



Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

General Public Survey

Summary of Key Findings

November 2019

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RESEARCH
& INSIGHT



Research Objectives/Approach

- The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) is the largest Counselling and Psychotherapy organisation in Ireland, representing over 4, 500 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 and 2016. This report presents the findings of the 2019 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).
- As with the previous surveys, fieldwork was carried out as part of B&A's Barometer (Omnibus) survey. Face-to-face interviews were conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Irish adults.
 - Sample is quota controlled for gender, age, social class, region and area of residence.
 - Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th and 28th March 2019.



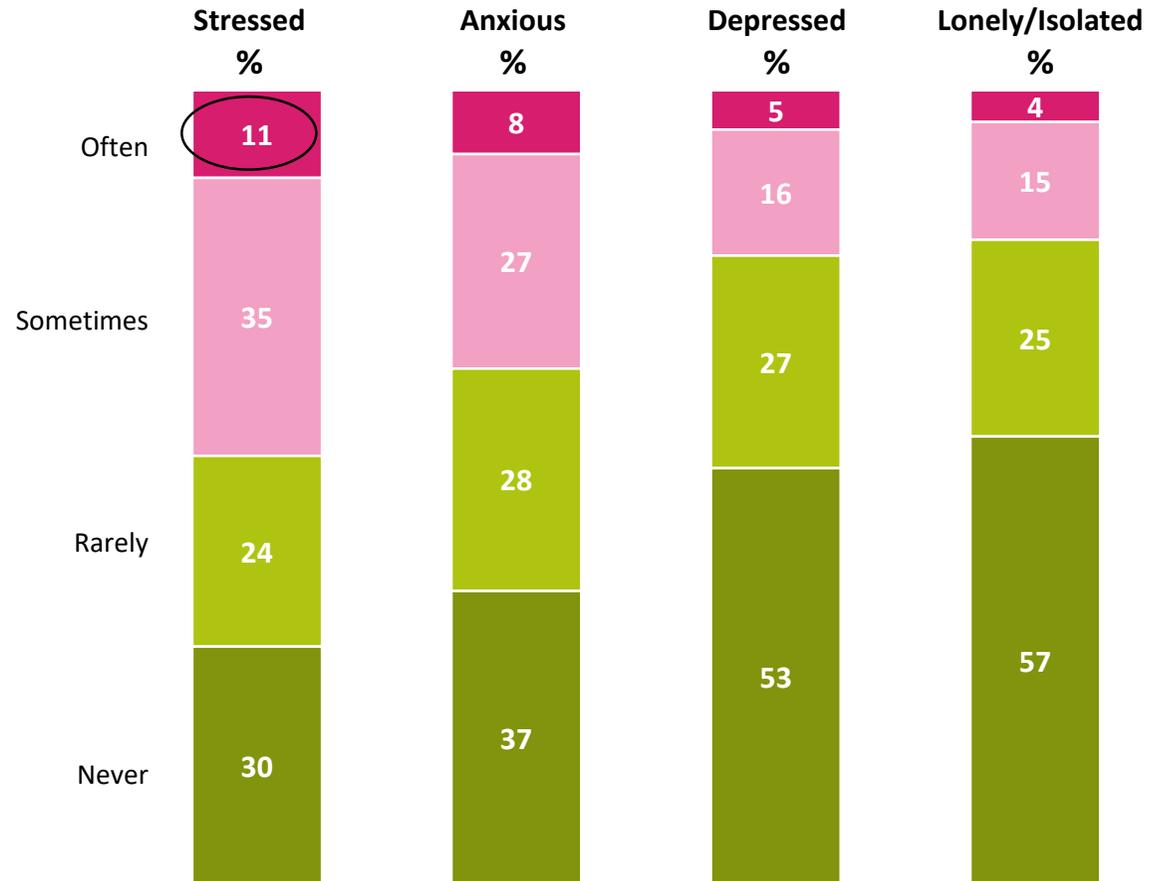


**Mental Health & Wellness
in Ireland**

Over one in ten Irish adults 'often' feel stressed



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



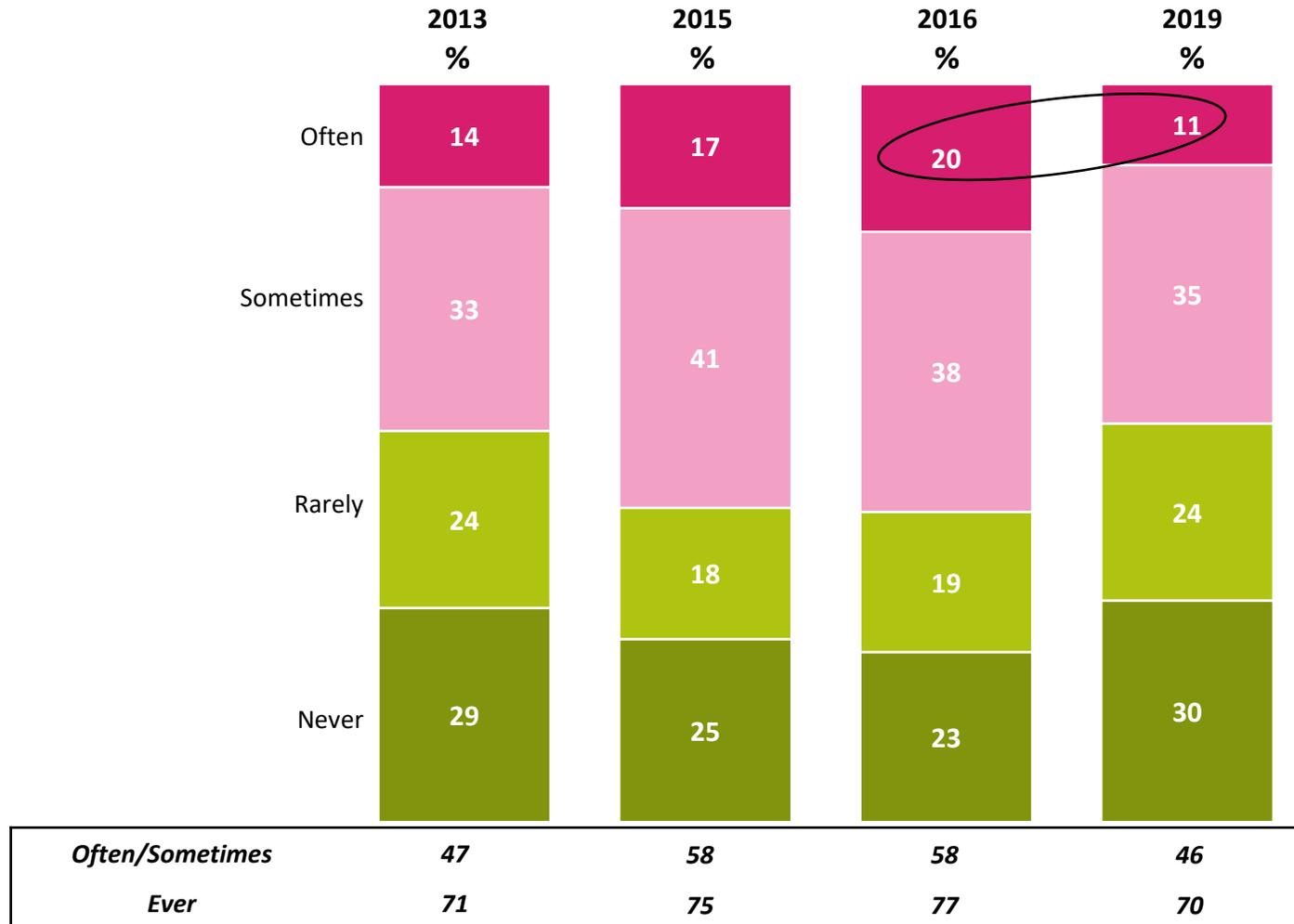
| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Often/Sometimes | 46 | 35 | 20 | 19 |
| Ever | 70 | 63 | 47 | 43 |

Almost half (46%) of respondents say they feel stressed at least sometimes – over a third (35%) feel anxious and approximately 1 in 5 feel depressed (20%) or lonely/isolated (19%), at least sometimes.

Levels of stress have fallen since 2016



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

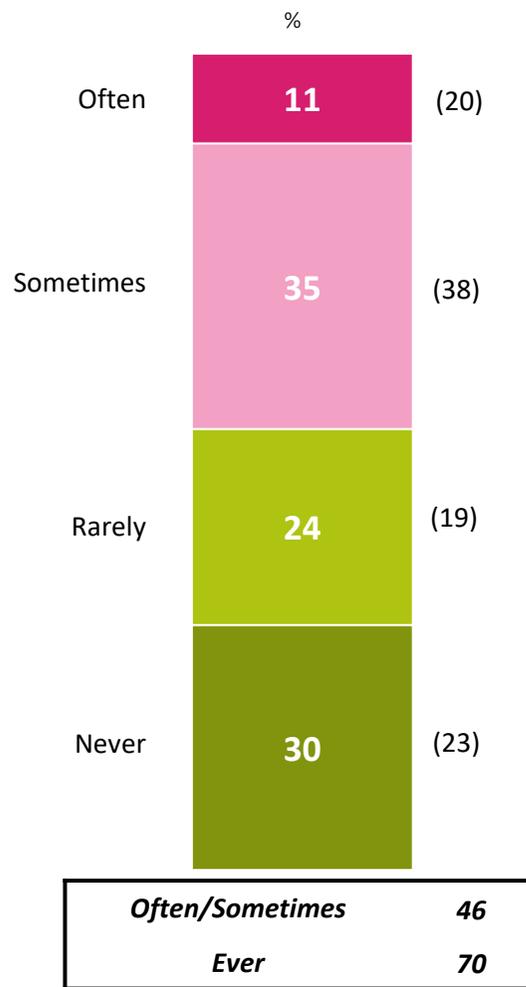


The proportion of adults who say they often feel stressed has reduced since 2016.

