

STudent Experience in the Pandemic: STEP towards Mental Health and Well-Being. Preliminary Results for Week 5 and 6 (06 March - 19 March)

J. Fritz, J. Stochl, J. Galante, B. Widmer, C. Allen, N. Acton, P. B. Jones, T. J. Ford

27 March 2021

Please note, this report uses preliminary, raw data, and has not been peer-reviewed. This report should therefore be treated as initial snapshot and may need amendment.

In total 1759 students of the University of Cambridge took part in the STEP survey (of note, this excludes around 200 students for whom we have no extracted data yet, due to the fact that they reside in different time zones and their data first needs to be put on the same time scale), spread across 31 Colleges. In this report we look at the data of

1. all those 1759 students (section “consecutive sample”), and
2. the longitudinal subset of students who have started taking part in the first two weeks of the study, so that the report is directly comparable to our previous two reports (section “longitudinal sample”).

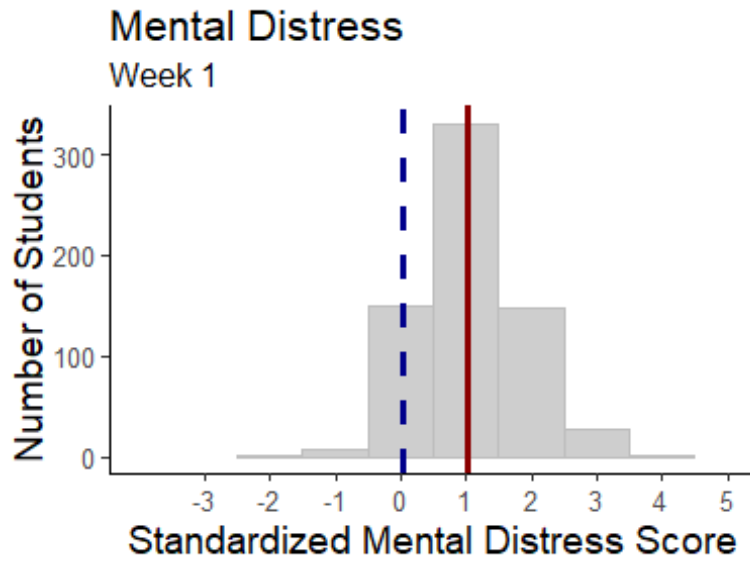
1: Consecutive Sample

1.1: Participation

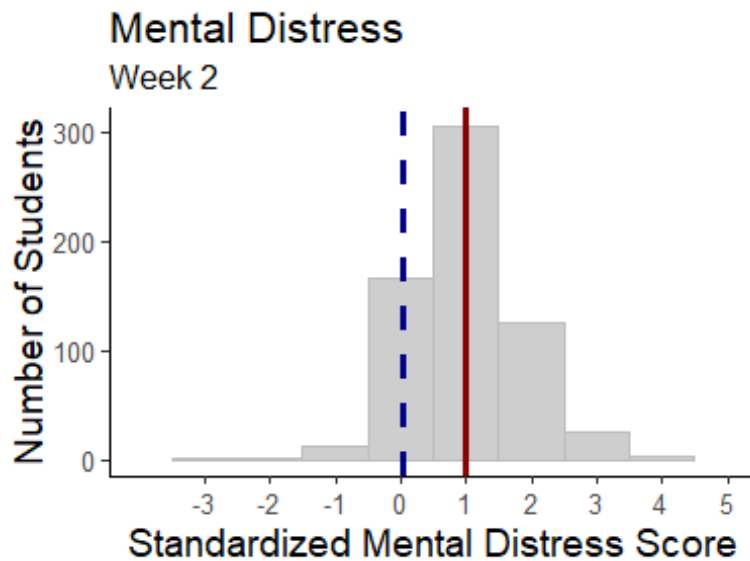
Of the consecutive sample of 1759 students, 1243 are female, 491 are male, and 25 preferred not to say.

1.2: Weekly mental distress

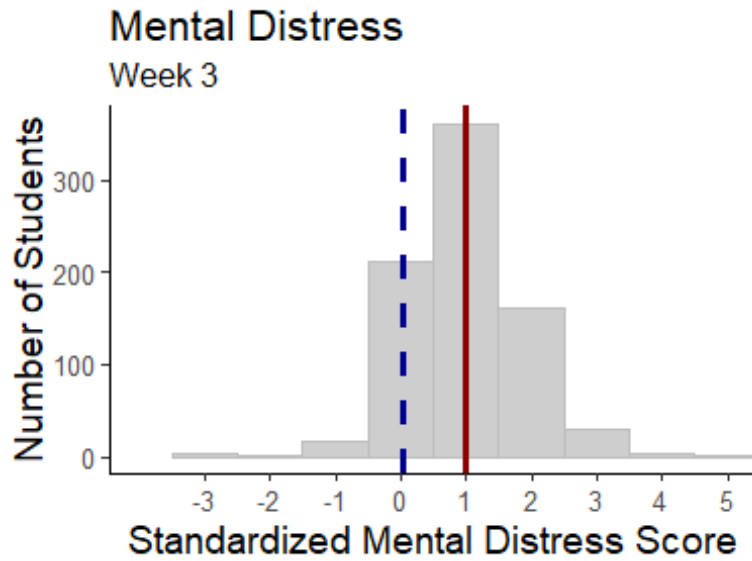
The first impression based on STEP data from week 1 to 4 was that Cambridge students seem to experience more mental distress than population representative young people before the COVID-19 pandemic. The same pattern seems to hold in week 5 and 6. This is illustrated in Figure 1 to 6, where the solid red line indicates the average mental distress score of the ‘consecutive’ sample of Cambridge students and the dashed blue line indicates the average mental distress score of the population representative young people before the pandemic.



