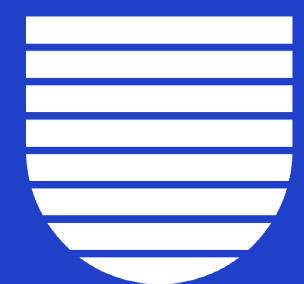


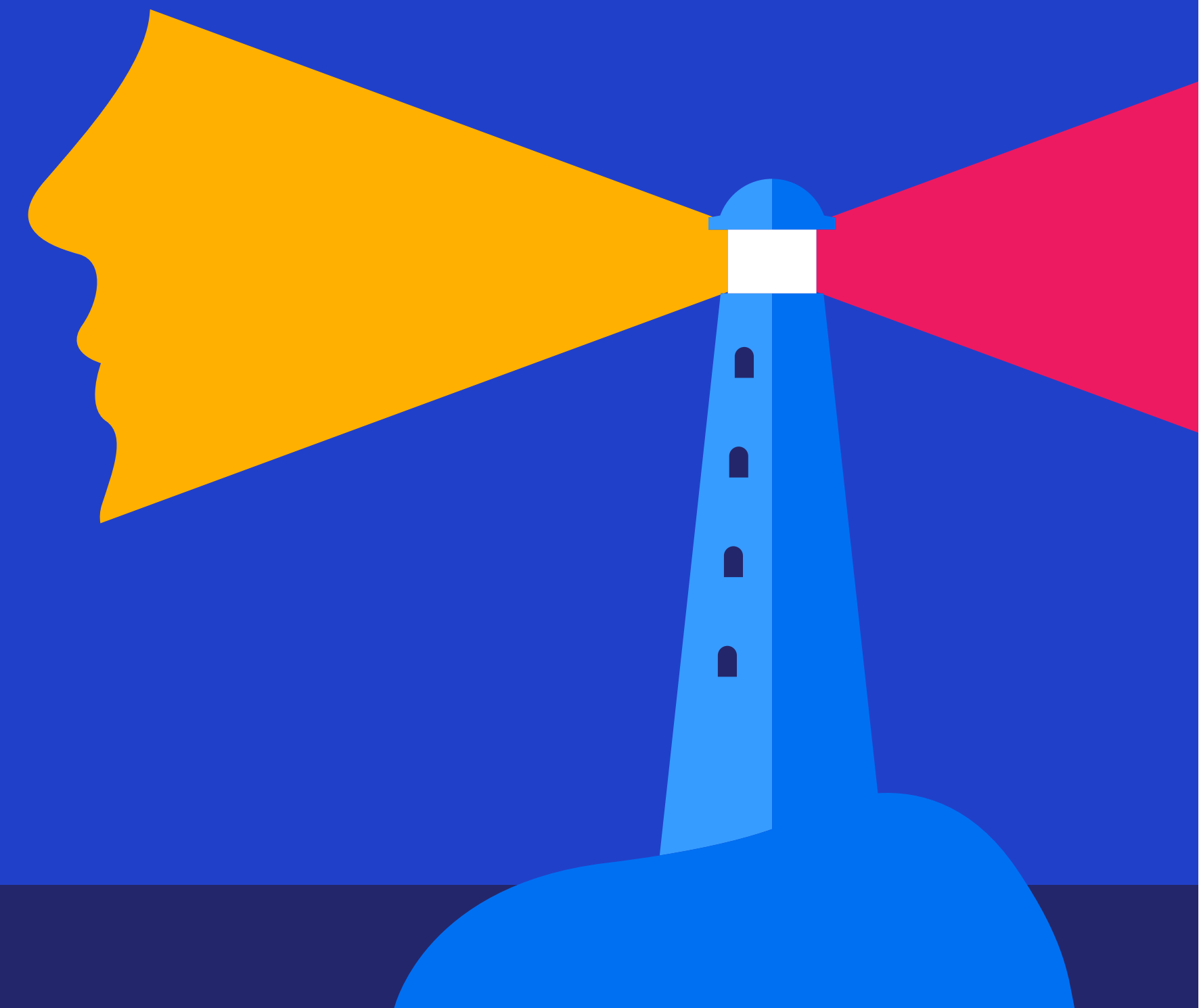
Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check

Trends in mental health and support-seeking

This research was conducted by Beyond Blue in
partnership with The Social Research Centre in 2024



Social
Research
Centre



Introduction

This report was prepared by Beyond Blue with research partners, The Social Research Centre (SRC), which is owned by The Australian National University. The information presented in this report is part of a comprehensive dataset that was collected by the SRC using their probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™. The survey is conducted every two years, most recently in July 2024 and previously in November 2022.

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For more information on this report or the research study, please contact Beyond Blue at research@beyondblue.org.au.

Acknowledgements

Beyond Blue acknowledges the Land on which our head office is based has deep connections to peoples and cultures across the Eastern Kulin Nation. As such we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this area, the Wurundjeri Peoples, and pay our respect to their Elders past and present. As an organisation with national reach, we extend our respect to all Elders and First Nations Peoples across Australia.

Beyond Blue acknowledges those who are living with and managing mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, their families, friends, and supporters, and those affected by suicide.



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Who we are

Who we are

Beyond Blue is one of Australia's most well-known, trusted, and visited mental health organisations.

We are the national depression and anxiety initiative, with deep expertise in, and a focus on, tackling Australia's most prevalent mental health conditions.

We provide accessible, free, evidence-based supports and services, advice, and referral around the clock to millions of Australians every year - from those who want to look after their mental health, to those in high distress and suicidal crisis.

You can read our Strategy - Earlier. Easier. Together - at <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about/strategy>

Vision

Our Vision is that all people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.

Role

Our Role is to work with the community to improve mental health and make it easier for people to feel better earlier, get well and stay well.



Aim of this research

The aim of this report is to present a high-level overview of mental health and wellbeing in Australia, including prevalence and support-seeking trends. It is a general overview and does not represent the full Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing dataset, which is derived from a comprehensive survey conducted by Beyond Blue and The Social Research Centre every two years. Some survey questions compare the latest 2024 data with data from the previous survey in 2022. Some questions were new in 2024 so no comparison could be made.

The report focuses on statistically significant findings that represent high level trends in mental health and wellbeing, as well as support-seeking, in Australia with the aim of assisting service providers, policy-makers, advocates and the community. Mental health challenges were operationalised in several different ways to capture a broad range of experiences (see Glossary of Terms on page 7 for further details). This report explores symptoms, diagnoses, functional impact and distress using standardised scales and self-report measures.

Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check explores general population trends. While the research captures data about demographic groups within the population, this report mainly focuses on high-level general population trends. Any references to gender in this report are respondents' self-reported gender as per the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard definition of gender. Readers seeking authoritative information about demographic groups can refer to the ABS for further information.



Background and Methodology

About the research

Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check is conducted by The Social Research Centre (SRC) on behalf of Beyond Blue as a representative survey of the Australian population on mental health. The information presented in this report is part of a comprehensive dataset that was collected in 2022, and again in 2024. It supports Beyond Blue in the monitoring of community outcomes that are aligned with its vision and strategic goals.

The survey was undertaken on The Social Research Centre's probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™. Life in Australia™ is Australia's most methodologically rigorous online panel. It exclusively uses random probability-based sampling methods and covers both online and offline populations. Results from Life in Australia™ are generalisable to the Australian population.

The most recent survey was conducted from 15 to 28 July 2024. The in-scope population for the survey was Australian adults aged 18 years and older. A total of 5,014 people completed the survey.

All data presented, unless otherwise stated, show survey percentages that are weighted. This means that the results have been adjusted to ensure they are representative of the Australian population. This applies to all results expressed as percentages. Some percentages or charts may not add to exactly 100% due to weighting or rounding.

To help determine if there are meaningful differences between 2022 and 2024 findings, or between certain groups and the general population, statistical significance testing was performed. Findings that are statistically significant represent genuine differences rather than random variation. Where results are reported as significantly different, it implies that a statistically significant difference at a 95 per cent confidence level has been established. Statistically significant differences are presented in graphs as up or down arrows or as an asterisk next to a percentage. All significant differences presented use the general population as the comparison group or show significant differences between years the survey was undertaken (currently 2022 and 2024). Findings that are statistically significant are primarily presented in this report.

Glossary of terms

The following terms and abbreviations have been used throughout the report:

At least moderate functional impact: Impact from a mental health issue that caused a person to cut down the amount of time they spent on work or other activities to an extent they described as either “moderate”, “quite a bit” or “extreme”. People experiencing “at least moderate functional impacts” from a mental health issue are also referred to in this report as “experiencing significant mental health challenges”.

ABS: The Australian Bureau of Statistics – Australia’s national statistical agency.

Functional impact: Impact from a mental health issue that caused a person to cut down the amount of time they spent on work or other activities due to a mental health issue.

Mental health issue: An issue that significantly impacted a person’s social and emotional wellbeing for several weeks in the past 12 months.

Mental health challenge: A generic term for the full range of mental health experiences presented in the report.

Mental health condition: A diagnosis the respondent reported receiving from a health professional.

Recent symptoms of anxiety and depression: Symptoms of anxiety and depression as measured by the four-item Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression (PHQ4). The PHQ4 is a brief screening scale for anxiety and depression disorders in the past two weeks*. The PHQ4 asks respondents if they felt nervous, anxious or on edge, unable to stop or control worrying, down, depressed or hopeless and/or had little interest or pleasure in doing things. Responses are scored and classified in symptom categories of normal, mild, moderate or severe.

