

Personal Project Report

1 PLANNING

1.1 MY LEARNING GOAL

I've been interested in psychology for a couple of years and the topic of mental health was a very important issue for me. My sister has been suffering from depression for over 5 years. As a kid I couldn't fully understand the struggles she was going through, the reasons for her actions (which were in my eyes irrational and hurtful – both for her and the rest of the family), and how I was supposed to act in this situation not to make it worse. I was lost, having trouble dealing with my own emotions and wanting to help my sister. Together with the rest of our family, we attended family therapy and I tried to learn as much as I could about her illness. After years of treatment, my sister is now much better and could even stop taking most of her medications.

Because of my personal experience, it is very important for me to spread awareness about mental illnesses, stop the diminishing or even romanticizing of them in media and everyday life, and put an end to the misconceptions about them.

The second reason I had for choosing this topic is the decline in the mental well-being a lot of people – including me – experienced during the pandemic. I heard more and more about the growing issues in mental healthcare, which had been overloaded even before the pandemic. Psychiatrists, therapists, and psychiatric hospitals had trouble taking in new patients. On top of that, my mom, who is a teacher, took a survey in her class and its results really frightened me. Each of the students marked at least one of the mental health issues that they struggled with. All of it really bothered me.

In my own experience, the pandemic together with the prolonging lockdowns only worsened my already pre-existing mental health issues. I noticed that I started to spend more time looking at my phone and computer screens. Even though I've always loved books and read more than ever in 2020, as time went on I sometimes found myself struggling to keep my focus and attention on one task. I experienced a lot of social anxiety going back to school and social interactions. I also started feeling sad, hopeless, and pathetic more often. I've felt the need to find out how to change it and improve my well-being.

I want to learn more about mental health issues (like depression, social anxiety, overstimulation) and how to overcome them. The ATL skill I chose for this goal is research because I thought it'd help me in finding valuable, relevant information about the topics.

1.2 PRODUCT

I want to write a book that will raise awareness about the topic and motivate teenagers to take the first step toward becoming healthier.

I decided to write a book because it will be an easy way to convey knowledge. I planned to make it colourful and written in a simple, easy-to-understand language. I wanted to transfer knowledge from scientific papers about complex issues to a wider audience that wouldn't be able to access it otherwise.

I wanted to include three main sections in the book: explanations of each of the issues, helpful tips on how to improve your mental well-being, and a true story of a person struggling with those issues.

The ATL skill I chose for this goal is self-management because I knew that crucial for preparing this product will be my ability to organize my work and to keep focused on the task.

1.3 GLOBAL CONTEXT

The Global Context I chose for my Personal Project was Identities and Relationships. It allows me to explore human nature - us as individuals and the relationships that form our identity.

Mental health closely relates to that concept. Our well-being is shaped by our mindset, past experiences, personality, issues, and aspirations. However, it is also influenced by the connections we make, the quality of our relationships or lack thereof.

This Global Context also allowed me to explore myself and inquire about who I am, what formed me, what affects me, what to change and what to preserve.

1.4 SUCCESS CRITERIA

When I decided on my success criteria I wanted to evaluate my product and assess the ATL skills used to complete this project.

I wanted to see if my book will have a positive impact on its intended audience and how good is its quality. That's why I decided on my first criterion. I wanted my book to be approved by someone knowledgeable and experienced in this field, as well as be appealing and engaging to teenagers.

To measure my research skills I developed the second criterion. When I decided on it I didn't quite know how big my research will be.

I knew I could struggle with my self-management, as writing a book is a complex task. To check if I will be doing all my work on time and not falling behind I developed my third criterion.

Success Criteria:	Below expectations	Meets expectations	Above expectations
1. My book is approved by an expert and the audience.	My book isn't approved by an expert and got less than 10 positive comments from the audience.	My book is approved by an expert and got 10-15 positive comments from the audience.	My book is approved by an expert, a person with issues mentioned in the book, and got over 15 positive comments from the audience.
2. My book is based on an appropriate amount of relevant sources.	My book is based on 1-3 relevant sources.	My book is based on 4-5 relevant sources.	My book is based on 6-7 relevant sources.
3. I have been able to follow all the deadlines.	I haven't been able to follow all the deadlines.	I have been able to follow all the deadlines.	I have been able to follow all the deadlines with time to spare.

1.5 ACTION PLAN

I prepared my Action Plan in a simple way with tasks divided for each month. This way I could have more flexibility in case of some unpredictable events. I put in it only the most important dates (finishing the product, Mini-Pitch presentation, Personal Project Fair, final deadline). This helped me to see exactly how much time I had for each task and I didn't have to stress so much about lots of dates filling my calendar.

The form of my Action Plan is a simple table with the timeline, tasks I had to complete, and reflections so I could see if I'm staying on track.

I divided my Action Plan into two main parts – research and preparing the product. Of course, these two things intertwine and can't be truly separated. However, this simple distinction was a guide for me through the project – it signalled to me what I had to focus on.

I altered my Action Plan a couple of times during this project so this is my final version.

