

IACP

Public Attitudes to Counselling/Psychotherapy & Mental Health

Quantitative Research

July 2023

J.234772

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B&A

 iacp



Project objectives

The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) is the largest Counselling and Psychotherapy organisation in Ireland, representing over 5,000 members. Its role is to maintain professional standards of excellence in the field, and to represent the interests of both client and Counsellor/Psychotherapist.

Behaviour & Attitudes carried out a general public survey for the IACP in 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2019. This report presents the findings of a 2023 survey, providing up to date insights into;

- Mental health and wellbeing of Irish adults,
- Suicide in Ireland,
- Attitudes toward mental health in Ireland,
- Attitudes toward Counselling/Psychotherapy (including that for children/adolescents).

Previous waves were carried out as part of B&A's face-to-face Barometer (Omnibus) survey with this wave being carried out on one of our online omnibuses. In 2020, 2021 and 2022 we conducted mini-surveys online focusing on the areas of a sensitive nature such as mental health issues and having seen a counsellor/psychotherapist. The self-complete nature of an online survey may provide a platform for greater disclosure compared to a face-to-face survey.

Both the face-to-face barometer and online omnibuses are nationally representative however this change in methodology means some results aren't directly comparable to previous waves and this is flagged where relevant

In 2023 a sample of 1,023 Irish adults was achieved.

- Sample is quota controlled for gender, age, social class, region and area of residence.
- Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th and 20th June, 2023.

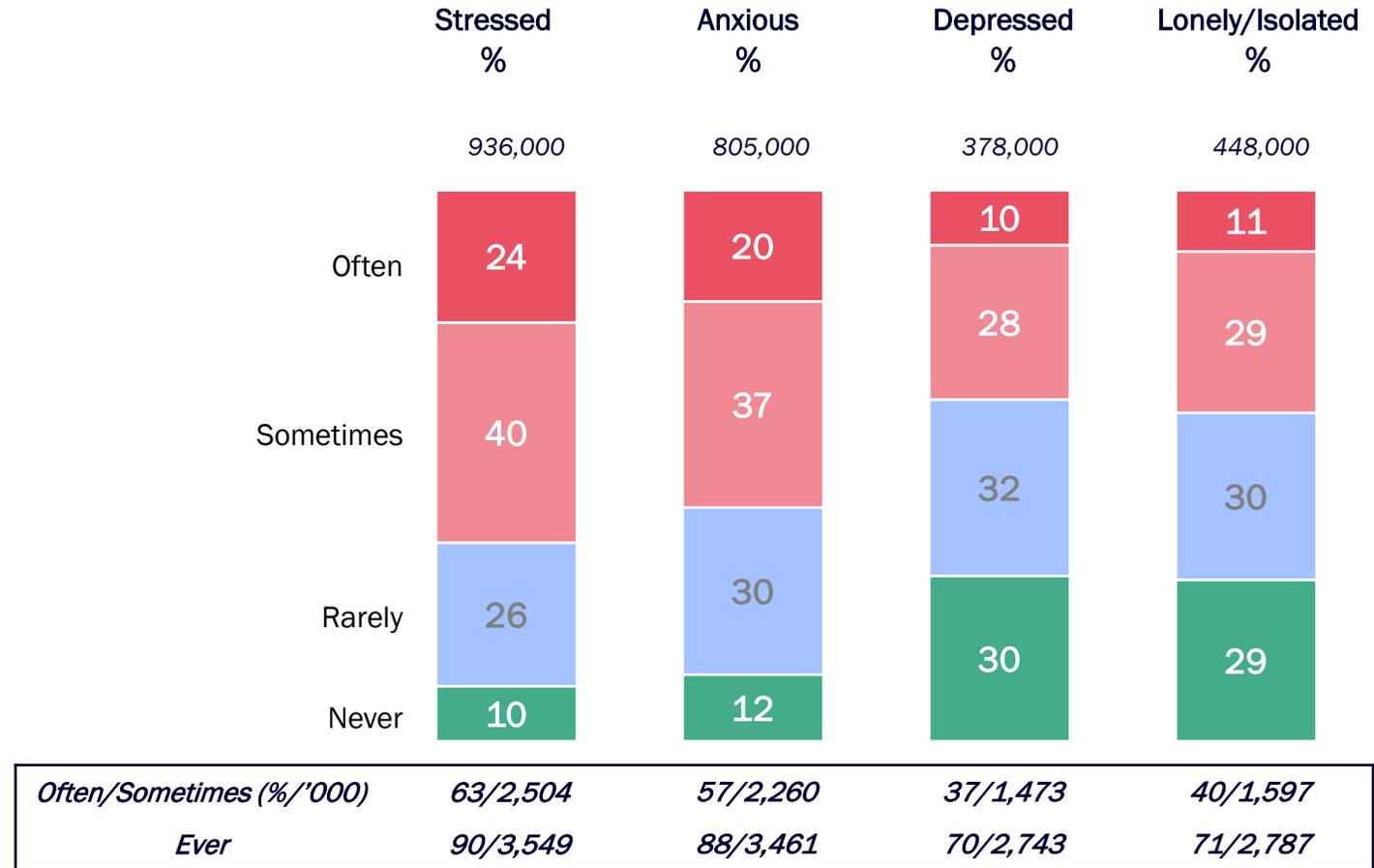


Mental Health & Wellness in Ireland

B&A

Just under one in four Irish adults 'often' feel stressed

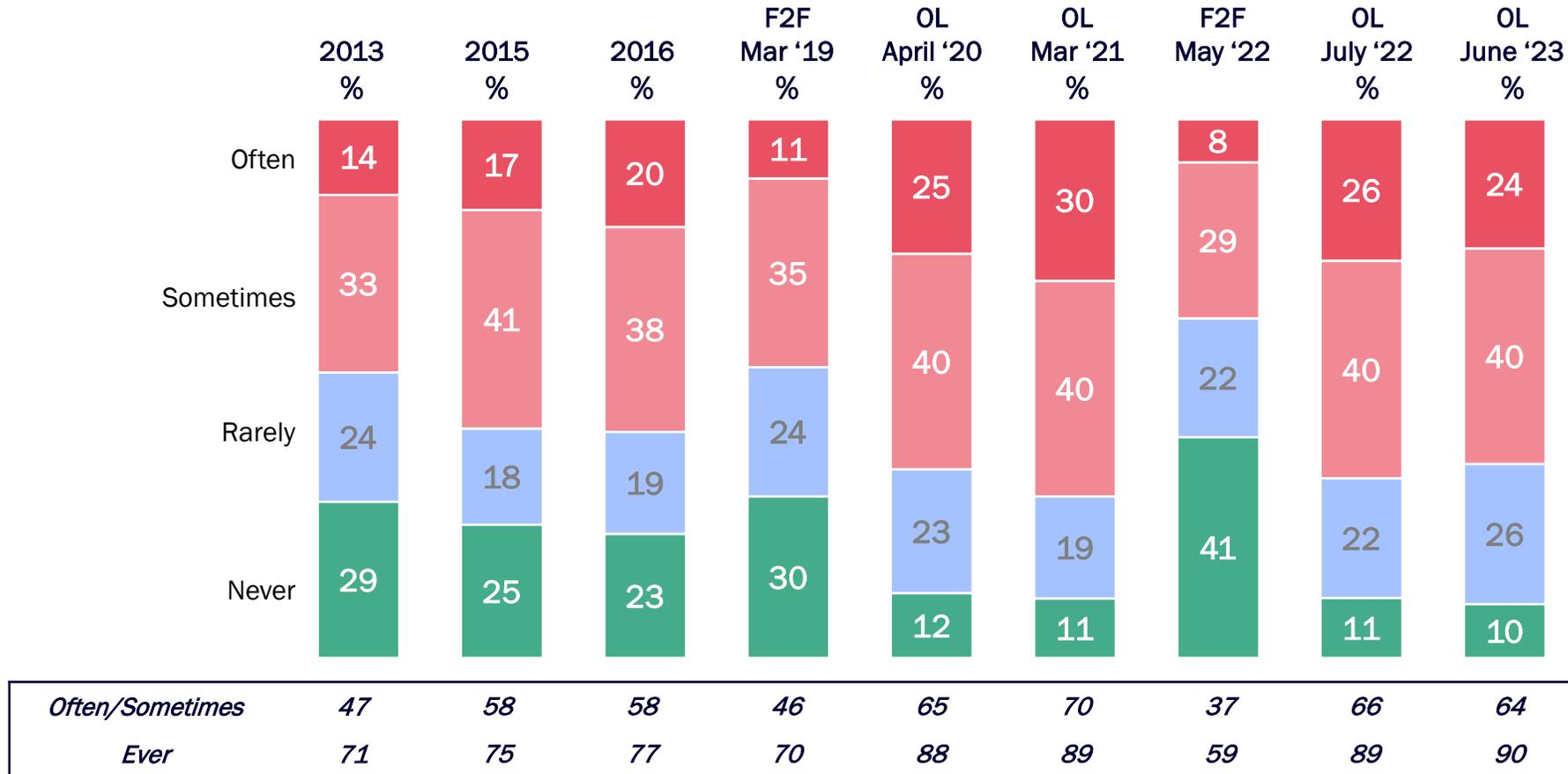
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



One in five often feel anxious with rates of feeling depressed and lonely/isolated slightly lower.

Levels of stress: consistent with 2022 for “often” feeling stressed

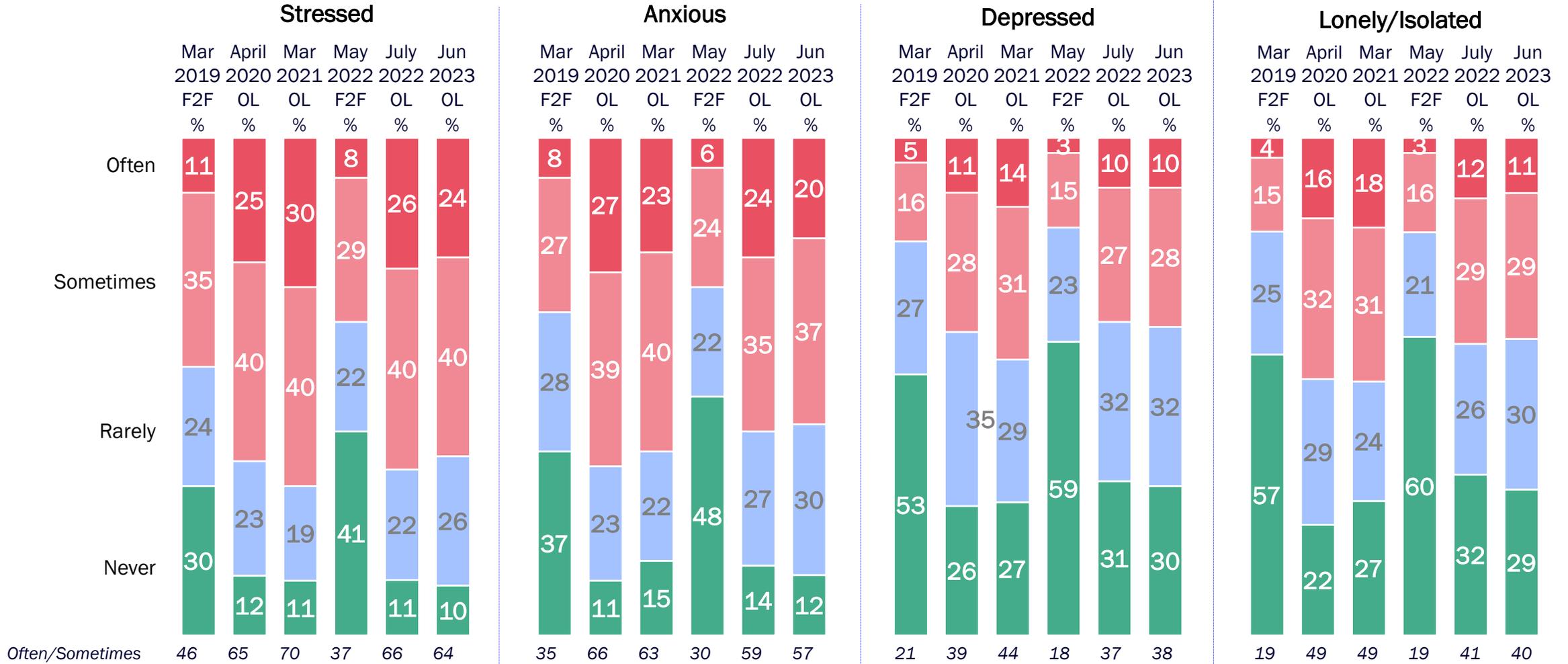
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,694,000 NB Survey method differences



While incidence of feeling stressed are in line with last year there has been a decrease since 2021, most likely a factor of the pandemic

Recent experience of mental health issues

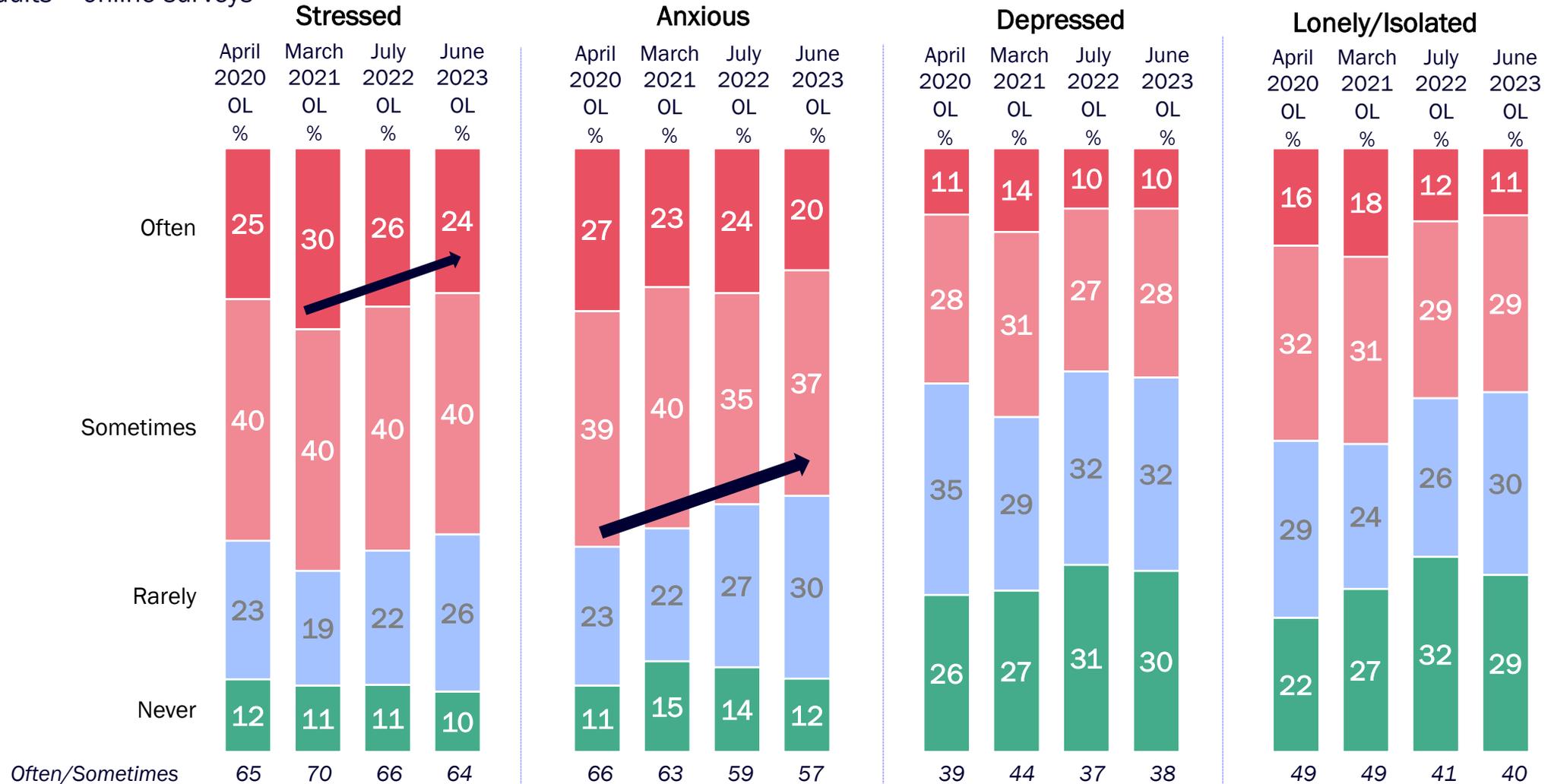
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000 NB survey method differences



Consistent rates of feeling often/sometimes stressed, anxious, depressed or lonely/isolated with July '22. Note the substantial differences in people saying 'never' face-to-face versus online

Mid-pandemic experience of mental health issues was elevated

Base: All adults – online surveys

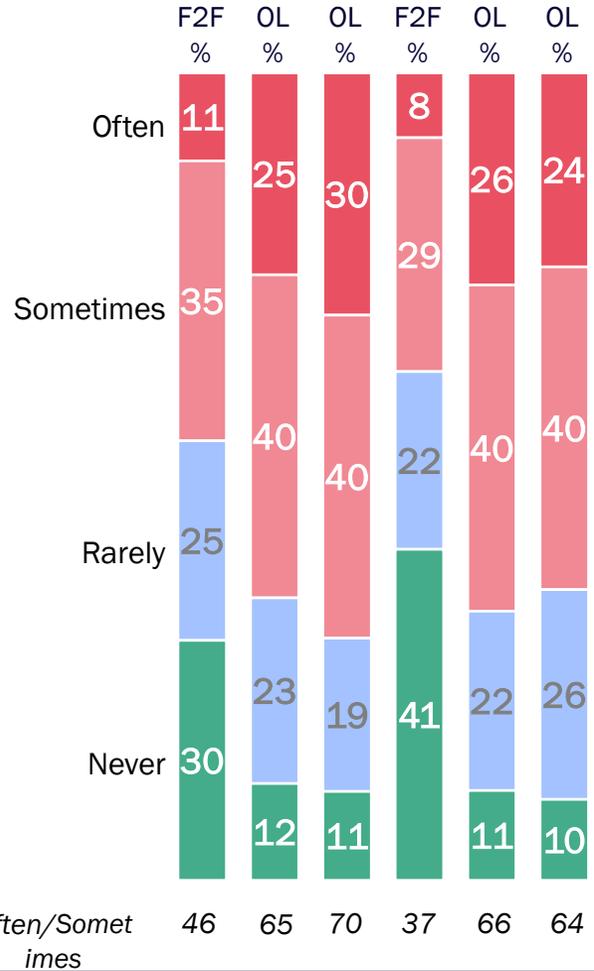


Stress has decreased since March '21 and anxiety has decreased as we have emerged from the pandemic. Depression and loneliness/isolation has also decrease since March '21 suggesting improving mental wellbeing post pandemic.