Significant mental health challenges: This is another way to describe people who experienced "at least moderate functional impact" from a mental health issue. Refer to the definition above.

Significant findings: A finding that is statistically significant established at a 95% confidence level. Findings that are statistically significant represent genuine differences rather than just random or chance variation.

Professional: The following members of the mental health workforce were together described as "professionals": GP, psychologist, psychiatrist, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), social worker, counsellor, occupational therapist, mental health coach, peer worker, national phone support line (e.g. Beyond Blue).

Self-reported anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours: Respondents were asked whether they experienced anxiety depression and/or suicidal thoughts or behaviours in the preceding 12 months. If they reported any of these experiences, this has been presented in the report as "self-reported reported anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours".

Stressors: This report measured social stressors by asking respondents about the following common sources of stress: financial pressure, relationship challenges, housing affordability, loneliness or lack of social connection, family health status, major illness or injury, job loss, transition or insecurity, having or raising children, death of a loved one or divorce.

* Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R.L., Williams J.B.W., & Lowe, B. (2009). An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: the PHQ4. *Psychosomatics*, 50(6):613-621. doi: 10.1176/appi.psy.50.6.613.

Summary of key findings

Key Takeaways

- **Symptoms of anxiety and depression are more common than diagnoses (page 10).**

Half of all adults in Australia experienced recent anxiety and depression symptoms.

Two in five Australian adults have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

- **Approximately 4.5 million Australian adults are experiencing significant mental health challenges that cause them to reduce their participation in daily life (page 11).**

One in five people (19%) experiencing significant mental health challenges did not seek professional support when they needed it (page 22).

- **Since 2022, support-seeking has increased overall, largely due to more people turning to someone they know for support (page 19).**

- **Up to 3.9 million Australians (one in six) connected with Beyond Blue's content and/or services over the past 12 months.**

- **People in Australia who cite lack of affordability or long waitlists as key reasons for delaying or not seeking professional support appear to be turning to Beyond Blue.**

Almost half the people who reported delaying or not getting professional support who turned to Beyond Blue report cost and waitlists as the leading barriers to getting support (page 25).

- **Cost and waitlists are the leading barriers to seeking professional support, with cost increasing significantly as a barrier since 2024.**

Shame and stigma have also substantially increased and remain significant barriers to professional support seeking (page 26).

- **More people are seeking mental health information online.**

In 2024, 30% of all people surveyed had sought mental health information online from at least one source, a significant increase since 2022 (26%) (page 23).

- **People experiencing significant mental health challenges are more likely to delay or not get support (page 21).**

Nearly one in four people who said they needed professional support either delayed seeking it or didn't seek it (22%).

One in two people experiencing at least moderate functional impacts from a mental health issue delayed or did not seek support (either from a professional or someone they know) when they needed it (56%).

- **Almost one in two people reported experiencing distress from financial pressure, followed by approximately one in three people experiencing distress from personal relationship challenges and housing affordability (page 14).**

- **Beyond Blue is recognised by almost all Australians (page 31).**

94% of people in Australia say they know something about Beyond Blue.

Mental health and wellbeing in Australia



Mental health issues are common and exist in the absence of a diagnosis

Symptoms of anxiety and depression are common

Mental health challenges are common in Australia. Nearly half (49%) of all adults experienced recent symptoms of anxiety and/or depression in a two-week period* (Figure 1) and this rose to two in three (63% NET percentage) people for adults aged 18 to 34. Of people in the general population who experienced symptoms (49%), the majority (one in three at 30%) were classified as having mild symptoms. These results are consistent with 2022 findings, with the exception that significantly more people were classified as having severe symptoms in 2024 (Figure 2).

Figure 1: PHQ4 symptom rates

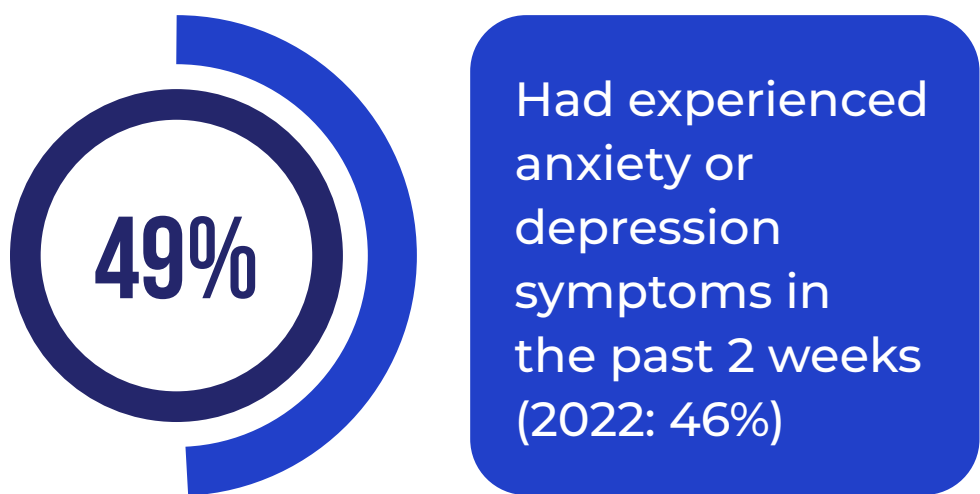
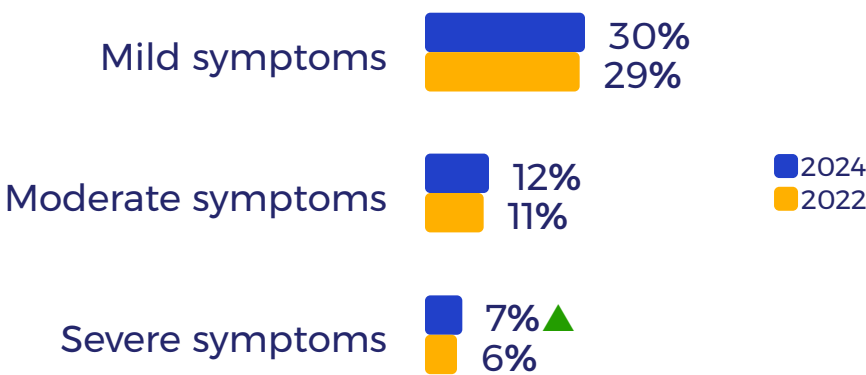


Figure 2: PHQ4 symptom severity



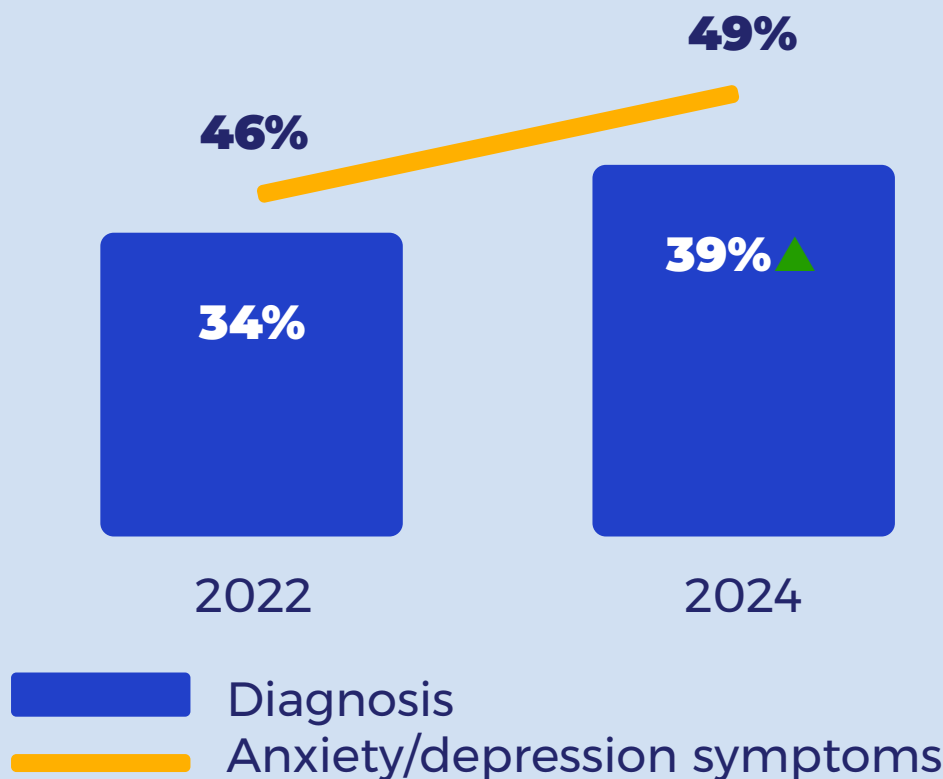
*Measured by the four-item Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression (PHQ4). Refer to Glossary of Terms on page 7 for further details. Hereafter, these will be referred to as recent symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Diagnosed mental health conditions are also common, but occur less frequently

Diagnosed mental health conditions are also common in Australia. Findings show that 39% of people have received a diagnosis from a health professional, significantly higher than 2022 (34%). More people experience recent anxiety or depression symptoms (49%) than have received a diagnosis (39%) (Figure 3).