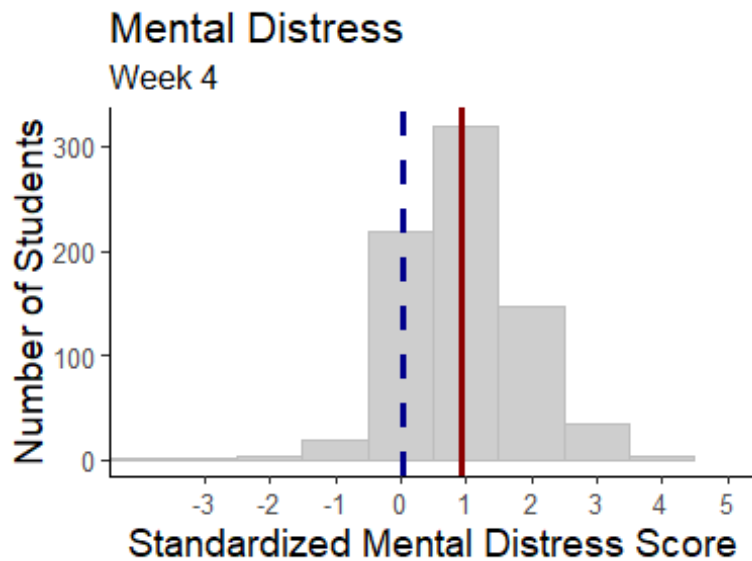
Cambridge students' mean score = 1.04 (standard deviation = 0.8, n = 664), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



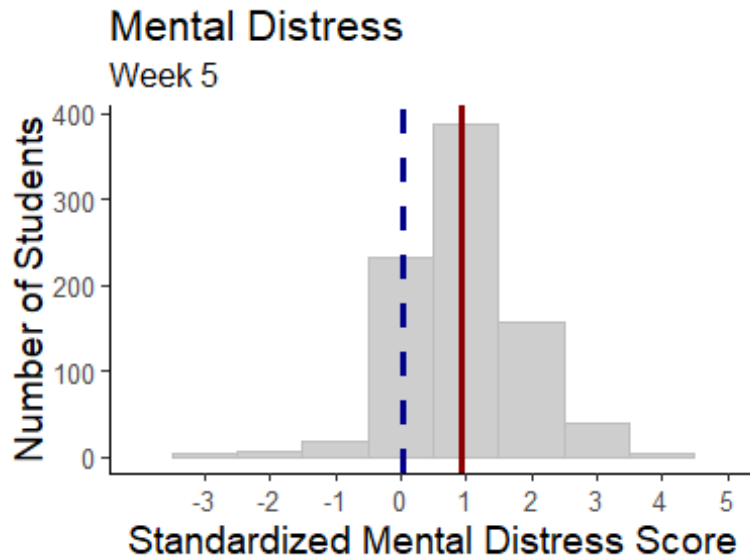
Cambridge students' mean score = 1 (standard deviation = 0.86, n = 644), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



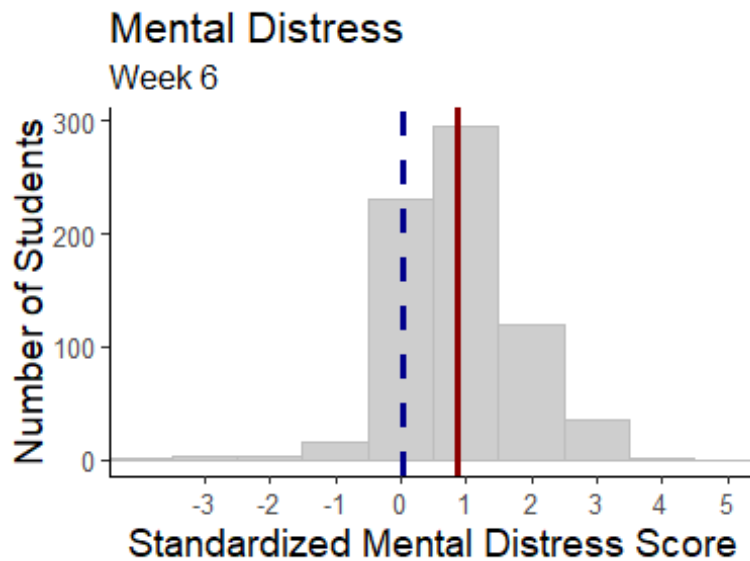
Cambridge students' mean score = 0.98 (standard deviation = 0.88, n = 790), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.94 (standard deviation = 0.9, n = 747), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.93 (standard deviation = 0.94, n = 848), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.86 (standard deviation = 0.95, n = 707), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).

1.3: Daily experience tracking

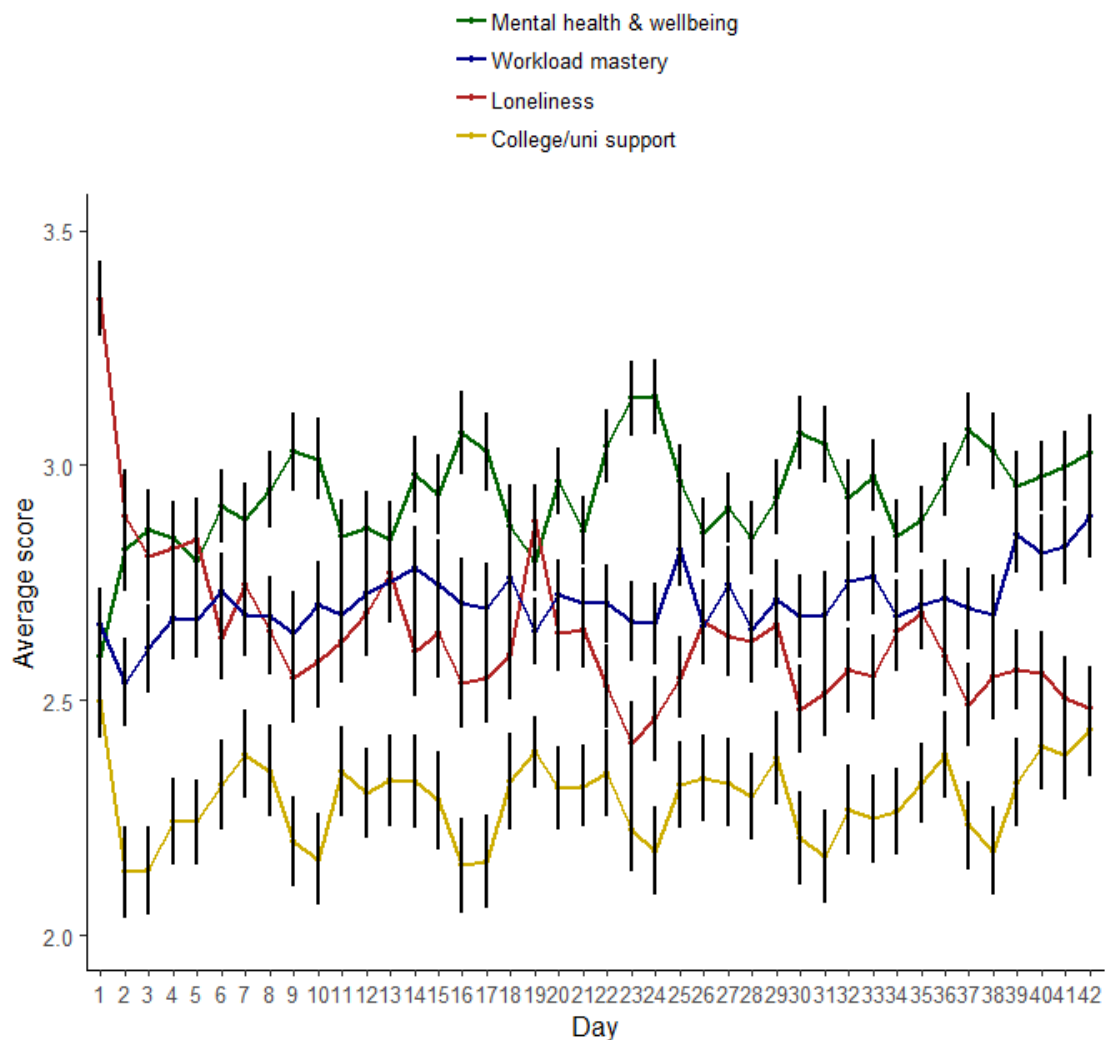
In the below plots you can see the daily experiences data of the first 6 weeks, for the following four questions: Please rate the extent to which, today, you have...

