

## **SURF-N4A MENTAL HEALTH ENDLINE SURVEY REPORT JAN 2021**

This report provides the results of randomised end line sample survey of 50 young survivors in Rwanda, conducted by Survivors Fund (SURF) for its Network for Africa Funded project.

Mental health for  
youth survivors of  
the genocide

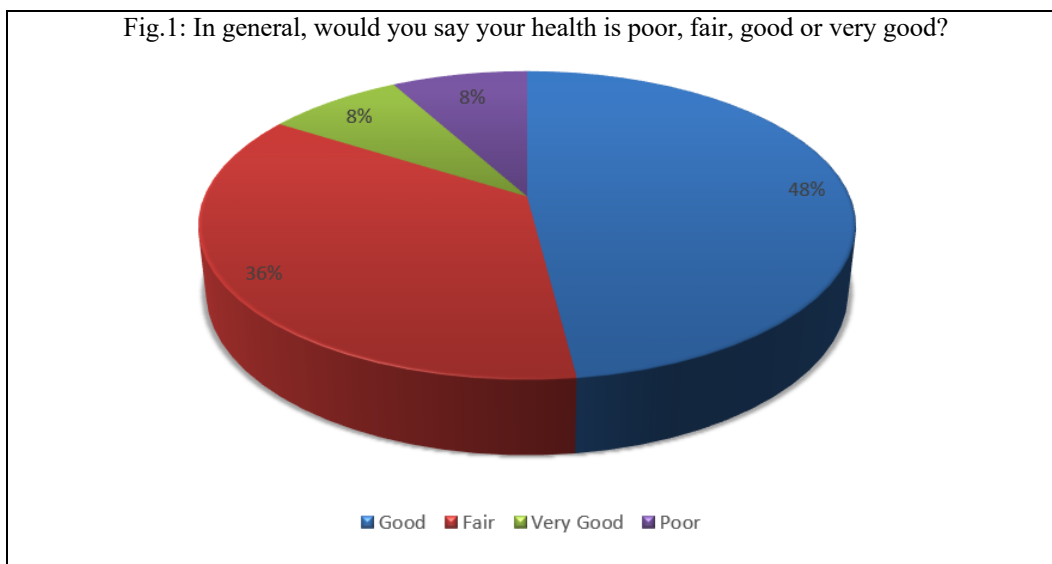
## Introduction.

Between 25th to 30th November 2020, SURF surveyed 50 randomly selected beneficiaries of a Network for Africa counselling project from the Eastern and Southern Provinces for the end line survey. These 50 beneficiaries answered the baseline questions at the beginning of the project, in February 2020. The questions were designed to get a snapshot of mental health issues faced by young survivors aged between 26 to 39. Findings from this sample group serve as a endline for the project, which currently works with a total of 263 young survivors across both provinces but in three districts.

This endline survey report shows that they were 33 female participants (66%) and 17 male participants (34%). Those from the Eastern Province came from Kayonza and Gatsibo districts and those from the Southern Province came from Huye district.

## Survey Results.

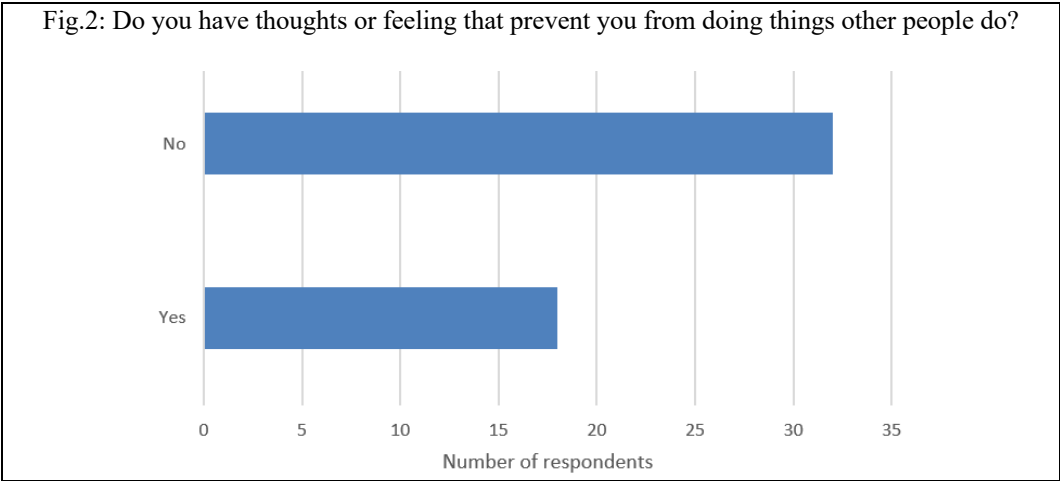
### 1. In general, would say your health is poor, fair, good or very good?



When comparing with the baseline, the endline shows that those who report “good” general health has risen from 2% to 48%, while those who say their general health is “poor” has dropped from 32% to 8%. The majority of endline respondents have confirmed that, their general health has moved from poor to good health.