While the disparity between rates of symptoms and diagnoses may be attributable to a range of factors, these findings indicate that people are experiencing distress and negative impacts from their mental health in the absence of a diagnosis from a health professional.

Figure 3: Rates of diagnosis and PHQ4 symptoms



Key takeaway

- Mental health challenges are common in Australia and exceed diagnosis rates.
- Scaling of novel, outcomes-driven earlier intervention support models and workforces would mean millions of Australians could be effectively supported to manage through early and mild symptoms of depression and anxiety, preventing these symptoms becoming more severe or people reaching crisis.

Social and emotional issues impact one in five adults' daily functioning

Mental health issues have an impact on people’s ability to work or engage in regular activities

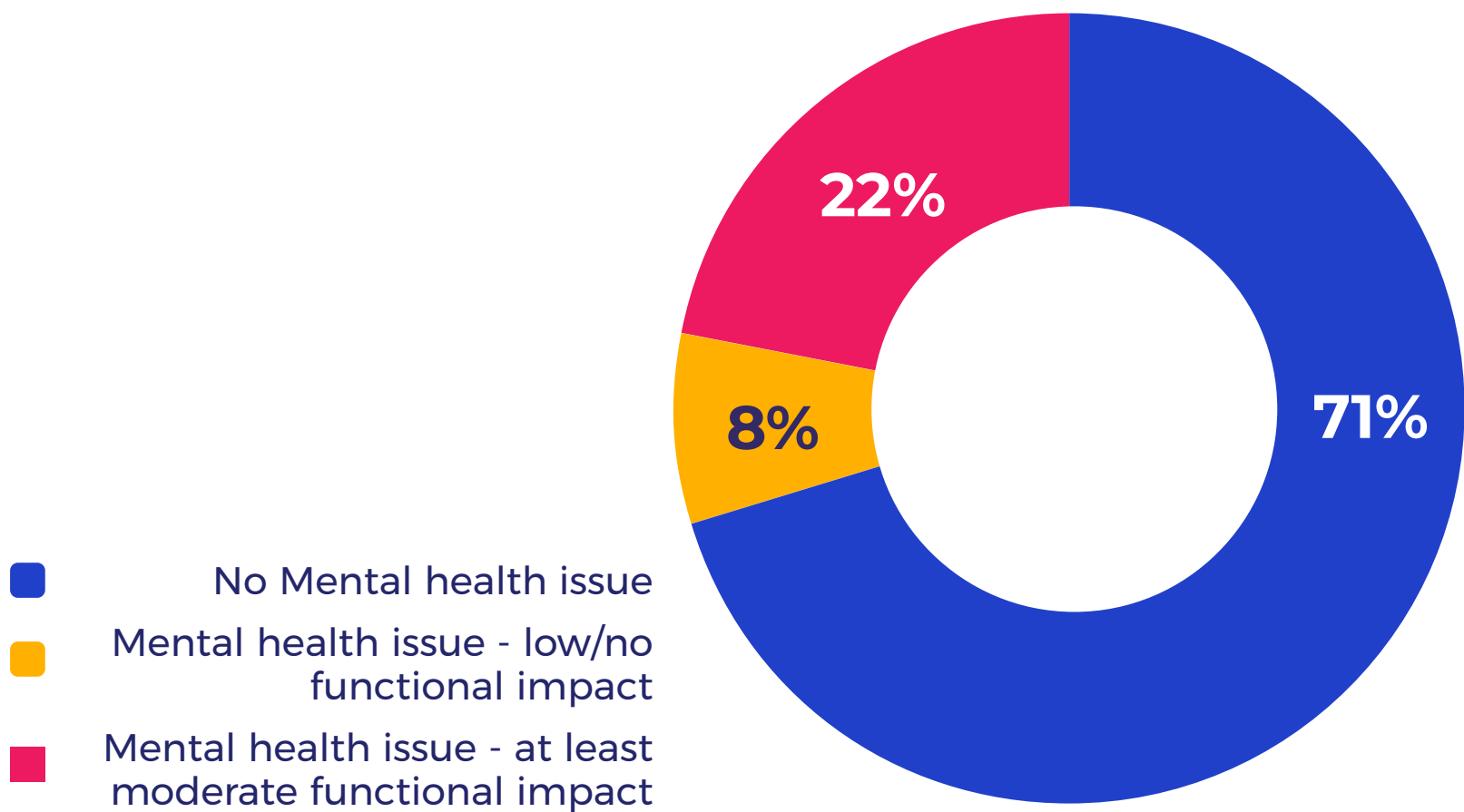
In addition to exploring the presence of anxiety and depression symptoms experienced over a two-week period, the survey explored whether people experienced a mental health issue that lasted for at least several weeks and affected their daily functioning.

Almost one in three people in Australia (29%) reported experiencing a mental health issue that interfered with their daily lives, consistent with 2022 findings.

For just over one in five people (22%), however, these issues caused them to cut down the amount of time they spent on work or on other activities to an extent they described as either “moderate”, “quite a bit” or “extreme” (Figure 4). Here, "mental health issue" was defined as an issue that negatively affected a person's social and emotional wellbeing for several weeks in the past 12 months.

Throughout this report, people whose mental health issues interfered with their ability to work or engage in activities to an extent described as "moderate to extreme" will be described as "experiencing at least moderate functional impacts" from their mental health issue or as “experiencing significant mental health challenges”.

Figure 4: Mental health issue rates*



Key takeaway

- Just over one in five adults in Australia (22%) - approximately 4.5 million people – experienced a mental health issue that interfered with their ability to work or engage in activities to an extent described as "moderate" to “extreme“ for at least several weeks over a 12-month period.

Younger adults and women are more likely to experience mental health challenges

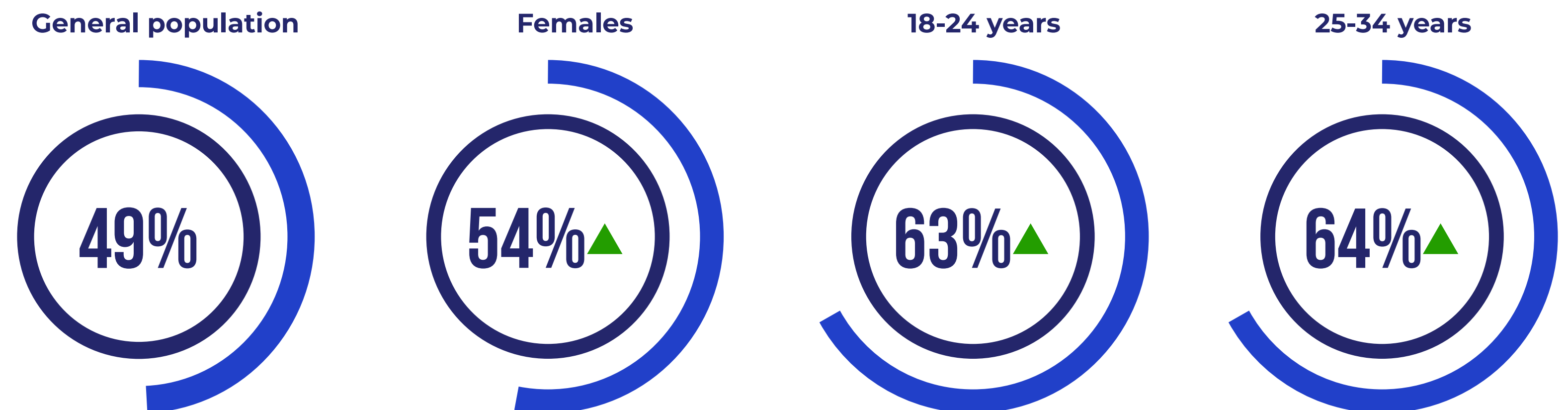
Functional impacts from mental health issues affect more younger adults and women

Younger adults aged 18 to 34 years (63% NET percentage) and women (54%) were significantly more likely to experience recent anxiety and depression symptoms, and greater symptom severity, than the general Australian population (49%) (Figure 5). Additionally, women and younger adults (18-34 years) were significantly more likely to experience at least moderate functional impacts from a mental health issue.

Key takeaway

- Younger adults and women are more likely to experience mental health challenges than the general Australian population and they are more likely to be experienced as severe.