1. felt positive about your mental health and wellbeing
2. felt lonely
3. been practically supported by your College and/or the University
4. been on top of what you needed to get done

The questions have five response options: (1) "Not at all", (2) "Rarely", (3) "Some of the time", (4) "Often", and (5) "All the time". For this data we have no comparison group, but we will monitor changes over time in relation to potentially significant events (e.g. ease of lockdown, change in exam regulations).

All daily experiences in one graph

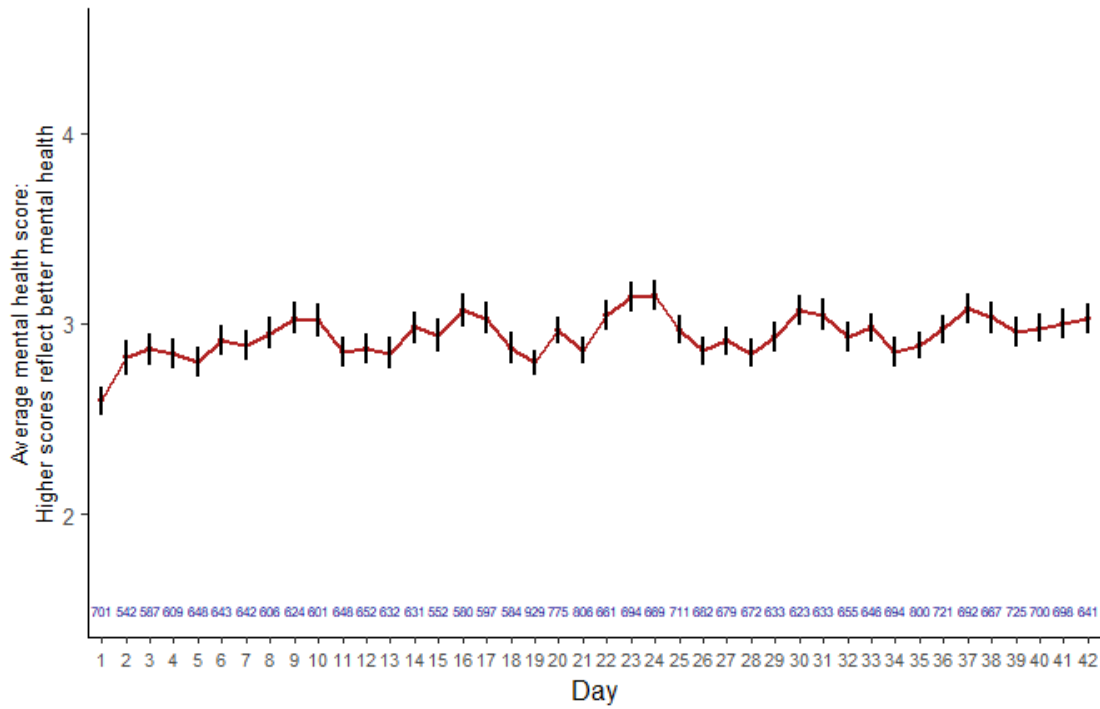
Daily experience tracking



Daily experiences in separate graphs

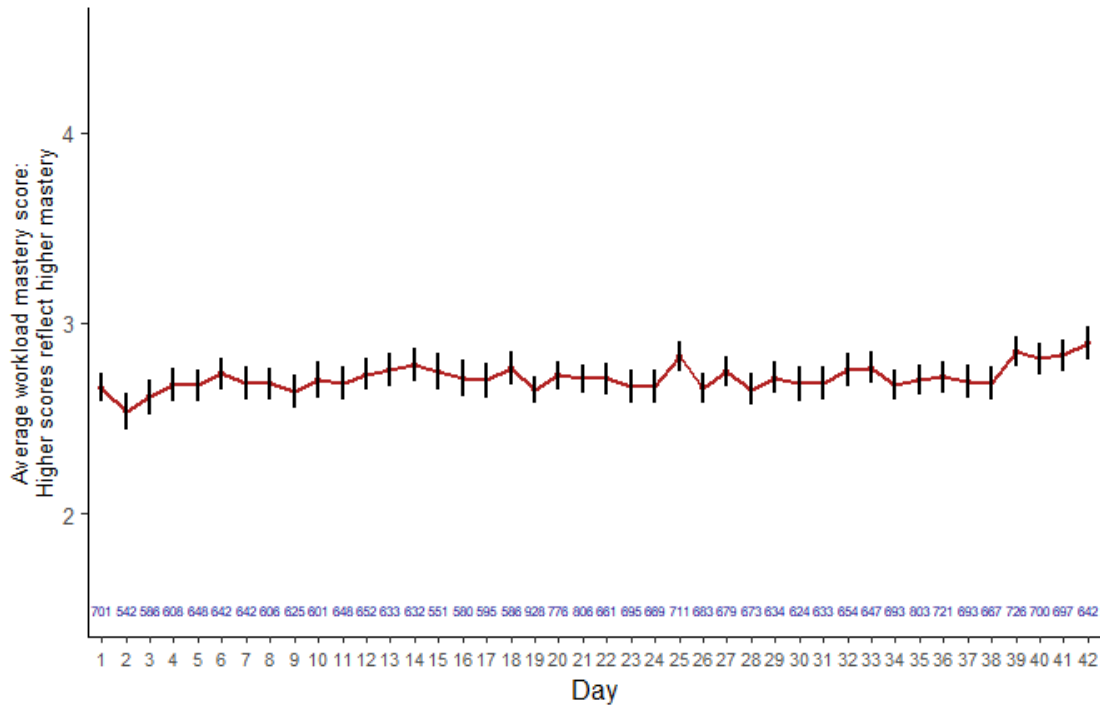
Full sample: Daily mental health & wellbeing