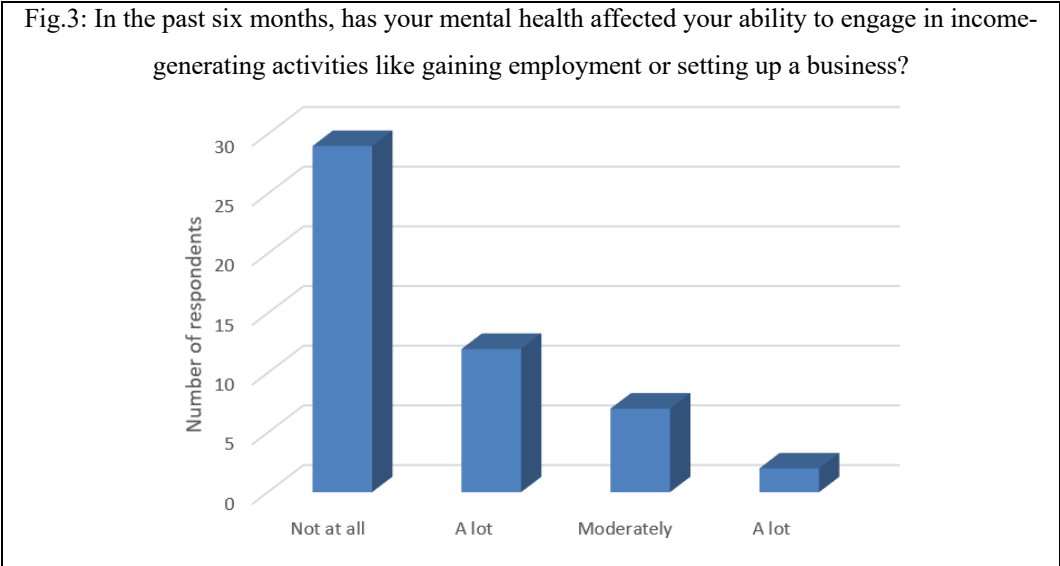
When asked to describe the general state of their mental health, the majority of participants (24) stated that they were in good general health. A small number (8%) of respondents are in a poor condition, while 36% are in a fair condition and 8% very good. Most of them linked their general health to their mental state, and those who have started small income generating activities have confirmed the positive changes of their mental health.

**2. Do you have thoughts or feelings that prevent you from doing things other people do?**



The majority of respondent, 32 (64%) felt that their mental health has not prevented them from doing things other people do. This is positive feedback compared to the baseline where 78% were in position of having thoughts or feelings which prevent them doing things other people do. The endline survey results show that only 36% still have such thoughts.

**3. In the past six months, has your mental health affected your ability to engage in income-generating activities like gaining employment or setting up a business?**

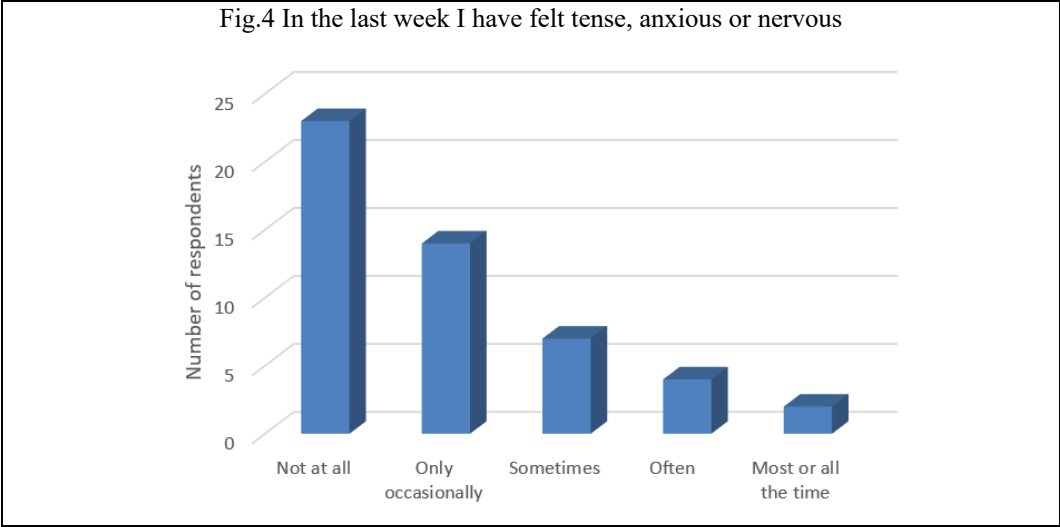


The endline survey shows that 4% of respondents have mental health issues affecting their ability to engage in income generating activities, while 29 respondents' (58%) income-generating

capabilities have not been affected by their mental health. This shows the improvement compared to the baseline survey, where 88% felt that their mental had a negative effect on their ability to work and generate an income. The intervention of the project has helped the young survivors to improve their mental health and start small businesses generating income.

**4.0 Mental health over the preceding week**

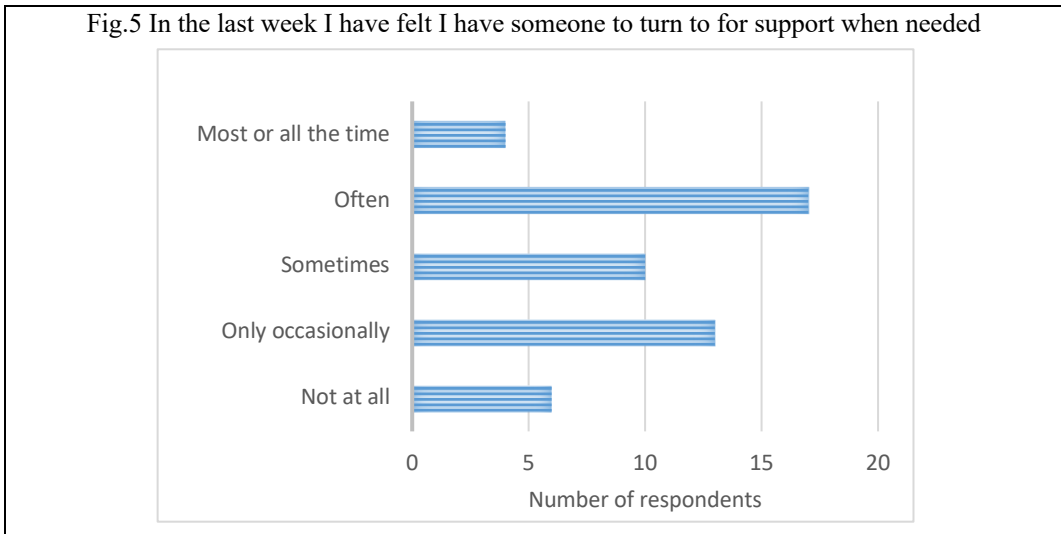
**4.1 In the last week I have felt tense, anxious or nervous**