Figure 5: PHQ4 anxiety and depression rates among younger adults and women



Causes of distress

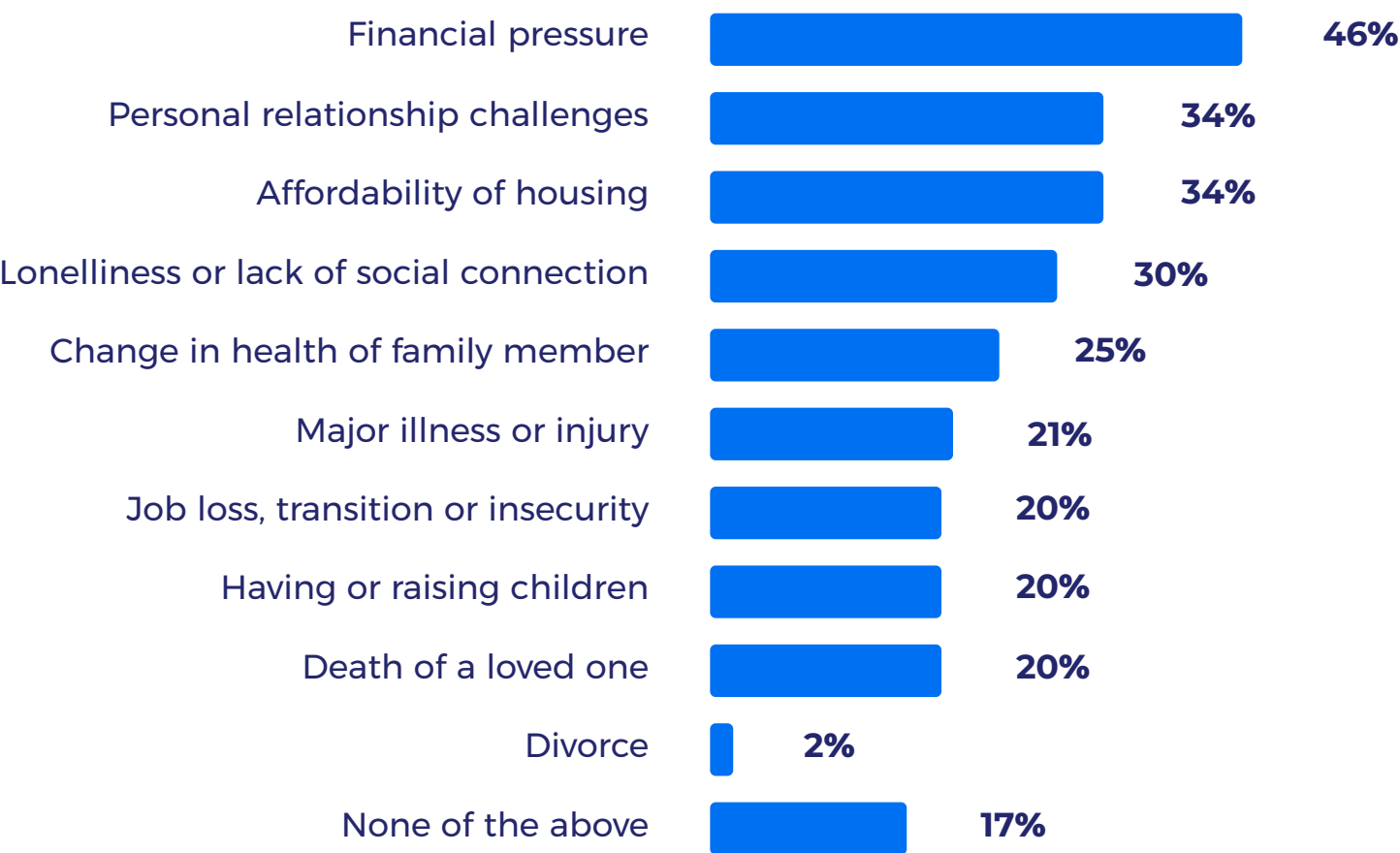


Financial pressures, relationship issues and loneliness are causing the most distress

Half of the Australian population identified financial pressure as the leading cause of distress

The survey explored common external drivers of distress. Financial pressure (46%), personal relationship challenges (34%) and housing affordability (34%) were the most prominent sources of stress impacting people's mental health (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Stressors impacting mental health



Key takeaway

- Financial challenges were identified as the leading cause of distress impacting Australia's mental health and wellbeing, impacting almost half of all people in Australia (46%).
- Relationship challenges, as well as loneliness and lack of social connection, caused almost as much distress as housing affordability, affecting approximately one third of the population.

Younger adults and women are more likely to experience distress from life stressors

Overall, people aged 18 to 44 and women reported significantly higher rates of distress across a greater number of issues than other groups.

Financial pressures were felt significantly more acutely by people aged between 25 and 55 (59%) and women (51%) compared to the general population (46%) (Figure 7). Loneliness and lack of social connection was also significantly higher for younger adults aged between 18 and 44 years (39% NET percentage) and women (34%) than the general population (30%).

Figure 7: Financial pressure by age



Loneliness and declining sense of community are associated with mental health challenges

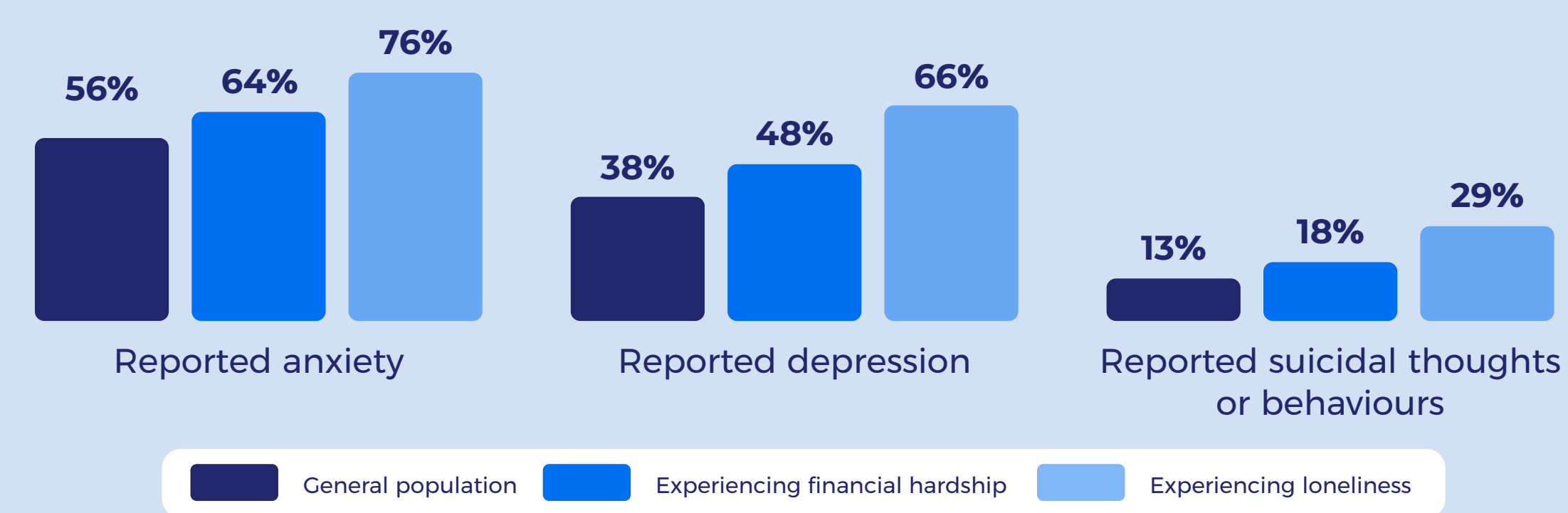
Loneliness and financial hardship are associated with higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms

The survey also asked people if they had experienced anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts or behaviours in the preceding 12 months. People who experienced loneliness or financial hardship* experienced higher self-reported rates of anxiety, distress and suicidal thoughts or behaviours than people who didn't (Figure 8). 46% of the population

was found to experience financial hardship and 30% reported experiencing distress from loneliness.

Loneliness is more strongly associated with self-reported anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours than financial hardship (Figure 8). This highlights the impact loneliness can have on mental health and wellbeing.

Figure 8: Self-reported mental health status by stressors



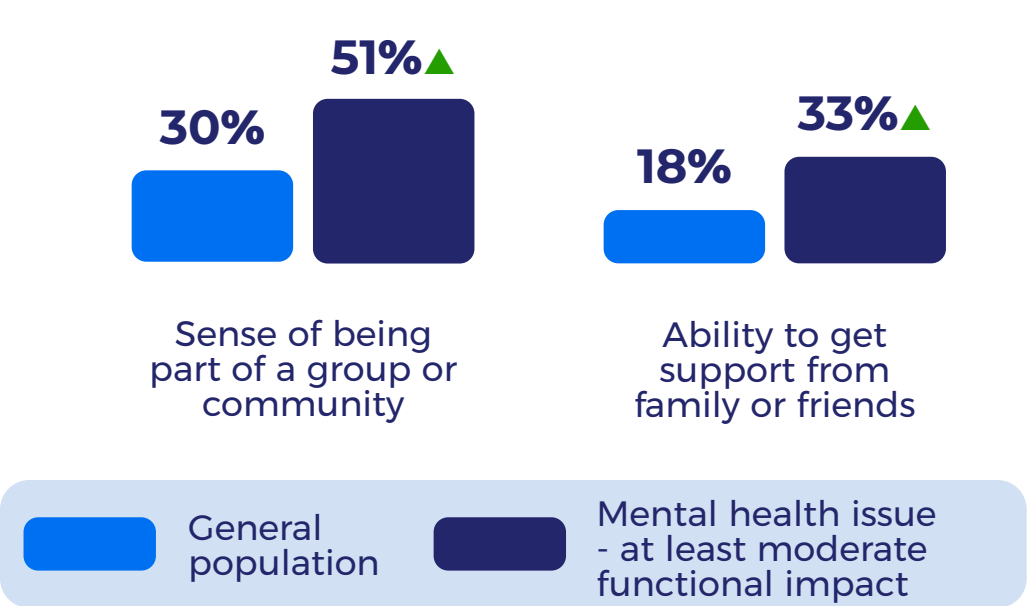
Sense of being part of a community has declined since 2022

Nationally, people appear to be feeling a reduced sense of community, with one third (33%) of people rating their sense of being part of a community as "excellent" or "very good", a significant decrease since 2022 (37%). More people were also likely to rate their sense of community as "poor" and "fair" in 2024 (30%) than in 2022 (28%). This indicates a decline in sense of community.

