

November 2019

The Health Behaviour Zone was a themed psychology zone, supported by the British Psychological Society. There was space for six psychologists in this zone. Four took part, due to two others having to drop out at the start of the event:

- Jolei Miah, the winner of this zone, is a PhD student working within the prison service, giving motivation counselling to prisoners to help them make healthier decisions
- Emily Mattacola is researching how teenagers think about and behave around their health, and how this is impacted by their relationships with friends
- Amber Cronin is an Intelligence Co-ordinator, exploring how people have been treated when they've gone to the doctors or hospital or social services
- Alex Spiers is a PhD student interested in the mental health of teenagers, and researching the effect of mobile phone use on their mental health

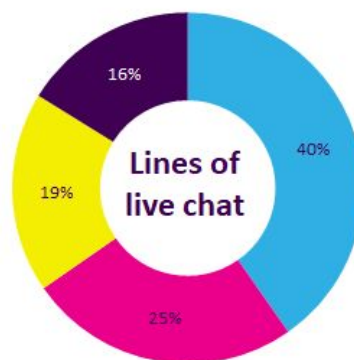
Key figures

Many chats in this zone were quieter than in others, due to smaller 6th form psychology classes taking part, and also the Red Balloon school - a special school with only 1 or 2 students per class.

All the psychologists took an active role in the event, with Joel accounting for 65% of all answers in the ASK section.

	HEALTH BEHAVIOUR ZONE	NOV '19 ZONES AVERAGE	2012-19 ZONES AVERAGE
Schools	11	10	10
Students logged in	332	368	389
% of students active in ASK, CHAT, VOTE, or comments	92%	91%	87%
Questions asked	871	571	659
Questions approved	455	262	291
Answers given	480	457	525
Comments	34	45	69
Votes	305	294	307
Live chats	17	18	17
Lines of live chat	4418	6334	5771
Average lines per chat	260	352	356

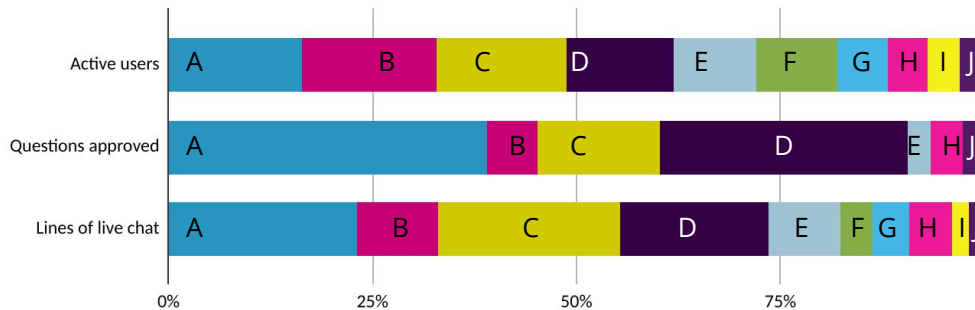
Scientist activity



PSYCHOLOGIST PLACE

Jolei Miah	1st
Alex Spiers	2nd
Emily Mattacola	3rd
Amber Cronin	4th

School activity



	YEAR GROUP(S)	CLASSES
A St Paul's School, Barcelona, Spain	8	2
B Stroud High School, Stroud (U)	12	3
C Kepier, Houghton Le Spring (WP)	7, 8	2
D King Edward's School Witley, Surrey	9	1
E Caerleon Comprehensive School, Newport (U)	9	1
F Bay House School, Gosport (U)	12, 13	2
G Preston Lodge High School, East Lothian (U)	8	1
H St John Rigby Rc Sixth Form College, Wigan	12	2
I St Dominic's High School, Belfast (WP)	13	1
J Wigan & Leigh College, Wigan	12	1
K Red Balloon Learner Centre Reading, Reading (SEN School)	8	1

We have found that schools that are more than 30 minutes travel time from their closest Higher Education Institution are less likely to receive visits and benefit from engagement activities. We give priority to underserved (U) and widening participation (WP) schools when allocating places. Find out more about our research at <https://about.imascientist.org.uk/2017/school-engagement-in-stem-enrichment-effect-of-school-location/>

Popular topics

The most common questions within both ASK and chats were about mental health. Many students expressed concern about the number of people affected by mental health issues, and asked the psychologists about the underlying causes, negative effects and what can be done to help people who are mentally ill. They asked about how social media affects mental health, especially in relation to Emily and Alex's research on teenagers, and if the mental health of the population as a whole has gotten worse since social media became more popular.

Many students asked about how our brains work, how it controls our emotions and work in different ways for different people.

There were lots of questions for Jolei about his career path and work within prisons, with students wanting to know his opinions on the prison system in the UK and more specifically about his day to day role working with prisoners and the difficult situations he has encountered.

Frequent words used in live chats by students and scientists



Question analysis



What's the worst mental health issue you have experienced as yourself and how did you overcome it?

What are your biggest fears?