Feeling stressed x demographics



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



| Demographic | Often % | Count | Often/Sometimes % |
|----------------------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| Gender: | | | |
| Male | 8 | (18) | 42 |
| Female | 14 | (21) | 50 |
| Age: | | | |
| -24 | 8 | (13) | 47 |
| 25-34 | 11 | (22) | 53 |
| 35-49 | 17 | (28) | 58 |
| 50-64 | 10 | (18) | 42 |
| 65+ | 6 | (11) | 26 |
| Social Class: | | | |
| ABC1 | 11 | (20) | 47 |
| C2DE | 11 | (20) | 46 |
| F* | 7 | (10) | 42 |

*Small base

| Demographic | Often % | Count | Often/Sometimes % |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| Region: | | | |
| Dublin | 16 | (25) | 49 |
| Outside Dublin | 9 | (17) | 45 |
| Area: | | | |
| Urban | 13 | (22) | 49 |
| Rural | 7 | (16) | 41 |
| Lifestage: | | | |
| Single | 9 | (16) | 41 |
| Pre Family | 9 | (16) | 56 |
| Family Pre School | 15 | (22) | 51 |
| Family Pre Teen | 16 | (28) | 56 |
| Family Teen | 16 | (24) | 61 |
| Empty Nester | 7 | (16) | 35 |

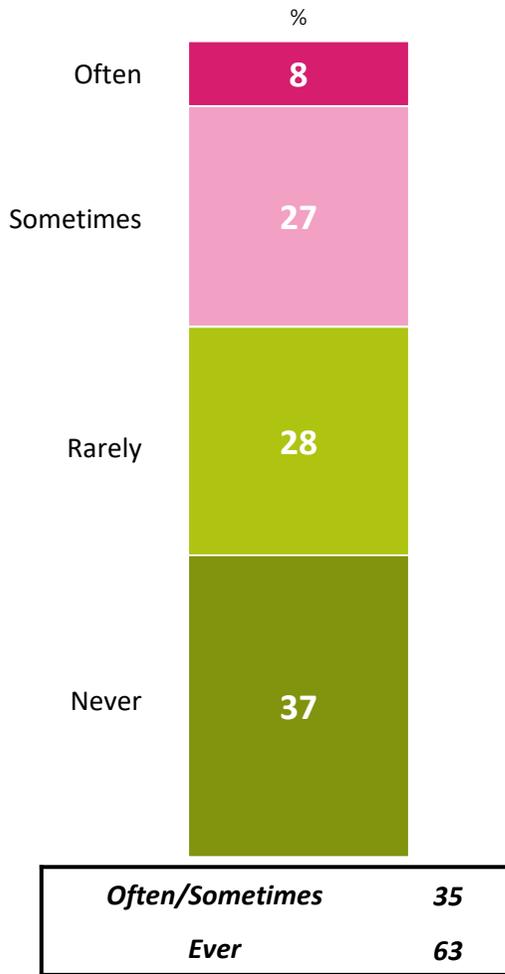
() = 2016

Females, those aged 35-49, Dublin-dwellers and those at family life-stages are more likely to say they feel stressed. 65+/empty nesters have the lowest claimed levels of stress.

Feeling anxious x demographics



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 7 | 31 |
| Female | 8 | 38 |
| Age: | | |
| -24 | 7 | 33 |
| 25-34 | 5 | 38 |
| 35-49 | 9 | 38 |
| 50-64 | 8 | 32 |
| 65+ | 7 | 30 |
| Social Class: | | |
| ABC1 | 7 | 32 |
| C2DE | 9 | 38 |
| F* | 2 | 27 |

*Small base

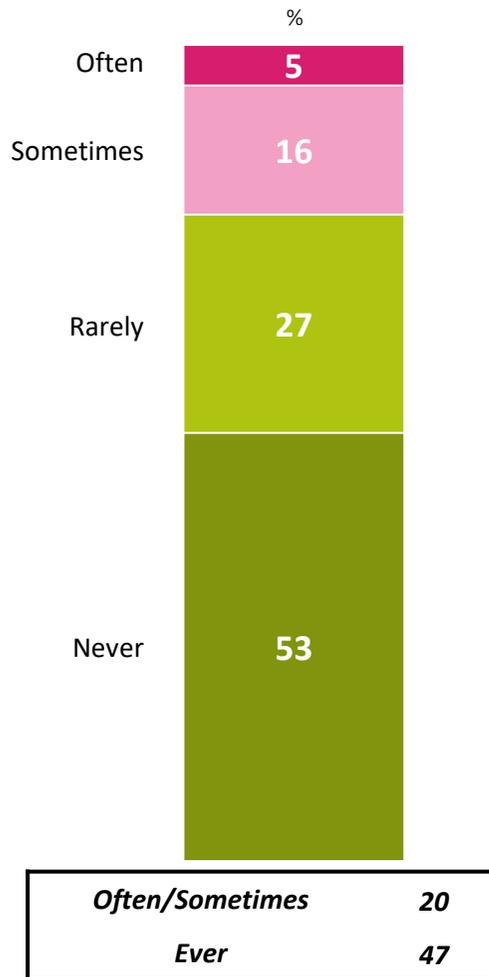
| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Region: | | |
| Dublin | 8 | 34 |
| Outside Dublin | 7 | 35 |
| Area: | | |
| Urban | 8 | 35 |
| Rural | 6 | 33 |
| Lifestage: | | |
| Single | 8 | 35 |
| Pre Family | 8 | 31 |
| Family Pre School | 5 | 34 |
| Family Pre Teen | 11 | 36 |
| Family Teen | 11 | 49 |
| Empty Nester | 5 | 30 |

Those in the family teen life-stage are more likely to say they feel anxious. Men, farmers and 65+/empty nesters claim the most modest levels of anxiety.

Feeling depressed x demographics



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 4 | 19 |
| Female | 5 | 21 |
| Age: | | |
| -24 | 2 | 19 |
| 25-34 | 3 | 22 |
| 35-49 | 7 | 24 |
| 50-64 | 6 | 18 |
| 65+ | 2 | 15 |
| Social Class: | | |
| ABC1 | 3 | 17 |
| C2DE | 6 | 24 |
| F* | 0 | 10 |

*Small base

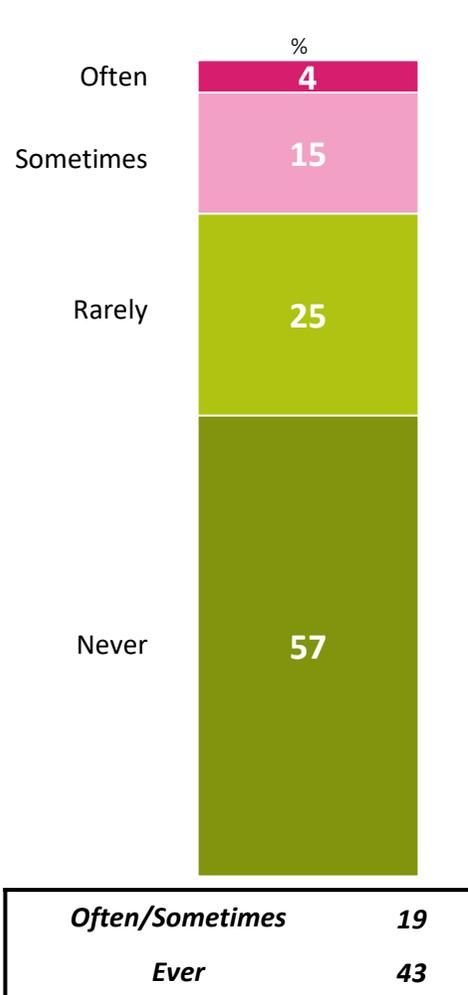
| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Region: | | |
| Dublin | 9 | 24 |
| Outside Dublin | 3 | 19 |
| Area: | | |
| Urban | 6 | 25 |
| Rural | 2 | 11 |
| Lifestage: | | |
| Single | 6 | 24 |
| Pre Family | 4 | 18 |
| Family Pre School | 4 | 20 |
| Family Pre Teen | 5 | 20 |
| Family Teen | 8 | 27 |
| Empty Nester | 1 | 13 |

Those aged 35-49, Dublin/urban dwellers, those in the family teen life-stage and lower income brackets are more likely to say they feel depressed. 65+/empty nesters and rural/farmers are the least likely to claim to feel depressed.