<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Reflections</u>
<u>October</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrange the first meeting with my Supervisor to discuss my project and share ideas• Write down the details of my meeting in the Academic Integrity form• Brainstorm ideas• Create my success criteria• Create my own Action Plan• Set calendar notifications• Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac	DONE I've completed every task for this month.
<u>November</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn how to find scientific papers on the internet• Select sources that I will use for writing the book• Read through the sources• Detail my own action plan• Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac	DONE I could have done more work this month if I would prioritize it but I'm pretty satisfied with my progress.
<u>December</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue the research• Read the scientific papers• Take notes• Brainstorm ideas for the book chapters and prepare sketches• Brainstorm ideas for class meetings/discussions• Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac	This month I haven't done as much work as I'd like to because I was studying a lot for the summative assessment and I also had to prepare myself during Advent for Christmas.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>January</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare daily to-do lists • Start writing the book • Finish writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the depression part, ✓ the social anxiety part, ✓ the overstimulation part, ✓ the tips for mental well-being part. • Create sketches and outlines for the book • Reach out to one person and ask for writing a letter • Translate the letter to English • Arrange the 2nd meeting with my Supervisor • Academic integrity Form • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac 	<p>DONE</p> <p>I think I've done a lot of work this month, especially during the winter break. I caught up to where I wanted to be with my project and I'm on the right track to finishing the book on time.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>February</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare drawings for the book. • Figure out a program to assemble my book. • Paste the text and arrange the pages. • Finish the book by the 14th of February • Format the book. • Arrange the 3rd meeting with my supervisor before the Mini-Pitch • Prepare the presentation for the Mini-Pitch (14th February!) • Record the presentation • Fill in the Google Form for feedback after the Mini-Pitch • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac 	<p>DONE</p> <p>I've done a lot of work while preparing for the Mini-Pitch. I've finished my book on time. I'm pretty satisfied with my presentation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>March</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a class meeting during my homeroom lesson • Ask other teachers to visit 2 other classes • Prepare and rehearse a presentation • Prepare a Google Form for feedback • Prepare a survey about mental health issues • Analyze the feedback • Add entries to the bibliography • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac 	<p>DONE</p> <p>This month I haven't worked on my product as much. Instead, I was going out to people, presenting my product, and gathering feedback.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>April</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with an expert • Write the report • Send my first draft to my Supervisor • Analyze feedback and check the report • Prepare for PP Fair (22nd April!) • Submit all my work to my Supervisor before 22nd April • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac 	<p>DONE</p> <p>I finished all my work before the deadline and even had time to spare.</p>

2.1 ACHIEVING THE LEARNING GOAL - ATL SKILL: RESEARCH

2.1.1 The process

I spent a lot of my time working on this project by researching the information needed to write the book. I felt that the issues I'm going to tackle are very sensitive and I have to understand them properly to comment on them. In the end, I spent more time exploring these issues and read more sources than I expected.

Research for this project was my first time looking for scientific papers online and reading them. It turned out not to be as easy as I thought it would be. A lot of journals required payment to view their articles and finding free studies relevant to my work wasn't so simple. In the end, after spending hours searching for them using different online tools I was able to pick the scientific papers needed for my book.

When I was searching for information beyond scientific studies, I limited myself to using only sites of universities, health institutions, and non-profit organizations. Thanks to this, I could be certain that the information I use comes from professionals in their fields and can be trusted.

After finding the relevant sources, I had to read through the papers, analyse them and evaluate what information was suitable for me, make and organise notes, and synthesize the knowledge I acquired.

To obtain different perspectives I contacted people suffering from different mental health issues. I asked one of them for help in creating this book. They wrote down their story in a form of a letter, which I included in my book. It was an eye-opening experience, a great opportunity to learn from and enrich my work with a different point of view.

Later on, when I started writing my book, I noticed gaps in my knowledge and went back to expand my research. It was crucial for me not to write anything that I thought was correct without any sources to prove it. With additional knowledge, I felt more confident in writing a book and spreading information to other people.

2.1.2 Excerpts from my notes:

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

At some point, most of us have, or will experience sadness. However, sadness is usually short-lived. When a person suffers with depression, it can affect work, school, eating, and the ability to enjoy life over an extended period. It is imperative to make the distinction between sadness and clinical depression; when depression is recognized, needed treatment can be obtained.

Depression can affect one's ability to do the simplest things, such as waking up in the morning, brushing your teeth, going to school or work, and eating a meal. Depressed feelings make it hard to function normally, focus, and participate in once-enjoyable activities. Depressed feelings result in little to no motivation or energy, making it hard to get through each day.

Symptoms of depression range from feeling sad, empty, hopeless, angry, cranky, or frustrated; to weight loss or gain; to thinking about dying and/or having suicidal thoughts. A more

How prevalent is depression among adolescents? Data from the 2013 national Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) showed that 29.9% or three out of 10 U.S. high school students expressed feeling sad or hopeless almost daily for two or more weeks (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2015).

Clinical depression may lead to attempts at self-harm. The YRBSS survey revealed that 17% of high school students in the U.S. expressed having contemplated committing suicide, 13.6% made a suicide plan, and 8% reported attempting to commit suicide at least one or more times in the 12 months before the survey. Table 3 lists the prevalence of male, female, and race of high school students who contemplated committing suicide, made a suicide plan, and attempted suicide over one year. The CDC (2015) also reports that 157,000 young people between ages 10 and 24 years were seen in Emergency Departments in 2013 for self-inflicted injuries. These self-inflicted injuries are a cry for help.