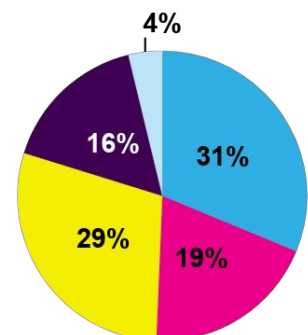
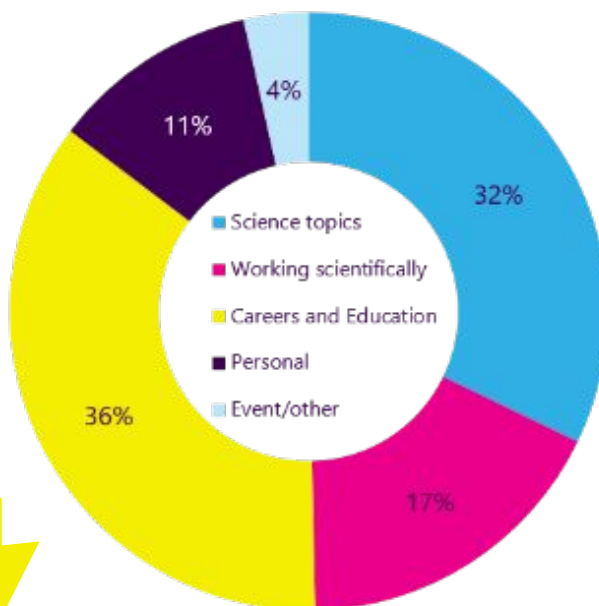
When working with the prison inmates are some of them arrogant and hard to work with or do you know how to deal with those sort of people?

Should I do exercise to get my self esteem up or is it a myth that exercise does makes you happier?

You said you study why teenagers act the way they do, but is that for all of them because surely they act by the way their surroundings are and what people do to make them act that way, right?

What do you think the biggest misconception of psychology is?

How long did it take you to get your degree in psychology?



Historic Per-Zone Average (Themed Zone)



Jolei



Emily



Amber



Alex

Examples of good engagement

Many students asked questions about things that they deal with in school, such as exams, in relation to psychology and mental health:

*"Do you think pressure surrounding exams is necessary to motivate students or does it have a more damaging effect?" – **Student***

*"Well we need some stress in order to motivate us to work well, but no, I don't personally think exams are the best way of getting students to show us what they can do. It's a high pressure test of memory, which tells us so little about your real understanding of an area. There are better ways to assess this, but they'd be much more time consuming, so we're stuck with exams for now! That's why I think helping teach young people how to manage exam stress is a really important thing we could be doing." – **Emily, Psychologist***

*"Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the exam process?" **Student***

"Working within what we've got, I think helping young people to see that it's also important for them to balance their exam and personal lives is really important. Your exam grades do not define you; you can be happy and successful without getting 3A in your A levels! Just helping them to see that there are other important things in life too can help you feel much more chilled about them. It's something I talk to our applicants about a lot when they visit the uni I work at." – **Emily, Psychologist***

There was a lot of interest in the psychologists' individual research areas, with students particularly interested in Alex's research into teenagers using phones in bed. Students could link this to their own lives, helping to contribute to their Science Capital:

*"What results have you found so far?" – **Student***

*"We've found that looking at your phone with a bright screen an hour before bed is linked with worse mental health" – **Alex, Psychologist***

*"Did you look at what they were looking at on their phone?" – **Student***

*"We don't know if it is the 1) light from the phone 2) reduction of sleep 3) emotional/upsetting content people view that is causing changes in mental health" – **Alex, Psychologist***

*"I use my phone at night for hours with no light on. Tbh i do have less quality sleeping time" – **Student***

*"Yes! Try not to use 1hr before sleep. Your friends will still be there in the morning I promise" – **Alex, Psychologist***



Scientist winner: Jolei Miah

Jolei's plans for the prize money: "I want to spend the money on a public event to encourage people to pursue further education and a career in Health Psychology.

I would spend the money on printing a special limited leaflet designed by me explaining what the future could hold of them. I will also use the money to buy refreshments for those who attend."

Read Jolei's [thank you message](#)

Student winner: Lara365

As the student winner, Lara365 will receive a certificate and a gift voucher.

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made about November's *I'm a Scientist*...

Both classes absolutely loved taking part and my class actually clap at the end of the live chat...This project encourages a greater understanding and interest in science. Pupils see scientists as real people with interests like their own. It breaks down the stereotypes around the career. Taking part also encourages the pupils to think about the world of work and future careers.

— Teacher

I particularly enjoyed the live chats with classes because the engagement was totally led by them and it was a lot of fun to chat about such a variety of things, from being a researcher, to their questions about dementia, to our favourite snacks, to Netflix - I'll miss doing them a lot! And, in chats, there were some questions that came up frequently, which has given me a better idea of some of the concerns/questions of younger people.

— Scientist



I'm a Scientist has changed my perspective on science

— Student

We had our first live chat today and the students loved it!! It was so lovely to see them so engaged with the live chat and some of their questions were fab!

— Teacher