Feeling stressed x demographics

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

Mar 2019 Apr 2020 Mar 2021 May 2022 July 2022 June 2023



	Often %	Often/ Sometimes %					
		2019	2020	2021	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Gender:							
Male	18	42	61	64	30	58	58
Female	29	50	70	75	44	75	69
Age:							
-24	30	47	75	84	45	80	67
25-34	32	53	81	84	41	85	76
35-49	30	58	71	78	44	75	75
50-64	18	42	62	65	33	60	63
65+	10	26	40	39	23	39	33
Social Class:							
ABC1	23	47	70	76	39	71	68
C2DE	25	46	60	64	37	63	60
Household Situation:							
Kids	32	52	73	79	41	77	73
No kids	19	42	61	66	35	63	58

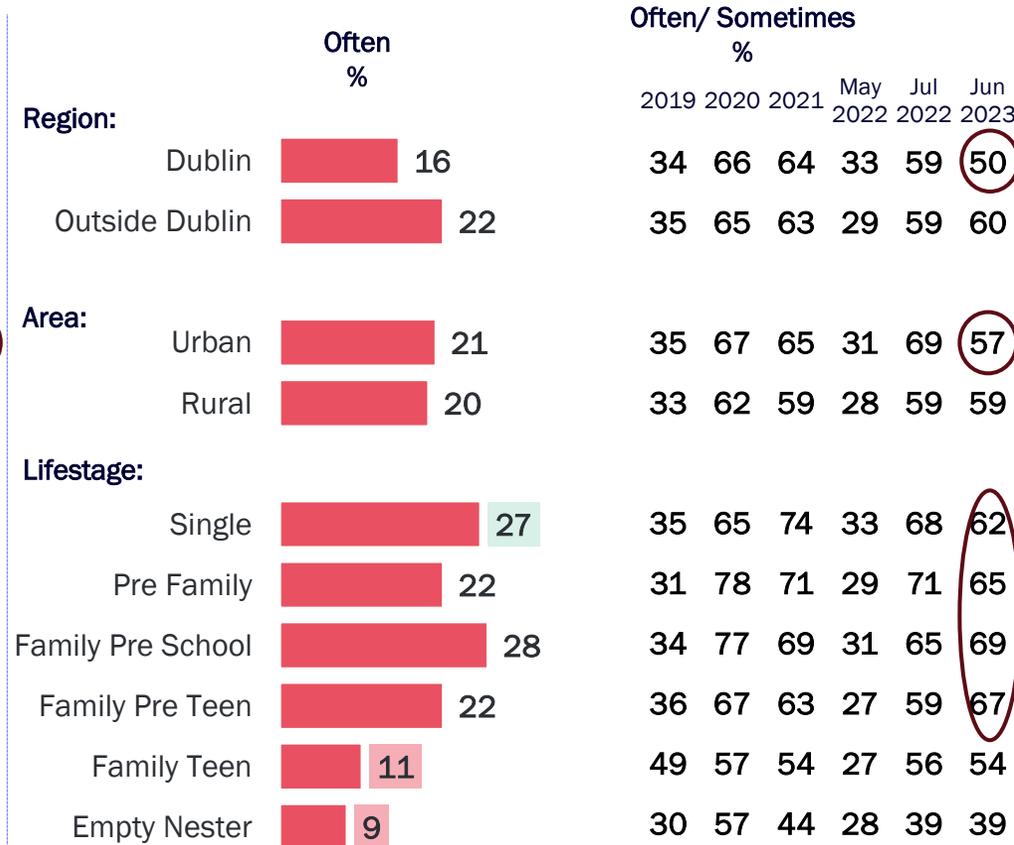
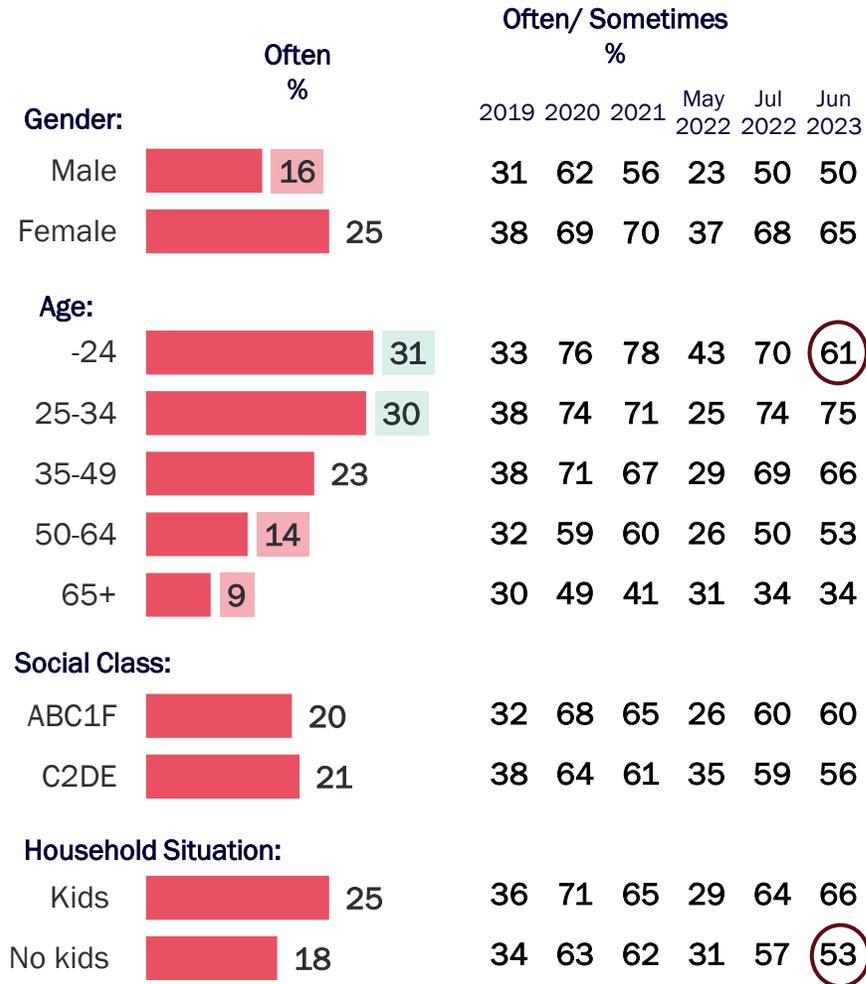
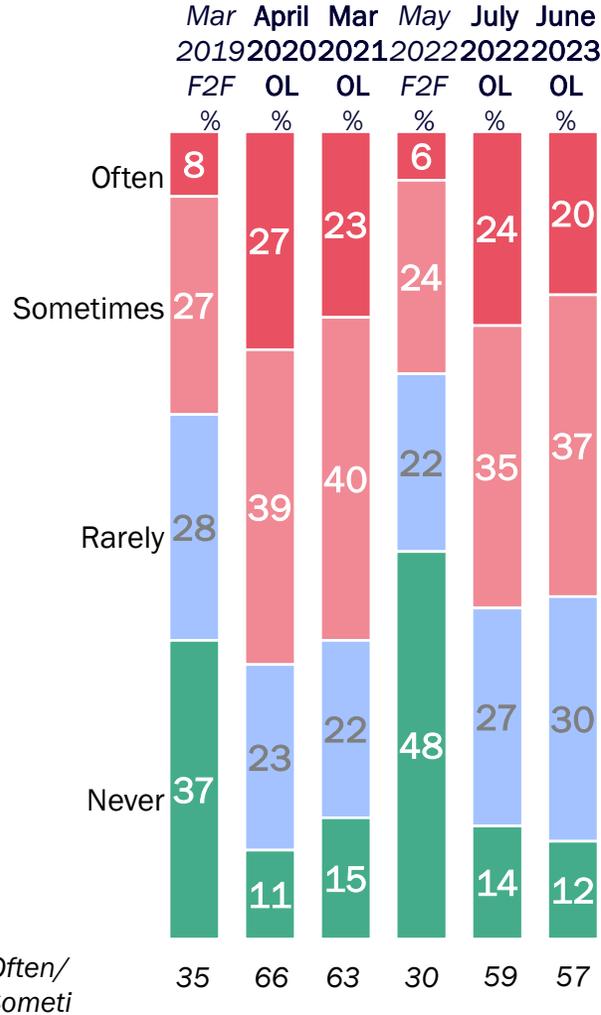
	Often %	Often/ Sometimes %					
		2019	2020	2021	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Region:							
Dublin	19	49	63	69	39	62	55
Outside Dublin	26	45	66	70	36	69	67
Area:							
Urban	23	49	66	71	39	66	61
Rural	25	41	63	68	33	68	69
Lifestage:							
Single	25	41	66	74	37	73	63
Pre Family	23	56	80	84	40	80	71
Family Pre School	38	51	78	88	42	85	76
Family Pre Teen	29	56	72	75	43	70	74
Family Teen	16	61	52	54	38	62	71
Empty Nester	14	35	51	50	30	46	47

Women, 25-49-year-olds and those with kids in the household are significantly more likely to state they have often felt stressed in the last two weeks. Over 65 years olds are least likely to often feel stressed, and only a third now do .

(Interestingly, we had been a lot more likely in f2f studies to find people who said they were “never stressed”.)

Feeling anxious x demographics

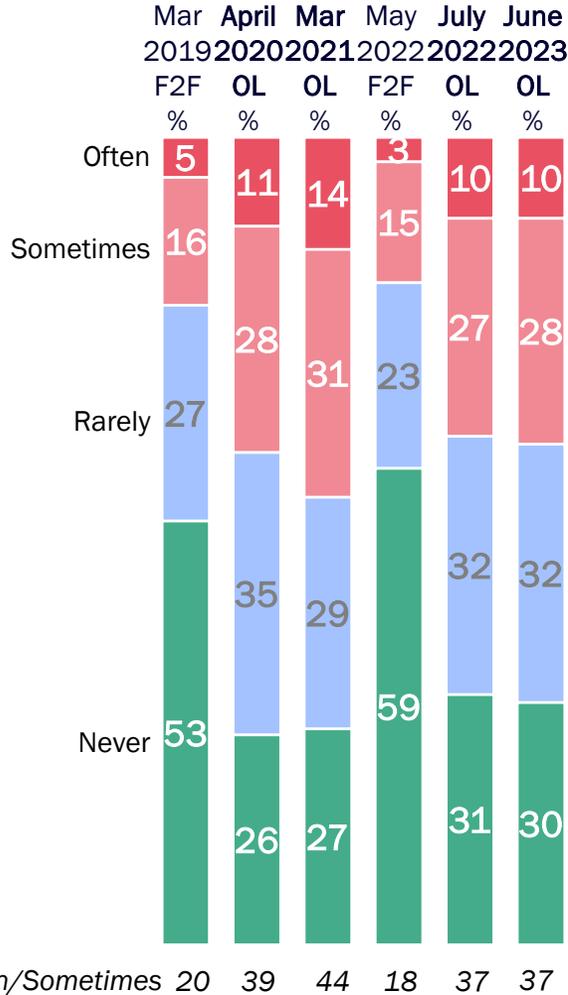
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Men and over 50-year-olds are less likely to state they feel anxious often with under 35-year-olds more likely. Again, online respondents are much less likely to say that they are “never anxious”.

Feeling depressed x demographics

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



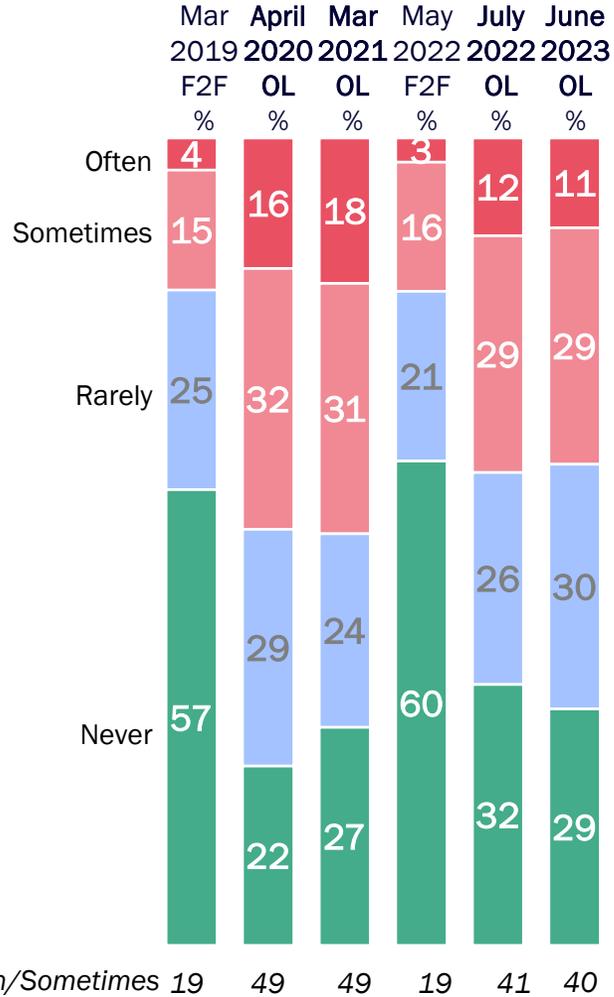
Demographic	Often %	2019	2020	2021	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Gender:							
Male	9	19	35	42	14	35	38
Female	10	21	42	47	21	40	36
Age:							
-24	15	19	44	58	24	43	47
25-34	14	21	49	55	16	53	52
35-49	12	24	45	47	16	45	42
50-64	6	18	30	40	14	32	31
65+	2	15	25	24	20	16	18
Social Class:							
ABC1F	9	17	35	47	11	35	39
C2DE	10	24	42	42	24	40	37
Household Situation:							
Kids	14	19	43	44	18	42	46
No kids	7	21	36	45	17	36	33

Demographic	Often %	2019	2020	2021	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Region:							
Dublin	11	24	40	46	18	33	37
Outside Dublin	9	19	38	43	18	39	38
Area:							
Urban	11	25	40	46	17	37	39
Rural	7	11	36	42	19	38	34
Lifestage:							
Single	13	24	42	55	21	45	40
Pre Family	9	18	48	56	12	44	48
Family Pre School	11	20	45	50	17	42	45
Family Pre Teen	14	20	43	36	17	45	47
Family Teen	9	27	29	34	11	27	36
Empty Nester	2	13	28	29	15	23	21

Over 50-year-olds are less likely to often feel depressed with those with kids in the household being more likely than average.