Blue number = number of student responses



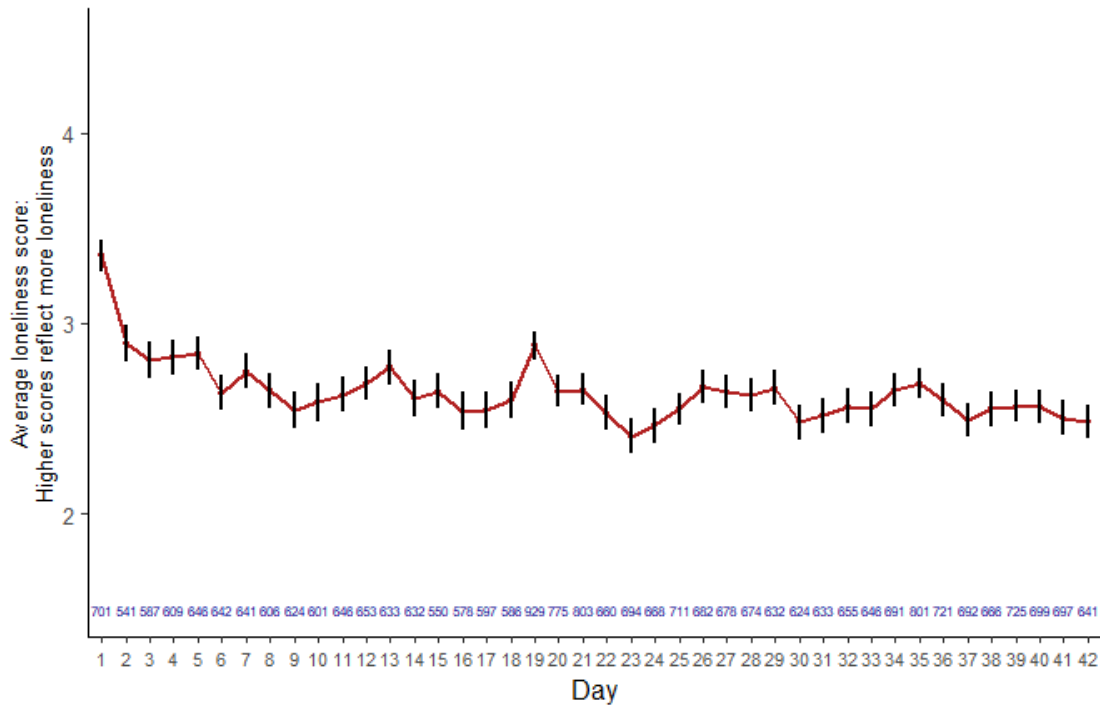
Full Sample: Daily workload mastery

Blue number = number of student responses



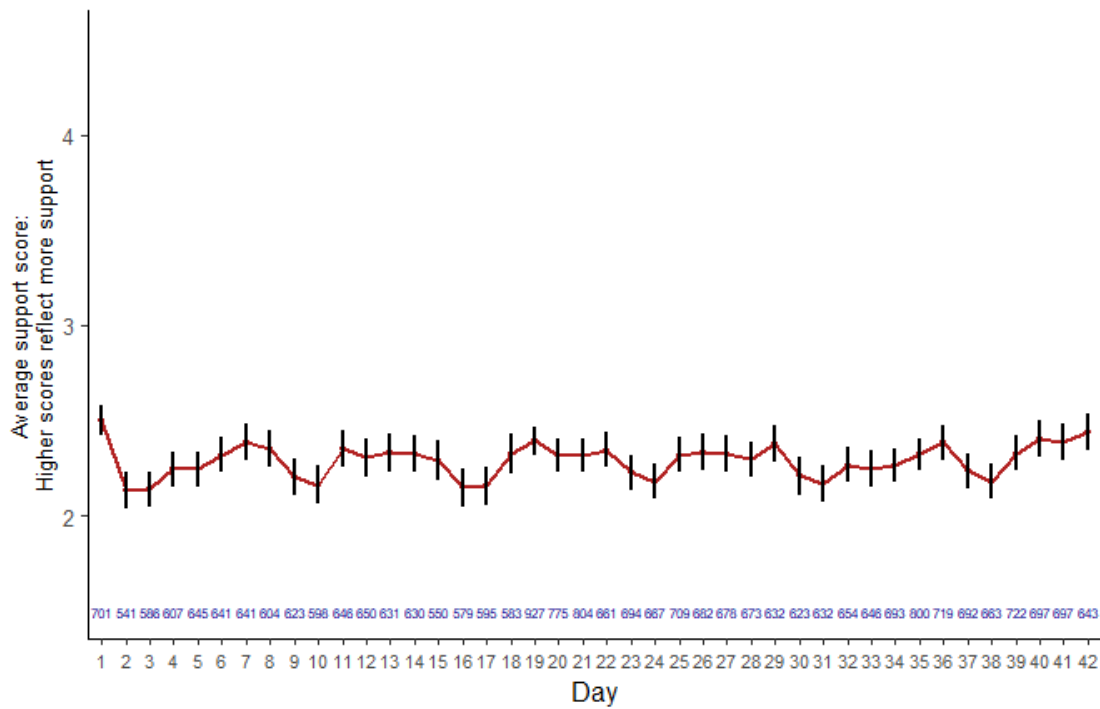
Full Sample: Daily loneliness

Blue number = number of student responses



Full Sample: Daily college/ uni support

Blue number = number of student responses



The black bars depict 95% confidence intervals (more specifically, they depict the interval of two standard errors above and below the mean).