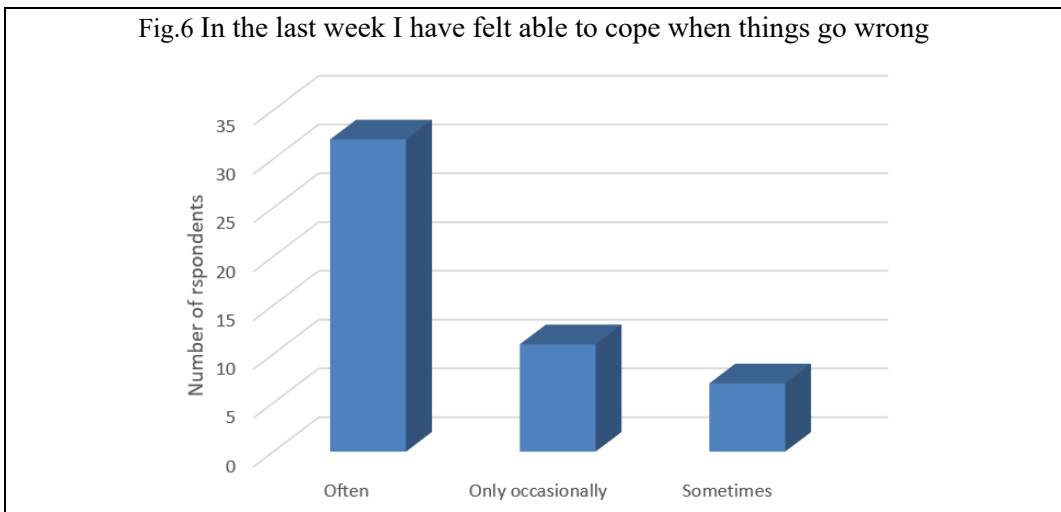
This end line survey shows that, the majority of the respondents, 46%, have not had feelings of anxiety in the past week, compared with just 4% at baseline. At endline, 12% of respondents had feelings of anxiety either “most or all of the time” or “often”, down from 68% at baseline. 42% of respondents at endline showed feelings of anxiety “sometimes” or “only occasionally” over the past week compared with 28% at baseline. As the groups closed, those who reported feeling anxious counsellors will keep monitoring their situation through phone consultation and face to face where possible.

**4.2. In the last week I have felt I have someone to turn to for support when needed**

The results of this question show that the majority of respondents have a regular support person they felt they could turn to ‘most of the time’, ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ in times of distress, and this is shown by 62% of the respondents. Only 12% of the respondents at endline do not have anyone to turn to when they need support, a significant improvement on the 40% of respondents at baseline. In addition, 26% occasionally have someone to turn to for support when needed.



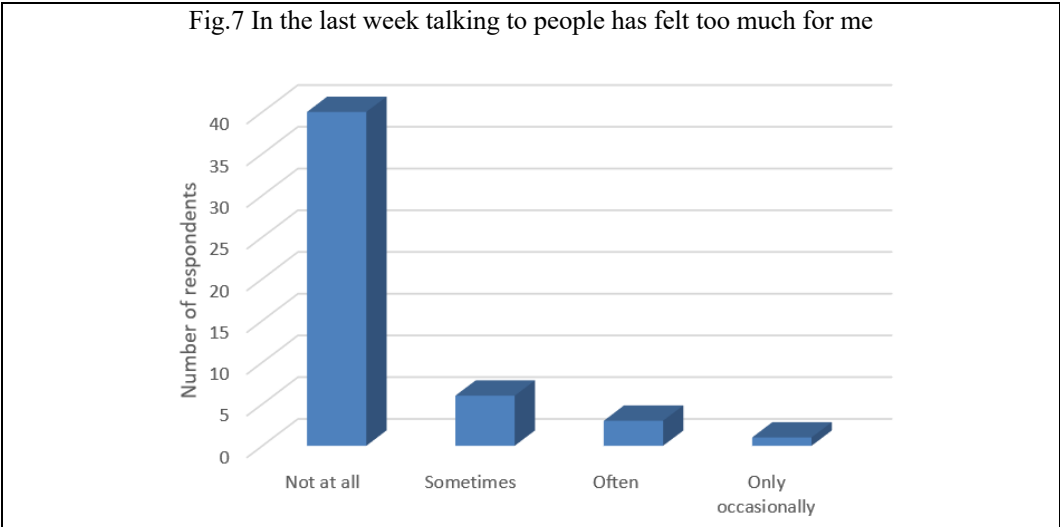
**4.3. In the last week I have felt able to cope when things go wrong.**



The findings to this question, respondents reported that 64% are able to cope when things go wrong, and most of them have faced challenges of unemployment which causes the instability of their mental health. Moreover, 36% percent of the respondents reported that they are occasionally able to cope when things go wrong. While 66% of respondents felt unable to cope when things go wrong, there were no respondents who felt this way at endline.

As we reported in the baseline survey, the ability to cope or not might also influence what participants consider as ‘things going wrong. As most of the young survivors who dropped out of school and had no employment coping might be a serious issues affecting their lives.