Feeling lonely/isolated x demographics

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



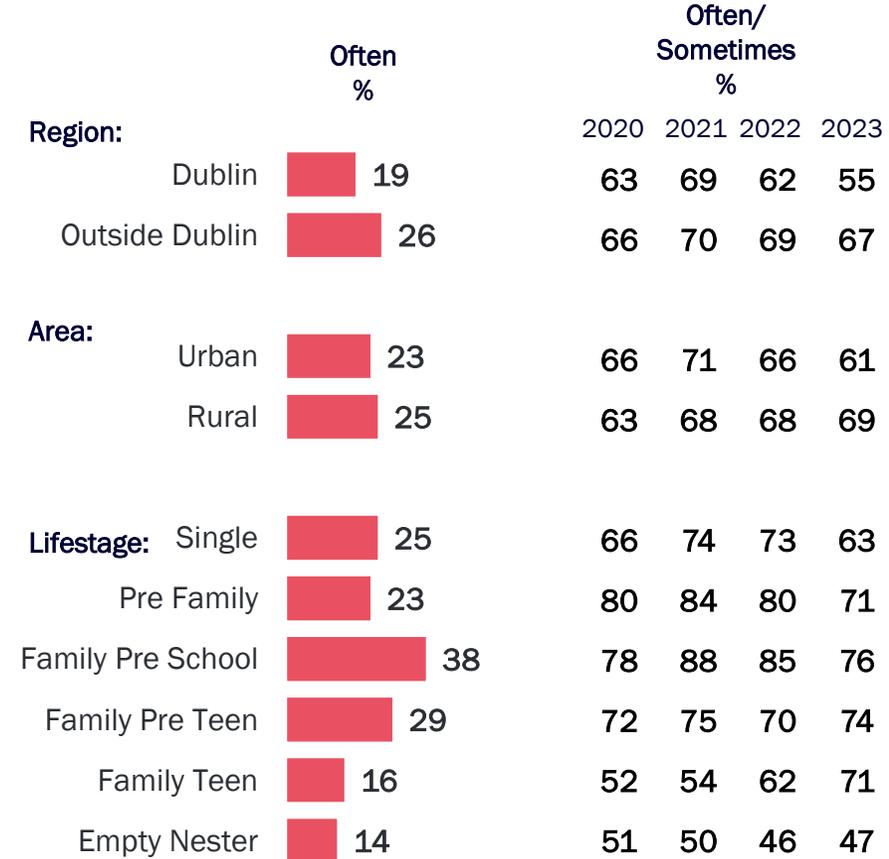
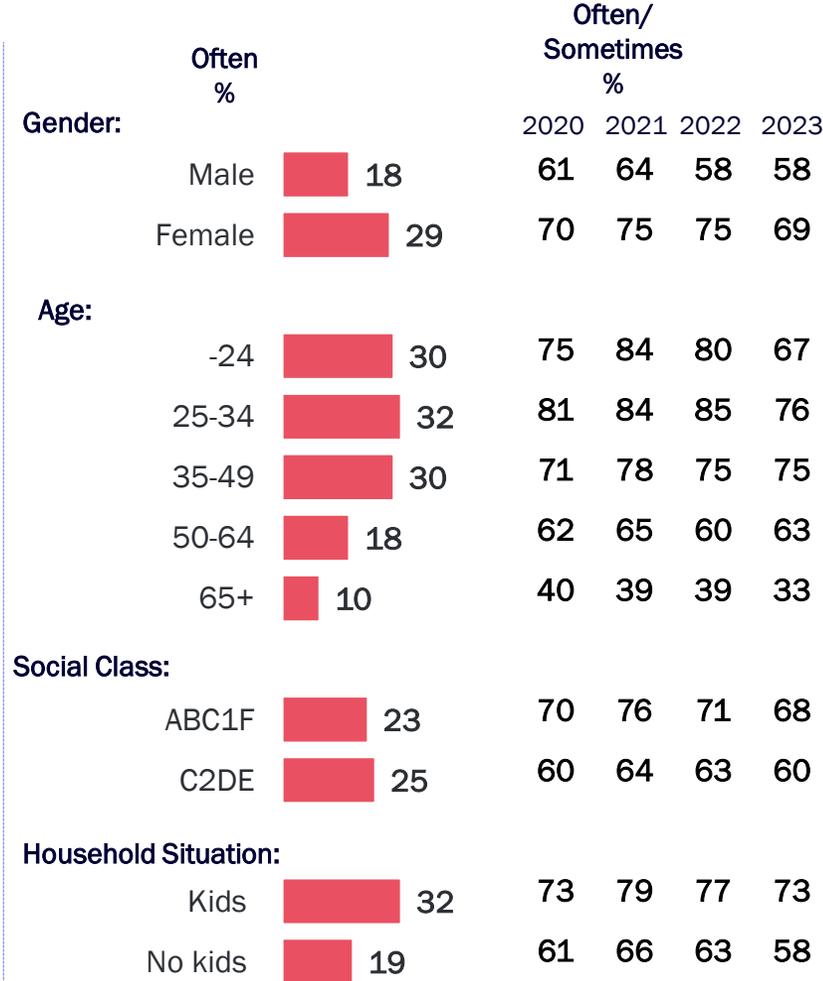
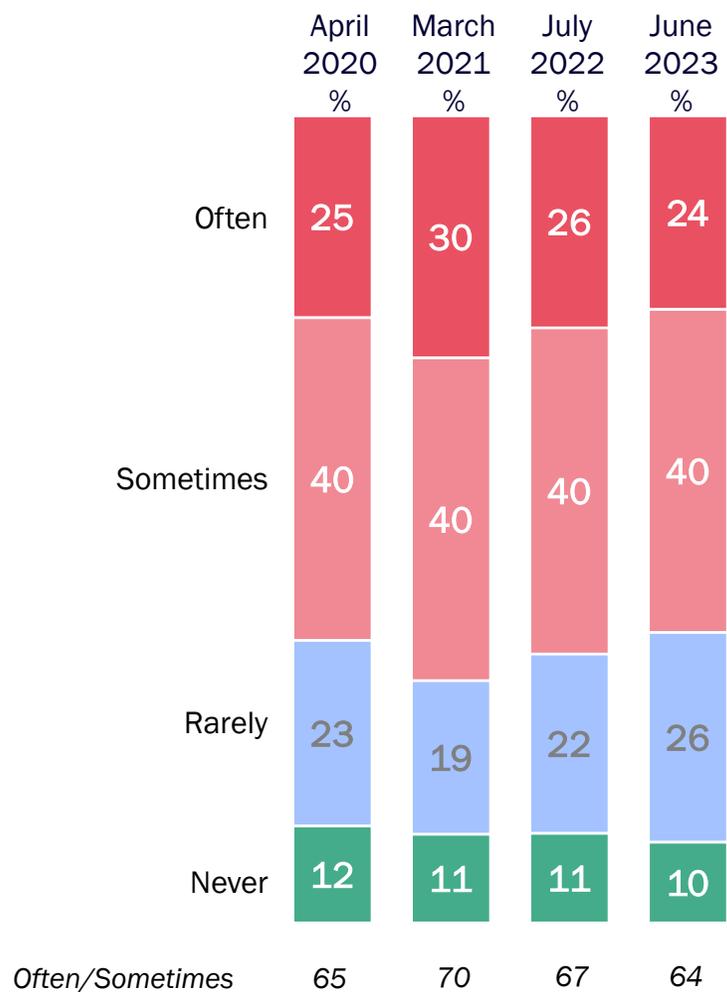
	Often %	2019	2020	2021	Often/Sometimes %	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Gender:								
Male	9	18	44	44	15	39	39	
Female	14	18	53	55	24	43	42	
Age:								
-24	18	20	73	63	21	62	54	
25-34	14	15	58	62	12	62	57	
35-49	14	17	50	49	16	44	45	
50-64	8	20	33	41	20	30	31	
65+	4	21	36	38	29	17	21	
Social Class:								
ABC1F	11	14	49	51	12	41	41	
C2DE	12	22	49	48	25	42	41	
Household Situation:								
Kids	13	14	51	50	17	42	47	
No kids	10	21	48	49	21	41	37	

	Often %	2019	2020	2021	Often/Sometimes %	May 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2023
Region:								
Dublin	10	17	50	52	19	41	38	
Outside Dublin	12	19	48	48	20	41	41	
Area:								
Urban	12	21	51	52	18	42	41	
Rural	11	15	44	45	21	41	39	
Lifestage:								
Single	19	26	62	64	24	59	53	
Pre Family	12	12	60	58	11	50	44	
Family Pre School	11	15	52	56	16	44	48	
Family Pre Teen	12	15	47	40	16	37	47	
Family Teen	6	23	30	30	14	30	35	
Empty Nester	4	13	31	32	18	18	18	

Over 65-year-olds are less likely than average to often feel lonely/isolated with those who are Single or Pre-family, but also Parents and Women, more likely.

Feeling stress has trended downwards since 2021

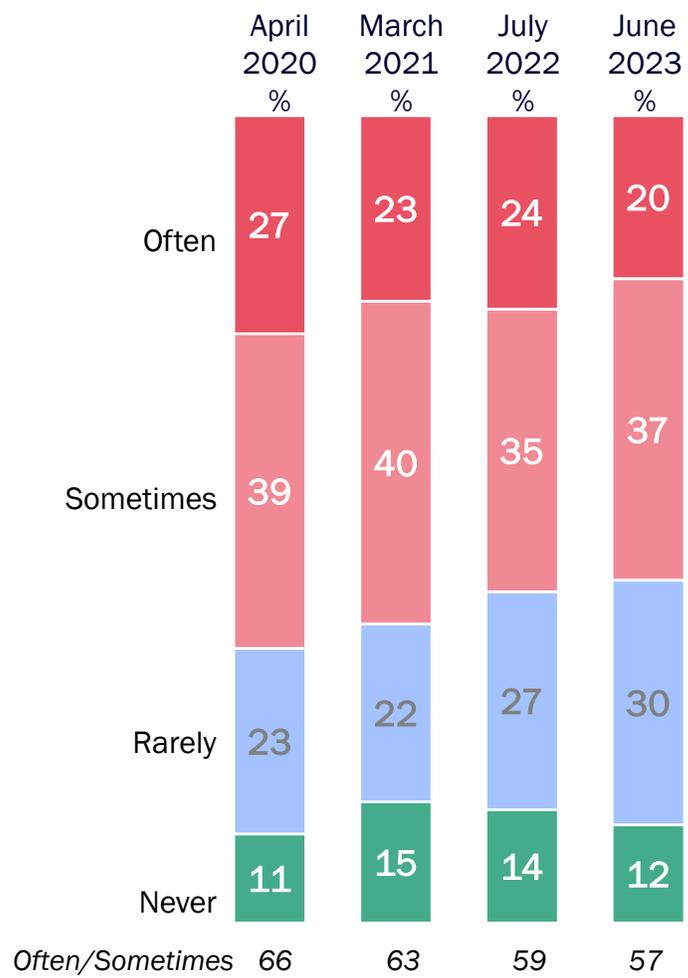
Base: All adults online surveys



Often or sometimes feeling stressed is in line with levels seen at the start of the pandemic (April '20) although has reduced from mid-pandemic (-6%pts vs March '21). It remains most elevated female, among parents, in the school-going lifestages and between the ages of 25 and 49. It is higher among more affluent homes (as it consistently has been) and to a greater extent in rural and non-Dublin areas (with a Dublin reduction noteworthy).

Feeling anxious x demographics

Base: All adults online surveys



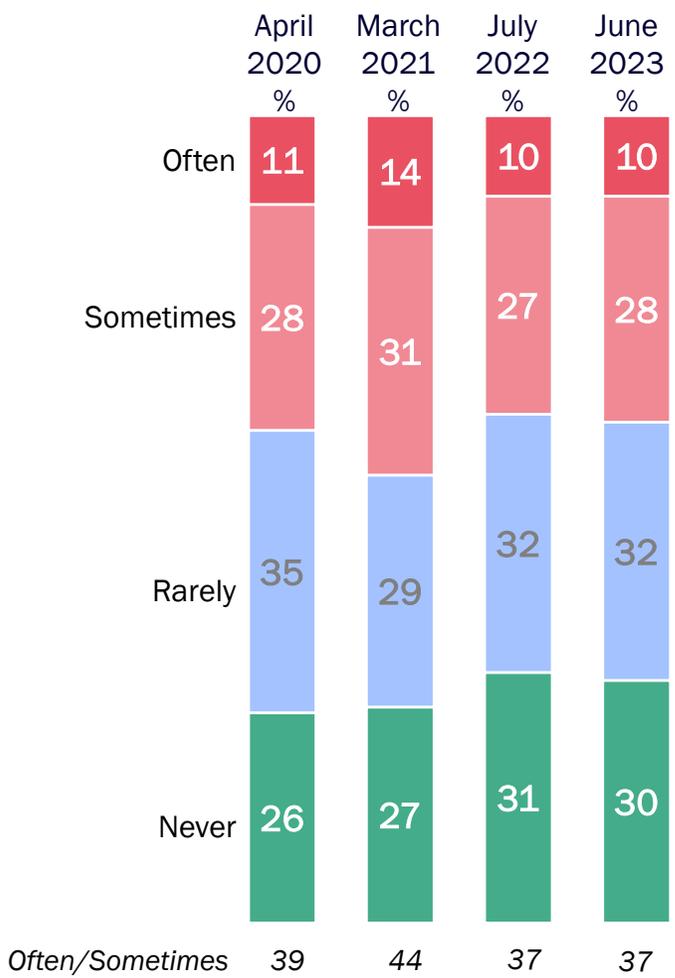
	Often %	Often/Sometimes %			
		2020	2021	2022	2023
Gender:					
Male	16	62	56	50	50
Female	25	69	70	68	65
Age:					
-24	31	76	78	70	61
25-34	30	74	71	74	75
35-49	23	71	67	69	66
50-64	14	59	60	50	53
65+	9	49	41	34	34
Social Class:					
ABC1F	20	68	65	60	60
C2DE	21	64	61	59	56
Household Situation:					
Kids	25	71	65	64	66
No kids	18	63	62	57	53

	Often %	Often/Sometimes %			
		2020	2021	2022	2023
Region:					
Dublin	16	66	64	59	50
Outside Dublin	22	65	63	59	60
Area:					
Urban	21	67	65	59	57
Rural	20	62	59	59	59
Lifestage:					
Single	27	65	74	68	62
Pre Family	22	78	71	71	65
Family Pre School	28	77	69	65	69
Family Pre Teen	22	67	63	59	67
Family Teen	11	57	54	56	54
Empty Nester	9	57	44	39	39

Feelings of anxiety are now somewhat less apparent although a regular occurrence for one in every five. Most elevated Female, 25 to 50, parents and slightly more so among more affluent families.

Feeling depressed x demographics

Base: All adults online surveys



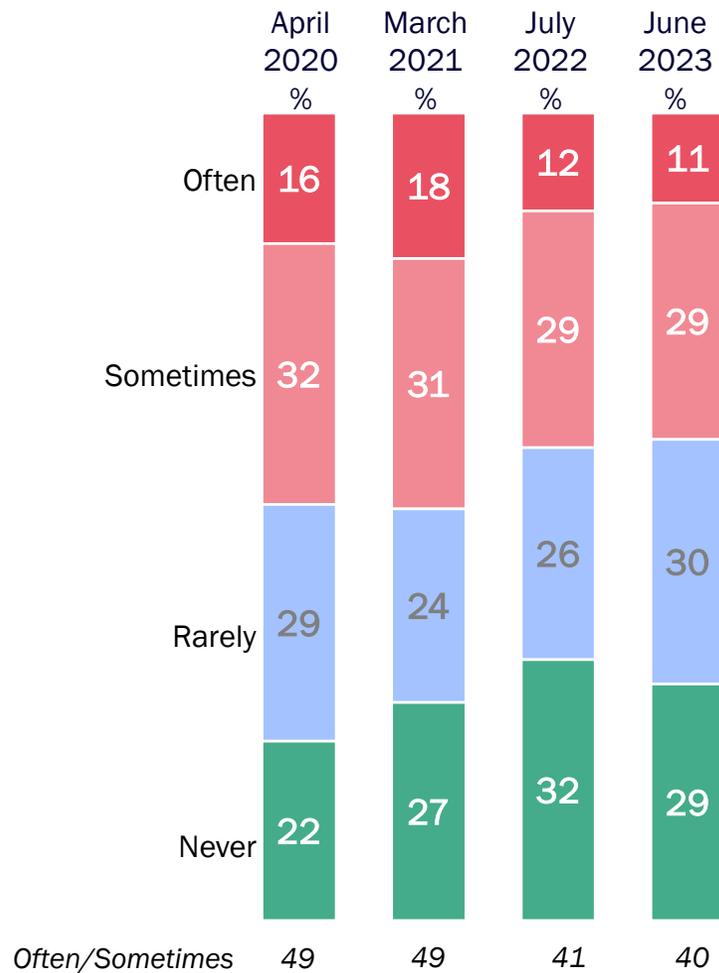
	Often %	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gender:					
Male	9	35	42	35	38
Female	10	42	47	40	36
Age:					
-24	15	44	58	43	47
25-34	14	49	55	53	52
35-49	12	45	47	45	42
50-64	6	30	40	32	31
65+	2	25	24	16	18
Social Class:					
ABC1F	9	35	47	35	39
C2DE	10	42	42	40	37
Household Situation:					
Kids	14	43	44	42	46
No kids	7	36	45	36	33

	Often %	2020	2021	2022	2023
Region:					
Dublin	11	40	46	33	37
Outside Dublin	9	38	43	39	38
Area:					
Urban	11	40	46	37	39
Rural	7	36	42	38	34
Lifestage:					
Single	13	42	55	45	40
Pre Family	9	48	56	44	48
Family Pre School	11	45	50	42	45
Family Pre Teen	14	43	36	45	47
Family Teen	9	29	34	27	36
Empty Nester	2	28	29	23	21

Just under two in five say they are depressed at least some of the time, with no current gender or class difference, but particularly elevated for Parents, among all family lifestages, in urban areas and largely under the age of 50

Feeling lonely/isolated x demographics

Base: All adults online surveys



	Often %	Often/Sometimes %	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gender:						
Male	9	44	44	39	39	
Female	14	53	55	43	42	
Age:						
-24	18	73	63	62	54	
25-34	14	58	62	62	57	
35-49	14	50	49	44	45	
50-64	8	33	41	30	31	
65+	4	36	38	17	21	
Social Class:						
ABC1F	11	49	51	41	41	
C2DE	12	49	48	42	41	
Household Situation:						
Kids	13	51	50	42	47	
No kids	10	48	49	41	37	

	Often %	Often/Sometimes %	2020	2021	2022	2023
Region:						
Dublin	10	50	52	41	38	
Outside Dublin	12	48	48	41	41	
Area:						
Urban	12	51	52	42	41	
Rural	11	44	45	41	39	
Lifestage:						
Single	19	62	64	59	53	
Pre Family	12	60	58	50	44	
Family Pre School	11	52	56	44	48	
Family Pre Teen	12	47	40	37	47	
Family Teen	6	30	30	30	35	
Empty Nester	4	31	32	18	18	

Loneliness and Isolation trended downwards since 2021 but is still experienced at some level by two in five and frequently by slightly over one in ten. At least occasional experience more pronounced 25-34 and in the Single lifestage, but the Urban and Dublin concentration seen during the pandemic has now reduced or evened out.

