



NYTYTI RY

How do we promote students' mental health in Finland?

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Welcome to Nyyti's office!

- Who are you?
- Why are you here?
- What has been the best thing about today?



What are we talking about today?

- What is Nyyti?
- Nyyti's activities for students
 - Individual support
 - Peer support groups
 - Case: Social anxiety and Jännän äärellä groups, ACT
 - Volunteer work
- **Office tour**
- NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) in Finland
 - Funding
- Students' mental health situation in Finland



Nyyti ry



An organisation for the
promotion of students' mental
health.

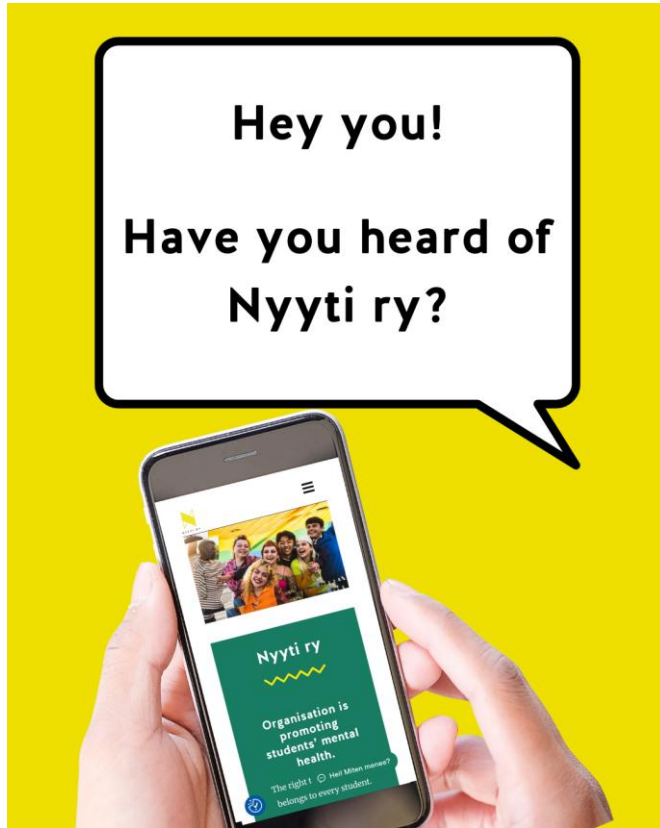
What is Nyyti?

- A national non-profit organisation that works with students' mental health in the social and health sector. Also has connections to the youth sector.
- **Nyyti's purpose is to promote students' mental health and ability to study.**
- Low-threshold support and activities for higher education students, where students receive support from professionals and peers for life's challenges.



What is Nyyti?

- Founded in 1984 by university students in Helsinki.
- Seven member organisations: national student organisations SYL and SAMOK, Student Unions HYY and AYY and other organisations MIELI ry, YTHS and HTO.
- The people of Nyyti
 - Number of paid staff: approx. 13
 - Number of student volunteers: approx. 100



What do we do?

We promote and support mental health of students in higher education.

We offer:

- Professional individual support
- Peer support groups
- Coaching for finding direction and clarifying goals related to working life and career
- Opportunities of volunteering
- 'Students' Living Room On Nyyti's Discord – informal discussion in Finnish and in English.
- Information about mental health, webinars etc.
- Societal advocacy



Support and Activities ▾

Groups

Online Courses and Tests

NyytiCoaching

Students' Mental Health Week

Stories

Our 2025 in numbers

- Activities for students
 - 704 activities
 - 9884 interactions
 - 6419 participants
- Expert activities
 - 123 expert advocacy activities, involving 2614 interactions
 - 130 collaboration meetings, involving 587 interactions
- 60 media mentions
- 17 press releases, statements, and opinion pieces
- 14 meetings with decision-makers and key influencers

Nyyti's mental health services

Atte Rimppi

Nyyti's services in general

- The focus of our services is on preventive work.
- The purpose of interventions is to prevent problems from escalating
- In individual counseling, the client is met 1–3 times, depending on the client's wishes
- The groups have 6–9 group sessions
- Groups are segmented for specific audiences
- The content of the group sessions is somewhat similar regardless of the group, as their purpose is to strengthen mental health
- All our activities are free of charge for students.
- To participate in our activities, you do not need a referral, crisis or diagnosis, the desire to discuss is enough.