Feeling lonely/isolated x demographics



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Gender: | | |
| Male | 3 | 18 |
| Female | 4 | 18 |
| Age: | | |
| -24 | 2 | 20 |
| 25-34 | 1 | 15 |
| 35-49 | 4 | 17 |
| 50-64 | 4 | 20 |
| 65+ | 7 | 21 |
| Social Class: | | |
| ABC1 | 2 | 14 |
| C2DE | 5 | 22 |
| F* | 5 | 16 |

*Small base

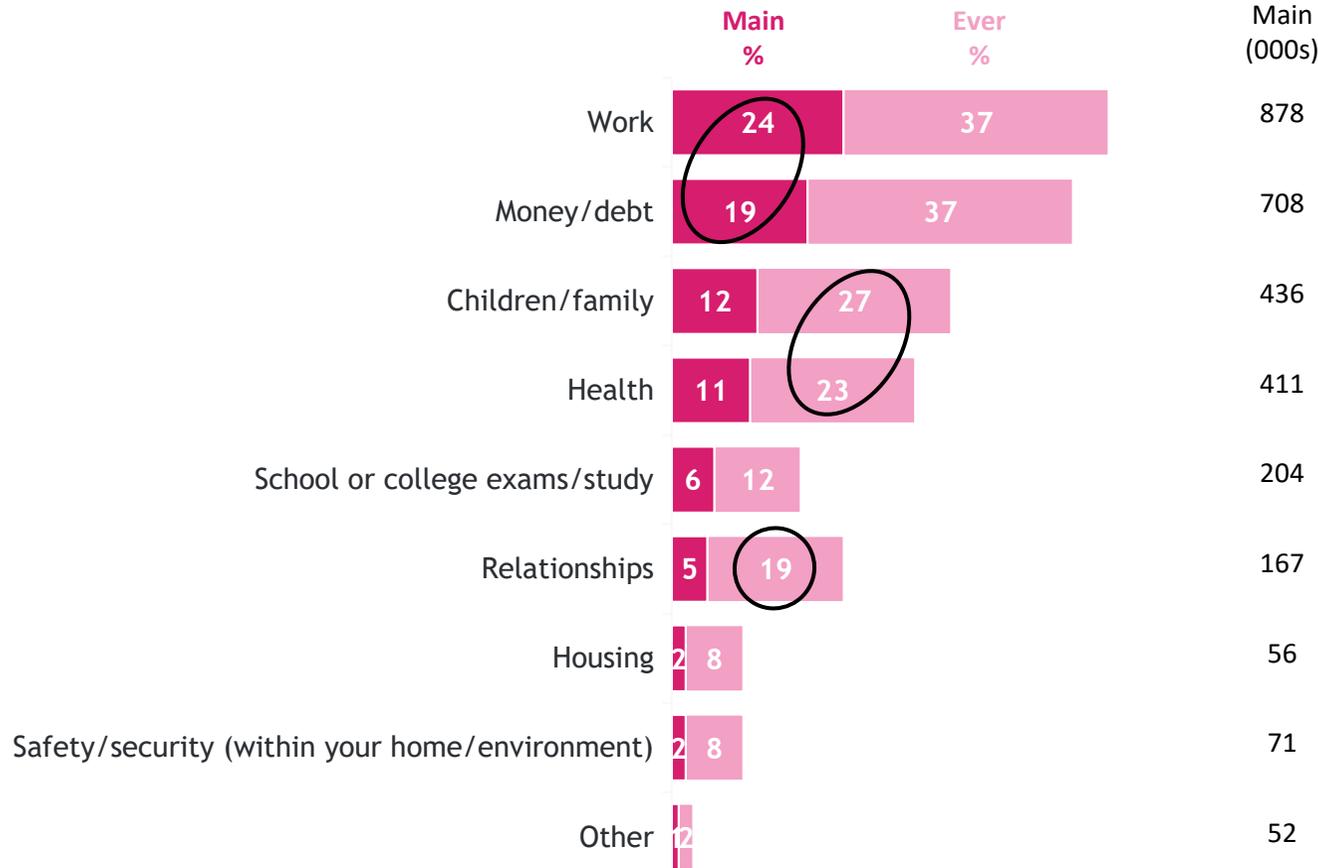
| | Often % | Often/Sometimes % |
|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Region: | | |
| Dublin | 4 | 17 |
| Outside Dublin | 4 | 19 |
| Area: | | |
| Urban | 4 | 21 |
| Rural | 4 | 15 |
| Lifestage: | | |
| Single | 6 | 26 |
| Pre Family | 3 | 12 |
| Family Pre School | 2 | 15 |
| Family Pre Teen | 4 | 15 |
| Family Teen | 3 | 23 |
| Empty Nester | 2 | 13 |

Single people and those at the family teen life-stage are more likely to say they feel lonely/isolated. As such, isolation is present at either end of the age spectrum.

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



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



Almost a quarter (25%) of Irish adults say that work is the main cause of stress in their lives, while money/debt is the number one cause of stress for almost 1 in 5 (19%). Children/family, health & relationships are other frequent stressors.



Work and children/family have increased as main causes of stress, while money has reduced further



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

| | Main | | | Ever | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2013 | 2015 | 2019 | 2013 | 2015 | 2019 |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Work | 25 | 20 | 24 ↑ | 27 | 30 | 37 ↑ |
| Relationships | 9 | 8 | 5 | 13 | 20 | 19 |
| Money/debt | 33 | 24 | 19 ↓ | 44 | 38 | 37 |
| Health | 10 | 14 | 11 | 19 | 23 | 23 |
| Housing | n/a | n/a | 2 | n/a | n/a | 8 |
| Children/family | n/a | 3 | 12 ↑ | n/a | 3 | 27 ↑ |
| Safety/security (within your home/environment) | n/a | n/a | 2 | n/a | n/a | 8 |
| School or college exams/study | 7 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 12 ↑ |
| Other | n/a | 3 | 1 | n/a | 3 | 2 |

Since 2015, work and children/family have risen as main causes of stress, while money/debt has reduced further, and for the first time is below work.



Over one in ten say they find talking to a Counsellor/ Psychotherapist helpful when they are struggling mentally



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

%



Talking about or sharing a problem is the most common way of coping when struggling in some way – almost half (47%) of Irish adults say that talking to a friend/relative is helpful to them, talking to the GP is helpful for almost 2 in 5 (38%), while over 3 in 10 (31%) talk to their spouse/partner. Exercise is also important for a significant proportion, with over 1 in 4 (28%) saying they find it helpful.