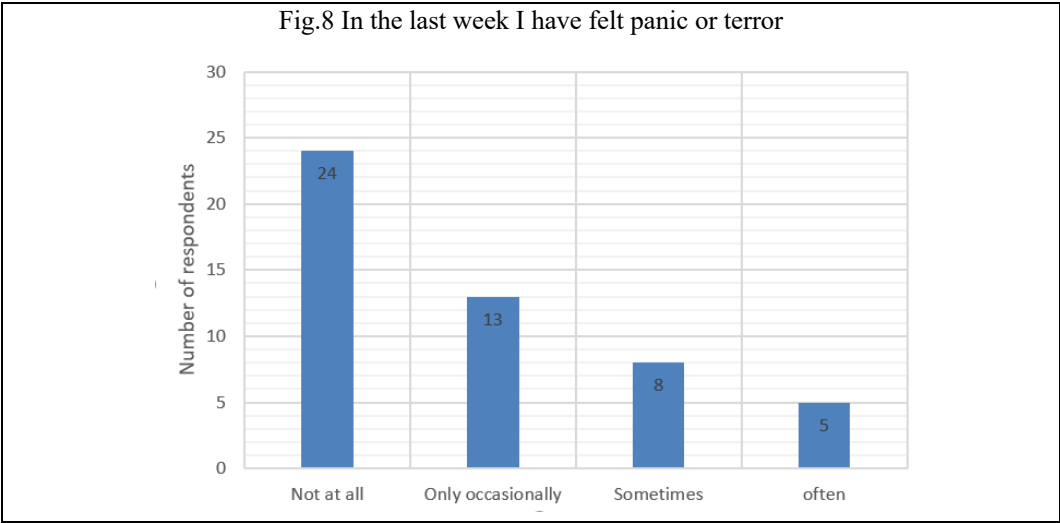
**4.4. In the last week talking to people has felt too much for me**



From the respondents, only 6% have reported that ‘often’ talking to people felt too much to them while most respondents (80%) did not find talking to other people to be an overwhelming experience. The baseline shows that only 14% previously felt able to talk to people when they felt too much to bear.

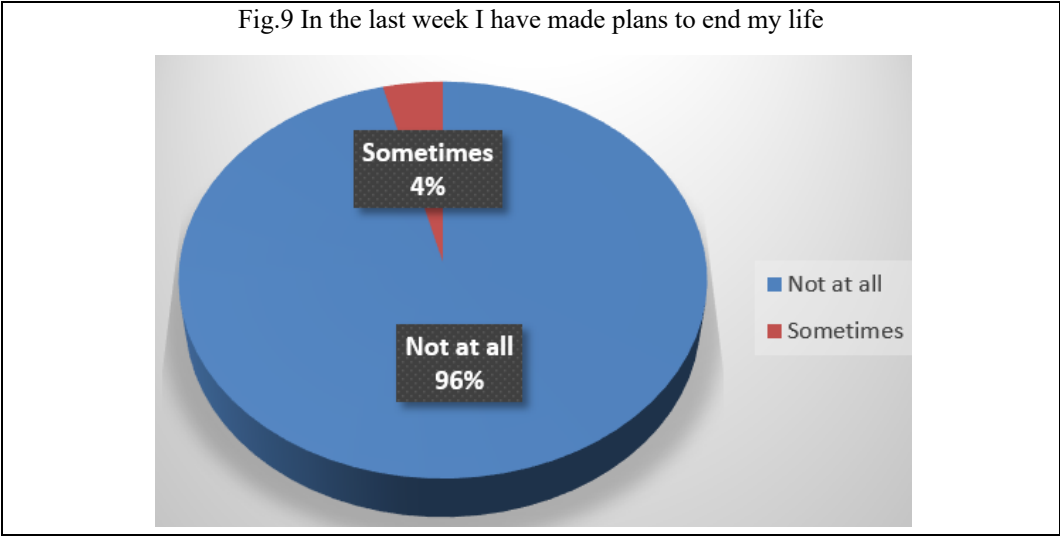
It is common globally for people suffering depression and anxiety to find social situations stressful.

**4.5. In the last week I have felt panic or terror.**



The report from the end line survey shows that 48% of respondents have not felt panic or terror in the preceding week – the same level as at baseline. However, there is a significant decrease of the rate of respondents reporting that they ‘often’ felt panic or terror – down from 58% to 10% between baseline and endline. No respondents reported having felt panic or terror most of the time at endline, compared to 4% at baseline.

**4.6. In the last week I have made plans to end my life**

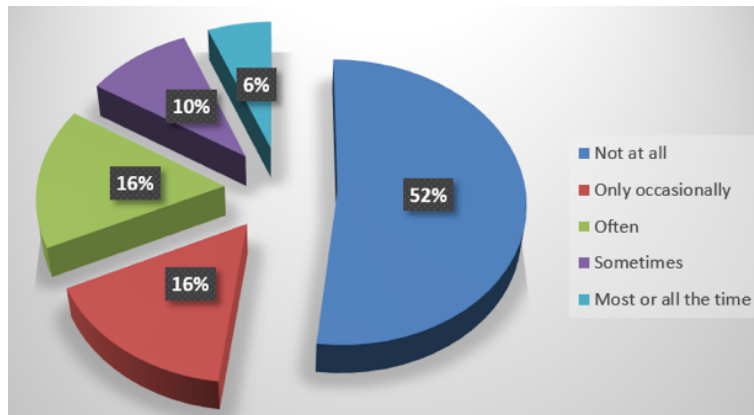


The results from the baseline survey showed that 25% had suicide thoughts prior to this project, with 10% who had these feelings on regular basis. This was caused by many reasons, with lack of hope for the future due to high trauma and its symptoms was the main reason. The endline survey shows that 96% had no thoughts of ending their lives through suicide in the preceding week, with only 4% of those who had the same thoughts. Counsellors will keep monitoring those who presented serious cases in face-to-face counselling sessions and do referrals to districts hospitals where applicable.

**4.7. In the last week I have had difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep**

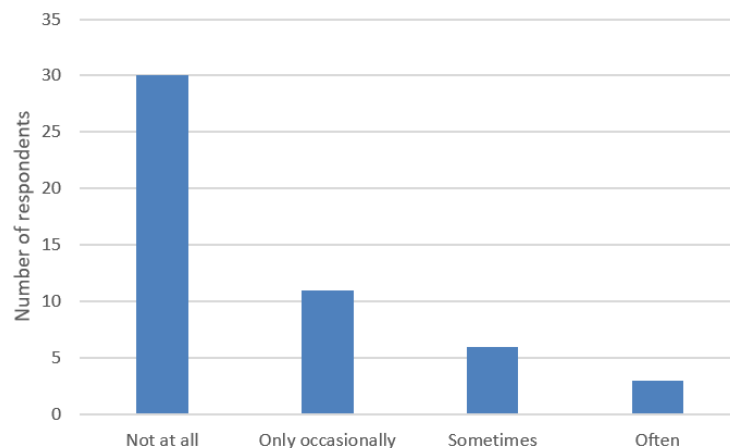
Many genocide survivors face insomnia or sleep disturbance as it is the common trauma symptoms especially for survivors. In the baseline survey, we reported 52% who are facing this challenge very often before the intervention of this project, but centrally the endline survey shows that 16% often have insomnia symptoms. However, 16% of respondents are still facing the same challenges though the intervention has reduced the number in the extreme way. Counsellors will keep meeting those affected in partnership with the peer support counsellors to discuss the way forward for better mental health.