Individual counseling

- In individual counseling, the aim is to focus on one problem that the student has. Let's offer discussion support for that and look at the matter together from different angles.
- Topics that came up in individual counseling: anxiety, pressure to perform, overload, social anxiety
- Individual counselings at Nyyti are conducted by experts and trained volunteers. The role of the volunteer is to be a peer for the student seeking help

Group activities

- Nyyti has six peer groups and two Mindfulness groups
- The topics of the groups are loneliness, social anxiety, minority stress, men's mental health, rainbow loneliness, creating hope in the midst of mental health challenges.
- The groups are led by Nyyti's employees. They last 6–9 weeks. A maximum of eight students are admitted to one group. Often there are 5–8 students in groups.
- The groups can be accessed through the Surveypal form by registering. After that, an initial discussion is held with each group member, where the student's situation is mapped out and the aim of the group is introduced.

The approach behind the support discussion and the groups

- Our experts use a wide range of different approaches when conducting individual counseling or peersupport groups.
- They include, for example; acceptance and commitment therapy, resource-based approach, cognitive therapy, solution-oriented therapy. Etc.
- The purpose of these is to prevent mental health disorders from becoming worse.
- Our purpose is to be customer-oriented. We want to create a feeling for students to be heard and seen.

How are Nyyti's mental health services different from public mental health services?

- Nyyti's services are free of charge, and you do not need a diagnosis, referral or crisis. The desire to talk is enough
- Nyyti's services can be a place to visit when queuing for public mental health services.
- In Nyyti's services, you can clarify your thoughts and get help for an acute problem, after which it may be easier to seek further help
- Nyyti's services, e.g. Peer groups can be used to support therapy if you want to talk about minority stress, the special aspects of men's mental health or loneliness with others who have the same experiences.

To be continued

- Nyyti's mental health services can be accessed quickly, in 1–2 weeks. It is much faster than in the public sector. In this way, NGO's support mental health work carried out in the public sector. You can get to our services even if you have to queue elsewhere. This is important for prevention point of view.
- The public and non-governmental sectors support each other and cooperate for the mental health of Finns.

Jännän Äärellä -peer support groups

Case example of dealing with social anxiety in an NGO

In a nutshell

- For students aged 18–35 who suffer from social anxiety or anxiety
- Duration: six two-hour group sessions
- Based on the ACT method
- The group is divided into two parts: Psychological flexibility and exposures
- The group meets face-to-face
- There are two instructors in the group

What do we do in the groups?

- The groups practice increasing psychological flexibility to make it easier to act in anxious situations. The groups are based on the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy framework, where the idea is to work towards the kind of life you want to live based on your own values. In practice, this means practicing that social anxiety would be in the back seat in challenging situations and that you would mostly control your own thoughts and feelings in those situations.

What do we do in the groups?

- The focus of the Jännän äärellä groups is discussion and the exchange of ideas. Together with other peers and instructors, the goal is to increase psychological flexibility through ACT-based exercises, followed by short and gentle exposures from the third group session onwards (starting from 2–5 minutes long). The aim is to create new ways of understanding and being in exciting situations.

Questions and discussion

And after that: office tour!