In which demographics do we see elevated experience

Stressed

Often:
 24% of all adults

- 32% of those aged 25-34
- 32% of those with kids
- 29% of women
- 38% family pre-school lifestage

Often/sometimes:
 63% of all adults

- 69% of women
- 76% of those aged 25-34 & 75% of 35-49
- 76% of family pre-school and 74% family pre-teen life-stage

Anxious

Often/sometimes:
 57% of all adults

- 75% of those aged 25-34

Depressed

Often:
 10% of all adults

- 14% of those with kids

Often/sometimes:
 37% of all adults

- 52% of those aged 25-34
- 46% of those with kids
- 47% of family pre-teen life-stage

Lonely

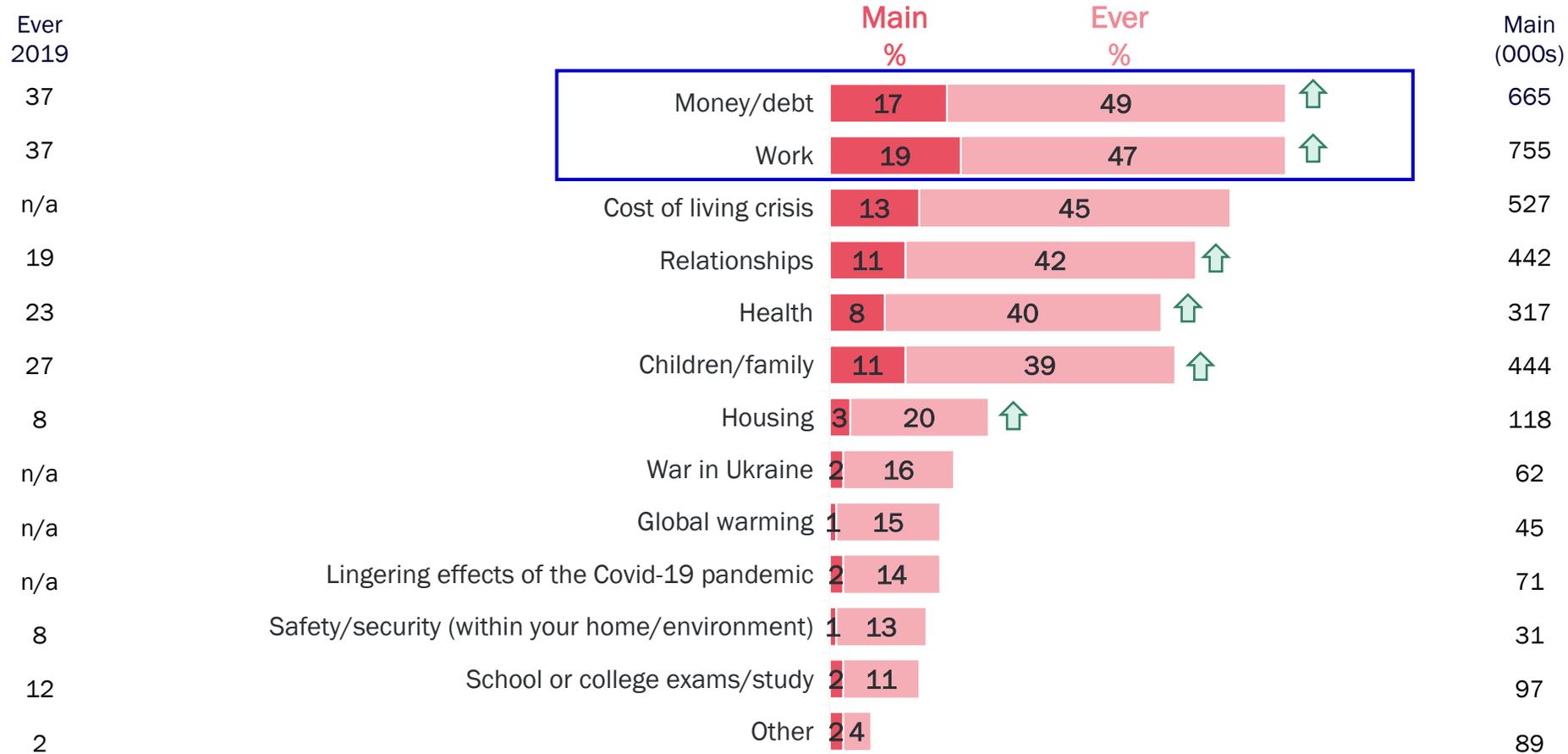
Often/sometimes:
 40% of all adults

- 53% of single lifestage

In many instances higher levels of experience tie in with lifestage changes, presence of children etc with class-related differences less tangible

Work & money/debt issues are the top two causes of stress in people's lives

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Money/debt and work remains the top two causes of stress in peoples lives. Other key causes of stress are the cost of living crisis (related to money/debt), relationships, health and children/family. If combining money/debt and cost of living it would be the main issue for three in ten, or 1.2 million people (and substantially higher than in 2019)

Main Causes of Stress - Summary

Work	Money/Debt	Cost of Living Crisis	Children/Family
<p>Main</p> <p>19% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24% of men• 28% of 25-34s• 27% of ABC1• 22% of Dubliners• 30% of pre-family lifestage	<p>Main</p> <p>17% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26% of 25-34s• 29% of family pre teen	<p>Main</p> <p>13% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16% of women• 17% of 25-34s• 23% pre family lifestage	<p>Main</p> <p>11% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15% of women• 15% of 35-49s• 14% of C2DEs• 19% family pre-school• 25% of farmers*
Relationships	Health	Housing	War in Ukraine
<p>Ever</p> <p>42% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 47% of U25s• 49% of those aged 25-34• 45% of Leinster dwellers	<p>Ever</p> <p>40% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 46% of women• 47% of Munster dwellers	<p>Ever</p> <p>20% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 41% of those aged 25-34• 25% of single people• 24% of pre-family lifestage	<p>Ever</p> <p>16% of all adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22% those aged 65+• 22% of family teen lifestage

**Small base*

The likelihood of an increasing array of factors being stressors has risen quite markedly since 2019

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

	Main cause of Stress				Ever Cause Stress			
	2013	2015	2019	2023	2013	2015	2019	2023
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Work	25	20	24	19	27	30	37	47
Relationships	9	8	5	11	13	20	19	42
Money/debt	33	24	19	17	44	38	37	49
Cost of living crisis	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	45
Lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	14
War in Ukraine	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	16
Global warming	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	15
Health	10	14	11	8	19	23	23	40
Housing	n/a	n/a	2	3	n/a	n/a	8	20
Children/family	n/a	3	12	11	n/a	3	27	39
Safety/security (within your home/environment)	n/a	n/a	2	1	n/a	n/a	8	13
School or college exams/study	7	3	6	2	9	5	12	11
Other	n/a	3	1	2	n/a	3	2	4

This could be a function of many elements but presumably the concurrence of the Pandemic and the more recent Cost of Living crisis, or the Polycrisis as some term it, is likely to be at the root of related stress

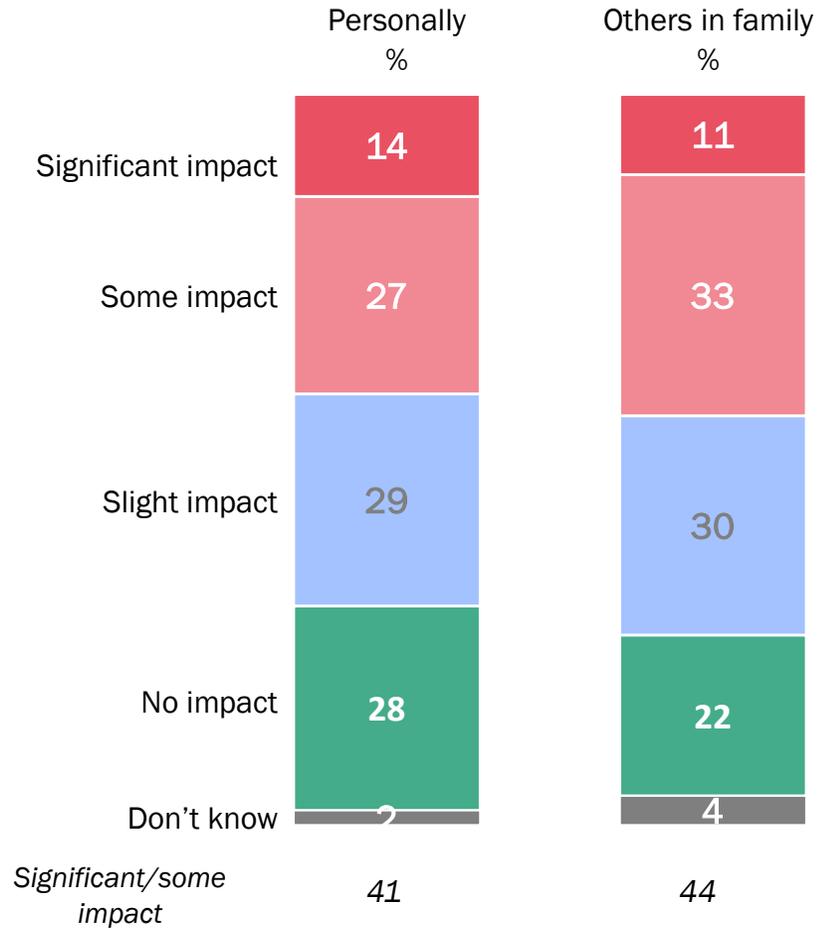


Impact of the pandemic on mental health

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Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

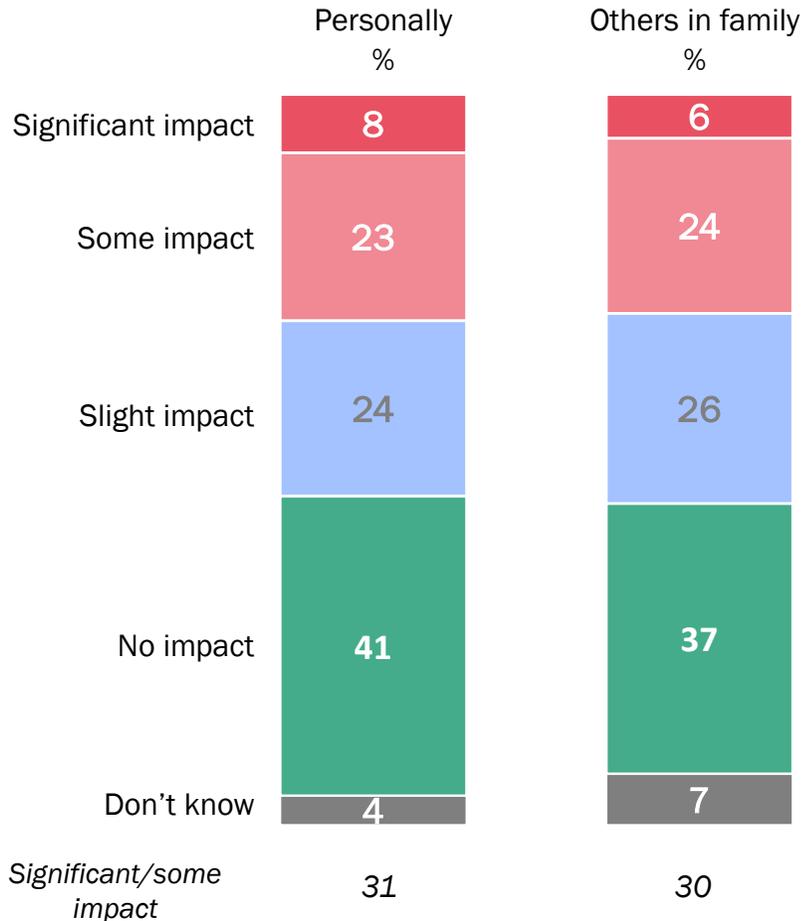
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Just over two in five state the COVID-19 pandemic had some or a significant impact on them personally. The pandemic is seen as having had even greater impact on others in ones' family with only 22% believing it had no impact. One in seven believe it had a significant personal impact

Lingering impact of effects of the Covid-19 pandemic personally and on others

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Approximately three in ten adults state they and others in their family have significant/some lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic today. One in twelve feel that it still significantly impacts them personally.

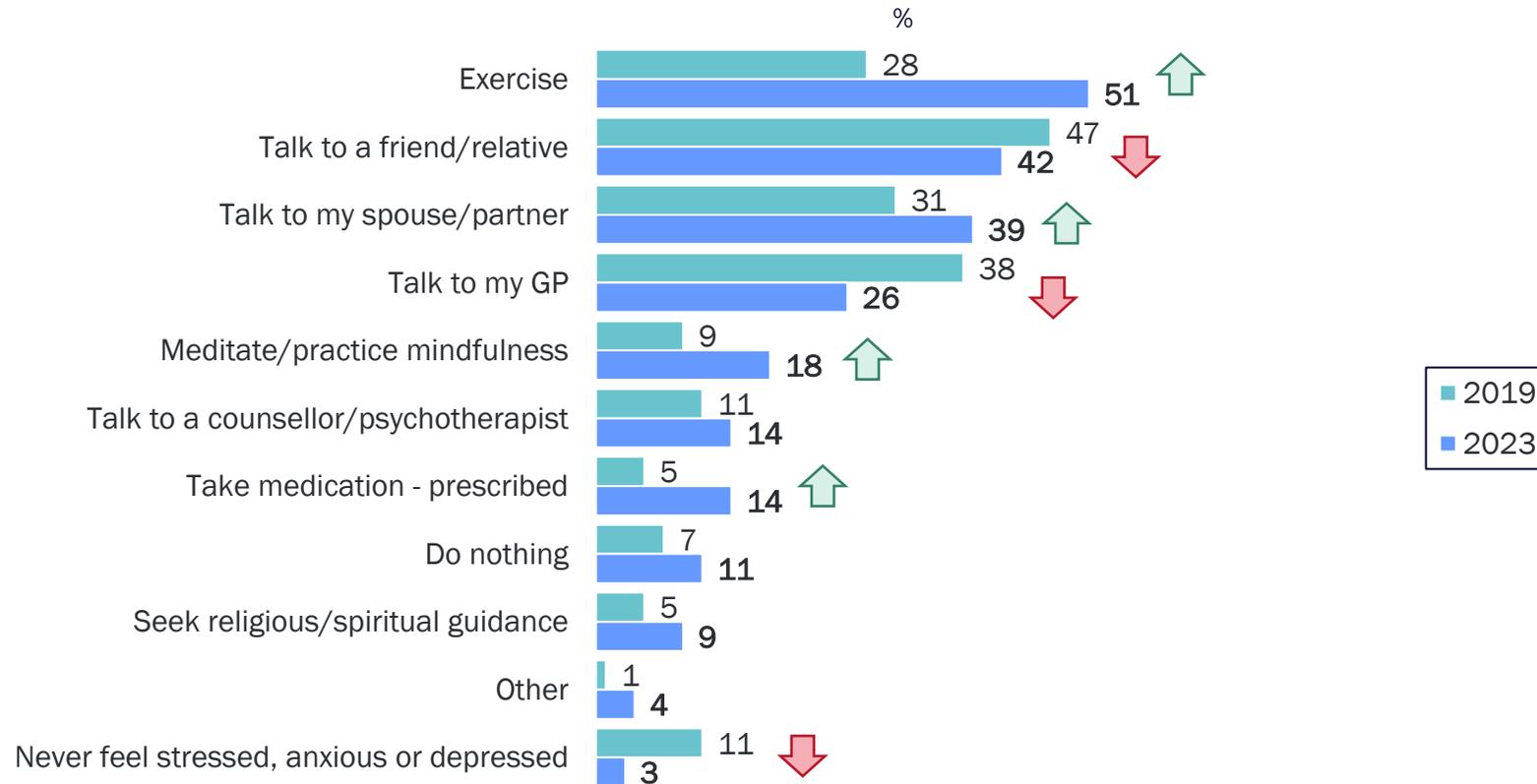


Mental health support and attitudes

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14% say they find talking to a Counsellor/ Psychotherapist helpful when they are struggling mentally

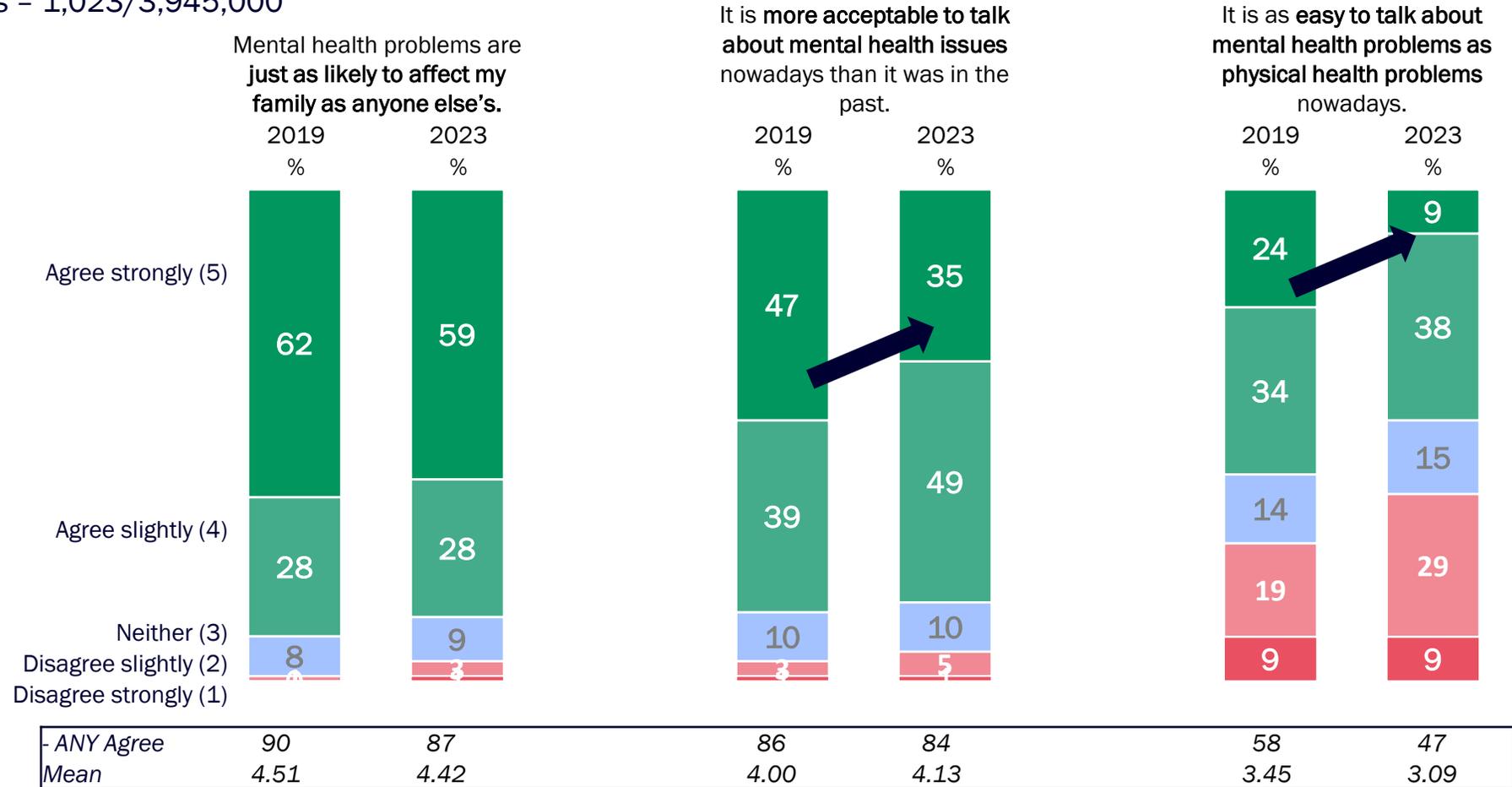
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Exercise, talking to a friend/relative and talking to a spouse/partner are more helpful when struggling with your mental health. Exercise, talking with spouse/partner, meditation and medication have increased since 2019, this could be as a result of pandemic living.

