

Play Your Best Card

Evaluation Summary: Stage 1

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Background & methodology

Play Your Best Card (PYBC) is a novel, story-based card game that aims to inspire critical thinking in young people, so they can explore practical ways of dealing with a wide range of life challenges, e.g. peer pressure, family break-ups, death, alcohol, and drugs, while raising awareness of the organisations that they can contact when they need help.

Co-designed with young people and the people who work with them, the game is designed to be played in schools and other relevant community settings, facilitated by teachers and counsellors.

Produced by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) in collaboration with Curative, the game was distributed to secondary schools and youth organisations in 2018.

This summary report presents key findings from the first phase of the PYBC evaluation, conducted in 2018. It presents insights around the acceptability, engagement, and usability of the game from the teachers and counsellors who have received the game.

Of 530 schools and youth organisations contacted, detailed feedback from teachers and counsellors at 76 schools and 24 youth organisations was received via an online survey.

Summary of initial findings

The findings from the initial evaluation were extremely positive. Overall, *PYBC* has been well-received by schools and youth organisations and, based on facilitator feedback, indications are that *PYBC* is a highly-effective, easy-to-use, relatable resource that can stimulate practical thinking and conversations between young people about key issues linked to mental health and wellbeing. The resource was found to be highly appropriate and already considered useful by teachers and counsellors working with young people, with clear potential for delivering positive impacts on young people’s mental health and resilience.

PYBC is easy to prepare for

Facilitators that have used the game find it easy to prepare for (86% saying it was “Very easy” or “Easy” – see Figure 1), and preparation was found to be easily integrated into the usual work hours of teachers and counsellors from schools and youth organisations within a reasonable amount of time. Almost all (92%) reported being able to prepare to facilitate the game in less than an hour.

Figure 1: How easy was it to prepare for facilitating the game with the young people that you work with? (n=52¹)



PYBC is working well for facilitators

With 98% saying that they were “Likely”, or “Very likely” to use the game again, *PYBC* is clearly working well for facilitators (see Figure 2). When asked what they liked most about the game, the five most common themes that emerged from respondents’ open text comments were that the game stimulated conversations between the young people, with some commenting that the game appeared to give them confidence to talk when usually they would not have done so (31%), that it got young people thinking in a practical way and problem solving (24%), that the game was “real”, relatable and practical (22%), that there was flexibility within the game so that it could be adapted for different groups (11%), and that the game got everyone involved, encouraging participation and teamwork (11%, see Figure 3).

Figure 2: How likely are you to use the game again? (n=52¹)

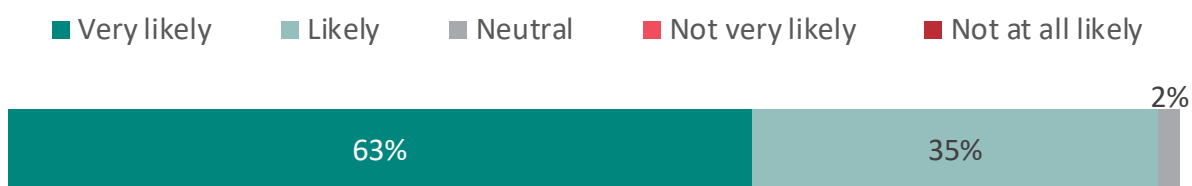
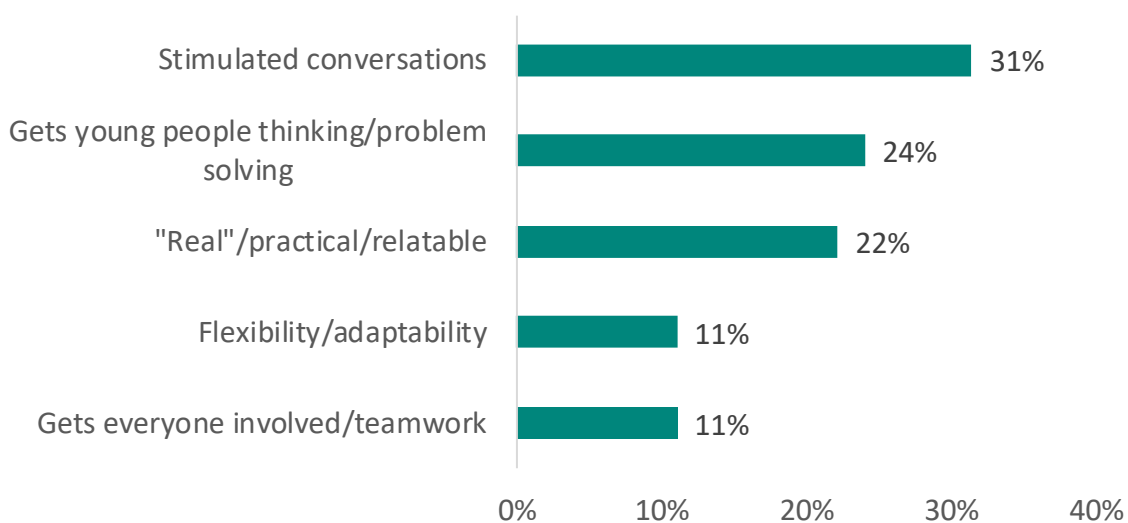


Figure 3: Top 5 themes from comments on “What do you like most about the game? What worked well?” (n=54²)



According to facilitators, *PYBC* appears to be well-received by young people, with 93% of facilitators saying that at least half of the young people they work with seemed to want to engage with the game, and almost all appeared to find the game enjoyable (93% selected “Very enjoyable” or “Enjoyable”).

¹ “n” is 52 (i.e. less than the total survey sample of 100) for these findings as these survey questions were only asked to the 52% of facilitators that had already used the game.

² “n” is 54 for these findings as this question was an optional question asked to the 52 respondents that had already played the game, plus eight that had showed the game to the young people they work with but not yet played it. 54 of these 60 respondents chose to answer the question.



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