Social and community support feels harder to access for people experiencing significant mental health challenges

People whose mental health issue was causing at least moderate functional impact were significantly more likely to rate their sense of community (51%) and ability to get support from family and friends (33%) as "fair" or "poor" than the general population (30% and 18% respectively) (Figure 9). This trend was even more marked for people experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

Figure 9: Mental health issue by social determinants



Key takeaway

- Loneliness is more strongly associated with self-reported anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours than financial hardship.
- Nationally, people are feeling a reduced sense of being part of a community and this is particularly true for people experiencing significant mental health challenges.

Almost one in two people are experiencing multiple life stressors

The majority of the population is experiencing stress from at least one source

The majority of the population (83%) is experiencing stress from at least one stressor and just under one in three people (30%) are experiencing stress from three to four stressors. 16% are experiencing stress from at least 5 or more sources. Stressors are listed on page 14.

With more life stressors, rates of mental health challenges increase

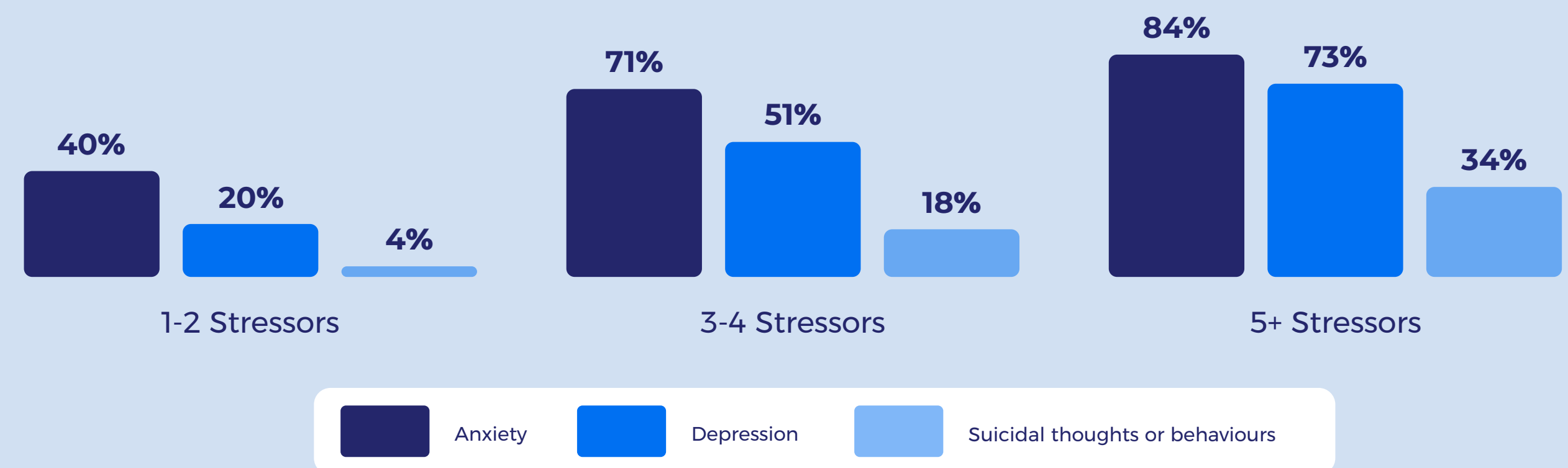
As the number of stressors in people's lives increases, self-reported symptoms of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours increases. Specifically, when the number of stressors jumps to three or four from one to two, the proportion of people experiencing anxiety (71%), depression (51%) and suicidal thoughts or behaviours (18%) approximately doubles (Figure 10). This helps to demonstrate how social factors are associated with mental health challenges.

Men are less likely to report adverse mental health impacts from stressors

Significantly fewer men and people aged over 55 reported impact to their mental health from stressors compared to the general population. In contrast, more women and people aged 18 to 44 reported experiencing distress from stressors.

Note: The title of this page was previously incorrectly published as "One in three people are experiencing multiple life stressors".

Figure 10: Stressors by self-reported mental health status



Key takeaway

- As people experience more life stressors, rates of self-reported anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts or behaviours increase.
- Half of all people in Australia experience 3 or more stressors and the majority of these people report experiencing anxiety or depression.

Support-seeking intentions and actions



Half of all support-seekers are highly distressed when seeking help

When seeking support, half of all support-seekers are highly distressed

Almost half of all people who needed support were highly distressed* before seeking help either from a professional (49%) or from someone they know (45%) (Figure 11).

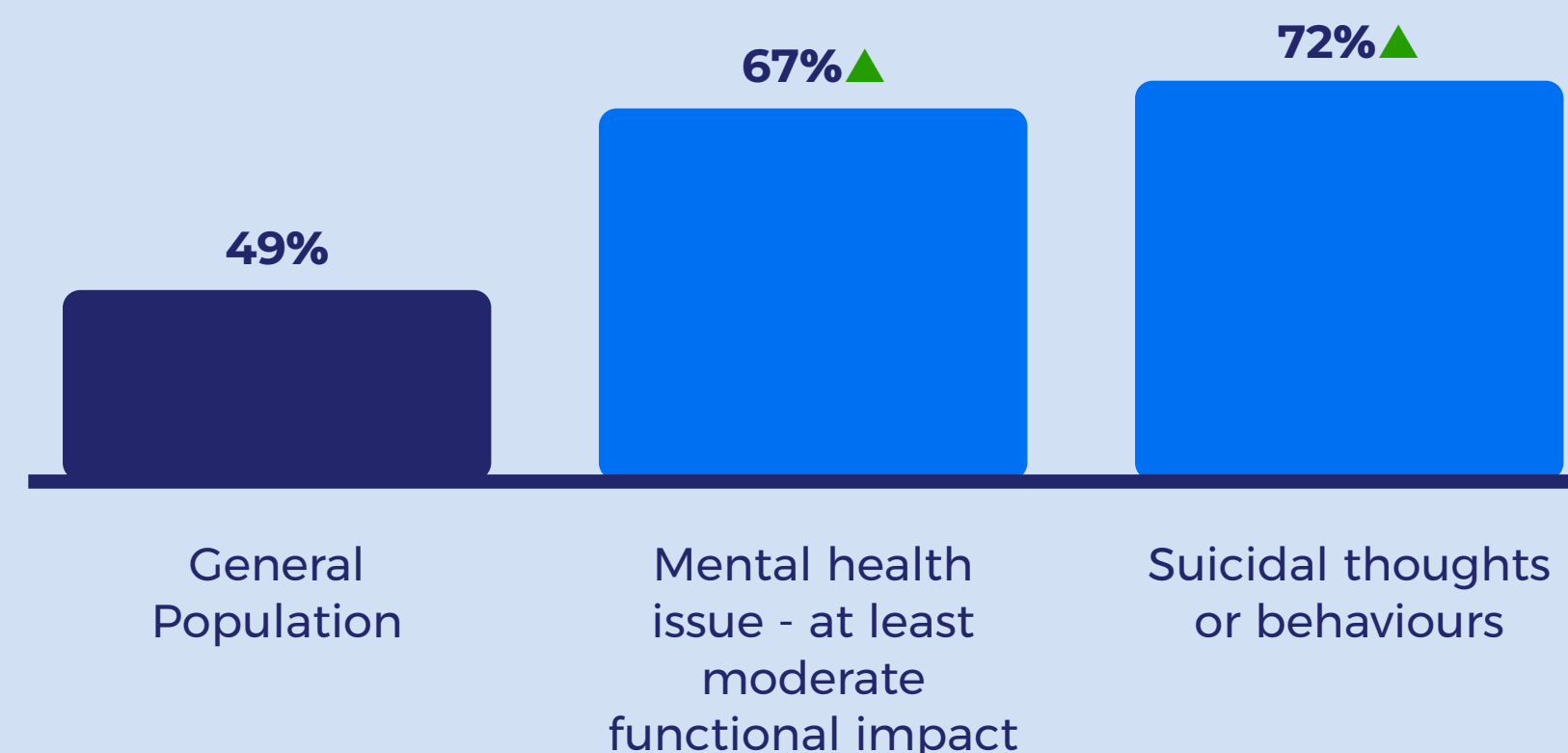
Figure 11: Distress level when seeking support



Distress can cause significant impacts in people's lives by the time they seek support

In comparison to the general population (49%), more people experiencing at least moderate functional impacts from a mental health issue were highly distressed when seeking support from a mental health professional (67%) (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Distress level by mental health issue