Positive attitudes toward mental health are broadly evident but evidence the openness and acceptance are somewhat diminished

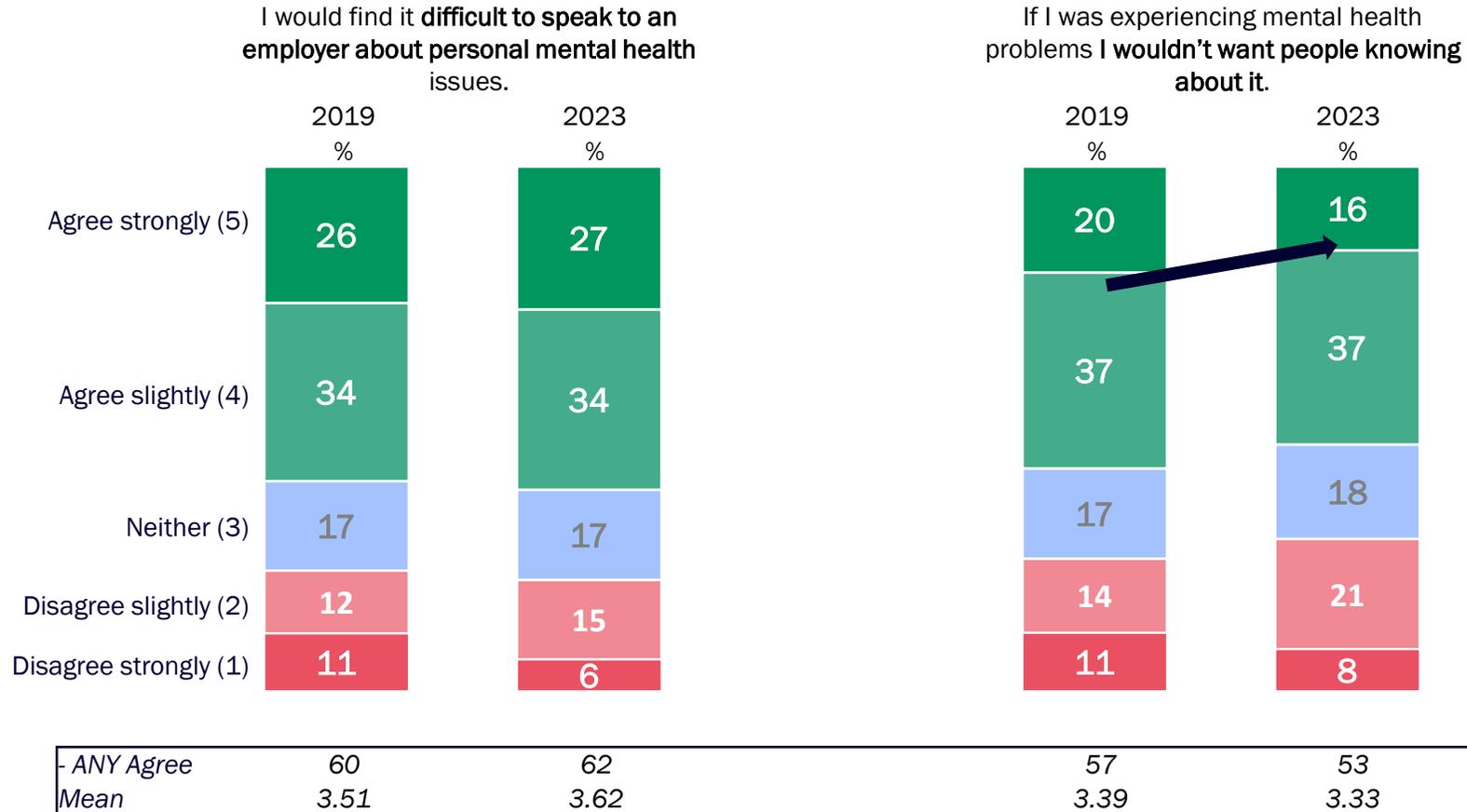
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Agreement with *mental health problems as just as likely to affect my family as anyone else's* is in line with 2019 at 87% (-3%pts). The intensity of agreement with it being *more acceptable to talk about mental health issues nowadays* has decreased (35% strongly agreeing, -12%pts). Overall agreement with *it being as easy to talk about mental health problems as physical health problems* has also decreased to 47% agreeing (-11%pts).

Despite positive attitudes, personal disclosure remains an issue for many

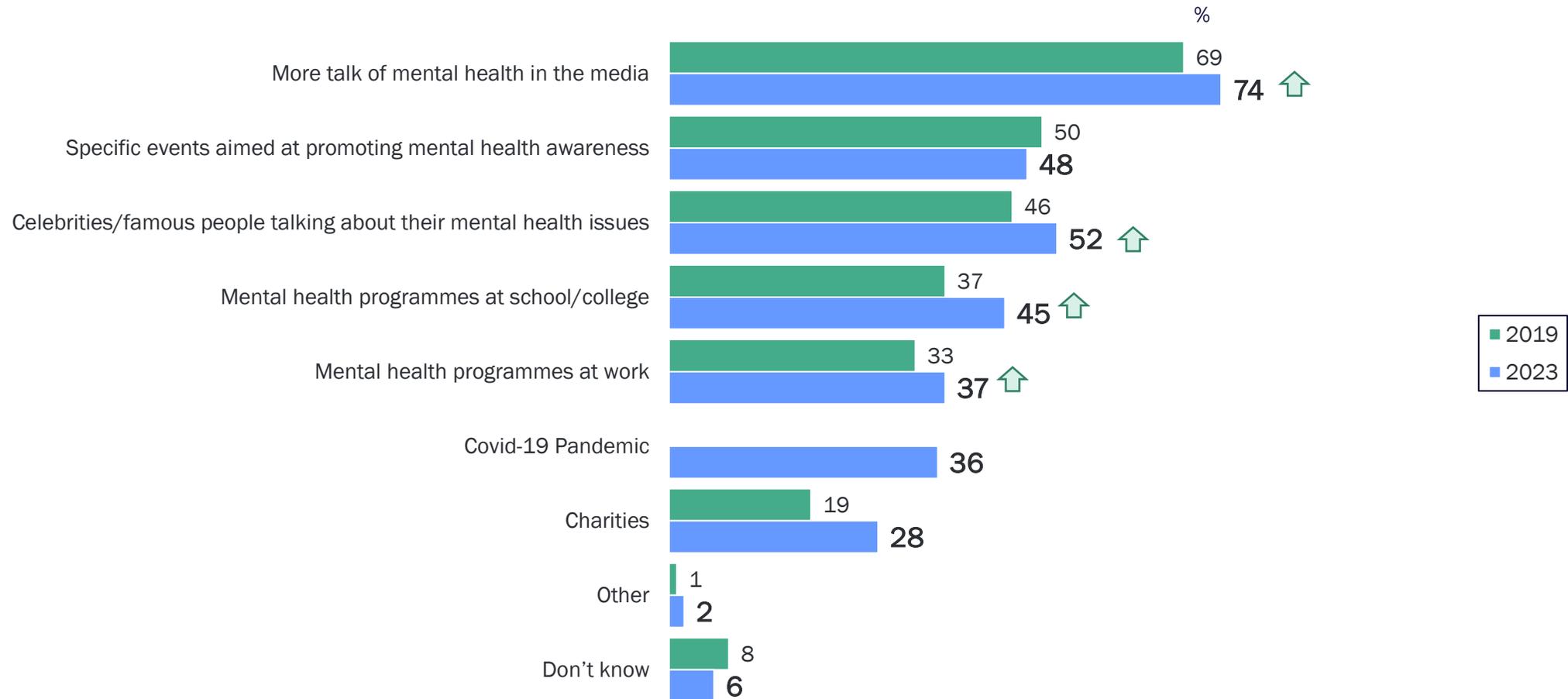
Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



Agreement with finding it *difficult to speak to an employer about personal mental health issues* remains in line with 2019 at three in five adults. Slight decrease in intensity of agreement with *if I was experiencing mental health problems I wouldn't want people knowing about it* to 53% (-4%pts), but still a majority perspective.

Media, events and celebrity focus the key contributors to growing acceptance

Base: Those who say it is more acceptable to discuss mental health – 1,023/3,945,000



Just under three in four adults state that *more talk of mental health in the media* has contributed to it being more acceptable to talk about mental health issues today. Focus by Celebrities, in college and at work also helps.

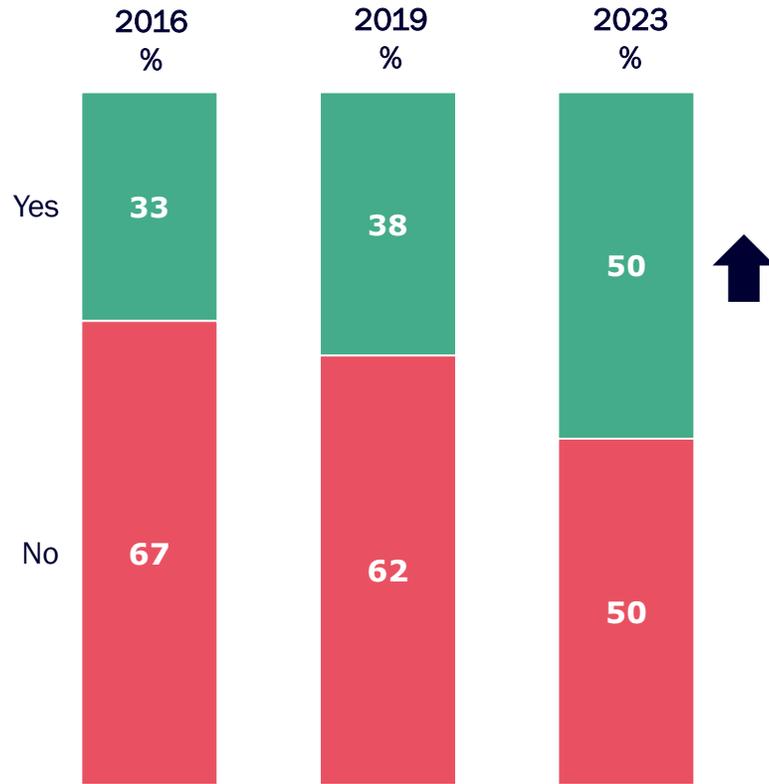


Suicide in Ireland

B&A

The proportion who have been affected by suicide has increased notably since 2016

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Any yes:	2016	2019	2023	'000s
Immediate family	6	5	7	293
Wider family	7	9	15	583
Friends/colleagues	11	14	19	753
Local community/ neighbours	14	17	23	902
	13%	14%	22%	
	13%	31%	42%	

In 2023 half of adults claim to have been impacted by suicide in some way, increasing from a third in 2016. This could be driven by increased awareness or consciousness but there is evident growth across wider family, peer group and community. However, the 2016 and 2019 levels were from face-to-face surveys so the possibility of previous under-reporting should not be discounted.

Suicide prevalence x demographics

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

	All Adults	Gender		Age					Social Class			Region		Area	
		Male	Female	-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	F	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Urban	Rural
<i>Base:</i>	1,023	503	520	89	176	333	265	160	548	461	14*	301	722	736	287
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes – suicide in immediate family	7	6	8	10	6	9	6	6	7	8	14	6	8	7	9
Yes – suicide in wider family	15	14	15	19	19	17	10	11	17	12	20	16	14	15	13
Yes – suicide among friends or colleagues	19	22	17	29	23	24	13	9	23	15	13	20	19	20	18
Yes – suicide among local community or neighbours	23	21	25	28	26	26	19	16	24	22	18	19	25	20	28
Other	1	1	1	-	1	2	0	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1
No	50	52	48	40	44	40	58	67	46	54	63	53	49	52	47

*Small base

There are no significant differences in awareness but it higher in the age groups below fifty and to an extent among middle class adults

Suicide prevalence x lifestage & condition experience

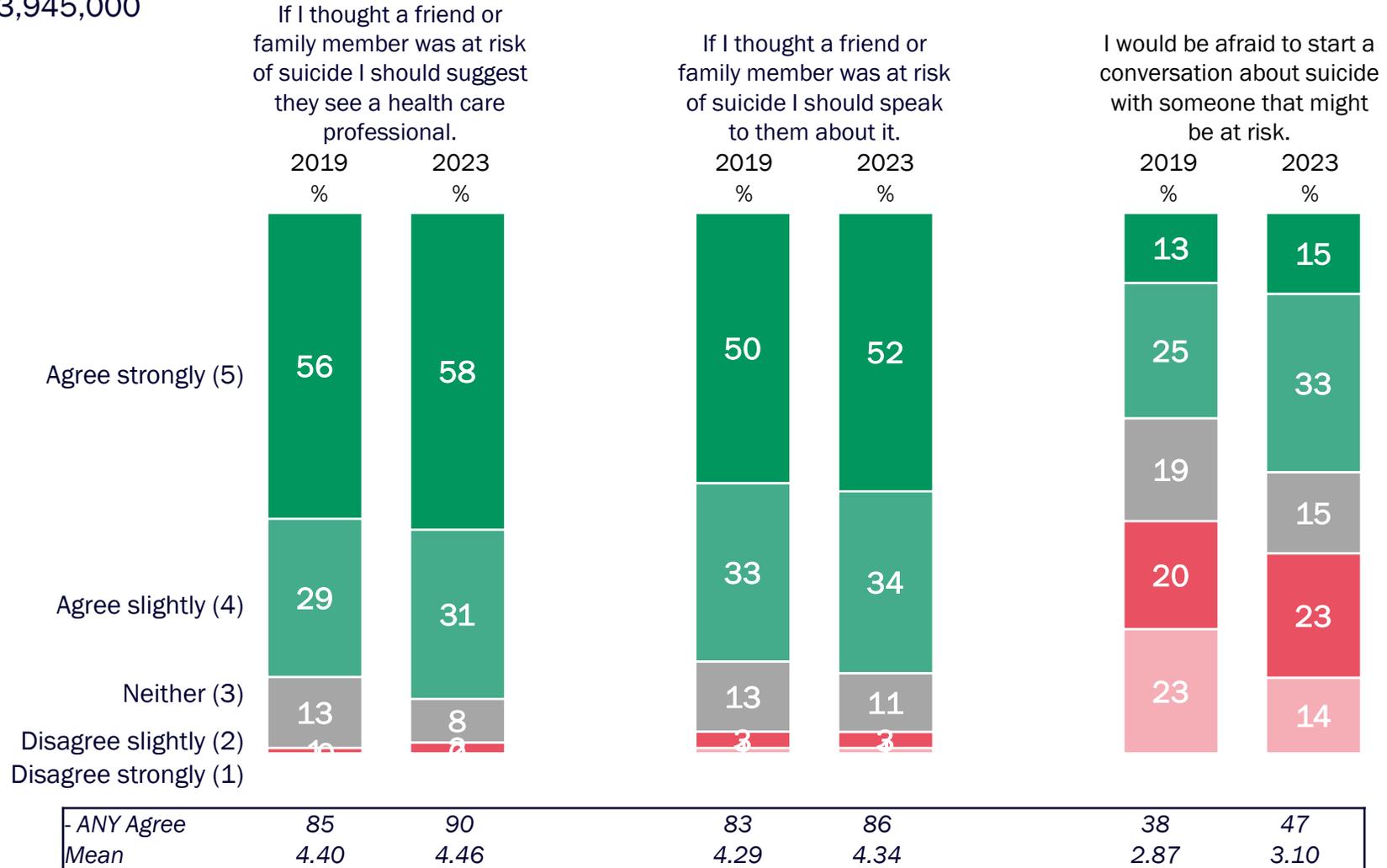
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

	All Adults	Lifestage						Often/sometimes feel...			
		Single	Pre Family	Family Pre School	Family Pre Teen	Family Teen	Empty Nester	Stressed	Anxious	Depressed	Lonely
<i>Base:</i>	<i>1,023</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>146</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>659</i>	<i>596</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>409</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes – suicide in immediate family	7	6	10	8	11	8	6	8	9	12	10
Yes – suicide in wider family	15	16	18	20	15	11	11	17	18	18	15
Yes – suicide among friends or colleagues	19	23	20	20	28	12	10	23	24	28	27
Yes – suicide among local community or neighbours	23	26	23	26	19	36	16	26	26	24	25
Other	1	1	-	1	3	-	0	1	1	1	2
No	50	48	44	41	41	47	65	43	42	39	40

Broader awareness in the family lifestages but not significantly so, Those with depression and loneliness experience have marginally higher awareness of it.