Depressed teens need to be assessed for how they respond to life, especially stressful situations. Negative thinking patterns and behaviors can be replaced with effective coping strategies, such as good problem solving, helping with motivation to change, building self-esteem, resolving relationship problems, and learning stress management techniques. If chronic pain is a variable, management of pain is important. Other studies additionally support the importance of religion and increased frequency of attendance at religious services as protective factors for depression and suicidal ideation in adolescents (Langille, Asbridge, Kisely, & Rasic, 2012; Rasic et al., 2011). According to the NIMH (n.d., a), helping teens recognize that they are not alone, that there are people who want to help them, and that depression is a real, treatable brain illness can help teens receive the care they need.

4. Discussion

Children and adolescents who spent more time using screen media were lower in psychological well-being than low users. High users of screens were significantly more likely to display poor emotion regulation (not staying calm, arguing too much, being difficult to get along with), an inability to finish tasks, lower curiosity, and more difficulty making friends. Caregivers also described high users as more difficult to care for and as lower in self-control. Among adolescents, high (vs. low) users were also twice as likely to have received diagnoses of depression or anxiety or needed treatment for mental or behavioral health conditions. Moderate users were also significantly more likely than low users of screens to be low in well-being and, among 14- to 17-year-olds, to have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety or need mental health

treatment. Non-users generally did not significantly differ in well-being from low users of screens.

The AAP recommendations set specific screen time limits only for children 5 years of age and younger. One set of researchers questioned these limits based on null correlations between screen time and four well-being items included in the 2011 NSCH (Przybylski and Weinstein, 2018). However, the more comprehensive set of well-being items in the 2016 NSCH produces significant associations between screen time and well-being on 18 of 19 indicators, providing substantial support for screen time limits. Notably, we found that the association between screen time and low well-being was larger for adolescents than for younger children, consistent with at least one earlier study (Rosen et al., 2014). This suggests that the AAP and other organizations focused on public health might consider extending recommendations for specific limits on screen time to preteens and teens.

It is worth speculating about why the associations between screen time and psychological well-being were larger among adolescents. One possibility is that adolescents, compared to younger children, are

considerably more likely to have social media accounts and to spend more time online. Peer relationships are particularly important for adolescents (Fuligni and Eccles, 1993), and if social media replaces face-to-face interaction, that may have a negative impact on well-being and mental health. Time spent on social media, gaming, and online is more strongly correlated with low well-being than watching TV/videos, and TV/videos are the more common screen activity for younger children (Rosen et al., 2014). Unfortunately, associations with well-being for TV vs. other screen activities cannot be determined in this dataset as time spent on TV and electronic gaming was included in the same item.

Adolescents are also more likely than younger children to have their own smartphone (Rosen et al., 2014), which allows the use of technology in more situations. This may increase the possibility of Internet addiction, excessive gaming, or problematic social media use, which has been linked to low well-being (Satici and Uysal, 2015). It may also increase the impact on sleep, as smartphones may be brought into the bedroom or even the bed, with negative impacts on sleep duration and/

or sleep quality (Twenge et al., 2017). Smartphones may also be used during face-to-face social interactions, which may negatively impact those interactions and blunt their usually positive impact on well-being (Dwyer et al., 2018).

Due to the cross-sectional design of the study, it is not possible to determine if screen time leads to low well-being, low well-being leads to screen time, or both. However, several longitudinal studies have found that increases in recreational screen time precede lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents (Allen and Vella, 2015; Babic et al., 2017; Hinkley et al., 2014; Kim, 2017) as well as among adults (Kross et al., 2013; Schmiedeberg and Schröder, 2017; Shakya and Christakis, 2017). In addition, experiments have shown that the presence of smartphones can lower enjoyment during social interactions (e.g., Dwyer et al., 2018; Kushlev et al., 2017) and that abstaining from social media use for one week can increase well-being (Tromholt, 2016). In other studies, the relationship appears to be reciprocal, with screen time and well-being each causing the other (Gunnell et al., 2016). These studies suggest that at least some of the

In summary, these results show a negative association between screen time and psychological well-being among children and adolescents. Across a diverse array of well-being measures, including measures of self-control, relationships with caregivers, emotional stability, diagnoses of anxiety and depression, and mental health treatment, psychological well-being was progressively lower from 1 h a day of screen time to 7 or more hours a day of screen time, particularly among adolescents. The significant association between screen time and well-being may have important clinical implications for the mental and physical health of children and adolescents and for developing guidelines for specific screen time limits for older children and adolescents.

DISCUSSION

We observed that more severe, excessive SNS use is associated with worse performance in the last 20 trials of the IGT. Previous research with the IGT has led to investigators categorizing the first 40 trials of the task (blocks 1–2) as decision making under ambiguity, and the last 60 trials (blocks 3–5) as decision making under risk (Bechara, Damasio, Tranel, & Damasio, 1997; He et al., 2010). Therefore, our results in block 5 imply that excessive SNS users may have difficulty specifically with decision making under risk. To note, however, these previous studies analyzed the first 40 trials as one block and the next 60 trials as another block, and we did not find significant results when we analyzed our data in this way – we found a significant relationship only in the last block of 20 trials (trials 81–100). Future research with different measures can more directly address this implication about excessive SNS use and risky decision making, teasing apart aspects of decision making under both risk and ambiguity.