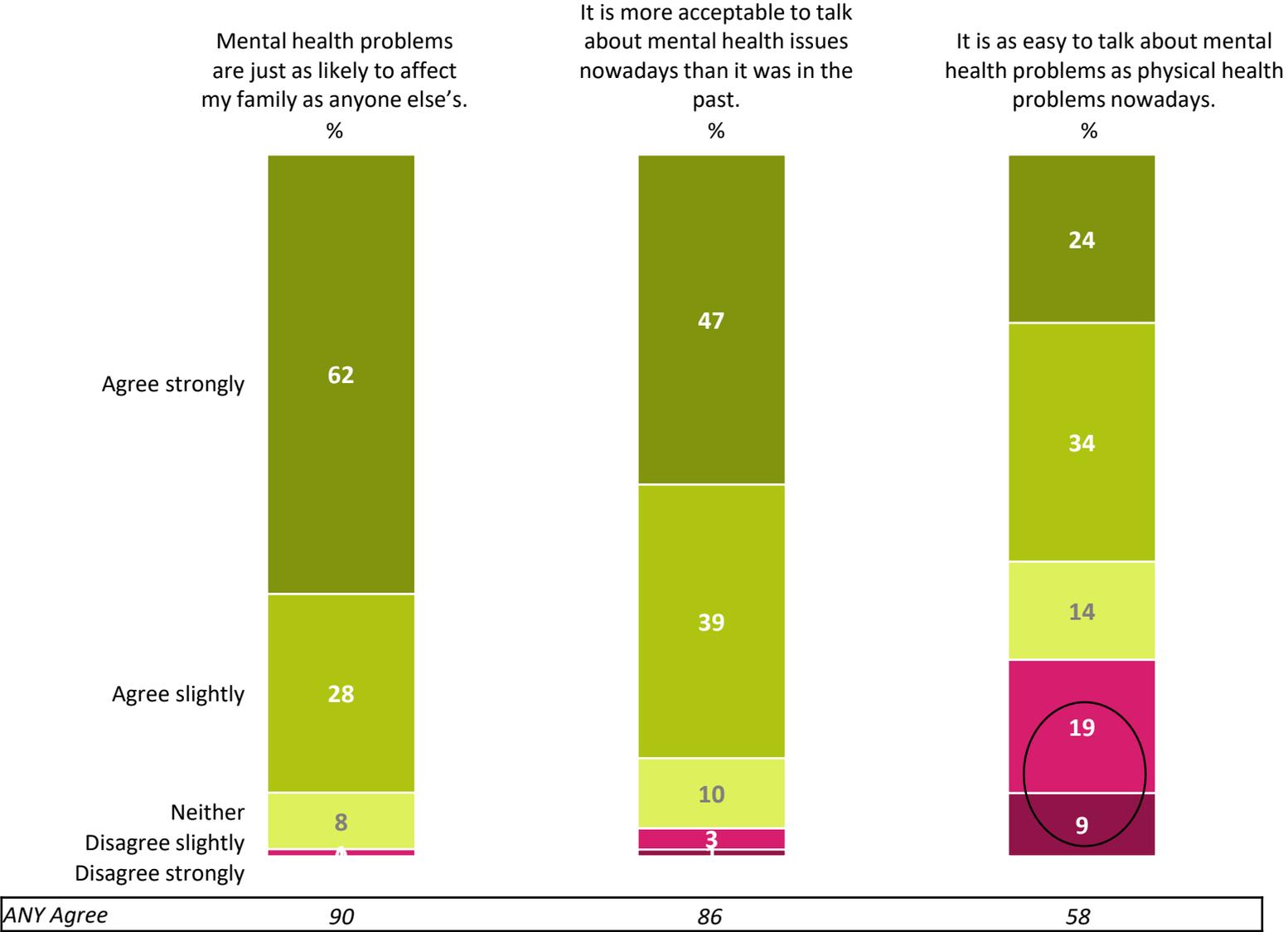


Attitudes toward Mental Health

Positive attitudes toward mental health are broadly evident



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



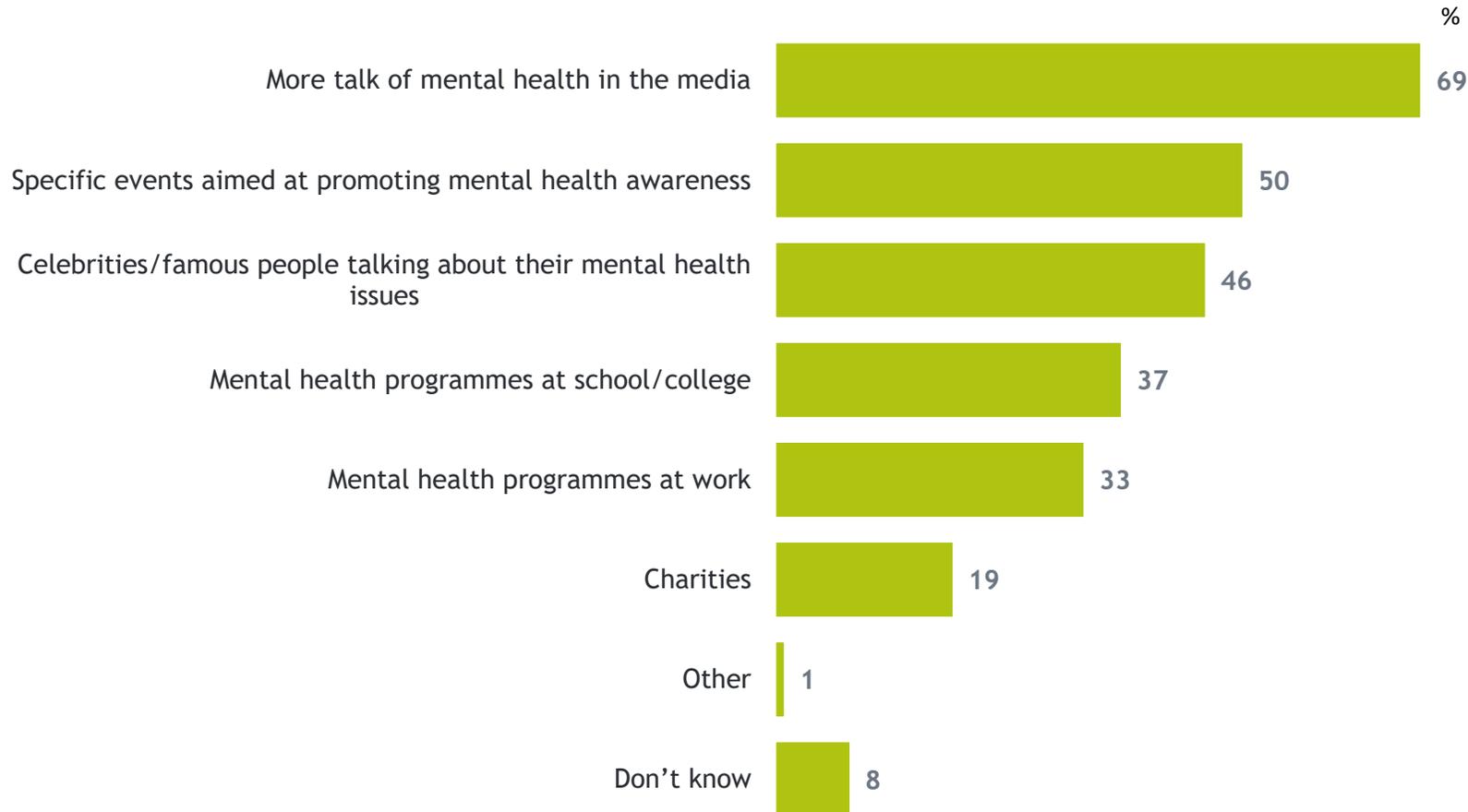
Almost 3 in 10 (28%) do not believe it is as easy to talk about mental health problems as physical ones.



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



Base: Those who say it is more acceptable to discuss mental health – 874/3,177,000

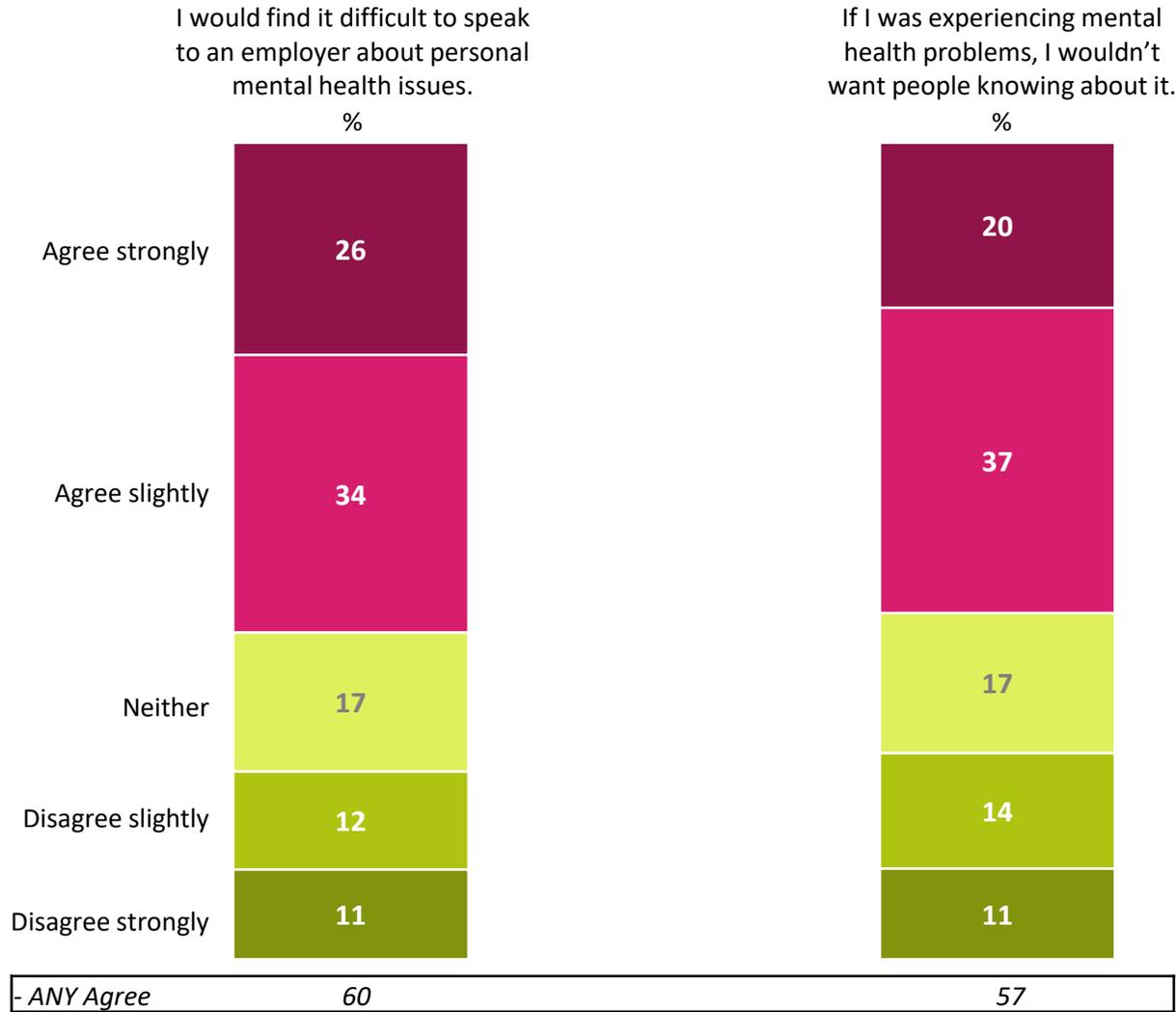


A broad range of factors are perceived as having contributed to it being more acceptable to talk about mental health these days, with more media focus the main influence, followed by specific events and celebrities raising this agenda.

Personal disclosure remains a potential issue for many



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



Around 3 in 5 say they would both find it difficult to talk to their employer about a personal mental health issue (60%) and wouldn't want other people knowing about it (57%).