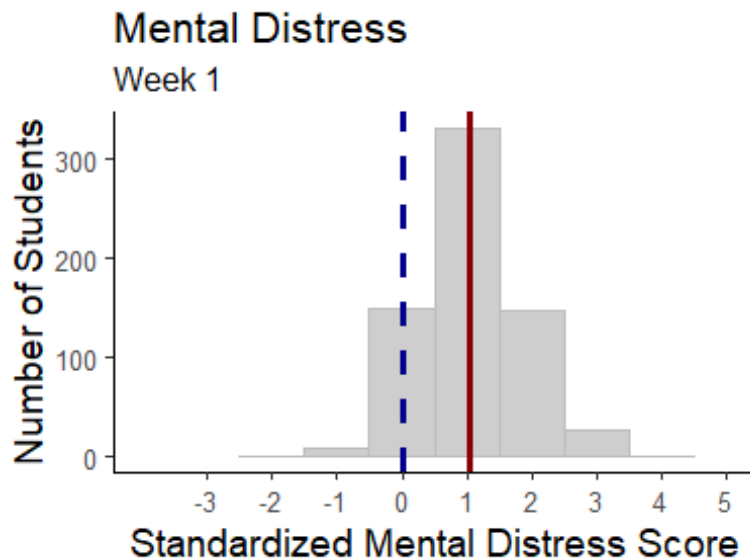
2: Longitudinal Sample

2.1: Participation

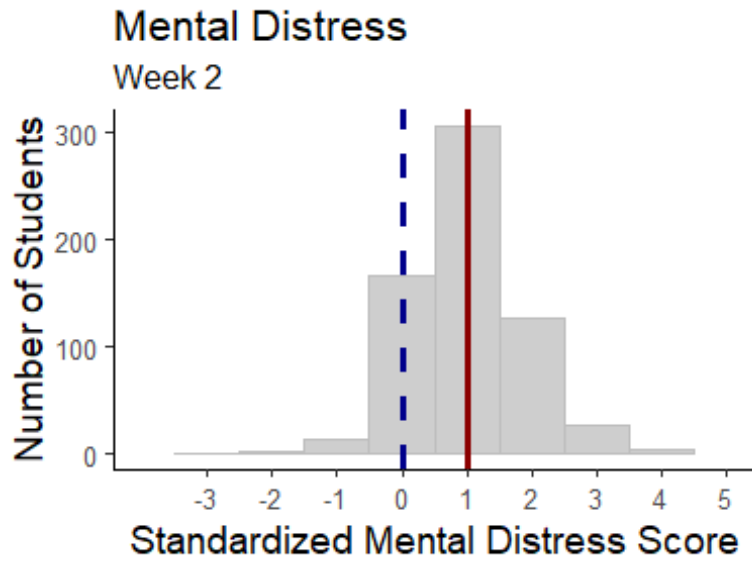
Of the longitudinal sample of 1078 students (spread across 31 colleges), 762 are female, 296 are male, and 20 preferred not to say.

2.2: Weekly mental distress

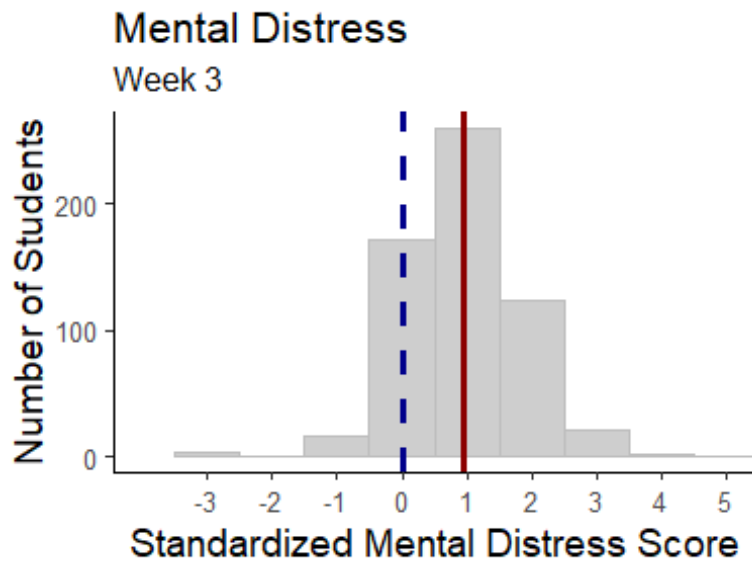
The first impression based on STEP data from week 1 to 4 was that Cambridge students seem to experience more mental distress than population representative young people before the COVID-19 pandemic. The same pattern seems to hold in week 5 and 6. This is illustrated in Figure 1 to 6, where the solid red line indicates the average mental distress score of the 'longitudinal' sample of Cambridge students and the dashed blue line indicates the average mental distress score of the population representative young people before the pandemic.



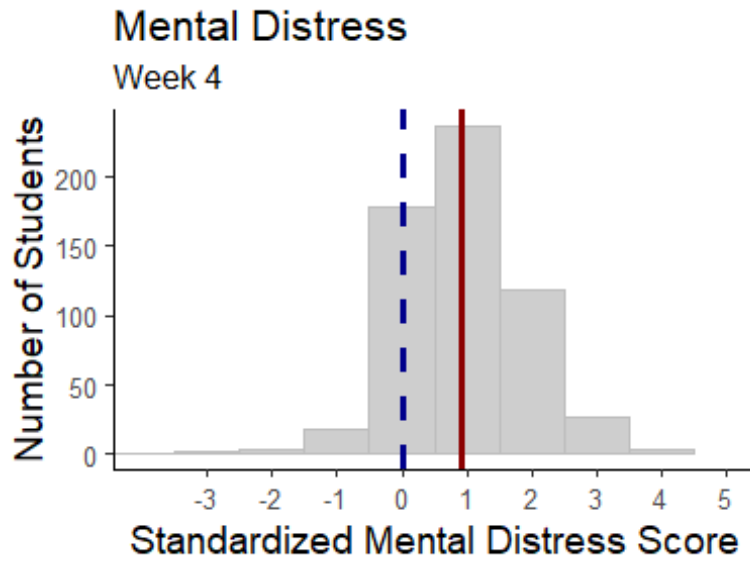
Cambridge students' mean score = 1.04 (standard deviation = 0.8, n = 663), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