Key takeaway

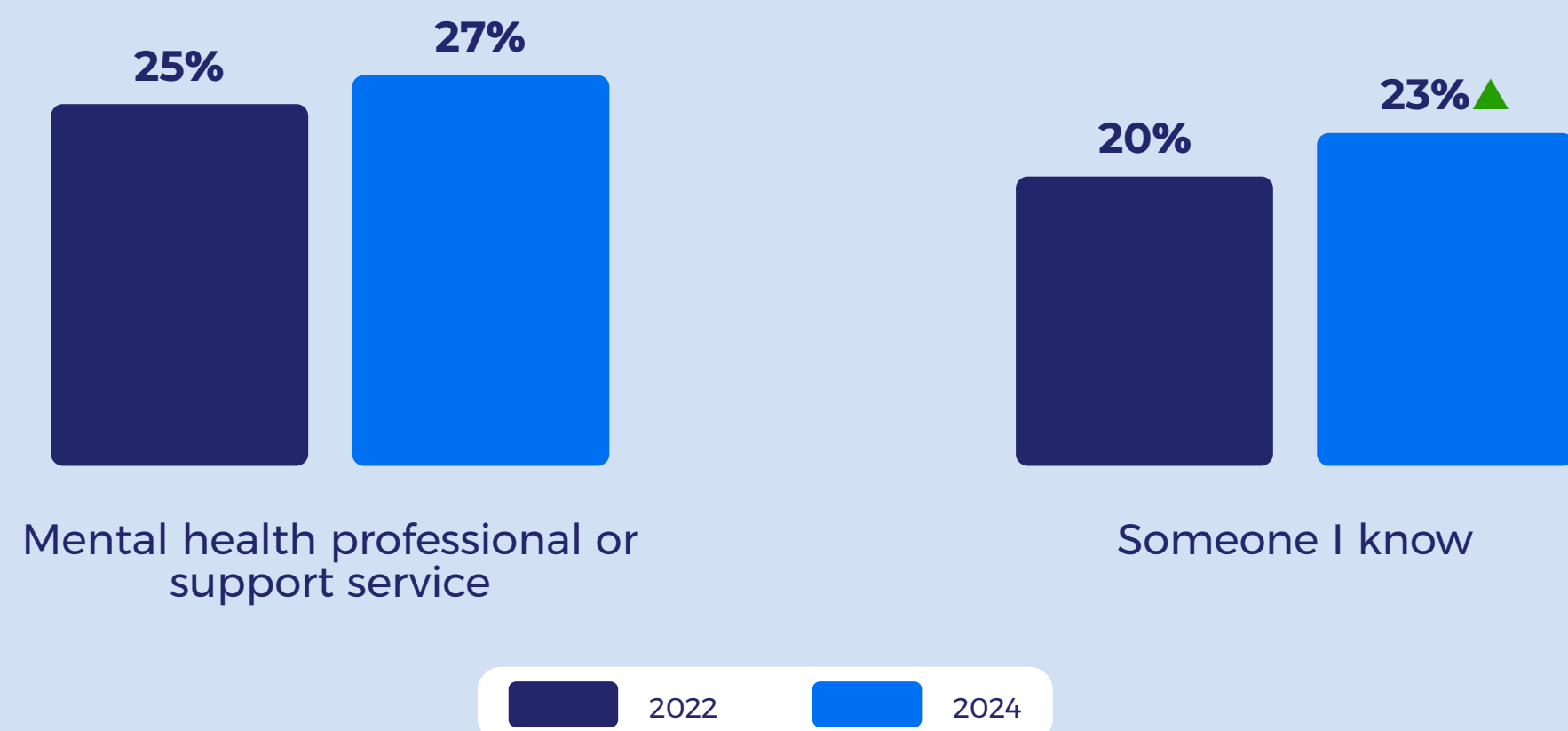
- Of the general population, half who needed support sought it when they were highly distressed.
- Of people experiencing significant mental health challenges, just over two in three were highly distressed when they sought help.
- This suggests that many people do not seek support until their symptoms escalate and highlights an opportunity to encourage earlier support-seeking and intervention to reduce the risk of mental health challenges reaching a crisis point.

Overall, more people are seeking mental health support

Two in five people in Australia are seeking support

A substantial proportion (39%) of the population sought support for their mental health and this increased significantly since 2022 (37%). They sought this support from either mental health professionals or services, or from someone they know. Just over one in four people (27%) sought support from mental health professionals or services, consistent with 2022 (25%). Support-seeking from someone known increased significantly (23%) since 2022 (20%) (Figure 13). It is important to note that a sizeable proportion do not seek support for their mental health when they report needing it (see page 22).

Figure 13: Support-seeking rates



Key takeaway

- Since 2022, support-seeking has increased overall and this was largely driven by people turning to someone they know for support.
- Given the high rate at which people turn to someone they know for support, it is important to have appropriate resources and supports available to people who are supporting others.



People are turning to the broad mental health workforce

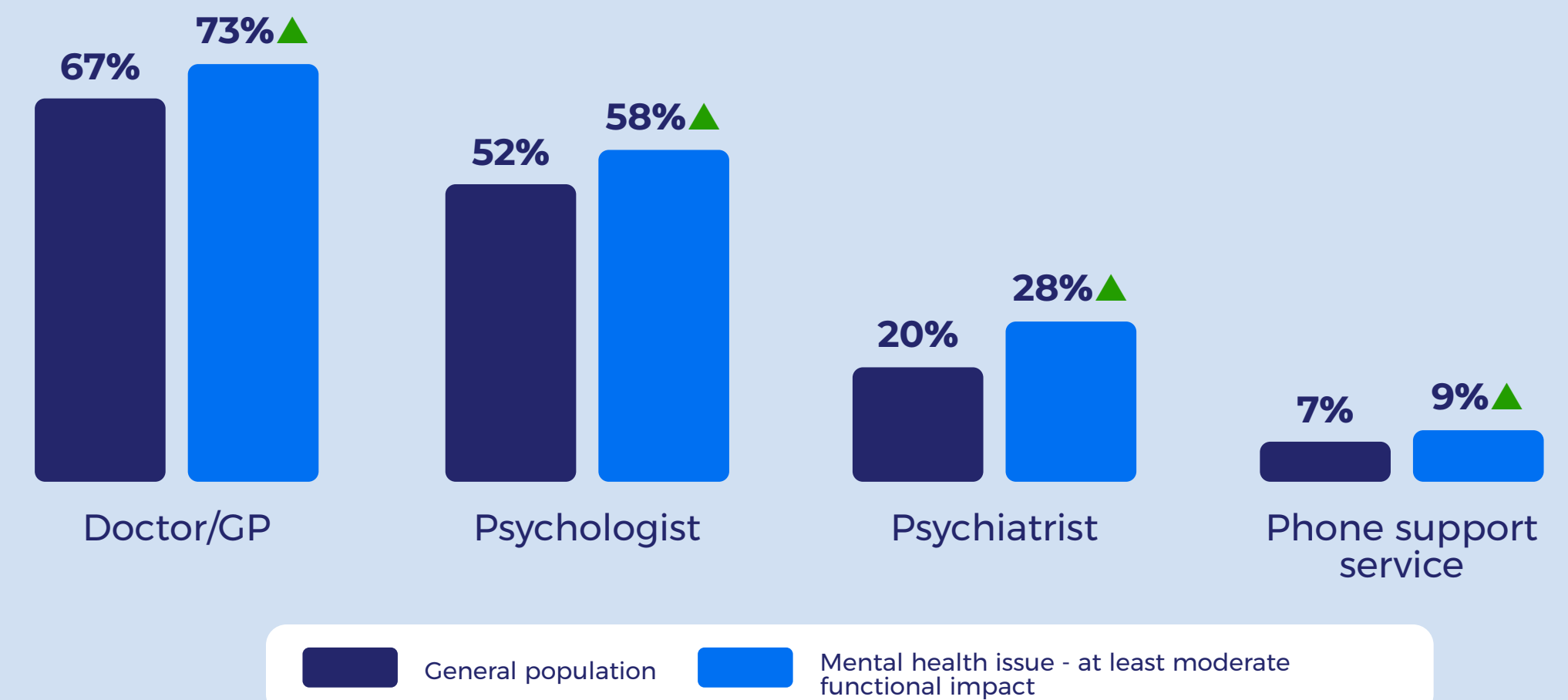
People are turning to a broad range of supports from the mental health workforce

People turned to a wide range of professional supports when they needed help for their mental health. People were most likely to go to a doctor or general practitioner (GP) (67%) or a psychologist (52%), followed by a psychiatrist (20%), workplace support such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (12%), an allied health professional such as a social worker, occupational therapist or counsellor (11%), mental health coach and peer worker (8%) or a national support line such as Beyond Blue (7%).

People experiencing significant mental health challenges are more likely to turn to the broad mental health workforce

People experiencing at least moderate functional impacts from a mental health issue sought professional mental health support at higher rates (62%) than the general population (27%). While they sought support from each of the above sources in a similar order to the general population, they were significantly more likely to seek support from GPs (73%), psychologists (58%) and psychiatrists (28%), as well as free, accessible professional support services such as Beyond Blue (9%) (Figure 14 – note not all response options are presented). However, this group was more likely to report they didn't get the support they needed at the time they needed it than the general population (see page 21 for further information).