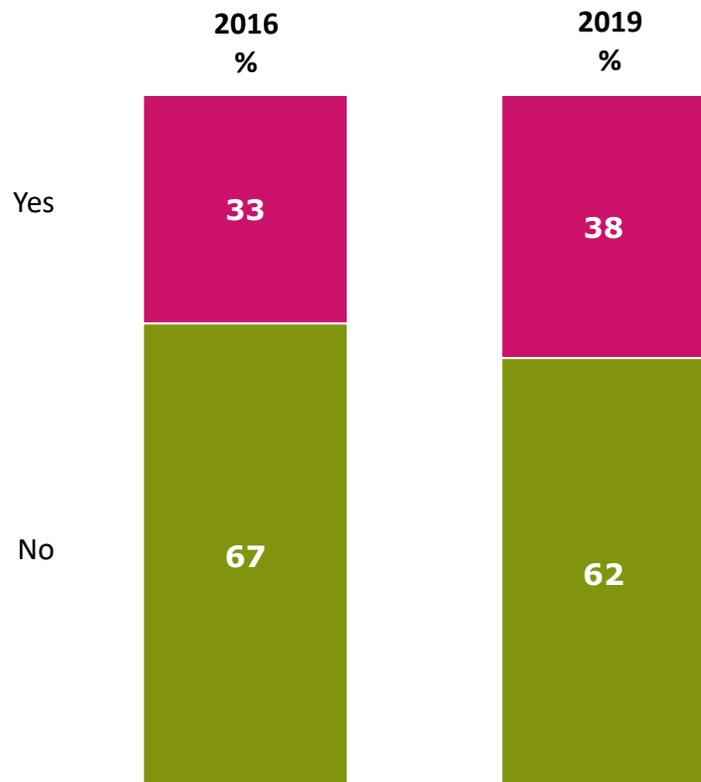


Suicide in Ireland

Almost 2 in 5 Irish adults say they have been affected by suicide in some way



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



| Any yes: | 2016 % | 2019 % |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Immediate family | 6 | 5 |
| Wider family | 7 | 9 |
| Friends/colleagues | 11 | 14 |
| Local community/neighbours | 14 | 17 |

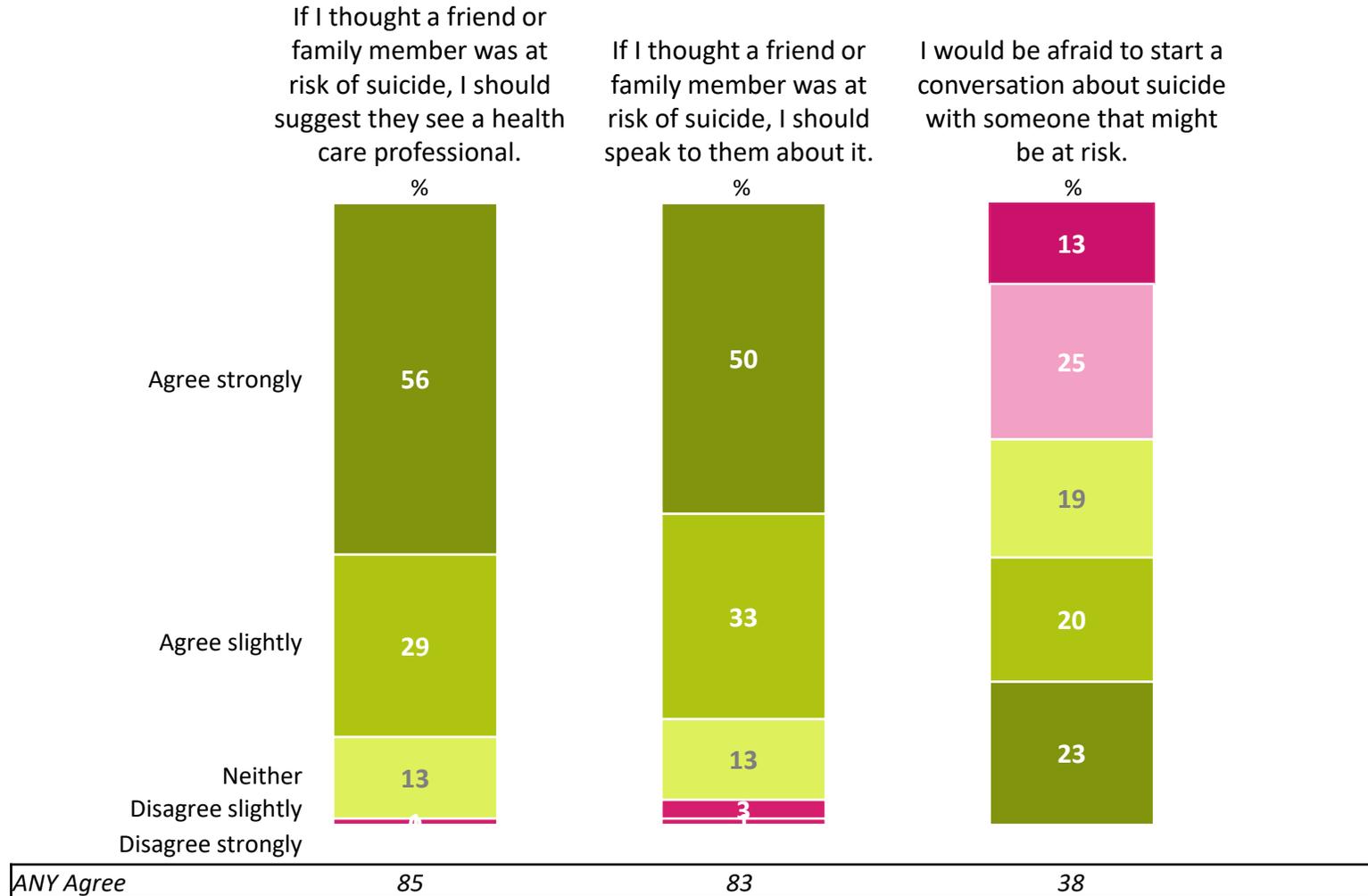
Almost 2 in 5 Irish adults (38%) say they have been affected by suicide in some way – more commonly amongst friends/colleagues and local community/neighbours.



Importance of talking about suicide is broadly understood



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



The vast majority agree that if someone was at risk of suicide, they should talk to them about it (83%) or suggest they see a professional (85%), however, almost 2 in 5 (38%) would still be afraid to initiate the conversation.