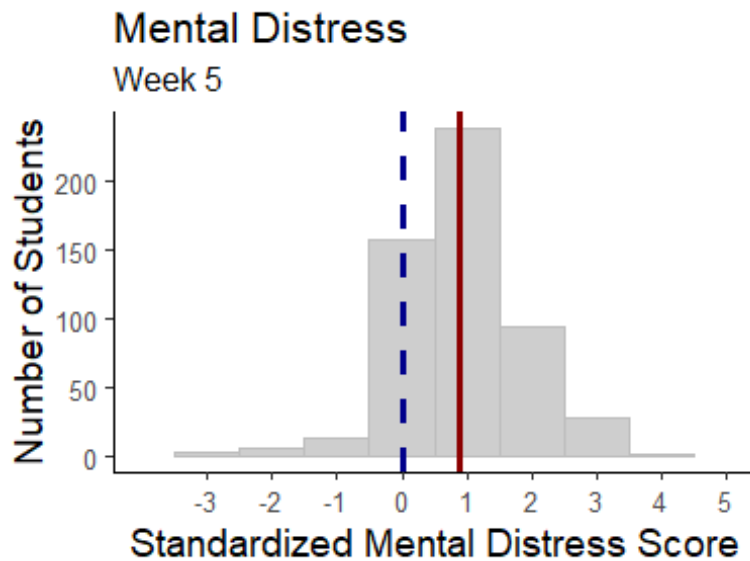
Cambridge students' mean score = 1 (standard deviation = 0.86, n = 643), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



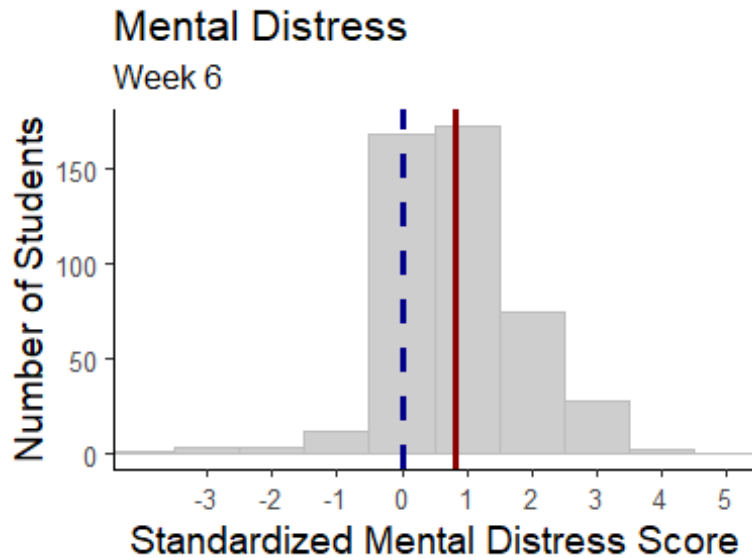
Cambridge students' mean score = 0.94 (standard deviation = 0.9, n = 600), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.91 (standard deviation = 0.94, n = 588), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.88 (standard deviation = 1.01, n = 546), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).



Cambridge students' mean score = 0.81 (standard deviation = 1.04, n = 465), compared to population representative young peoples' mean score = 0.02 (standard deviation = 1.18, n = 2017).

2.3: Daily experience tracking

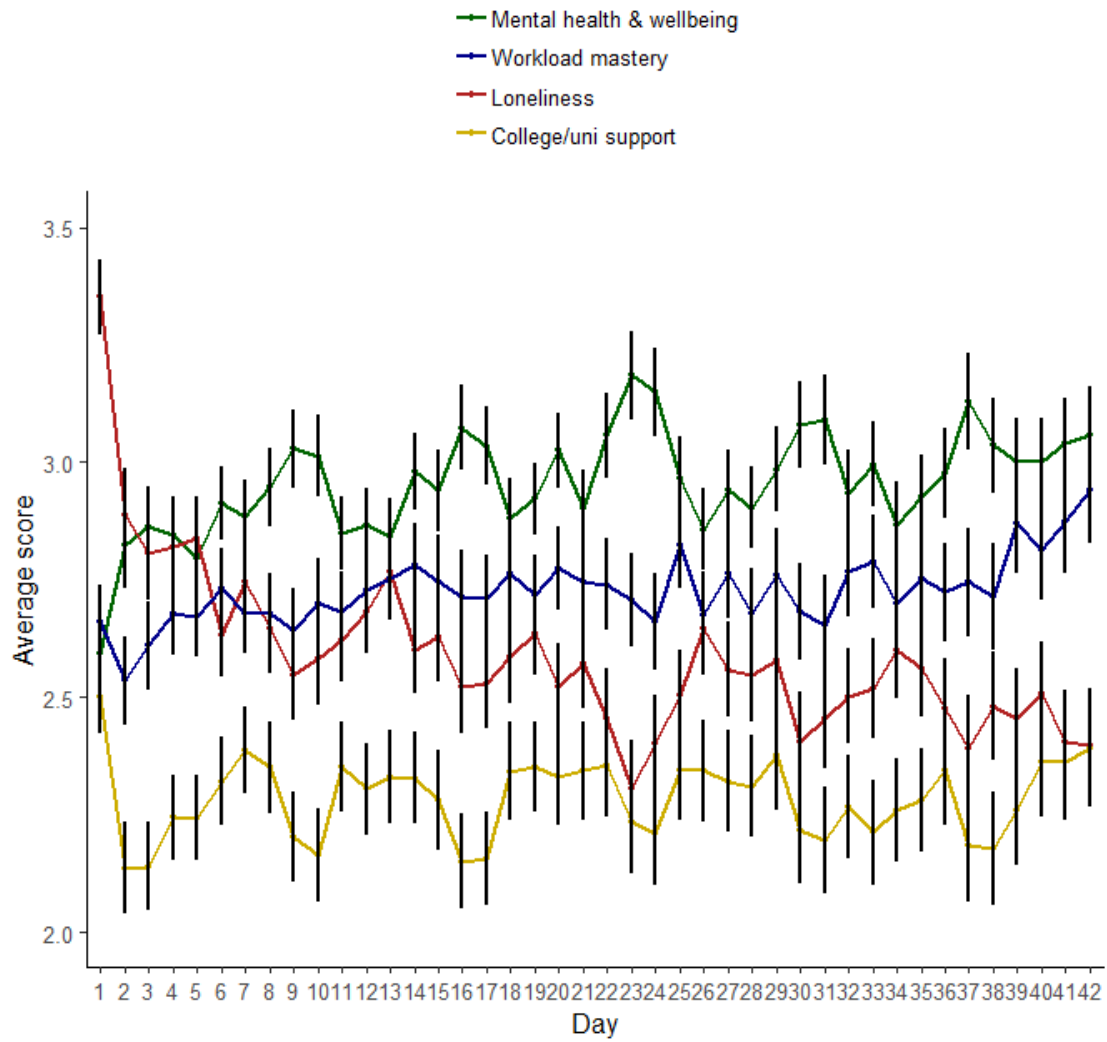
In the below plots you can see the daily experiences data of the first 6 weeks, for the following four questions: Please rate the extent to which, today, you have...

