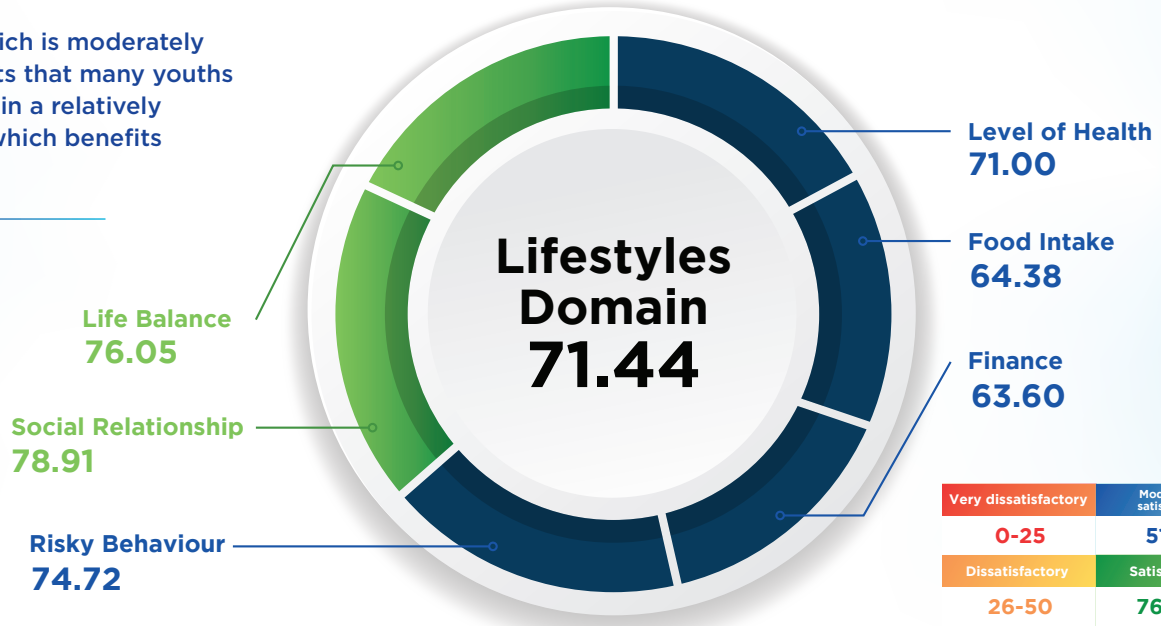
- A moderate satisfactory mental health level can serve as a valuable early indication of potential mental health problems.
- It suggested that there are some stressors, especially those related to the domains of surrounding environment, social support, and healthy mind. If left unaddressed, it could lead to more serious mental health concerns among Malaysian youth.



MyMHI'23 Score: Lifestyle Domain



A score of 71.44 which is moderately satisfactory suggests that many youths are trying to maintain a relatively balanced lifestyle, which benefits their mental health.



Very dissatisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
0-25	51-75
Dissatisfactory	Satisfactory
26-50	76-100

MyMHI'23 Score: Surrounding Environment Domain

A moderately satisfactory surrounding environment suggests a mixed state of supportiveness for the youth population. It indicates that while there may be certain supportive aspects, there are also potential stressors and challenges that could impact the mental health and well being of Malaysian youth.

Family Environment
66.22

Social Expectation
58.82

Safety
69.40



Social Media
74.15

Physical Environment
58.73

Very dissatisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
0-25	51-75
Dissatisfactory	Satisfactory
26-50	76-100

MyMHI'23 Score: Personal Characteristics Domain

A score of 71.65 suggests that many Malaysian youths possess valuable traits that enable them to overcome multiple life challenges, thus boosting resilience and fostering positive mental health and well-being.



MyMHI'23 Score: Life Experience Domain

A score of 88.51 suggests that the overall quality of life experiences among Malaysian youth is deemed satisfactory.

The majority of Malaysian youth are unlikely to experience negative events in their life, such as bullying and abuse.



Stigma and Discrimination
87.59

Abuse
88.47

Bullying
89.47

Very dissatisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
0-25	51-75
Dissatisfactory	Satisfactory
26-50	76-100

MyMHI'23 Score: Social Support Domain

A score of 68.29 indicates that youth in Malaysia received a moderately satisfactory level of social support.

Malaysian youth are receiving inadequate support (e.g., emotional, practical, and informational) from family, friends, significant others, and experts.



MyMHI'23 Score: Coping Mechanism Domain

A score of 71.92 signifies that youth possess a reasonable ability to handle and manage various stresses and challenges they encounter.

The top four stress management strategies applied by Malaysian youth are:

- engaging in leisure activities (93.57%)
- spending time with family and friends (89.80%)
- engaging in worship or spiritual practices (87.01%)
- spending time on outdoors activities (86.66%)



Stress Management
71.92

Very dissatisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
0-25	51-75
Dissatisfactory	Satisfactory
26-50	76-100

MyMHI'23 Score: Healthy Mind Domain

A score of 66.10 suggests that youth in Malaysia are at moderate risk of facing emotional disturbance or disruptive feelings.

- About 52.71 per cent of youth experience mild anxiety and 30.99 per cent experience minimal anxiety.
- About 45.35 per cent of youth experience mild depression and 14.37 per cent experience minimal to no depression.