Talking about suicide

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



While most people claim they would have a word with someone who may be at risk there has been a sharp uplift in tentativeness for fear of being a catalyst or causing offence/upset. Again, 2019 was face to face, so survey method differences need to be considered as a factor.

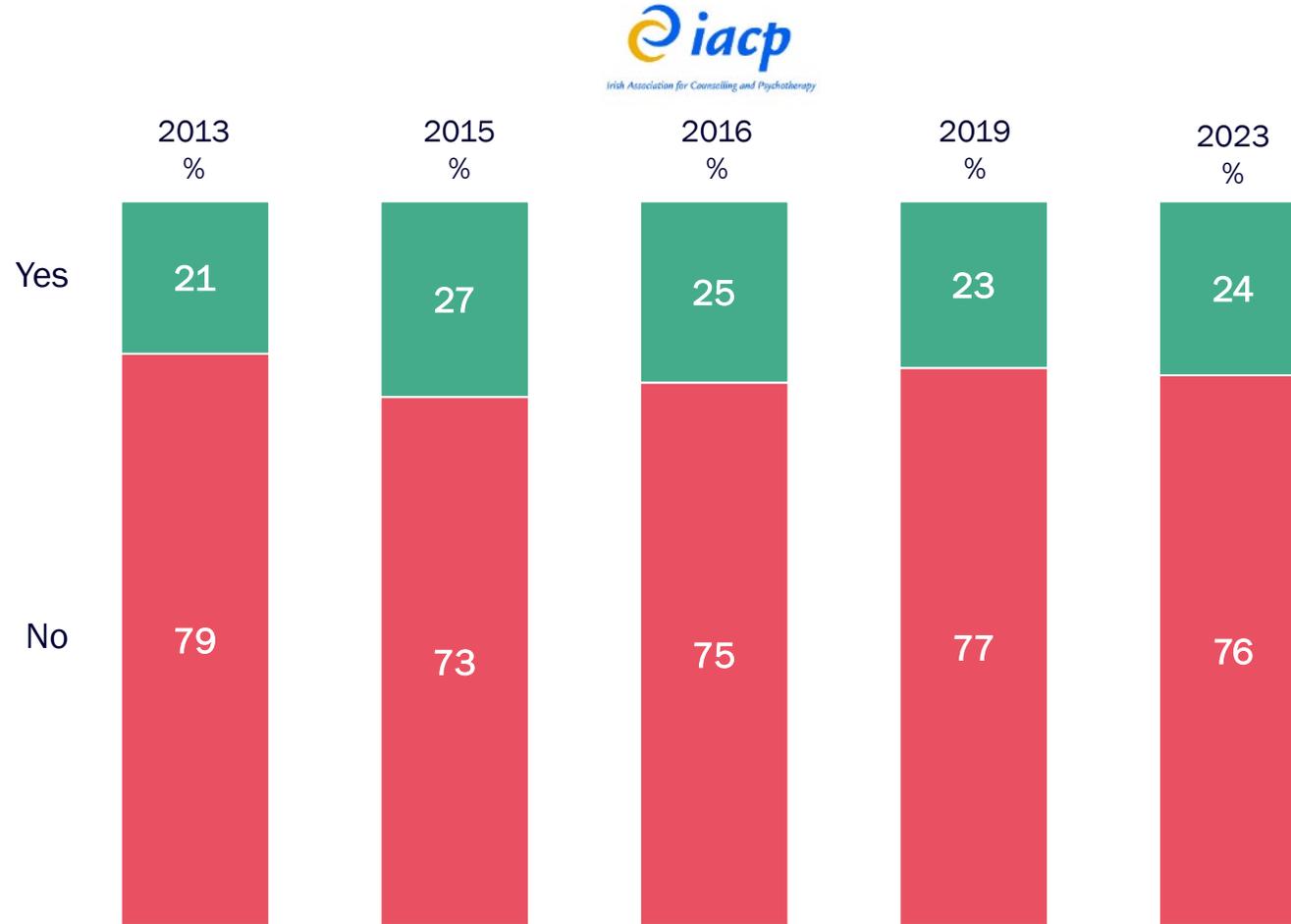


Attitudes toward attending Counselling/Psychotherapy

B&A

A quarter of Irish adults are aware of the IACP

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



A reasonably consistent one in four indicate awareness of the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Almost nine in ten believe it is important a therapist is fully trained and registered with a professional body

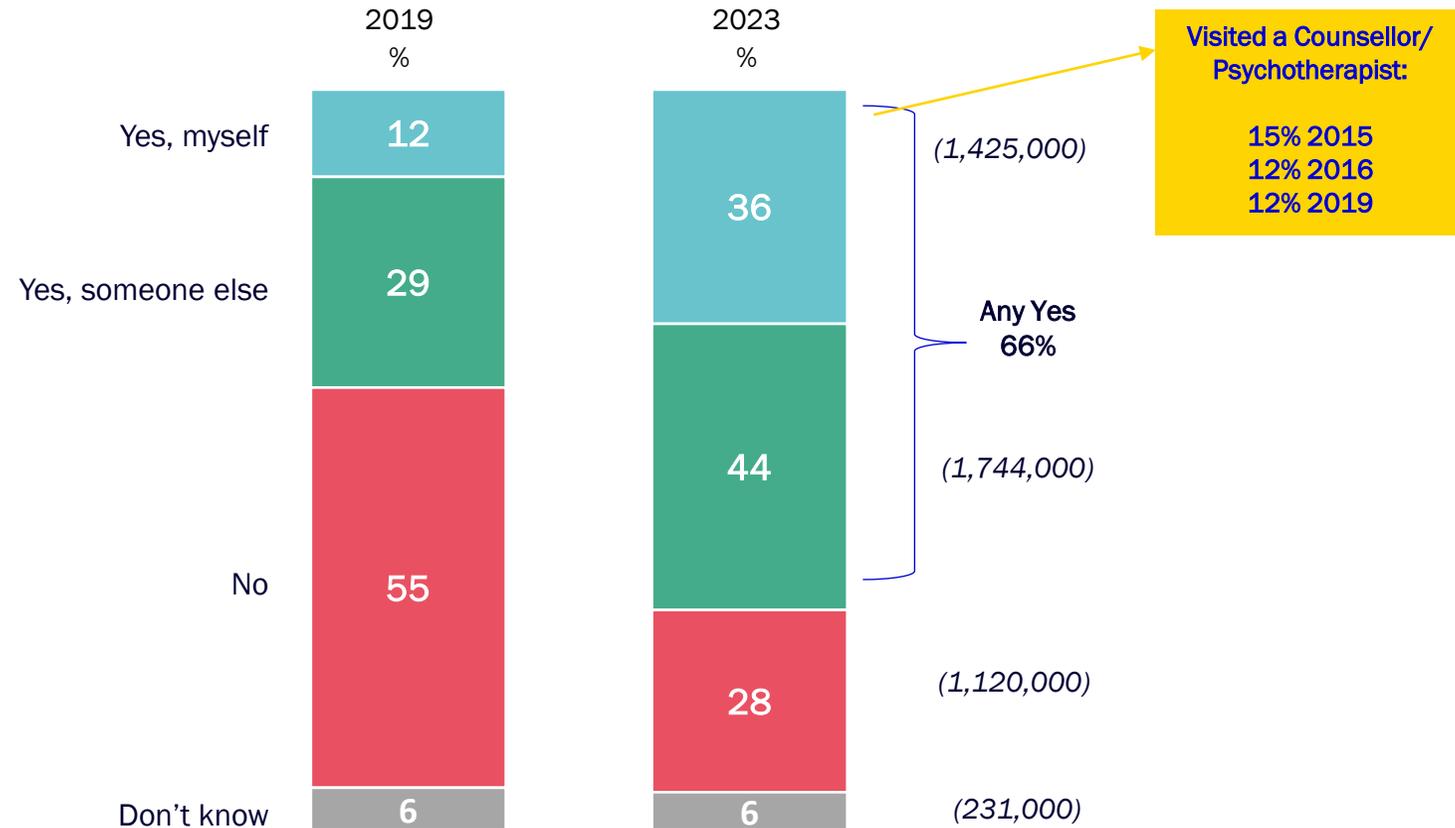
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



There is near universal agreement that therapists should be fully trained and registered.

Just over one in three adults say they have personally seen a Counsellor/Psychotherapist

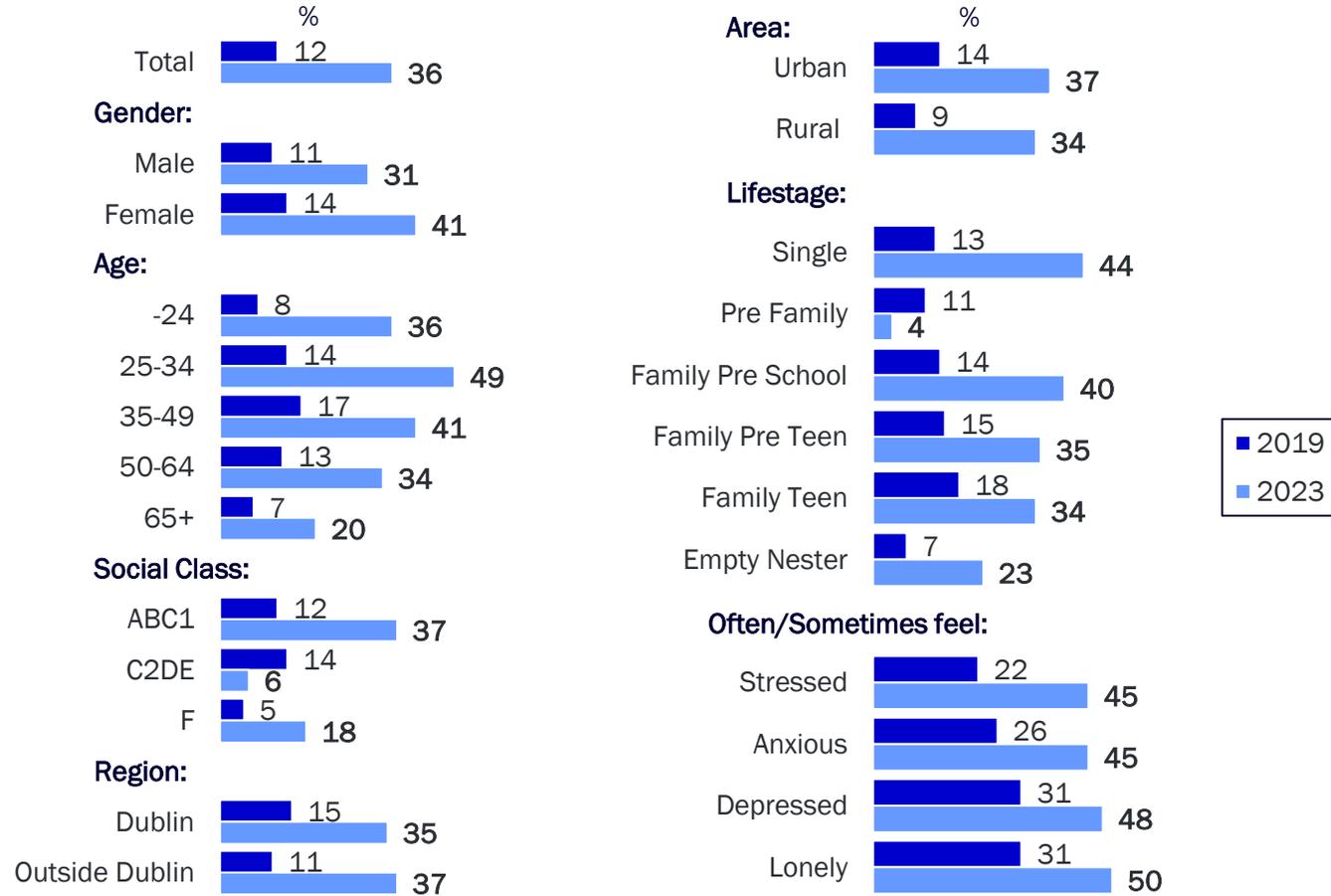
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



There has been an almost threefold increase in the numbers claiming to have personally visited a counsellor or psychotherapist. A majority now acknowledge that someone that they are close to has been to therapy.

Personally seeing a Counsellor/Psychotherapist x demographics

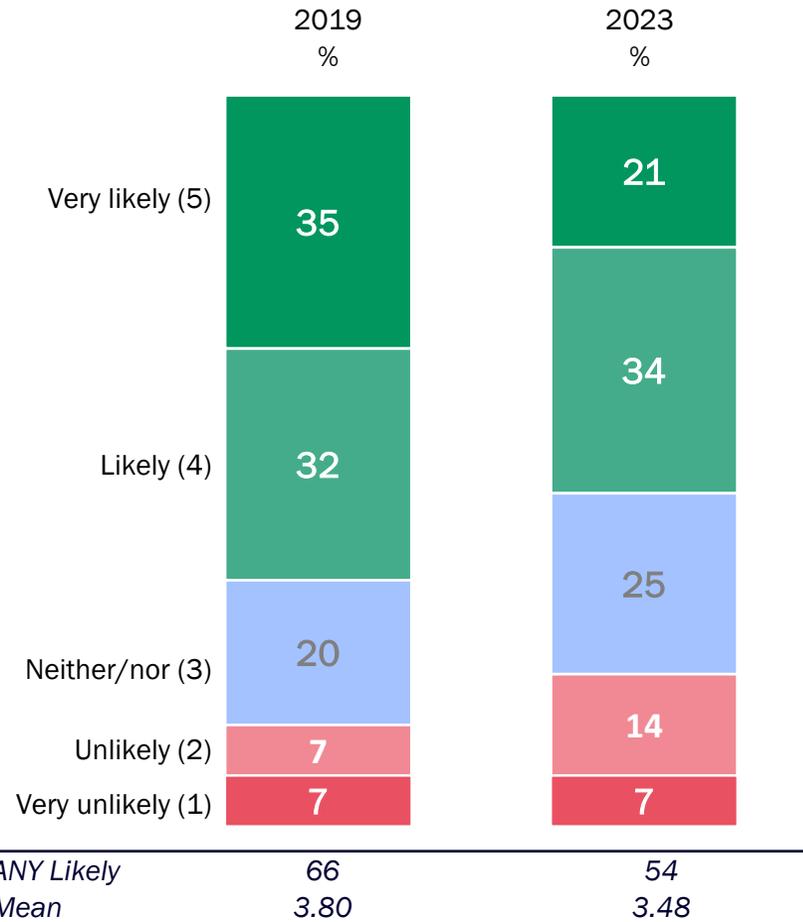
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



A substantial growth in the instance of having been for therapy across most demographics with middle class, 25-to-50-year-old, female adults more likely to have done so and a slightly higher instance for anyone experiencing loneliness, depression, anxiety or stress. 2019 survey was face to face.

Just over half say they would be likely to see a Counsellor/Psychotherapist if they were struggling

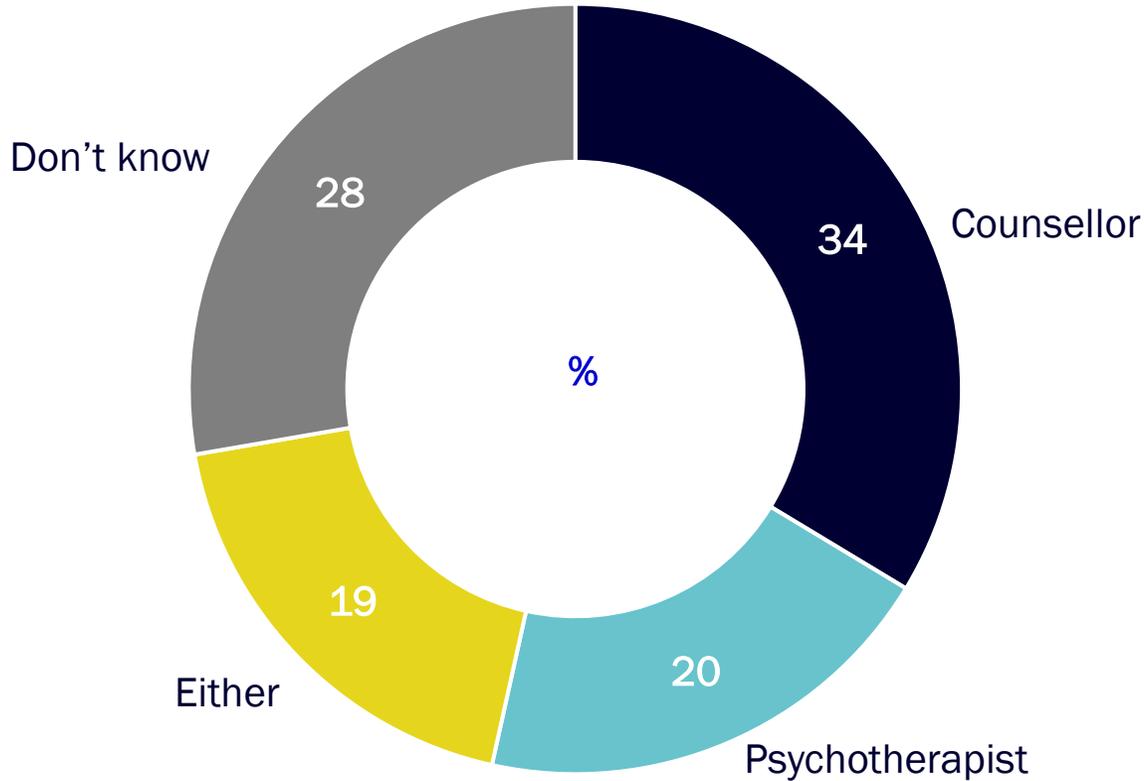
Base: All adults - 1,023/3,945,000



The appetite to attend a counsellor or psychotherapist is apparently lower, but this disguises the considerably elevated numbers having done so since 2019 (a trebling from one in eight to more than one in three.)