Nyyti ry: volunteering and online tools

Sanni Lehtinen

Volunteering

- For students
 - Individual support discussions
 - Mental health activist group Roihu
 - Project courses
- Other
 - NyytiCoaching with professional pro bono coaches
 - Mindfulness activities with pro bono coach

Online courses and tools 1/3

- **Mind matters - Online course**

- Online course offers tools and insights to help you promote both your own mental health and that of your fellow students.
- www.mindmatters.fi



MIND MATTERS
ONLINE COURSE

Online Courses and Tools 2/3

- **Learn Life Skills – Self-help Course**
 - An online course that helps you find ways to strengthen your well-being, coping, self-care and self-awareness.
 - <https://www.hyvakysymys.fi/en/course/learn-life-skills-self-help-course/>
- **Help for Loneliness Online Tool – in Finnish**
 - Material developed with students that provides information, peer support, video and audio content, and exercises for dealing with loneliness.
 - <https://apuayksinaisyteen.fi/>



Online Courses and Tools 3/3



- **The Eco-Crisis, Our Future and Mental Health Online Course**
 - Information and tools for strengthening environmental emotions and mental health, as well as practical exercises to promote the well-being and functional capacity of individuals and communities.
 - <https://www.nyyti.fi/en/the-eco-crisis-our-future-and-mental-health-online-course/>

Help and Support for Men's Mental Health Online Tool – in Finnish

- An online tool that provides information on men's well-being and challenges, as well as practical exercises and methods to support mental health and independent thinking.
- <https://miestenmielenterveys.fi/>



Other ongoing Projects in Nyyti

- **QueerMind – Promoting the Mental Health of LGBTQIA+ students**
 - The aim of the project is to support the mental well-being of LGBTQIA+ higher education students, increase knowledge about the effects of minority stress, and find ways to improve LGBTQIA+ friendliness together with the higher education community.
- **Compassion Mentoring for Postgraduate Students**
 - The aim of the project is to support the well-being and sense of community of students completing their doctoral studies by strengthening compassion skills and a more compassionate operating culture.



Current situation in Finland: NGOs & students' mental health

Sanni Lehtinen

NGOs in Finland

- There are over 100 000 non-governmental organisations in Finland, most of them are very small and based entirely on voluntary work.
 - E.g. local sports clubs.
- Between 700 and 800 professionally run social and health – sector NGOs get funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
 - Organisations for mental health, diseases and disabilities, family work, elderly people, etc.

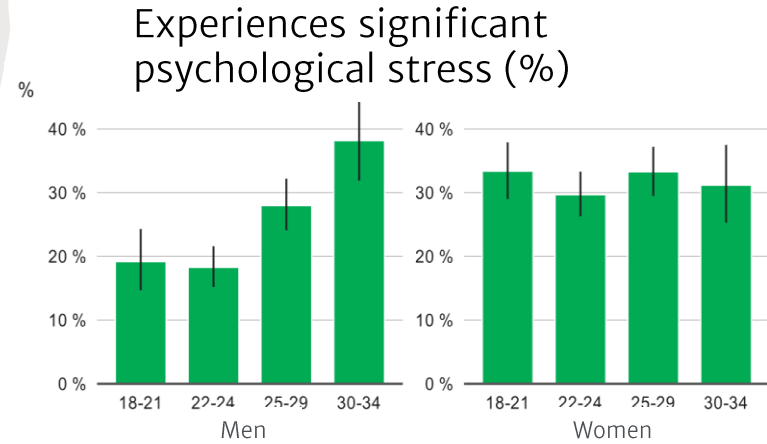
Funding of the NGOs

- The funding from the state for the NGOs is part of political decision making and under political debate.
- In 2024 the funding from the state for the whole sector was €384M and by 2027 the funding will be gradually decreased to €252M.
 - Even bigger cuts might be decided next week, when our government is having budget frame discussions.
- NGOs need to find new funding, for example from foundations, private donations, companies, etc.
- Nyyti's annual budget: approximately €1.2 million
 - **Approx. 93% of income comes from STEA grants (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)**, approx. 5% from own fundraising (donations), and approx. 2% from other grants (foundations).