Fig.10 In the last week I have had difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep



#### 4.8. In the last week I have felt despairing or hopeless

Fig.10 In the last week I have felt despairing or hopeless

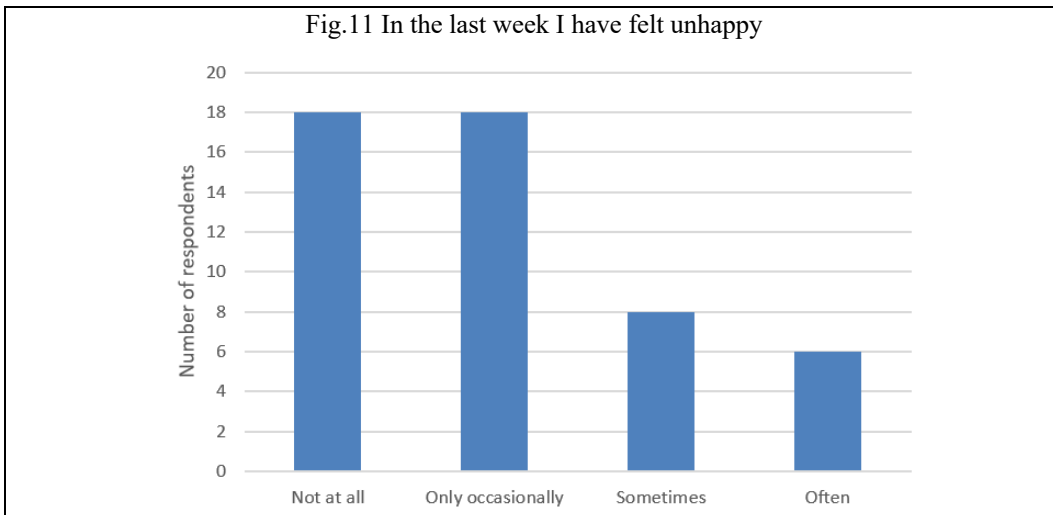


In the baseline, all respondents reported feelings of despair or hopelessness at least once over the past week. However, the end line results shows that 20% are facing the same challenges, which means the project has helped the young survivors to reduce these feelings.

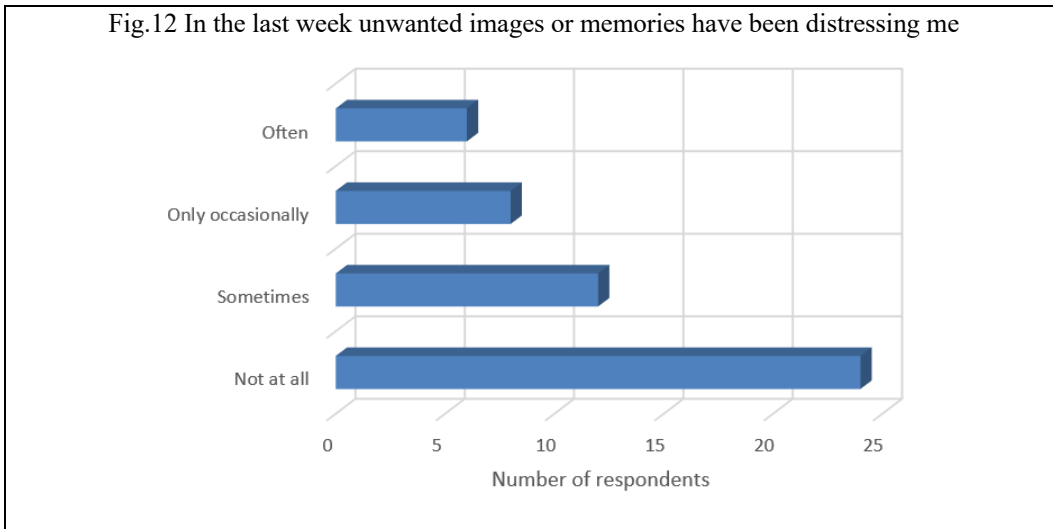
#### 4.9. In the last week I have felt unhappy

The results from the endline survey shows that 64% of respondents are still feeling unhappy while 36% responded that they were not having feelings of being unhappy at all. This is not much different to baseline, when 66% reported feeling unhappy. As we reported in the baseline survey, being unhappy could happen time to time though it may not represent as a sign of symptoms because beneficiaries might change due to some reasons.