Preference for a counsellor or a psychotherapist

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

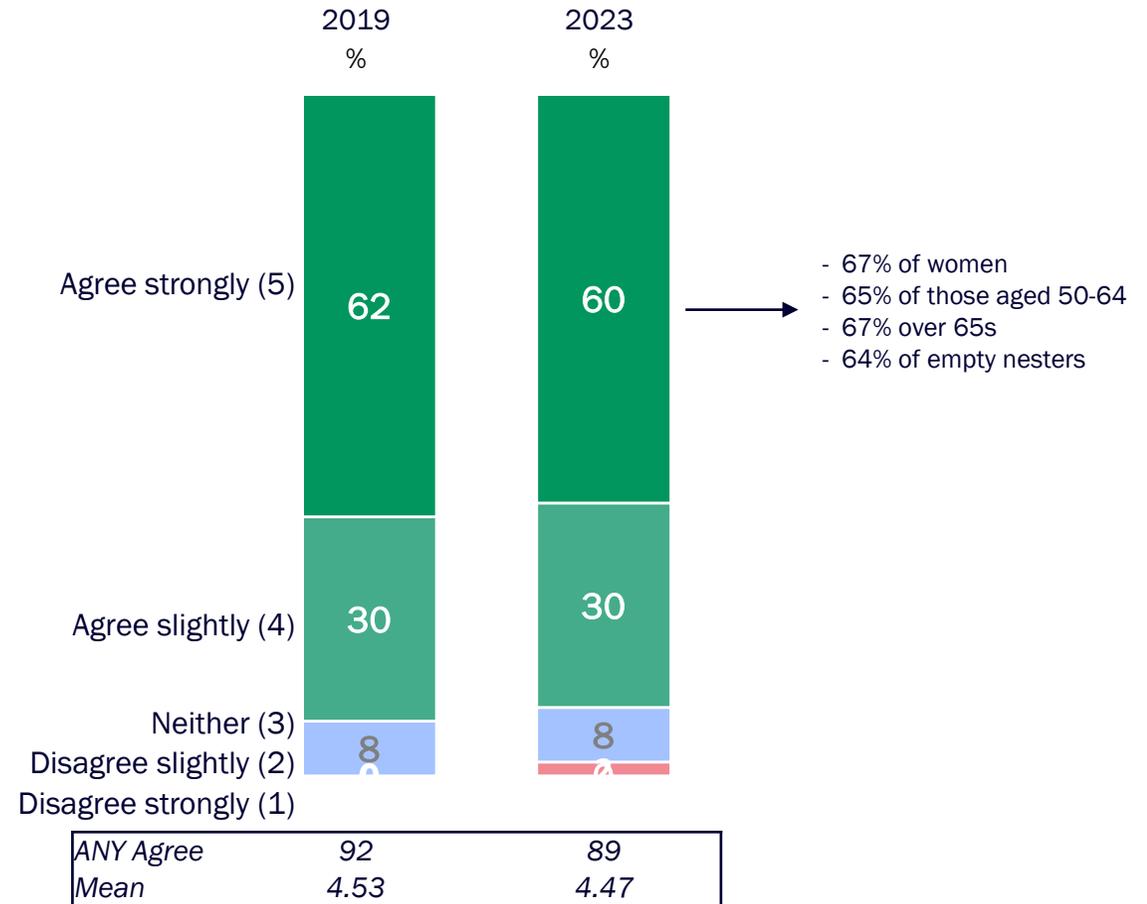


	Counsellor	Psycho-therapist	Either
	%	%	%
Male	29	23	19
Female	39	17	18
16-24	35	32	16
25-34	38	28	18
35-49	38	18	17
50-64	28	11	26
65+	30	20	15
ABC1	33	26	18
C2DE	34	15	20
F*	38	-	-
Dublin	34	23	19
Outside Dublin	34	19	18
Urban	35	22	18
Rural	33	17	19

More say they would choose to see a counsellor (34%) than a psychotherapist (20%) while some would choose either (19%) and others don't know which they would choose (28%). Women appear a lot happier to see a counsellor overall, with men less intimidated by the idea of a psychotherapist, but men still more likely to prefer a counsellor. More work probably required to understand what influences these patterns.

Nine in ten say it is a good idea to seek Counselling/Psychotherapy if you are struggling

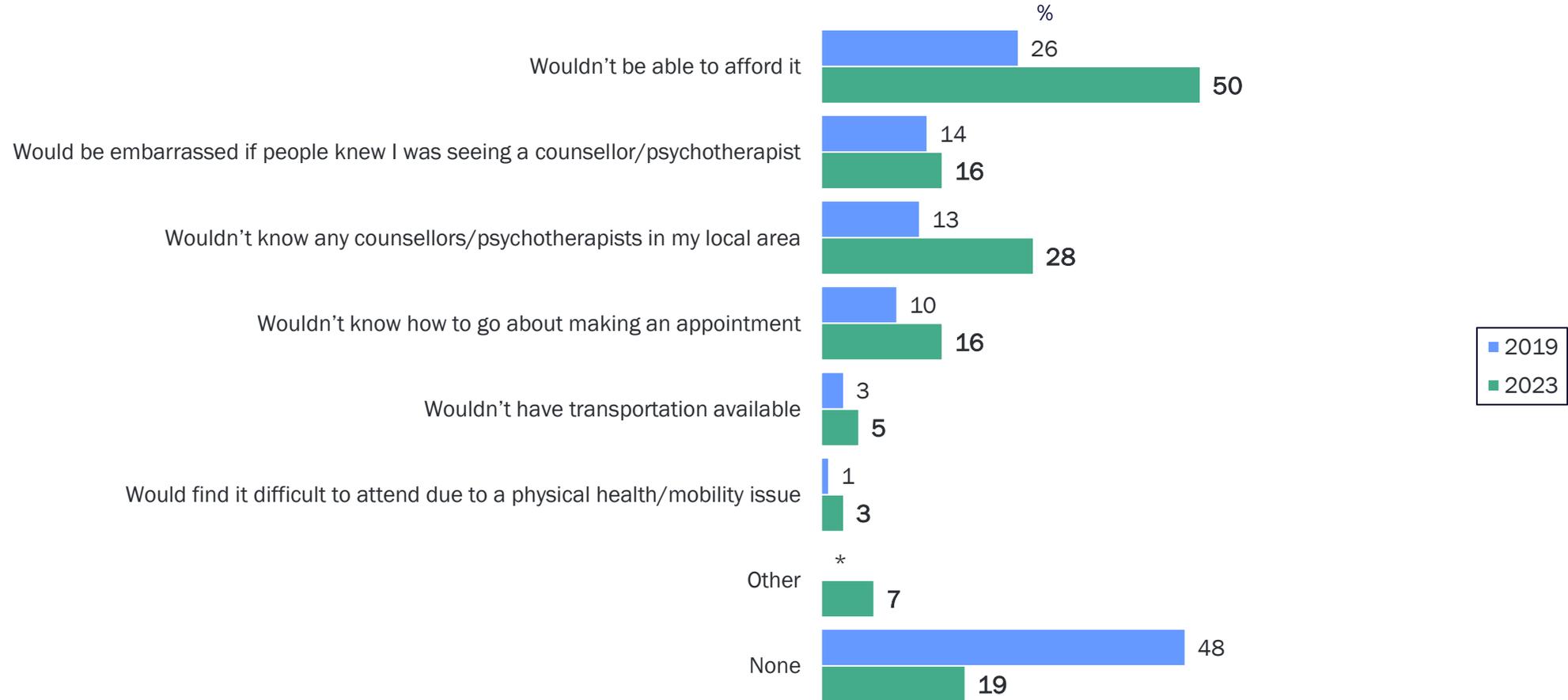
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Near universal agreement that counselling or psychotherapy is perceived as beneficial.

Affordability is seen as a possible barrier by one in four

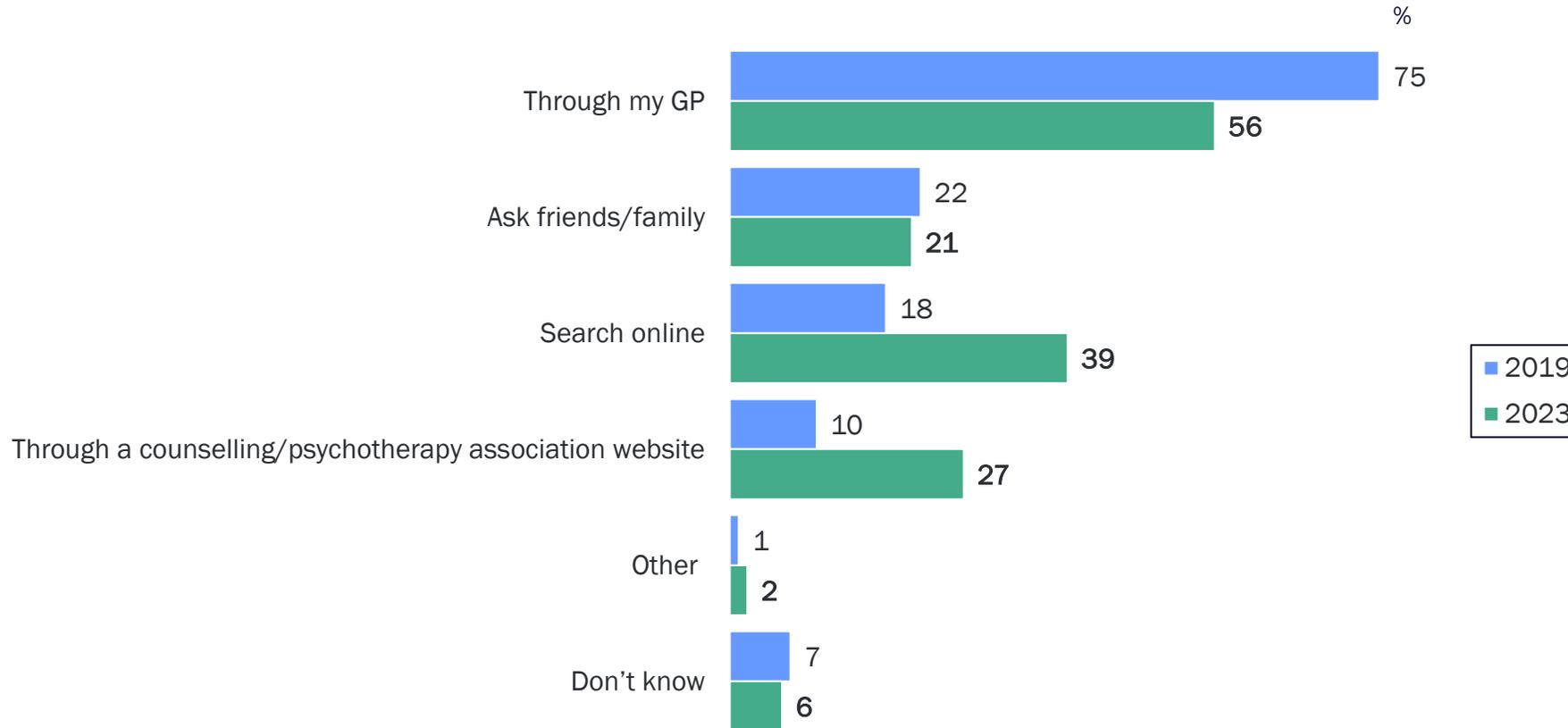
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Almost half suggested that affordability would be a deterrent, although not knowing a counsellor or psychotherapist or how to interact with one might equally be a preventative. About one in seven say they would be embarrassed.

Just over half say they would go through their GP to make an initial Counselling/Psychotherapy appointment

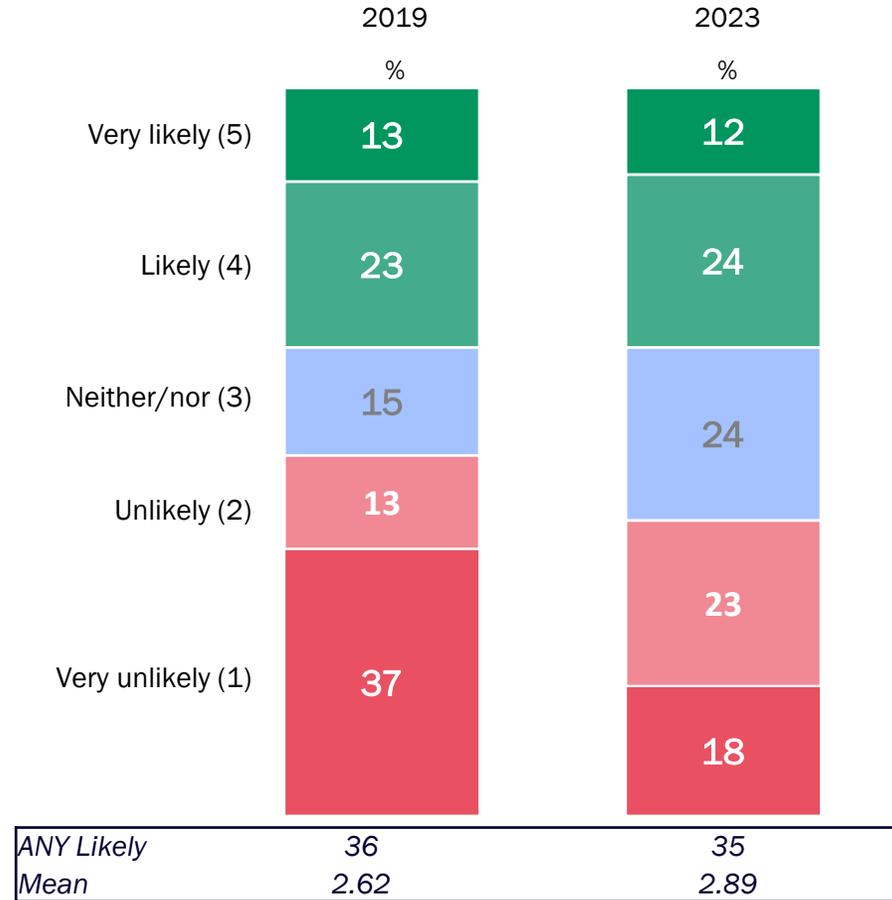
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



In the event of needing to make an appointment with the counsellor or psychotherapist, many say that they would make the GP their first port of call, but there has been a doubling in numbers who indicate that they would search online, now the second most likely course of action, and having bypassed the likelihood of initiating a conversation with friends or family.

Over a third are open to the idea of opting for online Counselling/Psychotherapy

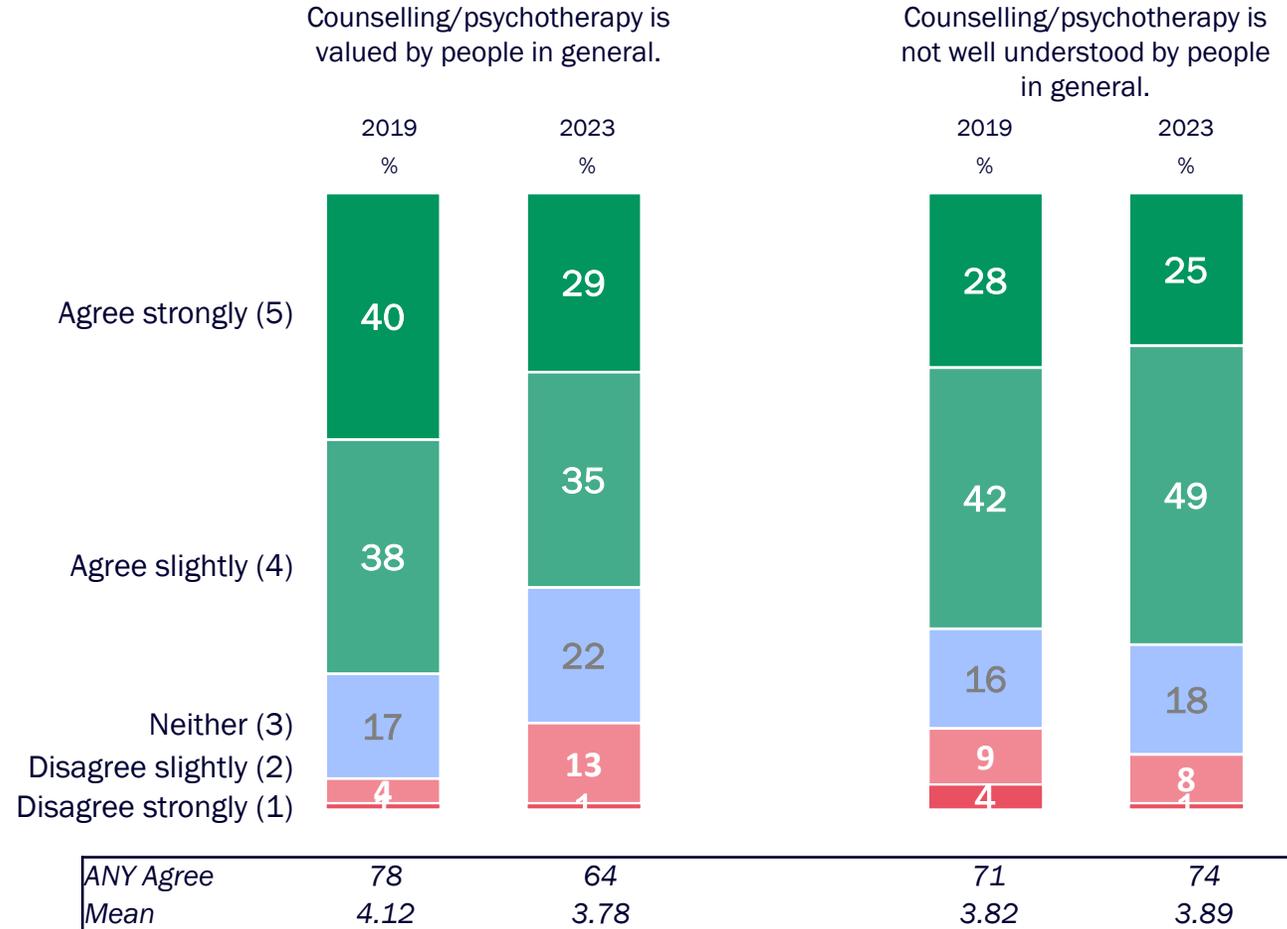
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



While there hasn't been any notable growth in appetite to see a counsellor or psychotherapist online, there has been a marked reduction in outright rejection, the level of which has halved since 2019.