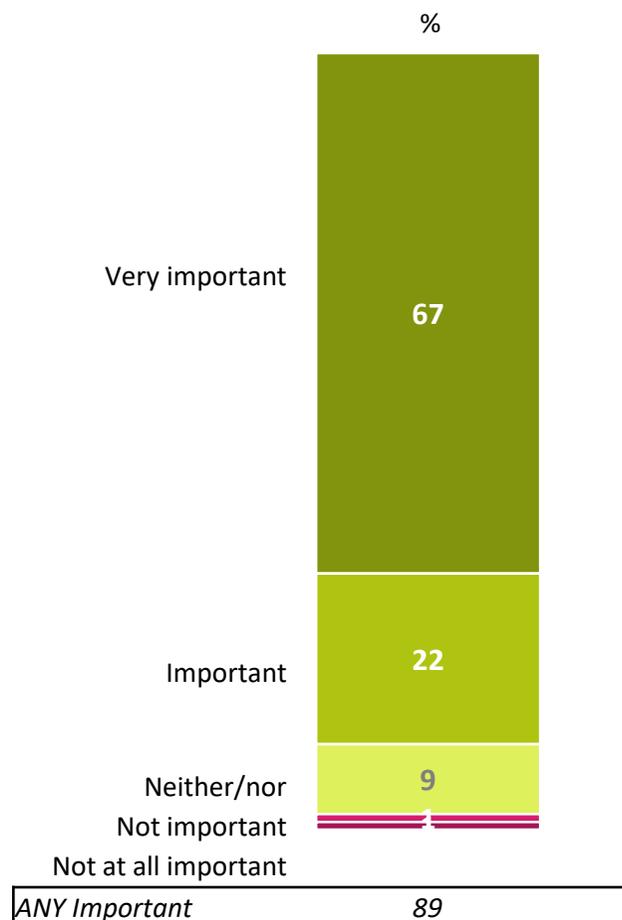




**Attitudes toward attending
Counselling/Psychotherapy**

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

Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

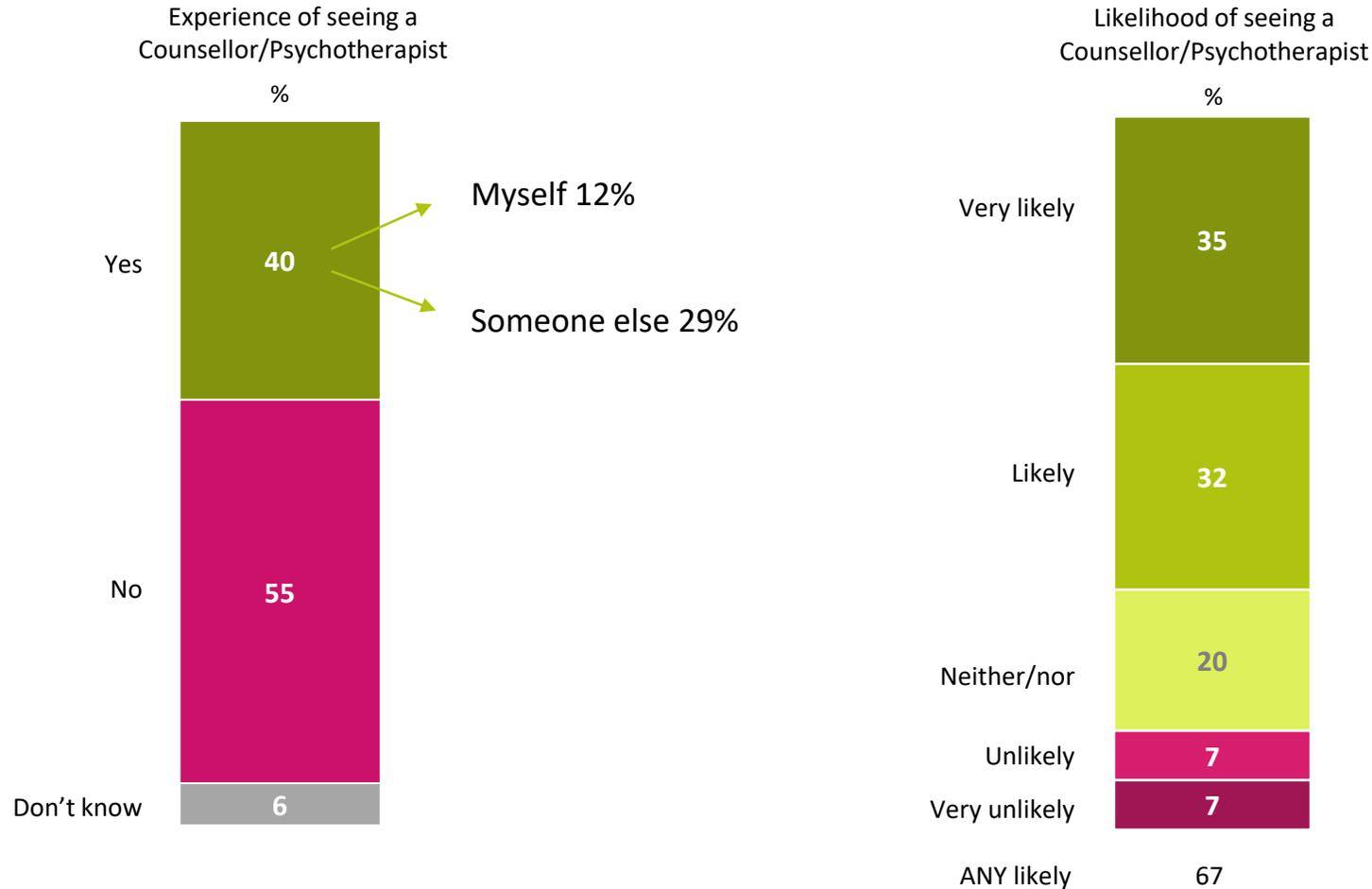


There is very broad agreement that therapists should be both trained and registered.

Over 1 in 10 say they have personally seen a Counsellor/ Psychotherapist, while two-thirds would be likely to



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



2 in 5 (40%) say that either themselves or someone they know have seen a Counsellor/ Psychotherapist, while two-thirds (67%) say they would be likely to if they were struggling with their mental health in some way.

Q.7a Have you, or someone you know, ever seen a counsellor/psychotherapist?

Q.7b And if you were feeling stressed, anxious, depressed, or struggling with your mental health in some way, how likely would you be to see a counsellor/psychotherapist?



Affordability is seen as a possible barrier by one in four



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



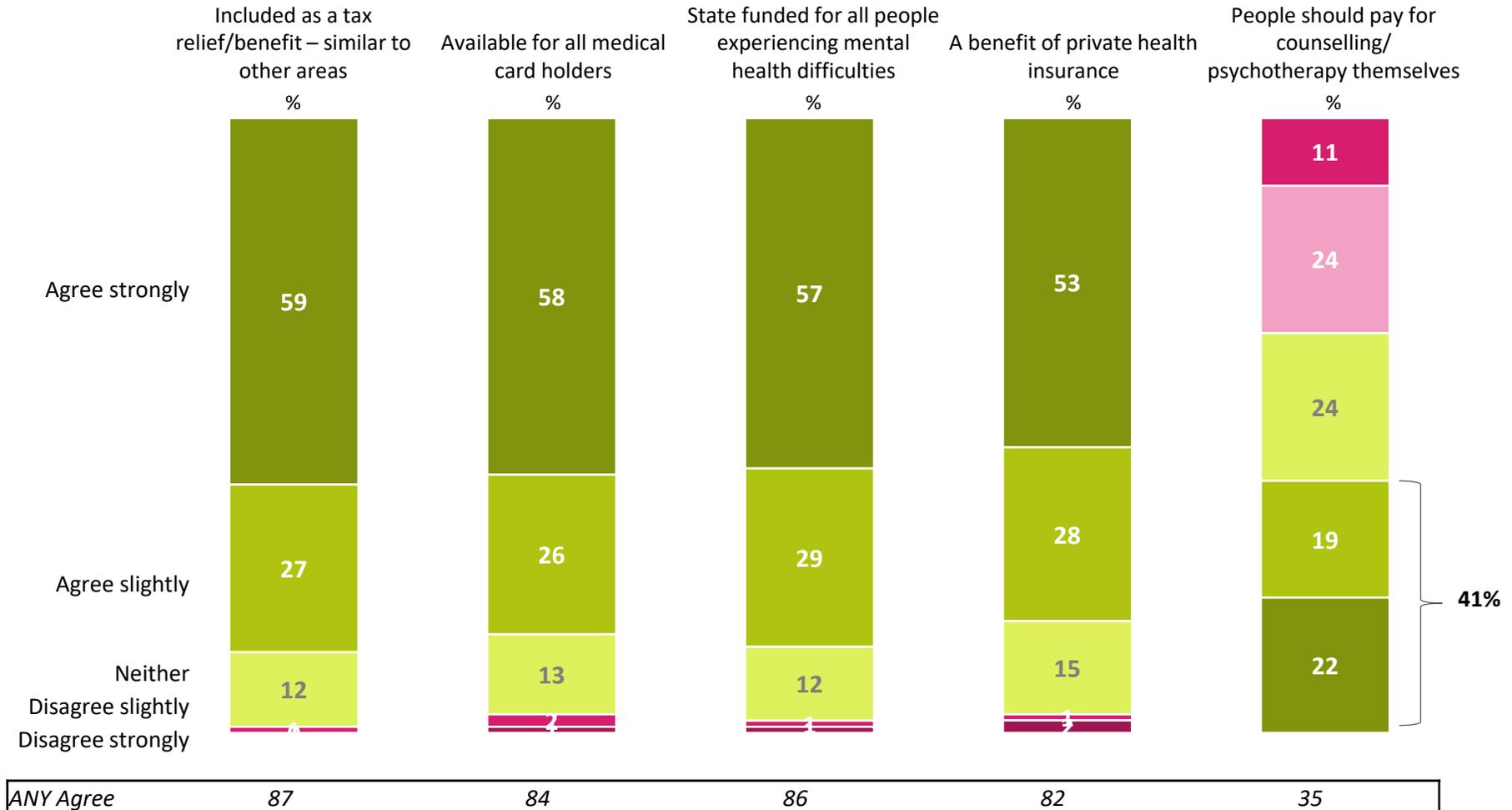
Almost half (48%) of Irish adults say there would be no barrier to them availing of Counselling/Psychotherapy. However, for a quarter (26%) affordability is a potential issue.

Support for funding of Counselling/Psychotherapy is strong



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

Counselling/Psychotherapy should be...

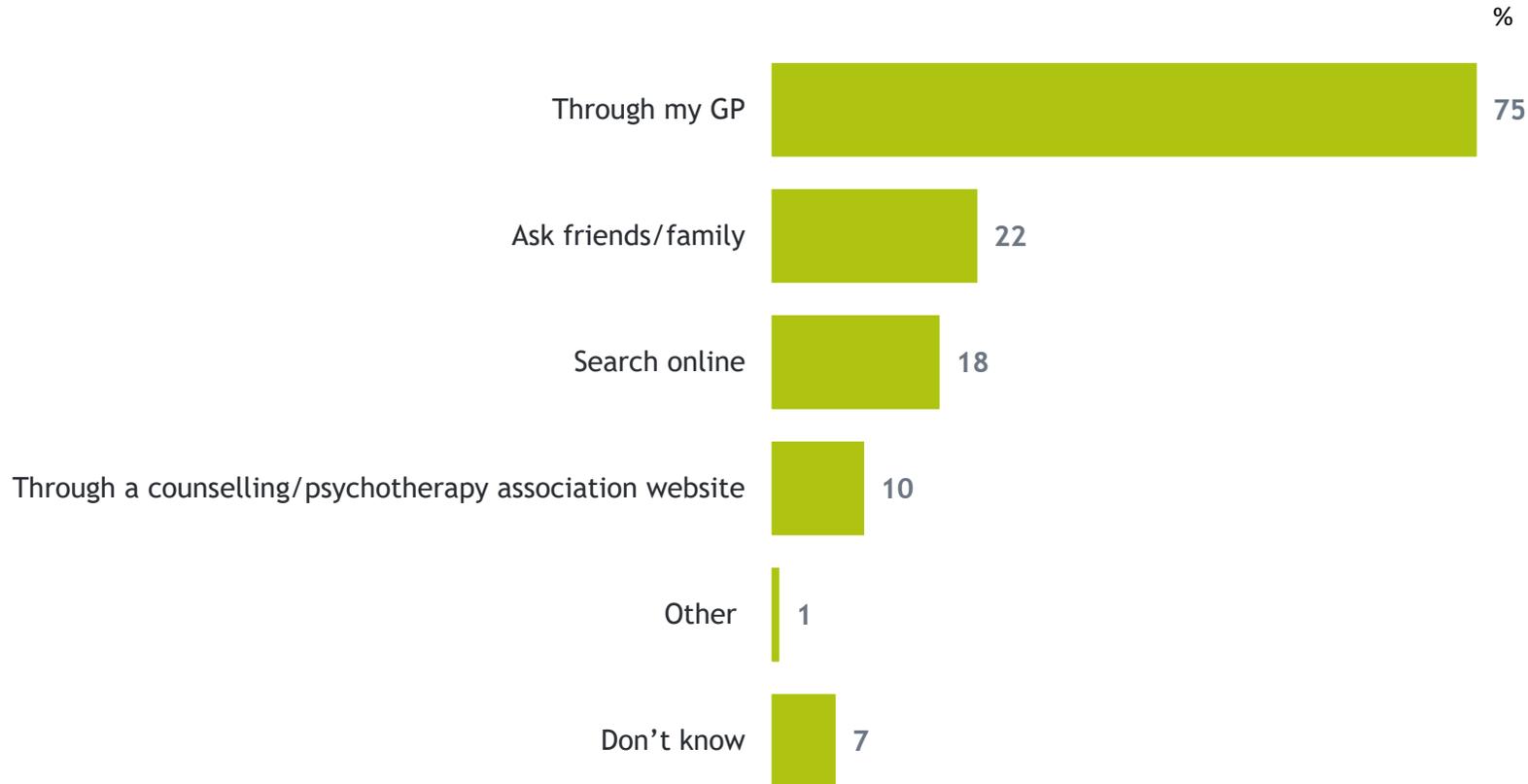


There is very strong support for universal availability and funding for Counselling/Psychotherapy, while over 2 in 5 (41%) disagree that it should be self-funded.