Figure 14: Professional support source



Key takeaway

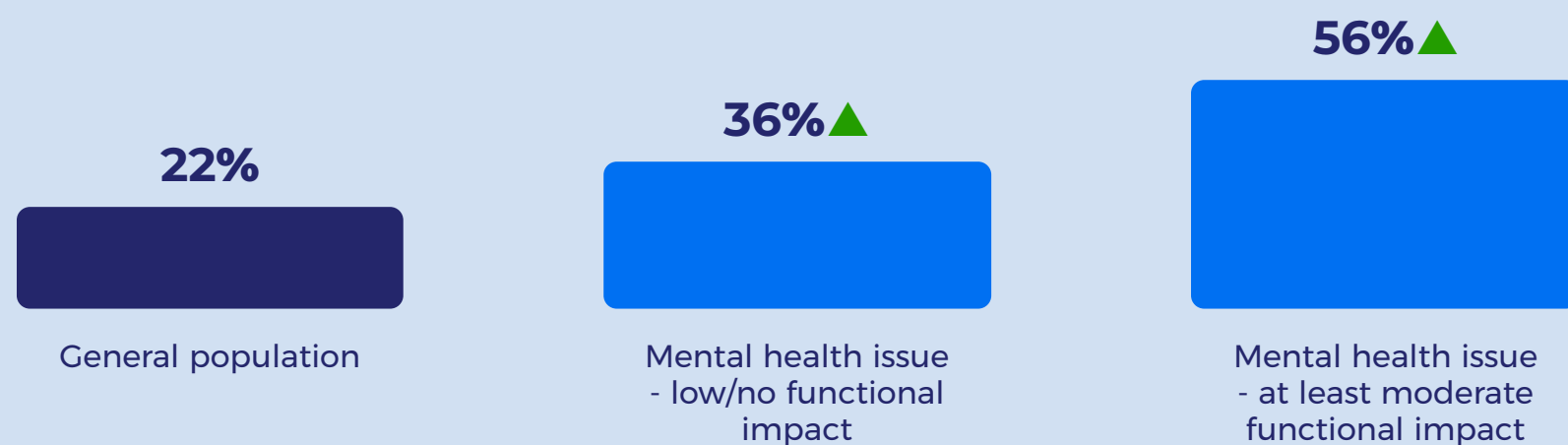
- Australians are turning to a wide range of mental health professionals for support, highlighting the value of a diverse mental health workforce.
- There may be opportunities to better utilise some professionals and services within the workforce.

People experiencing significant mental health challenges are more likely to delay or not get support

Nearly one in four report delaying or not seeking professional support

Delays in support-seeking can be attributed to a range of barriers, including cost, availability and stigma (see page 26). Nearly one in four people who said they needed professional support either reported delaying seeking it or not seeking it at all (22%). This increased considerably for people experiencing at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue, with just over one in two from this group delaying – or not seeking – professional support when they needed it (56%) (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Professional support-seeking delayed

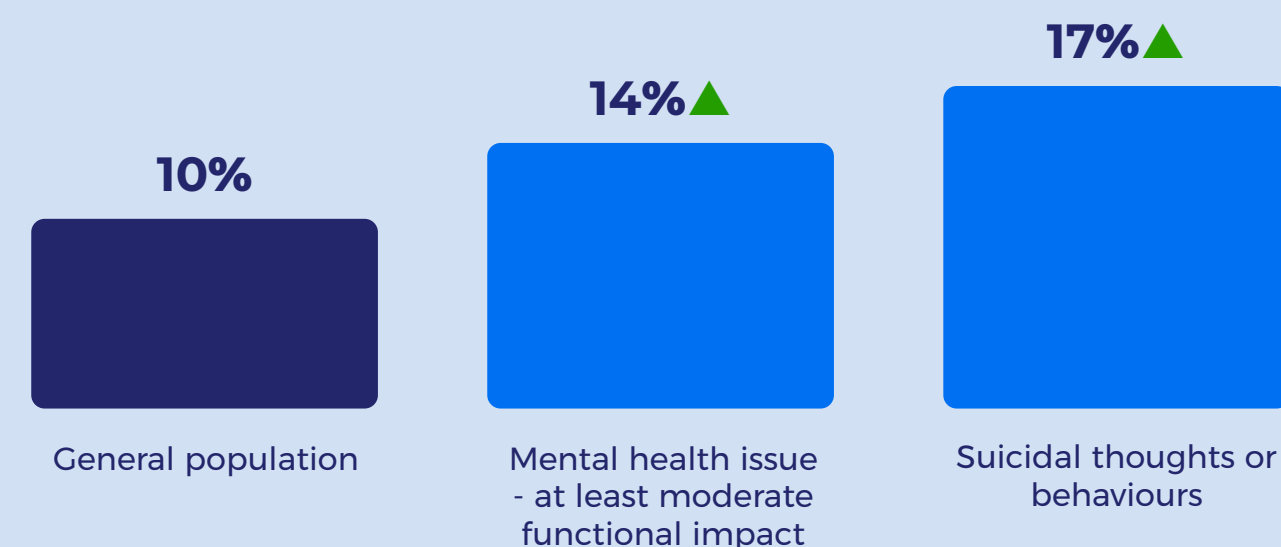


People experiencing significant mental health challenges are less likely to get the support they needed at the time they needed it

Three in four people (78%) said they got the support they needed when they needed it, however, 10% said they didn't get the support they needed when they needed it. This increased to 14% for people experiencing at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue and 17% for people who reported experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviours (Figure 16).

This indicates that one in seven people experiencing significant mental health challenges don't get the right support for their mental health when they need it.

Figure 16: Support not meeting needs



Key takeaway

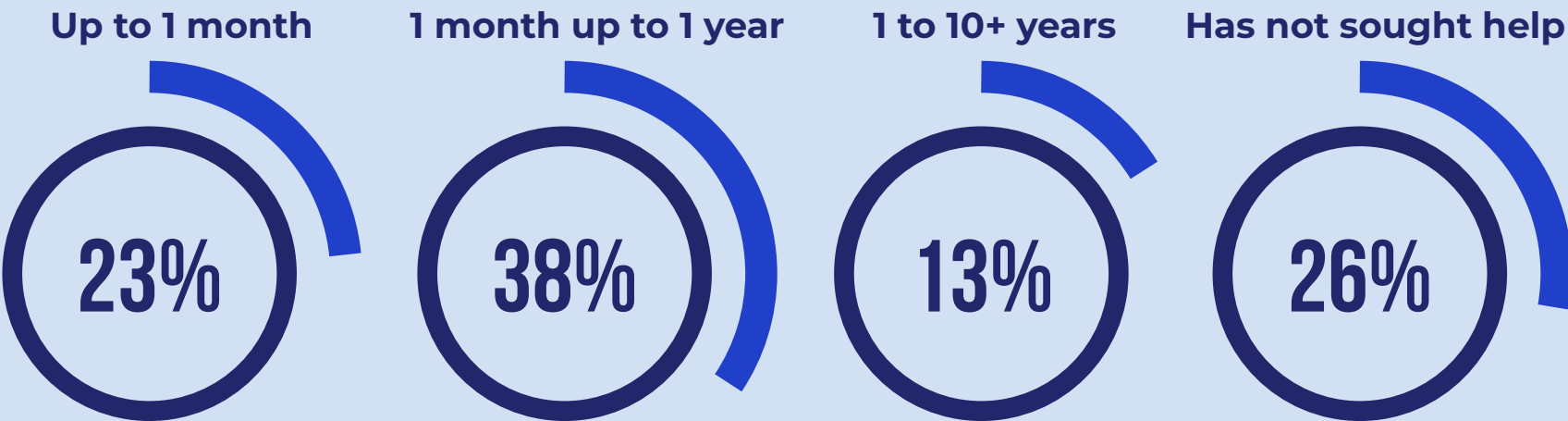
- Of people in the Australian population who said they needed support, a considerable proportion delayed seeking it or did not seek it at all (22%), including people experiencing significant mental health challenges (56%). Despite ongoing efforts to close service gaps in Australia's mental health system, many people still aren't receiving the support they need when they seek help.
- These findings highlight the need to better understand the barriers to - and enablers of - support seeking, to continue to design and scale new approaches that promote earlier support-seeking and help people feel better earlier.

One in four who need support don't seek it

While most seek support in the first year, one in four people in Australia don't seek support

People who said they needed mental support were asked how long they waited before first seeking it from a mental health professional or support service. Most sought support within the first year (60%). However, more than a third of people delayed seeking support for over one year or didn't seek it at all. Specifically, 13% waited between 1 to 10 plus years before seeking support and 26% did not seek support at all (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Time delay for professional support-seeking



One in five with significant mental health challenges, don't seek professional support even when they said they need it

One in five people (19%) experiencing at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue reported they did not seek professional support at all when they need it.

Key takeaway

- Of those who said they needed professional mental health support, one in eight people in Australia wait over one to ten plus years before seeking the support they need.
- These findings indicate that many people, including those experiencing significant mental health challenges, do not seek support in the earlier phases of a mental health challenge, if at all. This highlights the importance of continuing to promote earlier support-seeking and intervention.



More people are seeking help online

More people are seeking support online, especially via online media and forums

Seeking mental health information is increasing in Australia. In 2024, 30% of people sought mental health information online from at least one source, a significant increase since 2022 (26%). This trend occurred for people who were experiencing mental health challenges and people who were not.

Just over half of all people experiencing at least moderate functional impact

from a mental health issue had sought information online (53%). Additionally, significantly more people without a mental health issue sought mental health information online (20%) since 2022 (17%) (Figure 18).

Younger adults continued to be the most active, with approximately one in two aged 18-34 (48 NET percentage) accessing information from at least one online source.

Beyond Blue is the leading online mental health information source

Respondents were asked to provide the brand names of organisations they sourced online mental health information from.