Depression
63.11

Anxiety
69.08

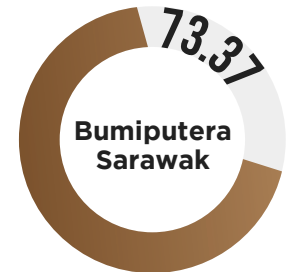
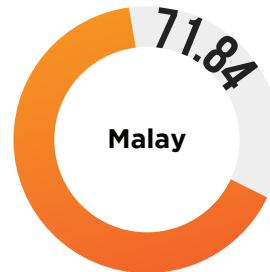
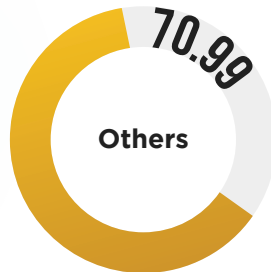
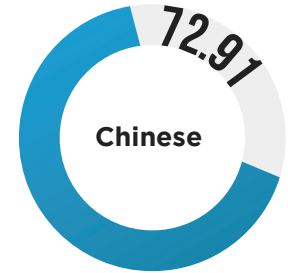
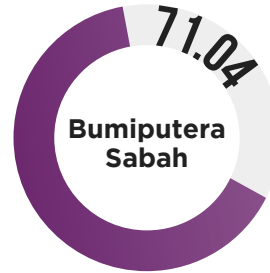
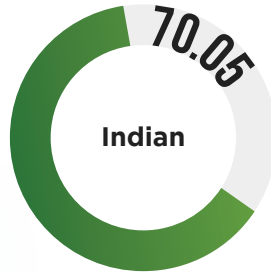
Very dissatisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
0-25	51-75
Dissatisfactory	Satisfactory
26-50	76-100

Index Score Based on Ethnicity



Overall M_yMHI'23 Score:

71.91



Intervention at Governance and Policy Level

Recommendation 1

Create living spaces that are not overcrowded and equipped with adequate facilities, thus fostering a supportive and stress-free environment

Strategies

- S1:** Implement policies for spacious, affordable housing to prevent overcrowded living conditions, with emphasis on green spaces and recreational facilities to promote physical activity and social interaction.
- S2:** Develop multi-use community centres that serves as hubs for mental health programmes, indoor and outdoor activities, and cultural events, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- S3:** Provide a supportive and safe environment for youth.

Cont.

Intervention at Governance and Policy Level

Recommendation 2

Improve youth's accessibility to mental health services

Strategies

- S1:** Expand the availability of community-based mental health services (e.g., MENTARI), particularly for underserved and rural populations, including services for individuals under 18.
- S2:** Resources should also be put into increasing trust in the existing programmes.
- S3:** Promote mental health hotlines in Malaysia (e.g., Talian HEAL 15555, MIASA-YSD Crisis Helpline).

- S4:** Create apps for Malaysian people, especially youth, that provide abundance of resources for dealing with all things mental health.
- S5:** Promote and expand positive support groups (e.g., Kafe@TEEN)

Cont.

Intervention at Governance and Policy Level

Recommendation 3

Healthy lifestyle promotion

Strategies

- S1:** Schools, higher educational institutions, and food premises should improve on the availability of healthy foods.
- S2:** The relevant stakeholders should aggressively promote the nature of healthy foods and the benefits of eating them.
- S3:** Strengthening school-based nutrition interventions.
- S4:** Promote physical activity through structured sports programmes and informal play.



Intervention at Community Level

Recommendation 1

Strengthening community and family support

Strategies

S1: Facilitate community forums and workshops to enhance financial literacy, focusing on teaching young people and their families about budgeting, saving, and financial planning

Cont.

Intervention at Community Level

Recommendation 2

Improve mental health resilience

Strategies

- S1:** Develop platforms for parents and youth to learn about and practice positive communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence, thus strengthening family bonds and support systems.
- S2:** Educate both schools and higher education institutions' counsellors on mental health knowledge.
- S3:** Enhance the Healthy Mind Programme by incorporating promotional activities.

- S4:** Incorporate mental health education into community programmes to raise awareness and dispel misconceptions about mental health conditions.
- S5:** Key stakeholders such as Ministry of Education and mental health related-NGOs, have the opportunity to create a book on mental health, drawing from real-life experiences.
- S6:** Encourage employers to implement mental health literacy training programmes
- S7:** Encourage responsible media reporting on mental health issues to avoid the perpetuation of stereotypes and misinformation.

Intervention at Family and Youth Level

Recommendation 1

Youth empowerment and participation

Strategies

- S1:** Increase mental health literacy among youth.
- S2:** Active involvement in leadership and service organisations.
- S3:** Leadership opportunities in academic and community settings.
- S4:** Educational modules to help youth discover and leverage their strengths.
- S5:** Increase youth participation in volunteering activities (e.g., Rakan Muda Programme).

Cont.

Intervention at Family and Youth Level

Recommendation 2

Empowerment by parents and caregivers

Strategies

- S1:** Parental involvement in recognising and supporting strengths is vital.
- S2:** Parents should receive training in mental health literacy and positive parenting skills.
- S3:** Parent should educate their children on finance-related matters.

Way Forward



01

The Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index Study should be carried out periodically to determine the trend or pattern in Malaysian youth mental health.



02

Establishing a National Steering Committee dedicated to youth mental health is of utmost importance.



03

The Youth Mental Health Action Plan should be developed to help and guide all stakeholders' actions.





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