Three in four say they would go through their GP to make an initial Counselling/Psychotherapy appointment



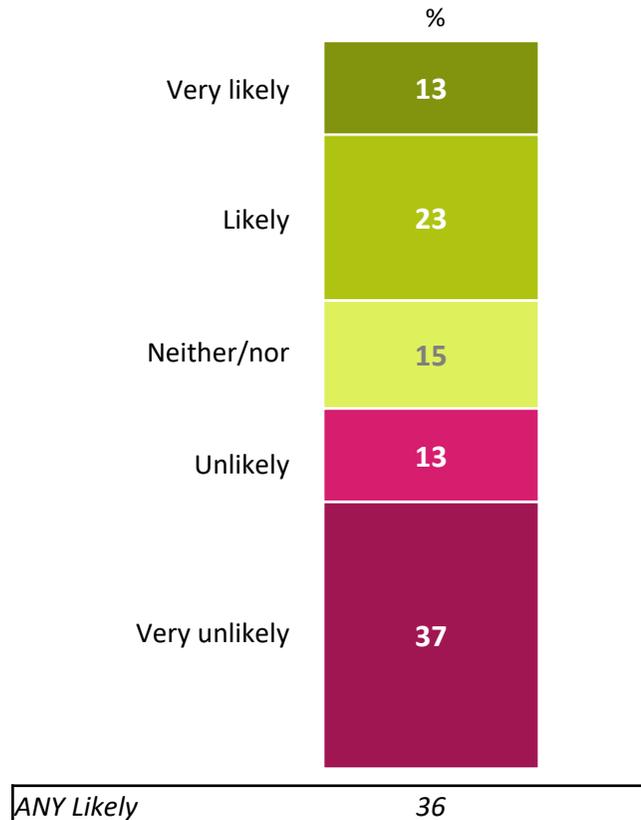
Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



Most (75%) say that they would approach their GP in order access to a Counsellor/Psychotherapist, while around one in five (22%) would ask a friend/family or search online (18%).

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

Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

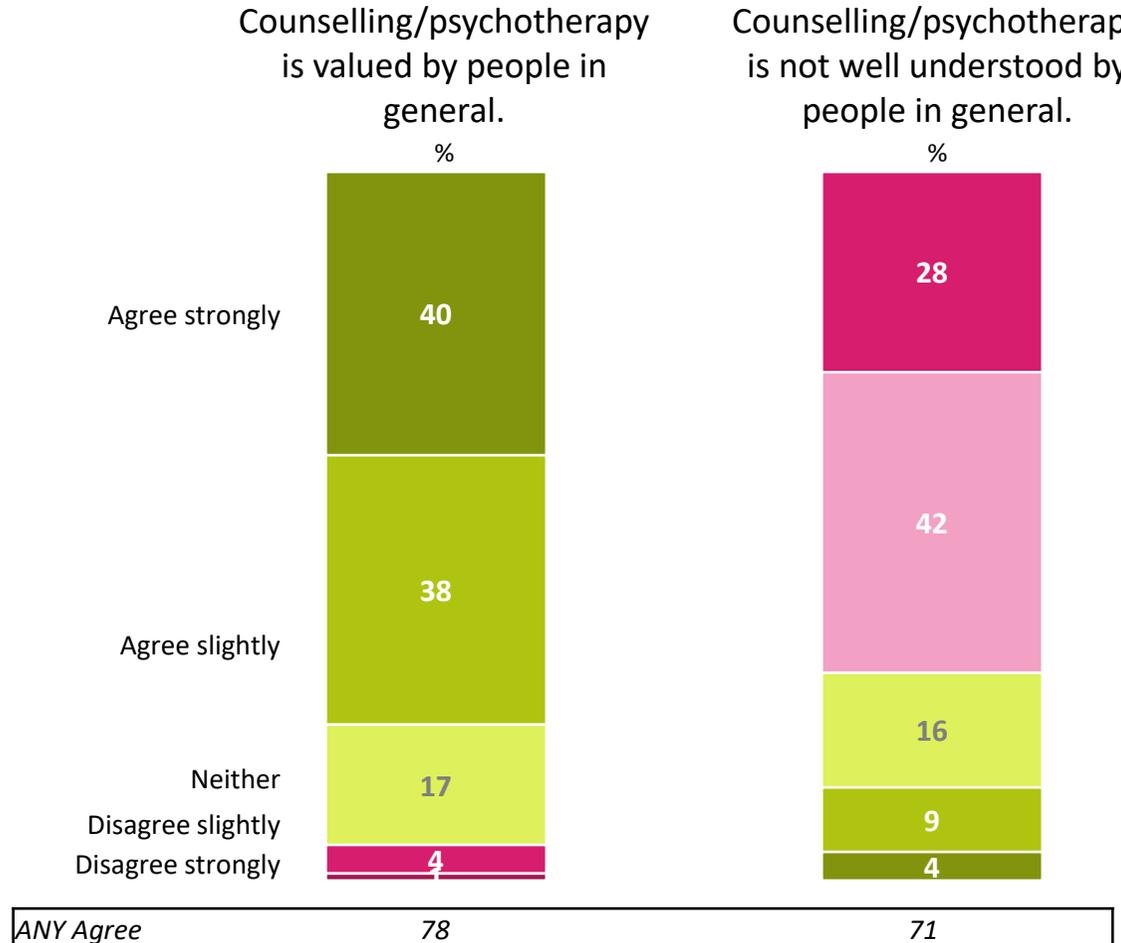


Over a third (36%) are open to the idea of opting for online Counselling/Psychotherapy, however, considerable diversity of opinion is apparent, with an almost identical proportion (37%) saying they would be very unlikely to consider it.

While Counselling/ Psychotherapy is valued by the vast majority, understanding is perceived to be lacking



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000



Although there is general acceptance as to its value, a substantial number feel that Counselling/Psychotherapy is probably not well understood generally.