Our results are consistent with a previous finding demonstrating that BFAS score correlates with another aspect of cognitive impulsivity, delay discounting (Delaney, Stein, & Gruber, 2017). Research has demonstrated that the delay discounting task and the IGT assess different aspects of impulsive choice (Stevens et al., 2014). Therefore, our results expand on this previous finding, tapping into another facet of decision making, as the IGT taxes decisions based on rewards and punishments – our findings imply that excessive SNS users are weighting the potential positive outcomes of their decisions more than the potential negative outcomes.

Our results have important societal implications. SNS use is ubiquitous and continues to grow, likely resulting in more individuals displaying excessive, problematic SNS use. Meanwhile, companies continue to develop features on SNS platforms to make them even more compelling. Taking this into consideration, our current finding, which demonstrates a behavioral similarity between excessive SNS use and substance use and behavioral addictive disorders, can influence the beliefs and practices of policy makers, therapists, and tech industry leaders. Our research provides a reference point for these individuals to discuss and address excessive SNS use in their respective professions.

Potential implications, next steps

Our results indicate that high exposure to electronic screens is associated with self-perceived attention and hyperactivity problems. Since these may affect academic performance and overall well-being, future studies should evaluate whether reducing screen time exposure results in reduction of self-perceived attention and hyperactivity problems in young adults.

2.2 CREATING THE PRODUCT - ATL SKILL: SELF-MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 The process

While I was working on this project, I met more trouble dealing with my self-management skills than my research skills. There were lots of topics I wanted to learn about. The difficulty was to avoid “falling into the rabbit hole” of never-ending research, to stop the investigation part of the project, and to put my thoughts and knowledge on paper.

Organization skills

During this project, I had to set smaller goals along the way to achieve. The action plan I prepared was really useful for that because it had little steps that I needed to accomplish. Besides that, before I started writing I divided the big scope of knowledge into smaller parts.

To keep track of all the tasks and not get lost, I prepared to-do lists for each day. It helped me stay focused and see the progress I was making. Thanks to this, achieving the overall large goal was much easier for me.

I had to adapt and change my action plan during this project multiple times. At first, I had trouble keeping to the schedule. I was unorganized, unmotivated, and unfocused. Always there was something I found more important and more urgent. After a couple of months, I realized some of the goals I set for myself were beyond my capability. This caused me to make quite big changes to the action plan.

The second factor, which forced me to alter my schedule, was the pandemic. When the government announced reinstating lockdown, my initial plan of organizing meetings at my school to discuss mental health issues with other students had to be moved in time.

The varying situation in the country and my personal life caused me to be more flexible and showed me the reality of working on a long term project. Thanks to the organizing skills I acquired over time I was able to overcome these obstacles and finish my book on time.

To organize my thoughts I often brainstormed. It was my way to get my ideas out of my head and to better understand what I want to do. These brainstorming sessions really helped me push the project forward.

Before starting to prepare my book I made many sketches to figure out the placement of the drawings and text in the book. They let me better strategize the appearance of the pages and made future work much easier and quicker.

Affective skills

Throughout this project, I experienced a lot of stress and anxiety. I felt like I'm falling behind with my project and was very unsatisfied with my work. I'm a perfectionist in nature and I have always strived for the best grades. I expected and even demanded from myself to do everything flawlessly and effortlessly. I got used to having no trouble with studying. I somehow projected this attitude onto other parts of my life – including Personal Project. I knew it was an irrational and rather unhealthy behaviour but didn't know what to do about it.

When I looked at my project, I only saw the downsides and flaws in it. It was very frustrating and hard to deal with for me. I was discouraged and unmotivated to continue with my project. I wanted it to be perfect but at the same time felt unable to work on it, to improve it, to actually bring it to fruition.

To overcome these difficulties I talked with my supervisor. She was very helpful. She pointed me in the right direction for continuing this project and gave me some ideas on how to improve it. Her feedback on my project – on what I was doing right and what needed improvement, on the ways I could enhance the work I

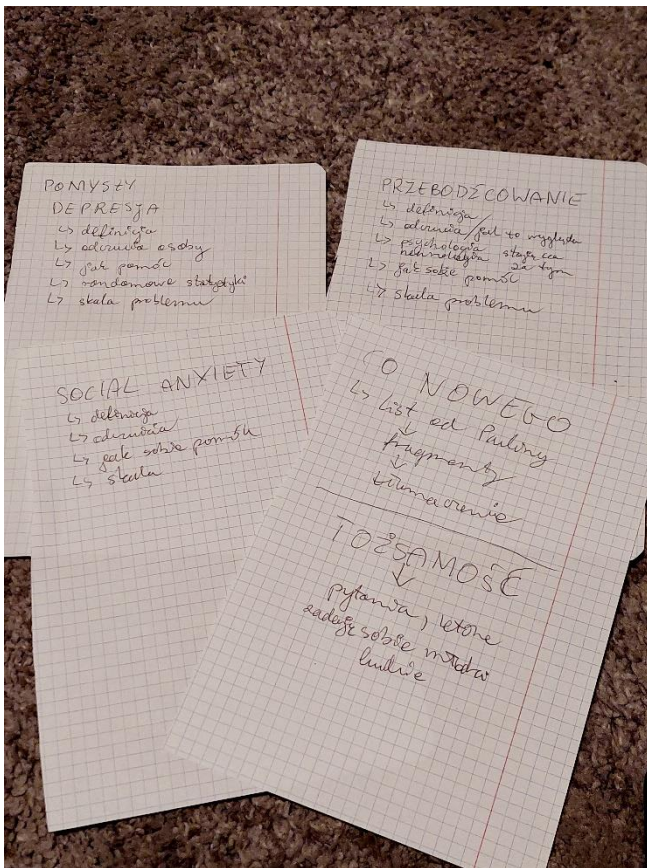
had already done – really was crucial. If I wouldn't turn to talk to my supervisor, I don't think I would be able to finish my project – at least not in this state for sure.