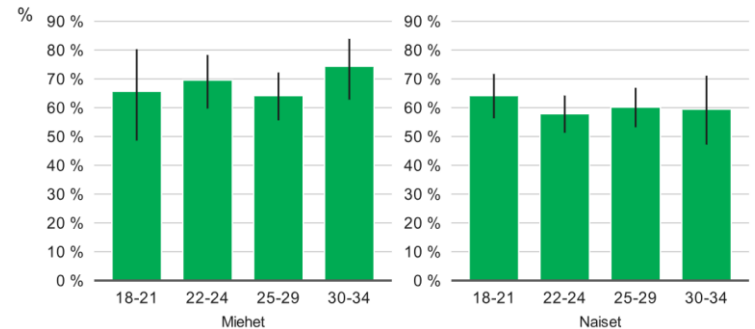
HE students' mental health

- How are students doing nowadays according to [The Finnish Student Health and Wellbeing Survey \(KOTT\) 2024](#)
 - 29 % experiences significant psychological stress and 34 % of students had social anxiety
 - Two out of three felt they had received insufficient mental health services from student health care
- In our experience students are
 - overworked (studies, job, social life, exercise, family, self-care)
 - anxious about the future (getting an education, future employment, monthly income, global politics, eco crisis)
 - lonely (distance learning, social anxiety)
 - and there is not enough resources to help everyone on time



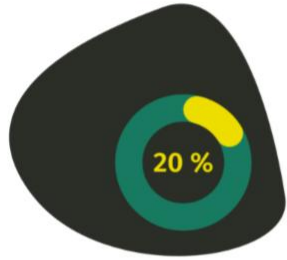
Lähde: THL, KOTT -tutkimus 2024

Received insufficient mental health services (%)



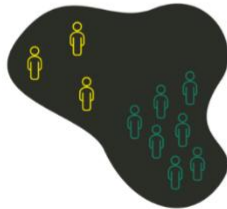
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Higher education students' mental health in Finland



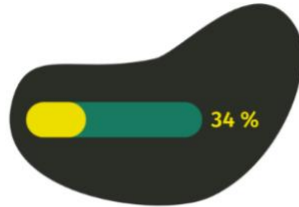
One in five students experiences harmful loneliness

One in five higher education students (20 %) felt lonely either fairly often or constantly (KOTT 2024).



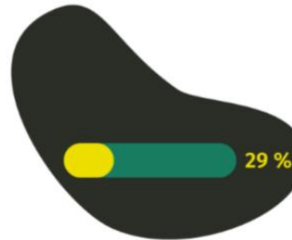
One third of students do not feel they belong to any study-related group

34 % of higher education students do not feel that they belong to any study-related group (KOTT 2024).



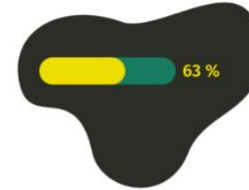
One in three students experiences social anxiety

One third (34 %) of higher education students experience social anxiety (KOTT 2024).



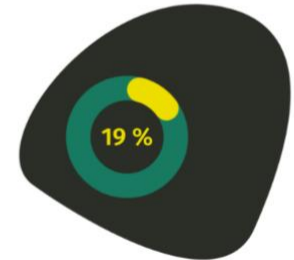
Almost a third of students are experiencing mental strain

Three out of ten (29 %) higher education students are mentally strained. This strain is clinically significant. (KOTT 2024.)



Well over half of students feel they are not receiving the mental health services they need

Almost two out of three (63 %) higher education students who needed mental health services felt that they did not receive adequate services (KOTT 2024).



One in five students feels that their income is very limited or uncertain

One in five (19 %) higher education students feel that their income is very limited or uncertain. Nearly a quarter (24 %) have been afraid of running out of food before they have money to buy more. (KOTT 2024.)