While counselling/ Psychotherapy is valued by the vast majority, understanding appears to be lacking

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

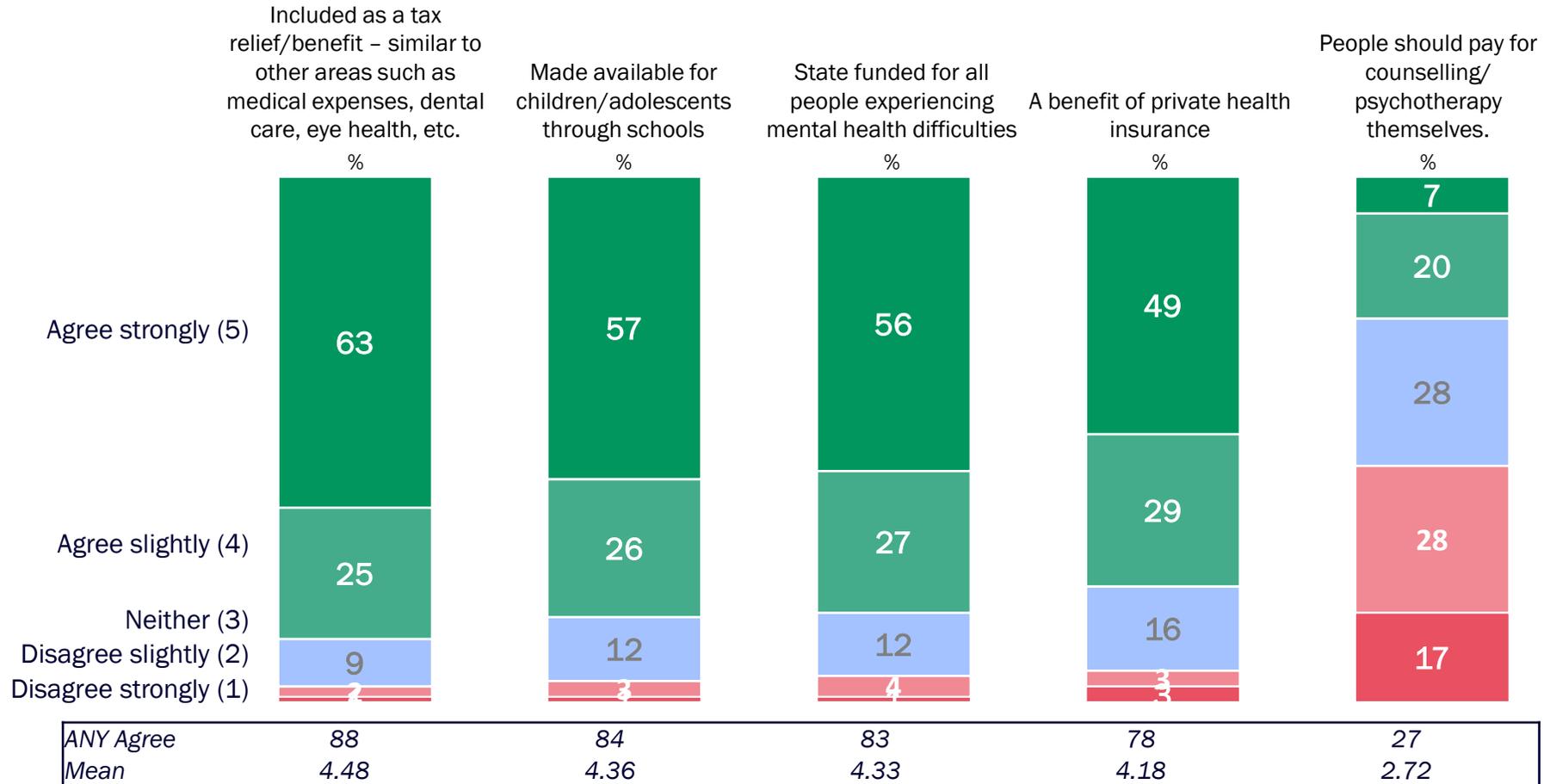


There has been somewhat of a reduction in agreement that counselling or psychotherapy is valued and indeed a greater number now doubt this. A majority are of the view that as a discipline it may not be well understood by people and there hasn't been any notable shift in this perspective over the past four years.

Support for funding of Counselling/Psychotherapy is strong

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000

Counselling/Psychotherapy should be...



There is generally strong levels of support for funding of counselling and psychotherapy, with only one in four believing that it should be self-funded and almost half disagreeing that this should be the case.

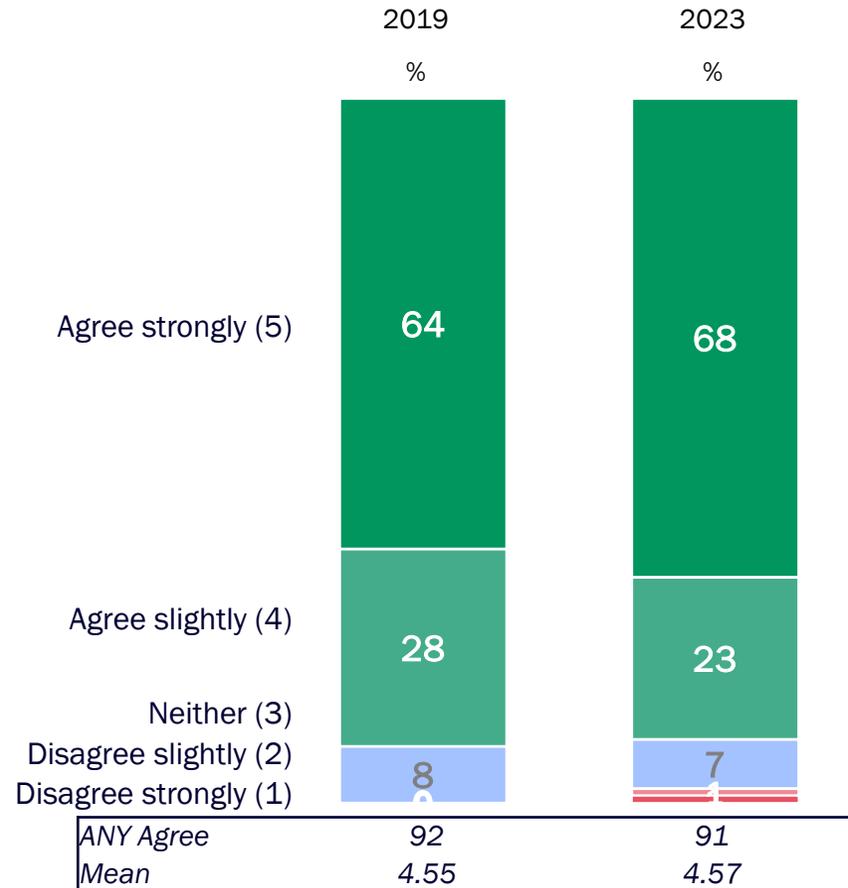


Counselling/Psychotherapy for Children/Adolescents

B&A

Over nine in ten say it is a good idea children/ adolescents see a Counsellor/Psychotherapist if struggling

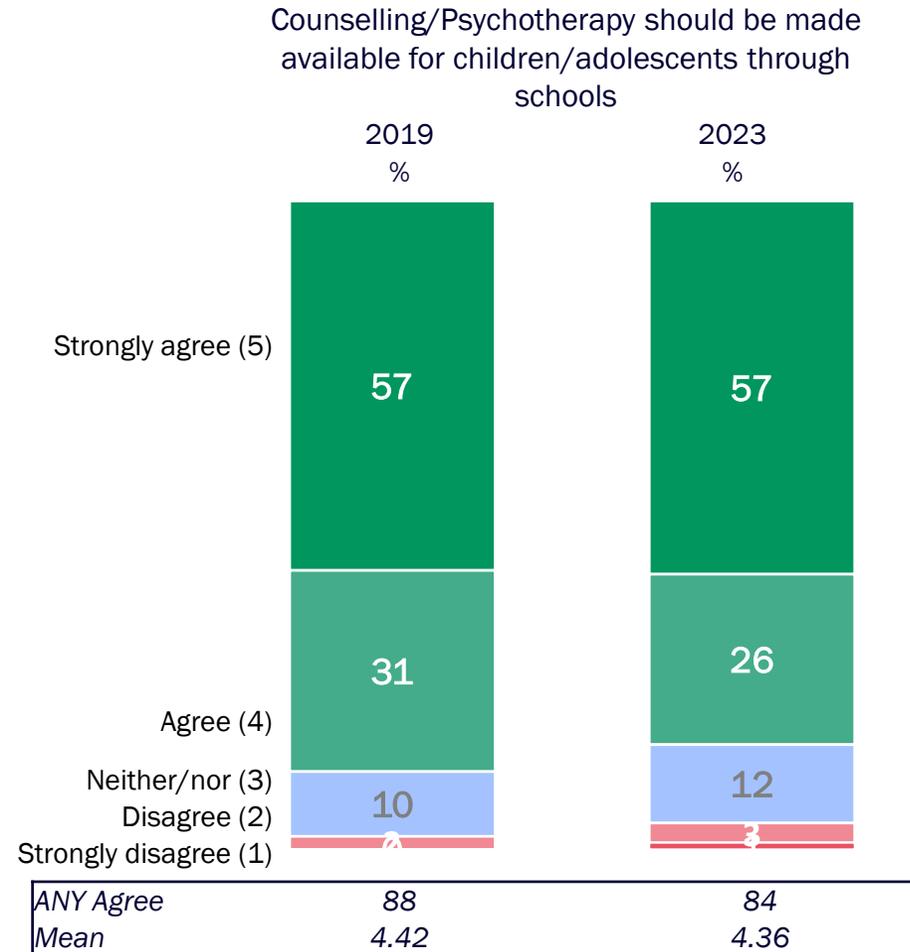
Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



Increasing agreement that counselling or psychotherapy could benefit adolescents and children.

Almost nine in ten support the idea of Counselling/ Psychotherapy being available in schools

Base: All adults – 1,023/3,945,000



There remains near universal support for the provision of counselling and psychotherapy in schools; six out of seven agree with it.



Summary of Key Findings

B&A

Summary of Key Findings

Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Loneliness

- About a quarter are often stressed while one in five often experience anxiety.
- Depression and loneliness or isolation are generally more narrowly experienced.
- There has been a slight decline in numbers indicating that they often feel stressed from the time of the pandemic and indeed the same is notable in relation to experience of anxiety, whereas the tailing off in the incidence of depression or loneliness/isolation is more modest.
- Rates of often or sometimes feeling stressed or depressed are in line with early pandemic levels (April '20).
- Experience of stress is most elevated among women, those under 50 and particularly in the family lifestages and among those with children.
- The experience of anxiety is much more tangible in younger age groups whereas depression is more evenly distributed by age group.
- Loneliness/isolation is noteworthy among those who are single with again higher experience younger rather than older.
- Three quarters of all adults (74%) continue to experience at least one of these four conditions on at least an occasional basis

Contributors to Stress

- Money and the cost-of-living crisis have become much more significant causes of stress in recent years; in combination, they would now tend to dominate as a perceived basis for stress.
- Otherwise work, relationships, children and health are also substantial drivers.
- The range of factors ever contributing to stress has substantially risen in recent years, potentially it might be argued, as a symptom of what might be perceived as a polycrisis (or a succession of crises coming hot on each other's heels.)

Summary of Key Findings

Pandemic

- One in seven (14%) indicate that the pandemic had a significant personal impact while 11% suggested that it significantly impacted others in their family. Interestingly 14% still cite the pandemic as a personal cause of stress (admittedly now well behind other aspects such as cost of living etc).
- 8% of adults stated they personally feel significant lingering impact post pandemic with 6% stating others in their family have significant lingering impact.
- Younger respondents and women were much more likely to suggest an immediate or an enduring pandemic impact on ones' mental health.

Supports

- Exercise is now regarded as the primary way of alleviating stress, having risen from 28% in 2019 (face to face) to a very high 51% today (online.)
- Equally, people are much more likely to talk to someone else, whether a friend or relative or alternatively a spouse or partner.
- About one in seven (14%) say they would talk to a counsellor or psychotherapist.

Attitudes to Mental Health

- While there is widespread acceptance that mental health problems are universal and can be experienced by all, there has been a reduction in the numbers saying its acceptable to talk about mental health issues, or indeed agreeing that it is as easy to talk about a mental health problem as a physical health problem. These were more elevated in the past.
- Many remain as anxious not to have to talk to an employer about a mental health problem as before.
- Personal disclosure has decreased from 2019 with 53% (-4%pts) agreeing if I was experiencing mental health problems I wouldn't want people knowing about it. Openness to discussion of mental health problems is much more apparent among older than younger adults and there does seem to be substantial trepidation about discussing a mental health problem among younger adults.
- A greater focus on mental health in the media, a rising number of celebrities talking about mental health, and running more related programmes in school or work have all been important in growing acceptance or consciousness of mental health issues.

Summary of Key Findings

Suicide

- Over the past four years there has been a substantial increase in the numbers indicating they have been personally affected by suicide, rising from 38% in 2019 to 50% today. Important to note that the current online survey method may be likely to have elicited a higher response than we were likely to have received face-to-face before.
- Experience of or connection to suicide in ones' wider family, peer group or local community have all risen quite tangibly.
- While there is openness to discussion of suicide and many indicate that they are keen to take action where they are concerned about someone, there is equally *escalating trepidation* about approaching someone that may be at risk. Almost half now say that they would be wary to initiate a conversation about suicide with someone at risk. This trepidation is much more apparent younger and male.

IACP

- About one in four remain aware of the IACP with awareness significantly higher younger and female and notably in the Greater Dublin area. Awareness hasn't grown appreciably, however.
- Almost all agree that therapists should be fully trained and registered with a professional body.

Counselling Experience

- The numbers with direct personal experience of a counsellor or psychotherapist has trebled since the 2019 survey, now standing at 36%. Equally, over the same time period 44% indicate that a friend or acquaintance has experience of counselling or psychotherapy, again a rise of significant magnitude (15%).
- The increase in experience of counselling or psychotherapy is apparent across all demographics, although there is a very marked class-based disparity now, with 37% of middle-class people saying they have availed of counselling in comparison with just 6% of working class.

Summary of Key Findings

- While more people have been to a therapist, openness to doing so in the event of one struggling has actually reduced (from 67% down to 55%.) However, this reduction is probably related to the substantial increase in numbers having already been to a therapist.
- When asked to indicate a preference for seeing a counsellor as opposed to a psychotherapist, more emerged expressing a preference for a counsellor (34% to 20% for a psychotherapist) although many indicated either (19%) and a sizable number (20%) said they didn't know. It does appear that the term Counsellor may sound less intimidating or alarming than a psychotherapist may do, with women in particular more comfortable with the idea of a counsellor.
- There remains almost universal openness to the idea of children or adolescents being able to access counselling or psychotherapy.
- Most are very strongly of the view that counselling or psychotherapy should be funded by the State and/or supported by insurers etc.

Attending Counselling/Psychotherapy

- While there is very strong support for the idea of being able to visit a counsellor or therapist if struggling mentally, younger respondents are much more cautious and less likely to strongly agree in this regard.
- Affordability is the biggest barrier to seeing a counsellor or psychotherapist with half of adults stating pointing to cost as a reason that would discourage them from seeing a counsellor or psychotherapist. Lack of familiarity, not knowing a therapist, and embarrassment would also serve as deterrents from visiting.
- While most are likely to seek a referral to a counsellor or therapist through their GP, there has been a doubling in the numbers saying that they would search online, which has risen from 18% to 39%, now sitting in second place.
- Most younger people suggested that they would go online first while sourcing an appointment through the GP is more likely the preserve of the over 50s.

Thank You



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Delve Deeper