Besides learning how to overcome difficult negative emotions and how to deal with dissatisfaction, I had to work also on my ability to focus and deal with distractions. As I said in the beginning, I've developed unhealthy habits during the lockdowns – spending more time on my phone, playing videos in the background, inability to stay focused on just one thing. During this project, I had to practice concentration and fight those behaviours. I started to block out unnecessary distractions – like music, videos playing in the background. Instead, I focused just on reading and writing. Some days I dedicated just for working on this project. Overall, I think I managed to deal with this shortcoming of mine.

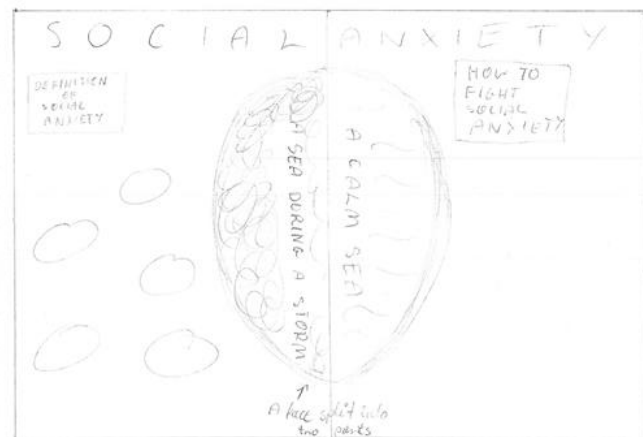
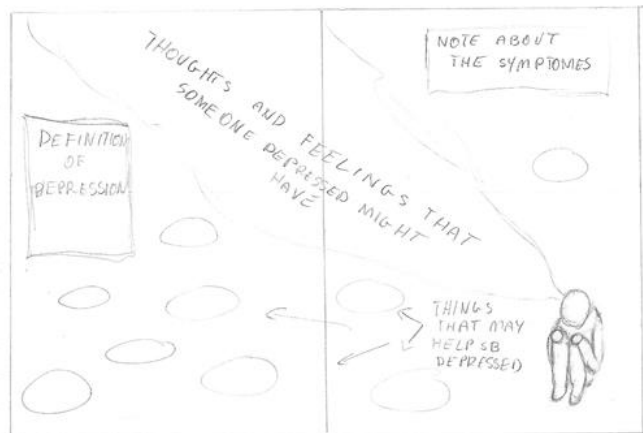
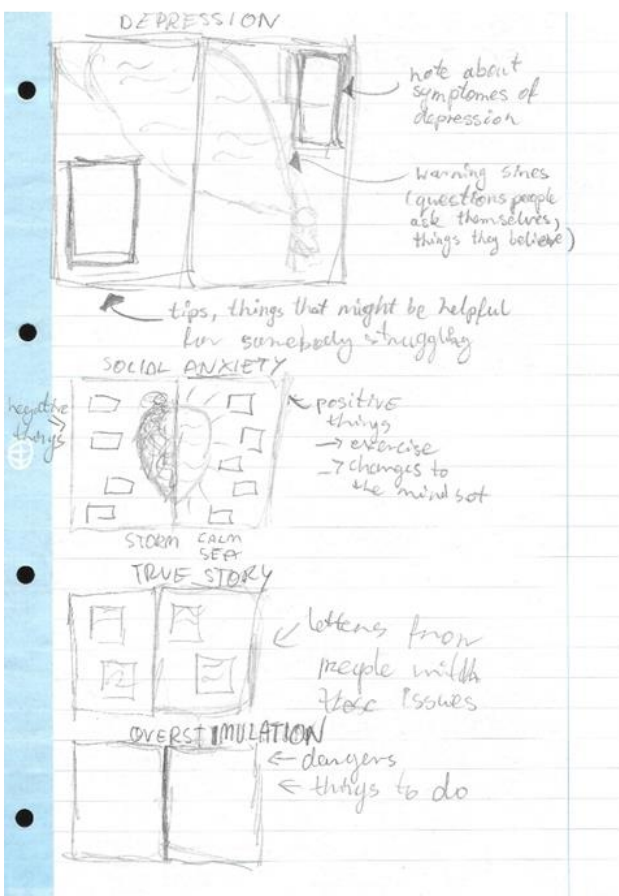
Reflection skills

After finishing the book I went to some classes in my school and presented my project to them. I received a lot of useful feedback which I used to strengthen my presentation and improve my book.