More statistics

- 85% of invalidity pensions for people under 30 were granted on the basis of mental health disorders (ETK 15.1.2026)
 - The most common cause is depression, but psychotic disorders also account for a significant proportion.
- Almost one in three recipients of sickness allowance received it on the basis of a mental health disorder (Kela, 22.9.2025).
- Mental health-related sick leave among students, particularly due to depression, has increased more than among other working people (Kela, 21.5.2025)

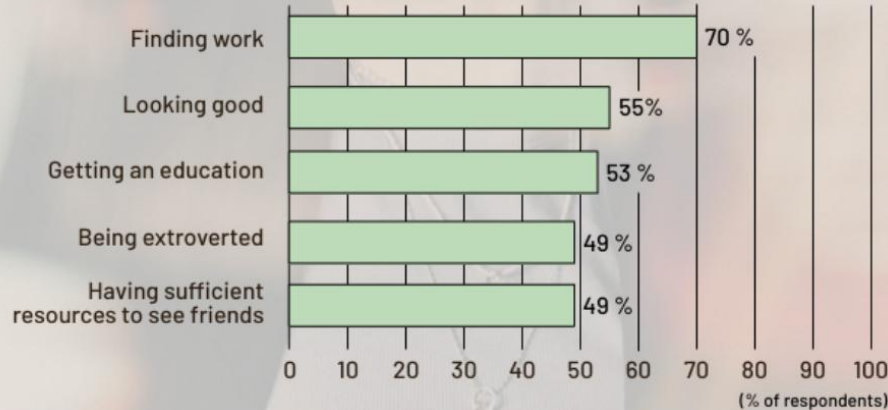
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FAITH IN THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD HAS COLLAPSED

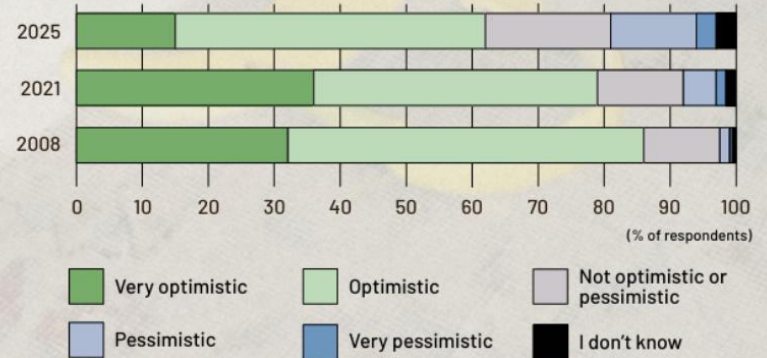
Only 17% of young people are optimistic about the future of the world, whereas in 2021 the result was 39%. For the first time ever, around 50% of young people are pessimistic about the future of the world.



"DO YOU FEEL PRESSURE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING ISSUES?"



"HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR OWN FUTURE?"



What kind of support students would need?

- [Mental health barometer 2025](#): How well certain types of services help with mental health?
 - 92 % said counselling (or other discussion based support), 84 % peer support, 82 % mental health organisations
 - Nyyti offers all of the above
- Experience of our volunteers: students want to be heard and listened, they want to feel connected to others and get help on time (not in half a year)

Why is Nyyti's work important to students?

(thoughts from our volunteers)

Easily accessible individual support

Information and courses about mental health

Peer support

Societal influencing in students' mental health field

Helps develop mental health skills

A chance to try different kind of worktasks as a volunteer

Community & Participation

Internship possibilities

→ looks good in CV and helps with employment in the future

→ promote agency and self-efficacy

Promotes equality and inclusivity for all students

Services are free for students

→ acts of kindness lead to more happiness



Questions and discussion

THANK YOU

Let's stay in touch!

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**Thank you for
your attention!**



NYTYI RY

**INFORMATION,
SUPPORT, ACTIVITIES
FOR STUDENTS'
MENTAL HEALTH**

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