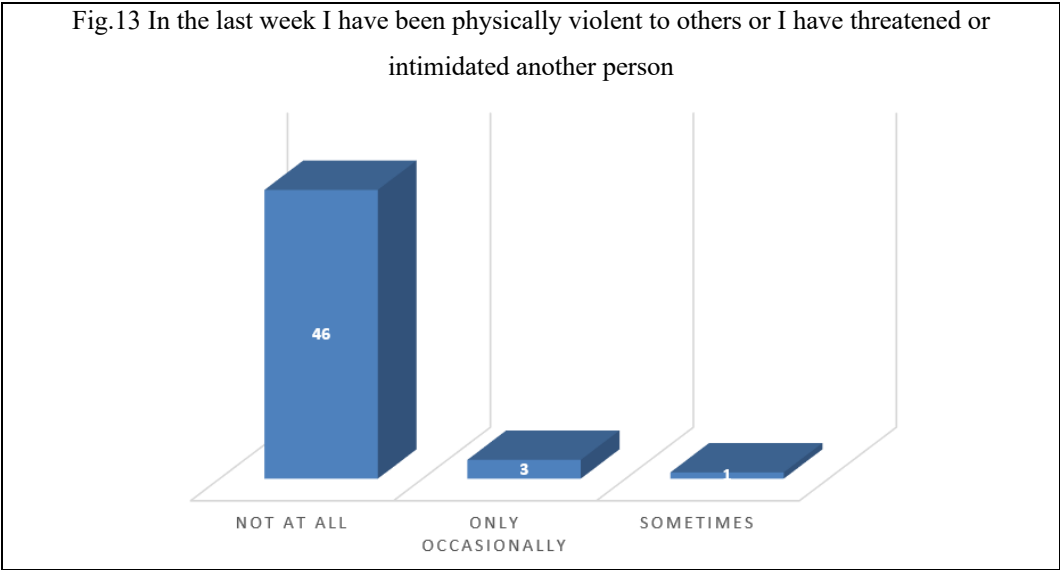


**4.10. In the last week unwanted images or memories have been distressing me**



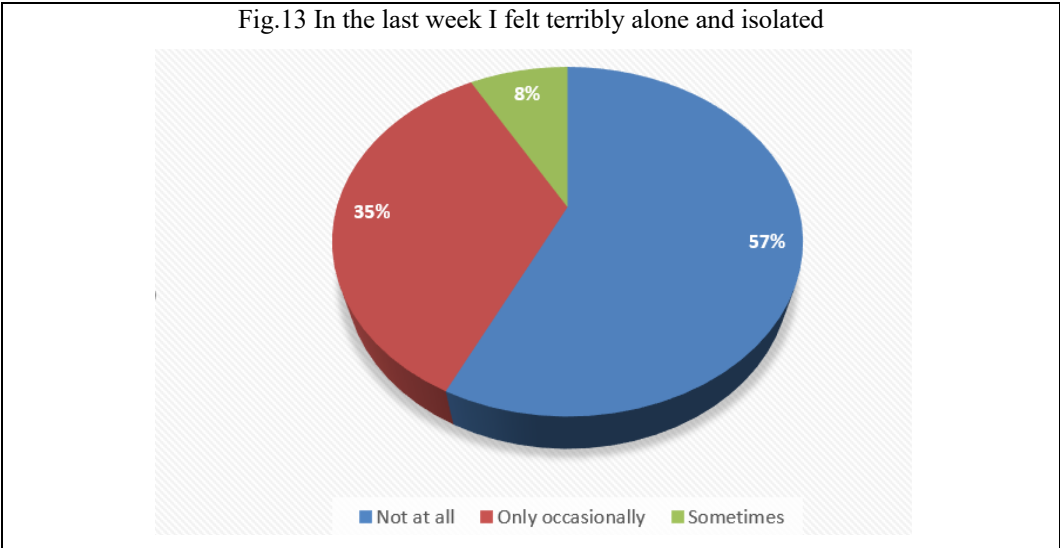
Flashbacks and intrusive memories are a common sign of trauma and PTSD. The number of respondents reporting intrusive thoughts has dropped from 86% at baseline, to 52% at endline. 48% confirmed that they no longer have the intrusive thoughts after the project intervention. However, 66 beneficiaries, representing 27% of the total number of project beneficiaries, reported having flashbacks during the commemoration period of the genocide specifically.

**4.11. In the last week I have been physically violent to others or I have threatened or intimidated another person.**



Report shows that 92% of respondents from both province have not been physically violent to others or threatened another person – a small improvement from the 86% who said they had not been physically violent at baseline; however, 8% have confirmed the cases of some who have been violent to other people. From the explanation of some examples, beneficiaries have said that this happens most of the time during the genocide commemoration period, where beneficiaries lose control because of thinking about their future and what happened to them during the genocide.

**4.12. In the last week I felt terribly alone and isolated**



Loneliness is one of the symptoms of PTSD or someone with mental health problems. In this case, 57% of respondent have reported that they are not facing the challenges of loneliness among the community. In the baseline, survey 44% reported that they face these challenges of loneliness. In addition, twenty-one respondents are still in the struggles of facing isolation. This number needs to be followed up though the counselling groups have closed.

**4.13. In the last week I have felt optimistic about my future**

When asked this question about being optimistic for the future, the majority, 49 people (98%) responded that they can see a bright future, this is mainly due to the intervention of this project. While respondents are young survivors, many of whom dropped out of school and have struggled to gain employment, only 2% do not see anything positive about the future.

**4.14. There are things that I can do that help me deal with unwanted symptoms.**

Table.1 ‘There are things that I can do that help me deal with unwanted symptoms’

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
10	39	1

98% percent of the respondents, confirmed that there is something they can do to deal with unwanted symptoms. Due to the fact that young survivors have faced different life challenges, it is very positive that the majority are able to do something to deal with trauma.