I think I learned a lot during this process about myself, my strengths, and my limitations but I will elaborate on it in the reflection part.



2.2.4 Sketches:



2.2.5 Changes to the action plan

What and when?

Week 8 – Week 12 November	Week 12 – Week 16 December	Week 16 – Week 20 January	Week 20 – Week 24 February	Week 24 – Week 28 March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac. • Conduct an interview • First: select sources • Second: read books about the topics • Conduct a survey in our school about mental health • Create proper (better) My Success Criteria • Detail my own action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac. • 2nd meeting with Supervisor • Academic integrity Form • Start writing the book. • Meet with an expert • Create a campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Select topics ◦ Design posters ◦ Ask for permission ◦ Go to my and other schools and hanging posters there • Organise meetings/debates in classes about the topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prepare topics/fragments from a book ◦ Prepare a speech/presentation ◦ Prepare materials for a debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac. • Prepare a presentation for Mini-Pitch • Continue writing the book. • Go to other schools to present my work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Translate my work to Polish ◦ Prepare a presentation and/or debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearse presentation for Mini-Pitch • After the Mini-Pitch, fill in the Google Form for feedback • Min 4 entries of evidence on ManageBac. • Start my report • Add entries to bibliography • 3rd meeting with Supervisor • Academic Integrity Form • Finish the book by 14th February. • Publish the book. • Analyse feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete report • Check report • Send final draft to Supervisor • Fill in Academic Integrity • Prepare for PP Fair • Submit all my work to my Supervisor before 31st March

2.2.6 Meetings with my supervisor

First meeting Date: October 29, 2021

During this meeting, I discussed with my supervisor what I wanted the project to look like. I asked my supervisor about what my Action Plan should look like – for example I wanted to know how detailed it should be. I also asked about the Success Criteria and if I could change them. Mainly, we discussed what the Product should look like. We discussed my ideas, who was this book for, what topics I wanted to write about. My supervisor proposed that I should also consider organizing discussions. I could go to other classes and talk about these issues, not only write about them.

Second meeting Date: January 9, 2022

This meeting took place right after the winter break. I discussed with my supervisor the progress I made and what steps I needed to take. At that point, I mostly had done the research - I found and looked through scientific papers and made notes. I didn't really start writing the book but had a vision, I knew what I wanted it to look like. I discussed with my supervisor my ideas. I didn't want the book to be just black and white, I explained that I wanted it to be simple but colorful and interesting visually. I also wanted the book to be easy to read and be divided into small chunks of text. We also discussed to whom this book should be directed and with what grades I could organize discussions in the future. I had struggled with my self-management and asked for advice. My supervisor gave me a couple of ideas about how I should proceed. Thanks to her I could reorganize my thoughts and change my action plan a little bit.

Third meeting Date: February 2, 2022

This meeting took place before the mini-pitch meeting. I reported the progress that I already made - the book was mostly done. Sadly, because of the online learning, I wasn't able to organize meetings in classes but I'm planning to them when we get back to school. I asked also a couple of questions about the upcoming mini-pitch.

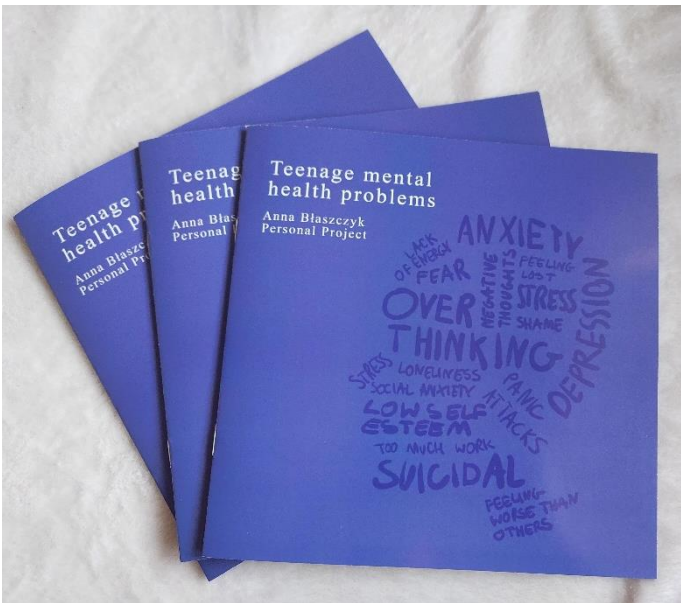
2.2.7 Meetings in classes:



3 REFLECTING

3.1 MY FINAL PRODUCT

3.1.1 The book

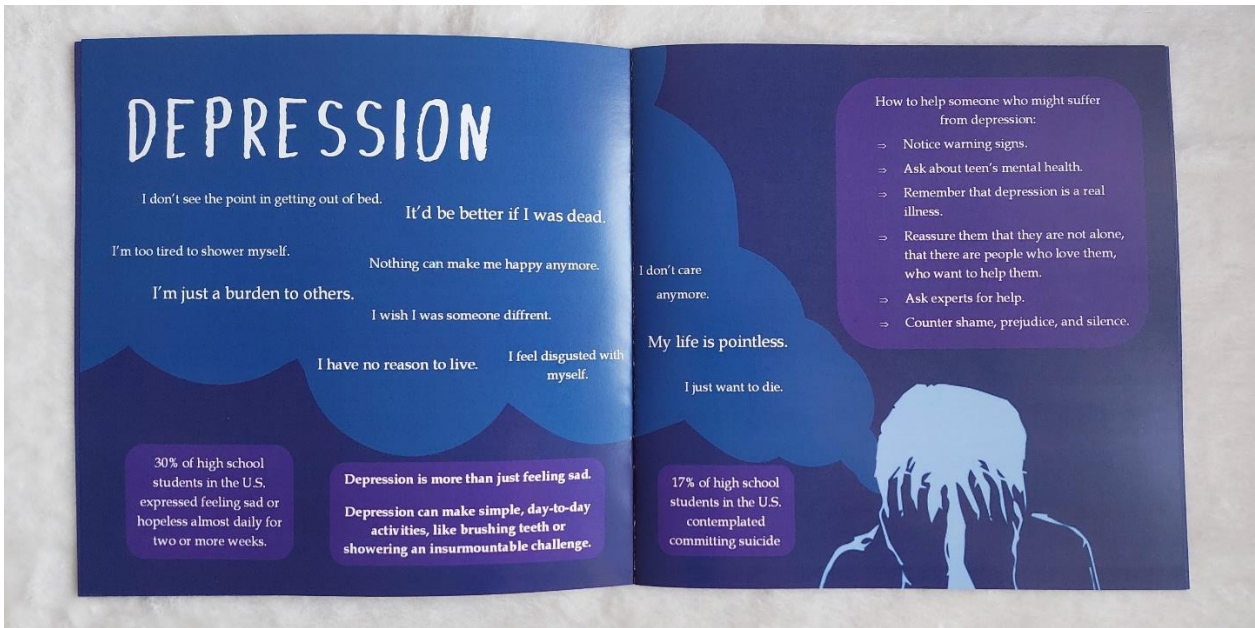


My final product was a short book about the mental health issues of teenagers. I decided to make it more visually interesting – not just black-and-white. I am very happy with how the visual aspect of the book turned out to look. When it comes to the content, I wanted to divide the text into small chunks so it would be easier for teenagers to read.

The book has three main sections about each of the mental health issues – depression, social anxiety, overstimulation. Additionally, there is a section about the identity crisis teenagers go through, tips on how to improve their mental well-being, and a translated letter to offer a different perspective.

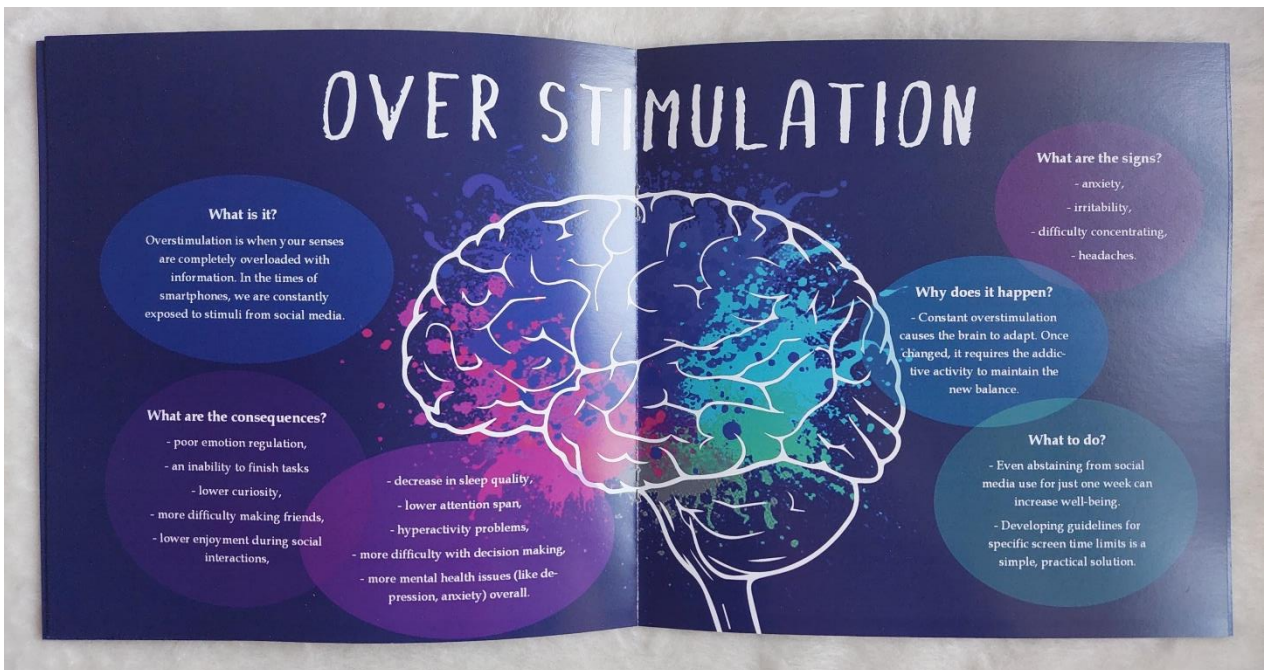
3.1.2 Depression

I am really proud of this section of the book. I wanted to showcase the thoughts and feelings of someone depressed. They act as warning signs – what someone may say or do – but also as a way to make the audience sympathize with people struggling with depression. I also added statistics about depression and suicide in the U.S. and ways to help someone struggling with this illness.