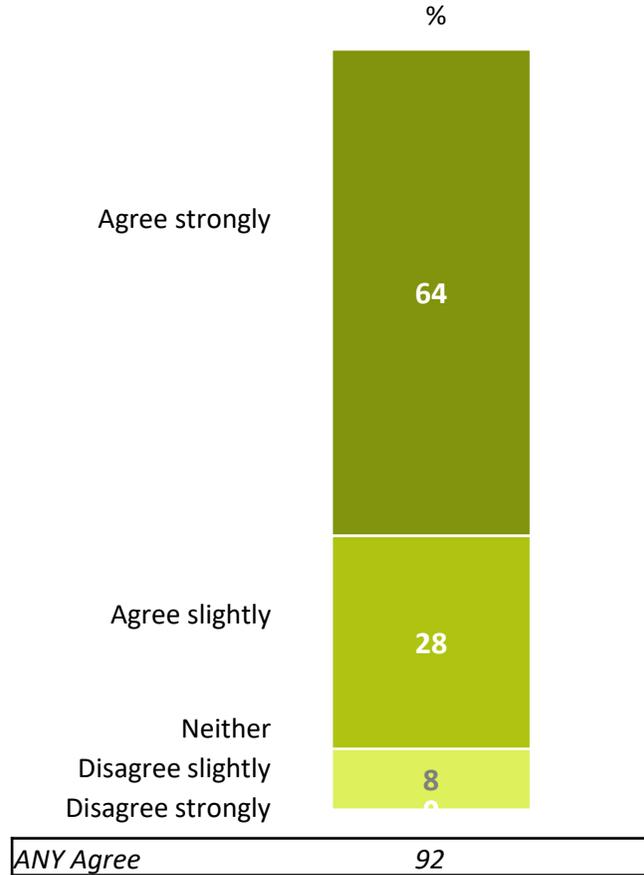




Counselling/Psychotherapy for Children/Adolescents

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

Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

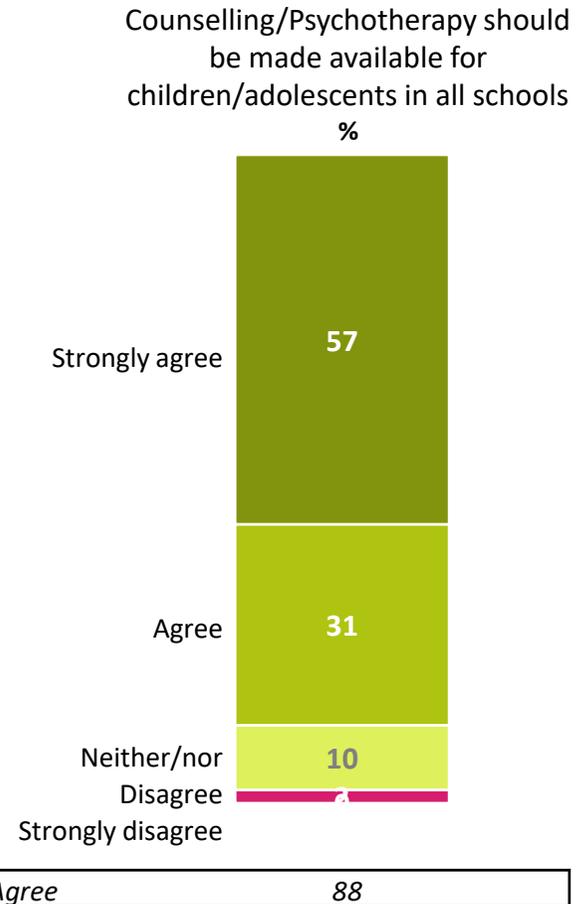
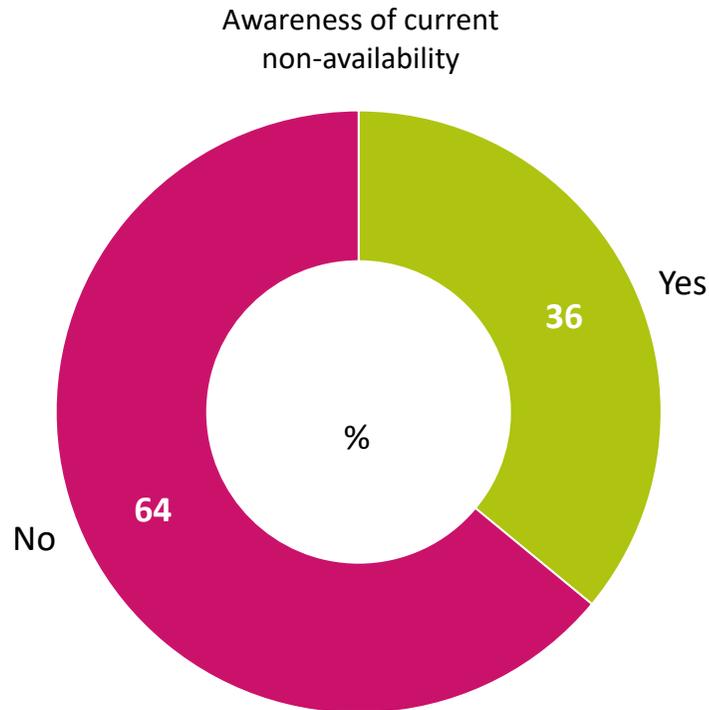


Almost two-thirds (64%) agree strongly that it is a good idea for children/adolescents to see a counsellor/psychotherapist if they are struggling with their mental health.

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



Base: All adults – 1,008/3,694,000

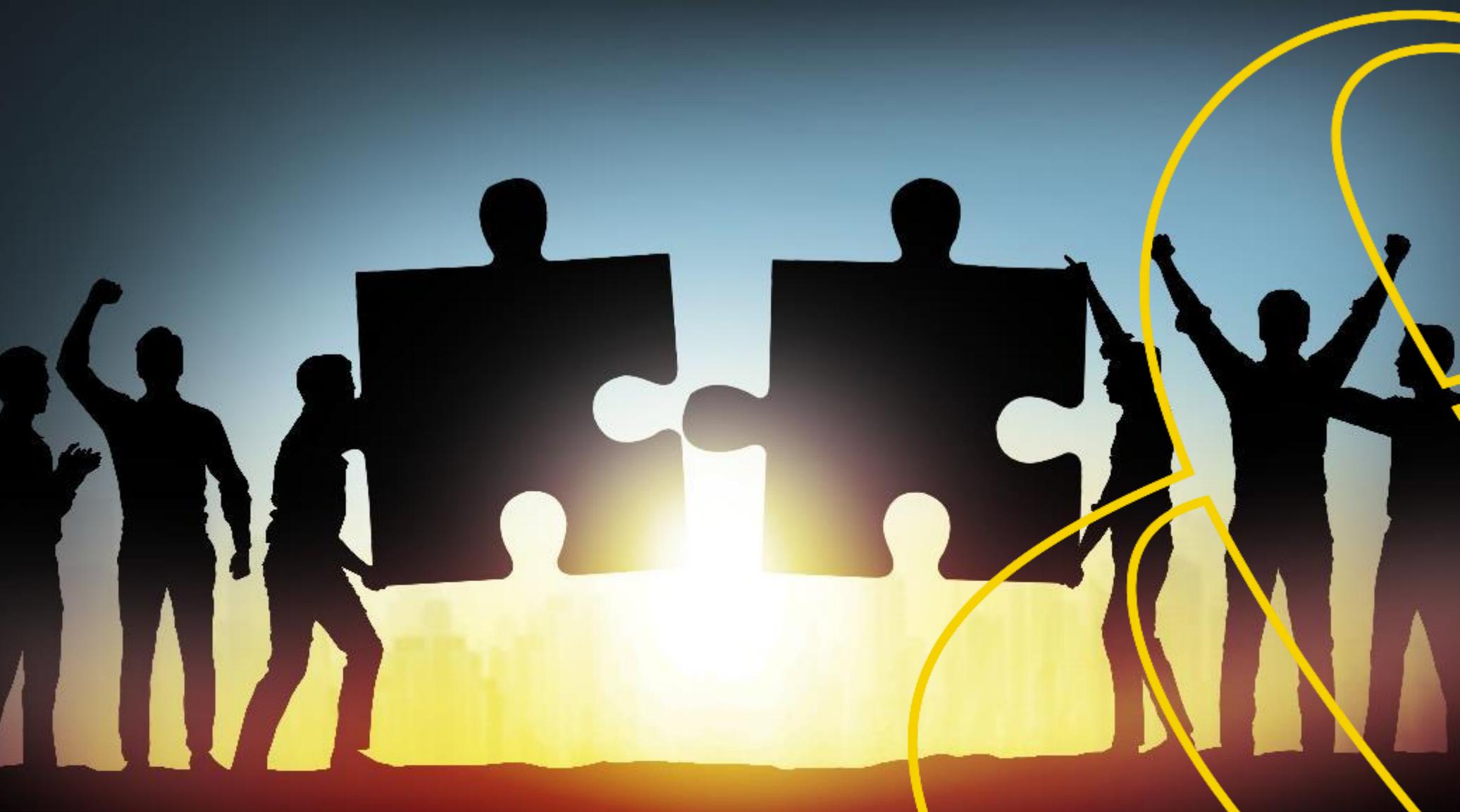


Two-thirds (64%) were not previously aware that Counselling/Psychotherapy isn't available in all schools in Ireland, while almost 9 in 10 (88%) believe that it should be – over half (57%) indicate strong agreement.



Q.12a Are you aware that counselling/psychotherapy is not currently available for all children/adolescents in schools?

Q.12b And to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Counselling/psychotherapy should be made available for children/adolescents in all schools.



Summary of Key Findings

Stress

- Over 1 in 10 people (11%) say they often feel stressed, however, this proportion is almost half that registered in 2016 (20%).
- Work and money/debt are the main causes of stress – while work has risen as the main stressor compared to 2015, money/debt has continued to fall since 2013.

Coping

- Talking (to someone close, or indeed the GP) is considered most helpful when people are struggling with their mental health.
- Exercise is considered helpful for over one in four, and one in ten say they find talking to a Counsellor/Psychotherapist beneficial.

Attitudes toward Mental Health

- Positive attitudes toward mental health are evident and a broad range of factors are perceived as contributing to it being more acceptable to talk about mental health issues nowadays – in particular, the media.
- However, personal disclosure remains an issue for many – the majority agree that they would find it difficult to speak to their employer about personal mental health issues, and that they wouldn't want people knowing if they were struggling.

Suicide

- Almost 2 in 5 Irish adults (38%) say they have been affected by suicide in some way – more commonly amongst friends/colleagues and local community/neighbours.
- There is broad agreement that if someone is at risk of suicide, we should talk to them about it or suggest they see a healthcare professional. However, almost two in every five say they would be afraid to initiate the conversation.

Attitudes toward Counselling/ Psychotherapy

- Attitudes toward Counselling/Psychotherapy are broadly positive – but most believe that it is not well-understood by people.
- There is also broad support for the idea that children/adolescents should attend Counselling/Psychotherapy if they are struggling, and indeed that it should be available in all schools.

Attending Counselling/ Psychotherapy

- Over one in ten say they have personally seen a Counsellor/Psychotherapist.
- Affordability is seen as a potential barrier to attending for over one in four, and there is broad support for funding of Counselling/Psychotherapy.
- Over a third are open to the idea of online Counselling/Psychotherapy, however, an equivalent proportion would be very unlikely to consider it.
- Most say that they would go through their GP to get a Counselling/Psychotherapy appointment.

Thank you.



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Delve Deeper