**4.15. Although my symptoms may get worse I know I can handle it.**

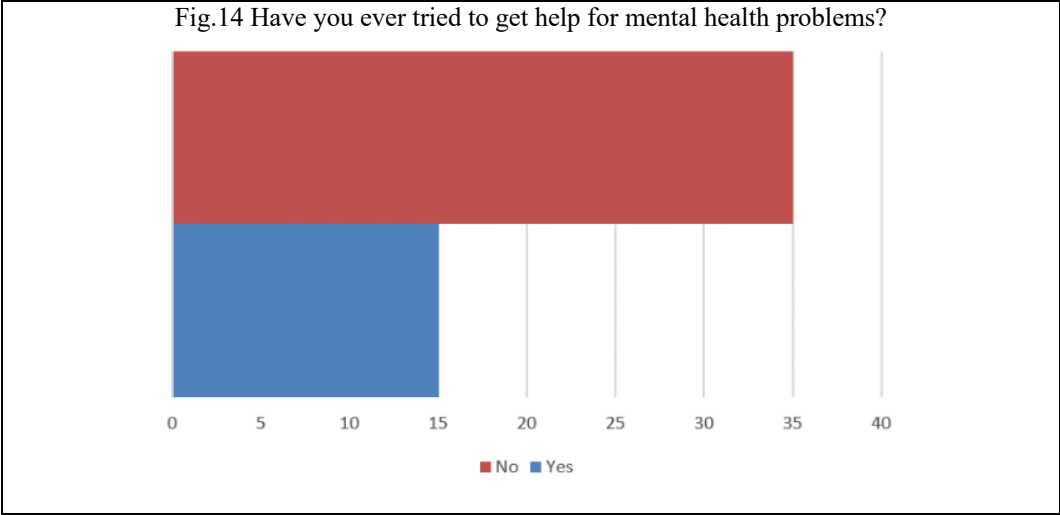
Table.2 ‘Although my symptoms may get worse I know I can handle it’

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
8	40	2

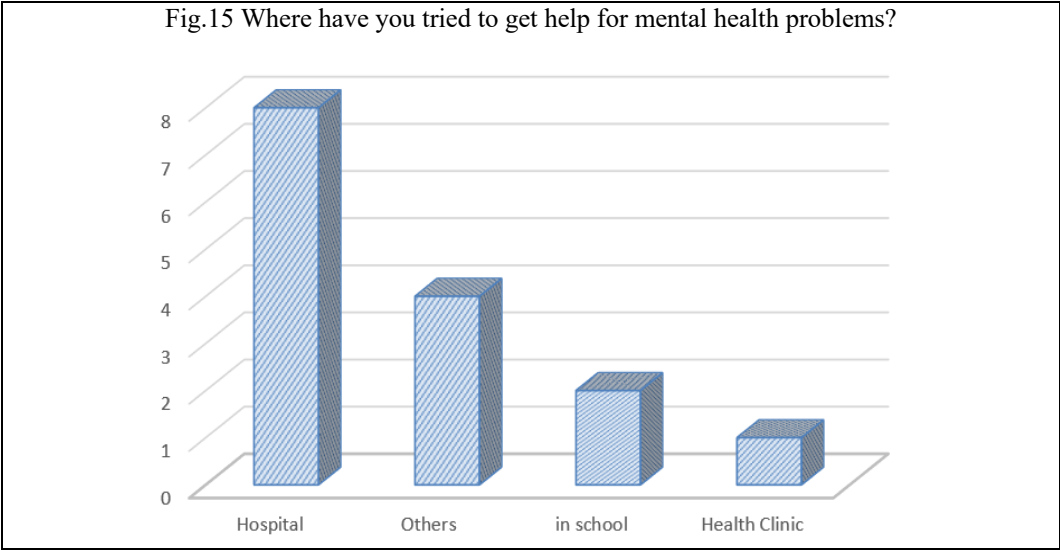
Only 4% of the respondents confirmed that, once they face challenges of trauma and its symptoms they do not know how to handle them. During the endline survey these young survivors say that due to high trauma the time of being with counsellors was too short to be able cope with strategies of dealing with trauma, and the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic reduced the time they should have given with counsellors.

**5. Have you ever tried to get help for mental health problems?**

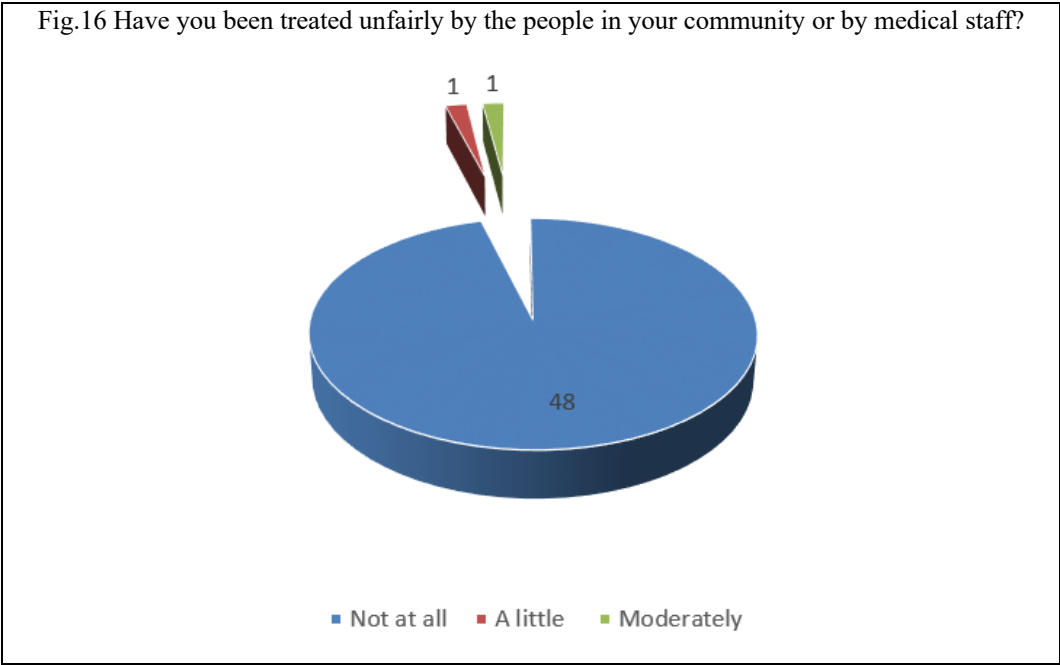
70% of the respondents have not tried to get additional help for mental health in the last six months. This means that since we started the counselling groups, 30% have tried to get help for mental health out of the counselling groups.



From those who have tried to get help, 16% tried at the hospital level, 8% from other service providers while 4% at school. When asked how they have tried to get help from school, all respondents confirmed that they had survivors associations where they meet and discuss their issues together. In terms of the help people received for their mental health problem, for 18% it included medication, and 22% received help individually.