3.1.3 Overstimulation

In this section of the book, I put more emphasis on explaining this issue as it isn't as talked about as much as the others. I structured it with five questions a reader might ask when learning about this issue.



3.2 REVALUATING SUCCESS CRITERIA

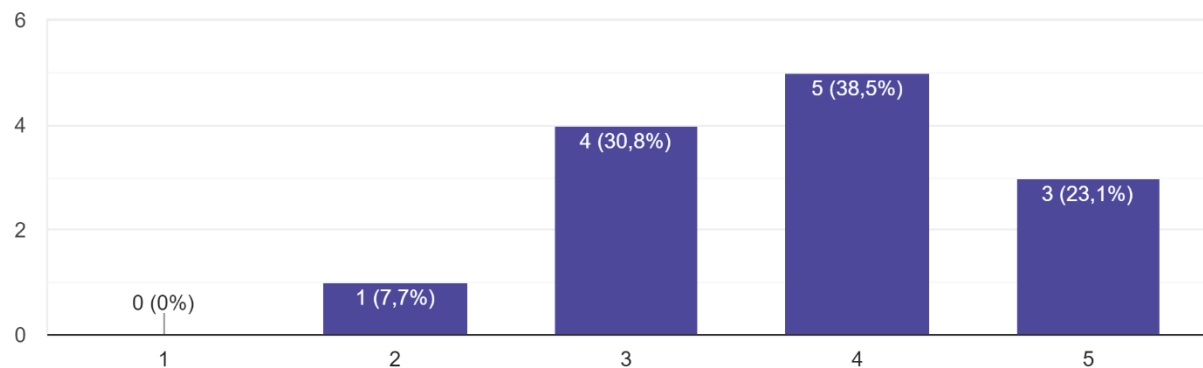
3.2.1 My book is approved by an expert and the audience.

My book was met with pretty positive reactions from the audience. I enjoyed having the meetings in classes. Although I could really work on engaging the audience more, in each of the classes I met someone who participated actively and wanted to have a meaningful discussion. I think it was a good idea to go out to people and see their reactions.

To have my book approved by the expert, I approached the school psychologist. She really liked it and gave me some notes on what I could add to improve my project.

How would you rate the presentation overall?

13 odpowiedzi



3.2.2 My book is based on an appropriate amount of relevant sources.

This is the criterion in which I highly exceeded my expectations. I read 16 sources in total.

At the beginning of the project I had very little knowledge about what I was getting into, so I think I set my goals too low. Although I read twice as many sources as required I still think I could have expanded my research.

I am pretty satisfied with my research skills but I could definitely work on my abilities to find relevant and useful information.

3.2.3 I have been able to follow all the deadlines.

I don't think I can say I accomplished this success criterion. At the beginning of the project, I wasn't able to stick to the schedule. This caused me to restructure my action plan and after that, I was able to stay on time. Taking into consideration the fact that the deadline for the project was extended, I think at the end of the project I had time to spare and didn't have to worry at all about finishing the project and the report on time.

If I could redo this project, I would definitely try to accomplish more in the early phases of the project. I would be more consistent with my to-do lists and be more rigorous with myself in terms of keeping to the action plan.

Overall, this success criterion was meant to verify my self-management skills and I think it quite well reflects my progress. I think I learnt a lot during the project which is why the start is way more messy, unorganized, and negligent than the finish.

3.3 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON MYSELF

During this project I've learnt a lot about mental health. Results and conclusions of some studies were surprising and even slightly terrifying – for example: the study “Excessive Social Media Users Demonstrate Impaired Decision Making in the Iowa Gambling Task”. It demonstrated that excessive use of social media can really damage mental abilities.

On the other hand, my research has presented quite a lot of solutions to these problems. It proved to me that we are able to overcome those difficulties, even if the odds are against us. I'm planning to include some of the solutions I've discovered.

Another very valuable thing for me were the meetings I organized and the conversations I was able to have. Most people didn't want to actively participate in the discussions. However, the ones that did – they offered new perspectives for me. The stories that people shared with me – some in person, some in an anonymous survey – really touched me. I am grateful for these conversations and I hope that I helped them as well.

The results of the survey I conducted were quite disturbing but at the same time, they proved to me that these issues are truly important. I think we have to be more open about mental health issues, stop stigmatizing them, and teach about them.

This project also offered me opportunities to learn skills that will be useful for me in the future. The experience of doing my own research will definitely turn out to be beneficial in the Diploma Programme and at the university.

Another thing I found to be valuable and worthwhile is the experience of managing my own long-term project. In the future – in school, studying or already working – I will have to organize myself and complete different projects. Some of them will be small and short, others – huge and spanning many months. During my Personal Project I was able to test myself and see how I would perform in this kind of situation. I think, thanks to this experience, I will be able to avoid many pitfalls in future projects.

Overall, I think I became more mature thanks to this project. I had to struggle with my negative feelings, overcome self-doubt and disappointment, adapt to varying situations, and deal with all sorts of difficulties along the way. I believe that in the future I will make better, more informed, and wiser decisions based on this project.