1. felt positive about your mental health and wellbeing
2. felt lonely
3. been practically supported by your College and/or the University
4. been on top of what you needed to get done

The questions have five response options: (1) "Not at all", (2) "Rarely", (3) "Some of the time", (4) "Often", and (5) "All the time". For this data we have no comparison group, but we will monitor changes over time in relation to potentially significant events (e.g. ease of lockdown, change in exam regulations).

All daily experiences in one graph

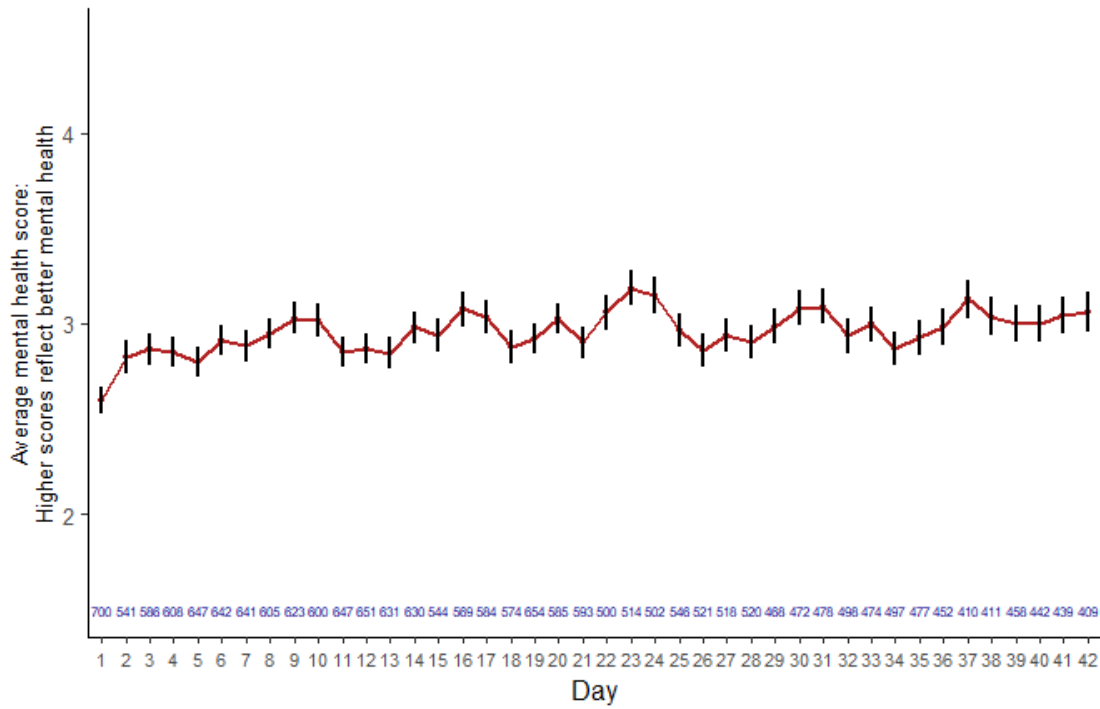
Daily experience tracking



Daily experiences in separate graphs

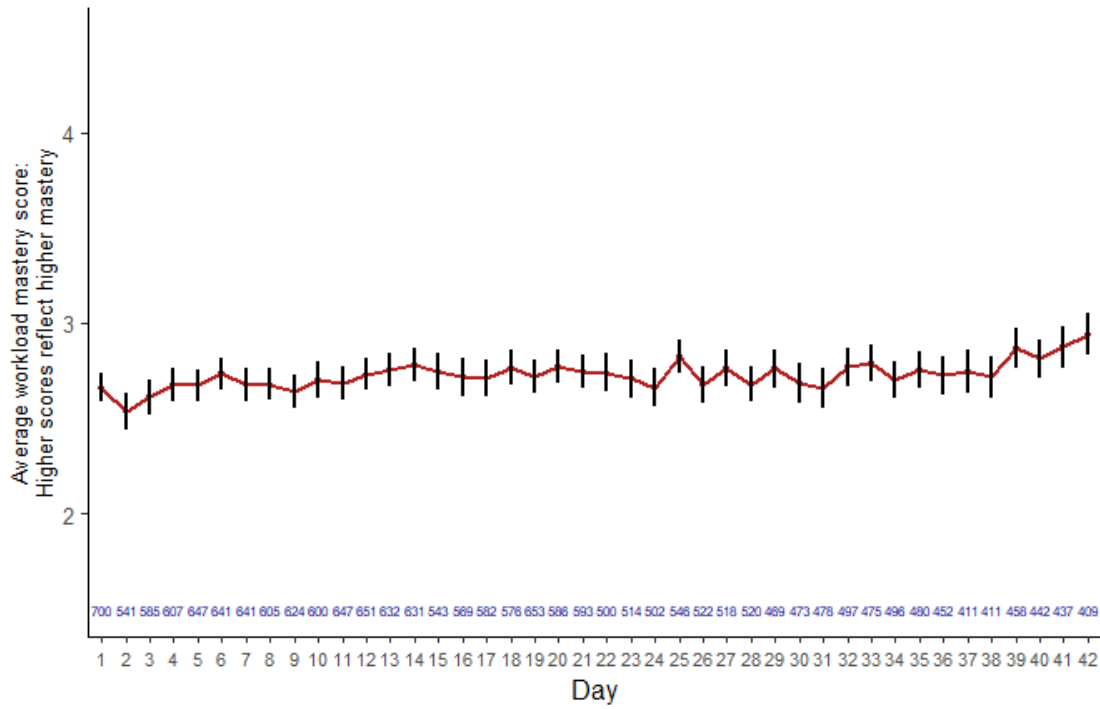
Full sample: Daily mental health & wellbeing