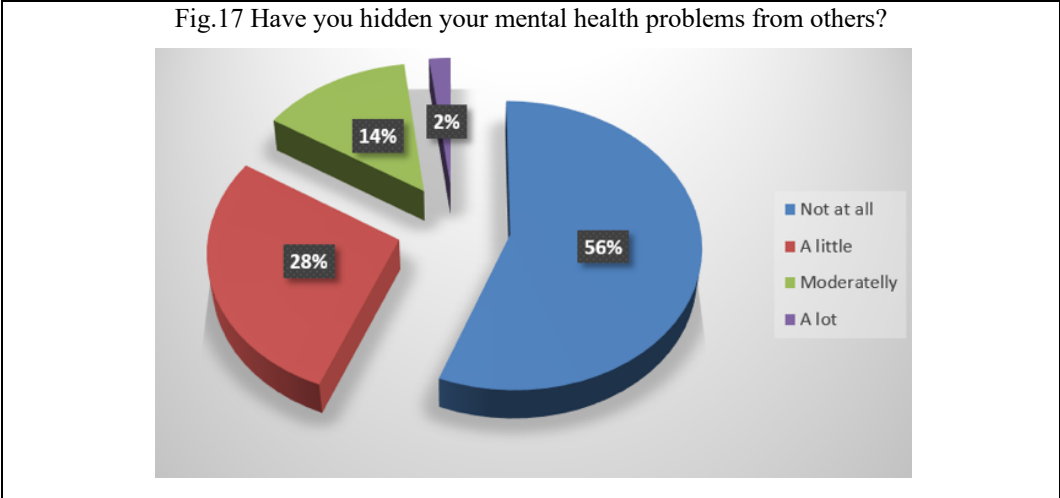


**6. Have you been treated unfairly by the people in your community or by medical staff?**



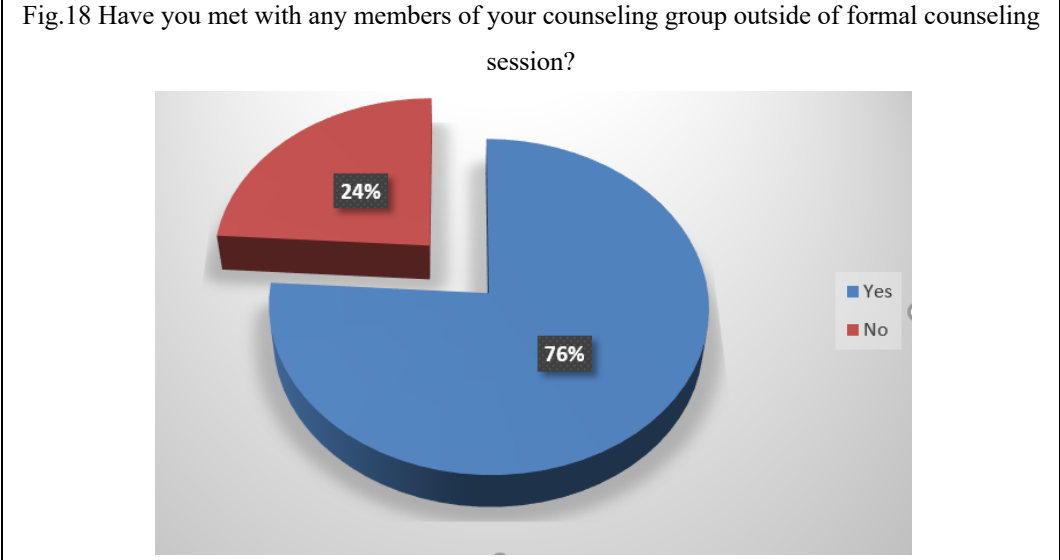
The answer to whether or not participants felt unfairly treated within their community over the past week. It is encouraging to see that the majority of respondents did not feel as though they were being treated unfairly within their community, with 96% responding ‘not at all’. For the two respondents who did feel they had been unfairly treated, they did not feel this was because of their mental health problem, but rather was the same case to the people in communities like not receiving good services from health carers or local leaders.

**7. Have you hidden your mental health problems from others?**



It is encouraging that 56% of respondents have not tried to hide their mental health problem from others at all; one of the best way of getting out of the trauma crisis is to speak about it. This number has increased from 44% of the baseline; however, 2% of the end line still has the issue of hiding their mental health problem to others.

**8. Have you met with any members of your counseling group outside of formal counseling session?**



While responding to this question, the majority of respondents (76%) have confirmed that they met with members of the counselling group outside of formal counselling sessions. They have formed groups and created friendships and are now visiting each other in their communities. During the interviews, respondents confirmed that this project has helped them to build their relationship with colleagues in the community, especially those who participated in the counselling sessions. In the baseline survey, we found that 96% were not meeting members outside of the counselling group. For the 24% of endline respondents who are not meeting members outside of normal counselling sessions, it was mainly because they live far from each other and it takes time to meet outside of counselling sessions.

## Summary.

Good mental health services are key for the social and moral recovery from consequences of the genocide. Generally, 64% of participants felt that their mental health has not prevented them from doing things other people do. This is very positive as young survivors can think of activities they can do in order to build their future and self-confidence; this means that after attending counselling sessions they wish to have small income generating activities to help them earn some money to sustain themselves and their families.

On a positive note, 48% of respondents reported no discrimination when using health services and the majority did not feel discriminated against within their communities. 56% of respondents were already very open about their mental health condition to others, where they have at least one person they trust so that they talk about their mental health problems.

The endline survey shows very positive changes in the beneficiaries' plan for their future compared to the baseline data, due to the project's intervention in both provinces. The majority of respondents confirmed that their hope for the future is high. At the end of counselling sessions, nine members have started small businesses generating an income. 98% of them are able to cope when things go wrong, and this is through the techniques they have learnt from both counsellors and peer support counsellors. The project has contributed greatly to bringing together survivors with mental health problems and helping them to deal with trauma and its symptoms in order to plan for a brighter future.