Blue number = number of student responses



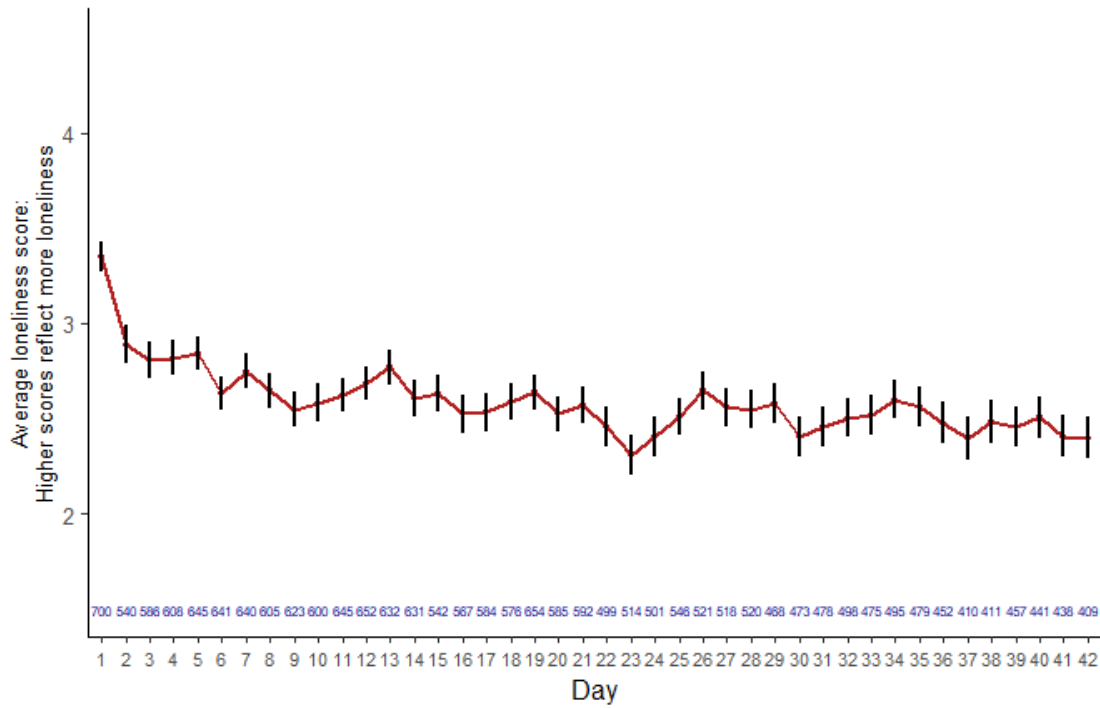
Full Sample: Daily workload mastery

Blue number = number of student responses



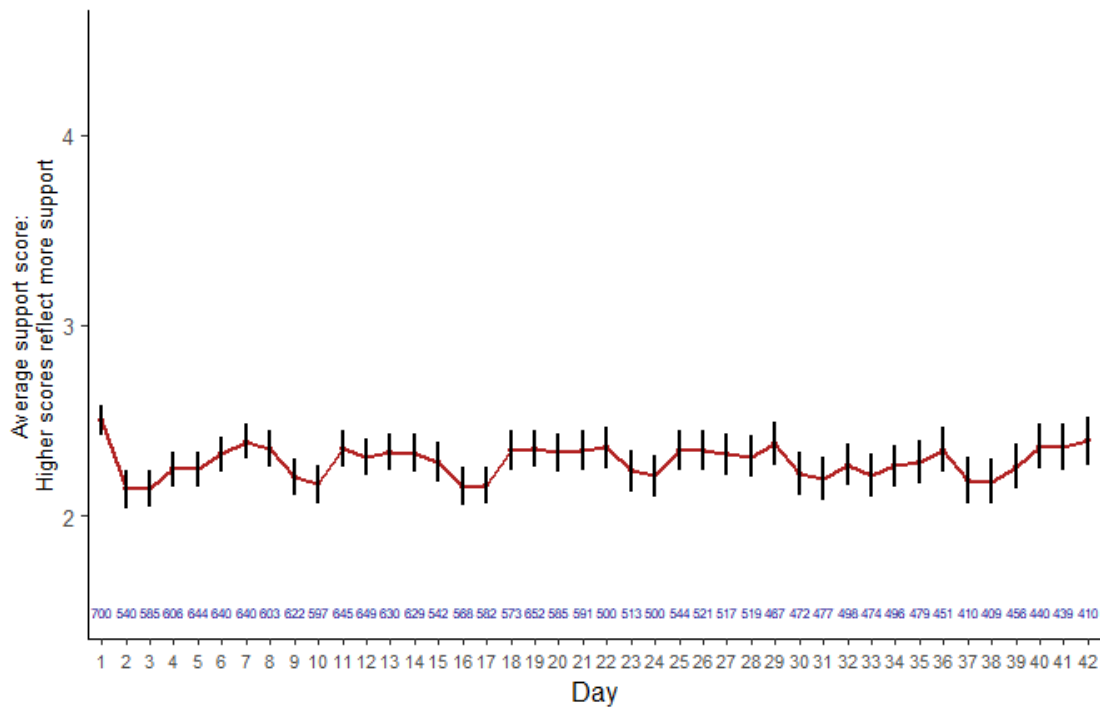
Full Sample: Daily loneliness

Blue number = number of student responses



Full Sample: Daily college/ uni support

Blue number = number of student responses



The black bars depict 95% confidence intervals (more specifically, they depict the interval of two standard errors above and below the mean).