Beyond Blue was found to be the leading information source for people seeking online mental health information in 2024 (19%) up since 2022 (8%).

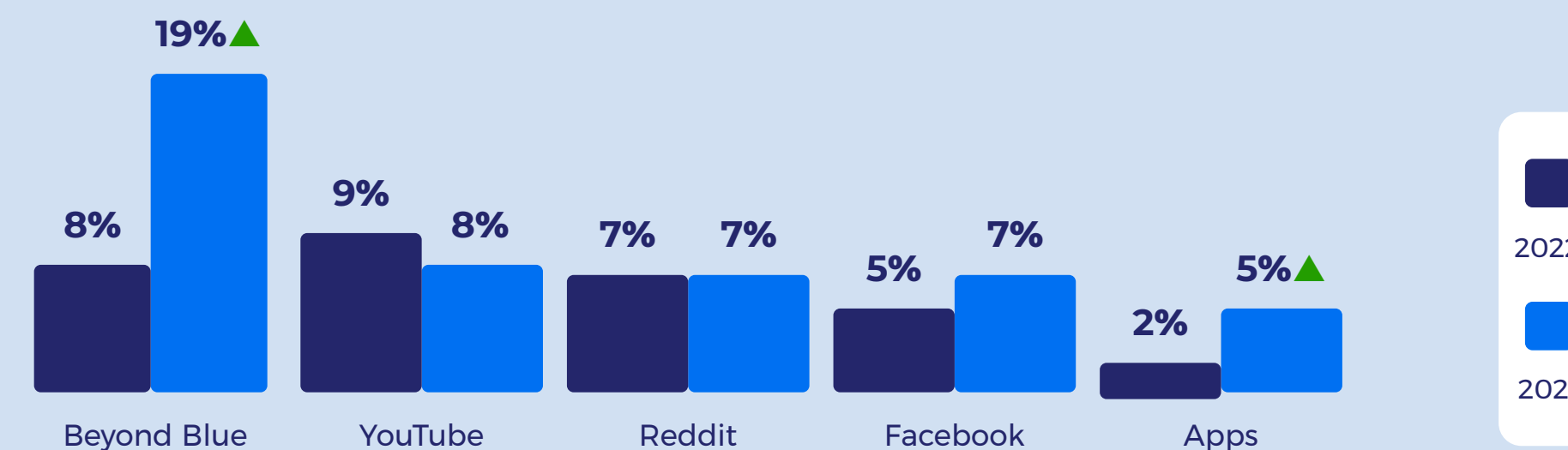
The sources people most frequently accessed mental health information from are presented in Figure 19*.

The trend towards increased online information-seeking, was also evidenced by a significant increase in the rate at which people accessed Beyond Blue's website/digital information, rising to 19% in 2024, up from 8% in 2022.

Figure 18: Online information sought about mental health



Figure 19: Online information sources accessed



Key takeaway

- There is increasing demand for mental health information online independent of people's mental health status.
- This suggests that evidence-based, lived experience informed, freely available and easily accessible online information sources play an important role in support seeking.

Enablers and barriers to support-seeking



Knowing what to do, trust and affordability enable support-seeking

The three leading enablers to support-seeking from professionals are knowing what to do, access to a trusted professional or service, and affordability.

Consistent with 2022 are the three key enablers to support-seeking: knowing what to do (52%), having a professional or service that is trusted (46%) and affordability (41%). The general population identifies these three drivers as more conducive to support-seeking than a GP referral (39 percent) (Figure 20).

Beyond Blue is providing support to people who say costs and waitlists are leading barriers

People in Australia who cannot afford professional support or face long waitlists for professional supports appear to be turning to Beyond Blue. Among people who said they needed professional mental health support, respondents who engaged with Beyond Blue (through content consumption or service usage) reported substantially higher rates of unmet or delayed professional support (48%) than people who didn't (18%). People who accessed Beyond Blue's services were

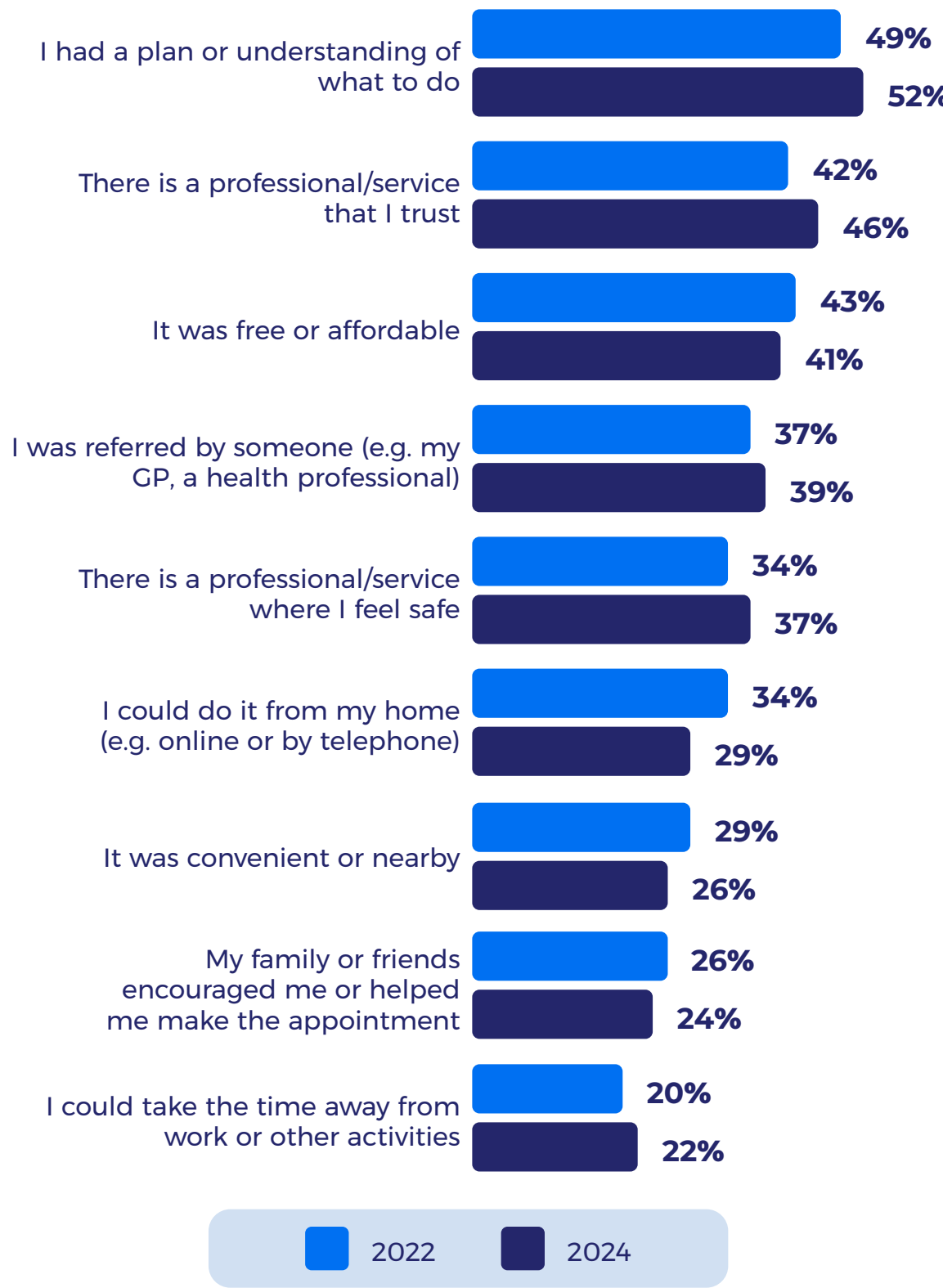
also more likely to cite affordability and convenience (i.e. being able to access support from home) as key enablers to accessing support.

The leading barriers that prevented people who needed professional support from accessing support sooner – or at all – are the cost of services and waiting lists. This may indicate that people facing mental health challenges are actively seeking free and immediate support and resources through Beyond Blue in general, particularly if they are unable to access professional support due to cost and waitlist barriers, highlighting the important role Beyond Blue plays in the mental health support ecosystem.

Key takeaway

- Knowing what to do and trust are greater enablers for seeking professional support than affordability.
- People in Australia who cannot afford professional support or face long waitlists for professional supports appear to be turning to Beyond Blue; almost half the people who use Beyond Blue report delayed or unmet needs for professional support.

Figure 20: Professional support-seeking enablers



Cost, shame and psychological safety concerns are growing barriers to support-seeking

Cost is the leading barrier to accessing professional support, followed by waitlists and problem-minimisation

Cost remained the main reason people said they delayed or did not seek support when they needed it, increasing significantly to 46% from 39% in 2022. The next three leading reasons people delayed or did not get support were: not thinking their problems were serious enough (33%, up from 24% in 2022), waitlists (31%, consistent with 2022) and thinking they would get better without it (29%, consistent with 2022) (Figure 21). These were also the main barriers for people experiencing at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue.

Shame and embarrassment are significant and growing barriers to accessing professional support

In addition to not thinking their problems were serious enough, more

people did not want others to know they were not coping (19%, up from 13% since 2022) and felt embarrassed or ashamed that they needed support (22%, up from 13% since 2022). These patterns were similarly reflected among people experiencing at least moderate functional impacts from a mental health issue.

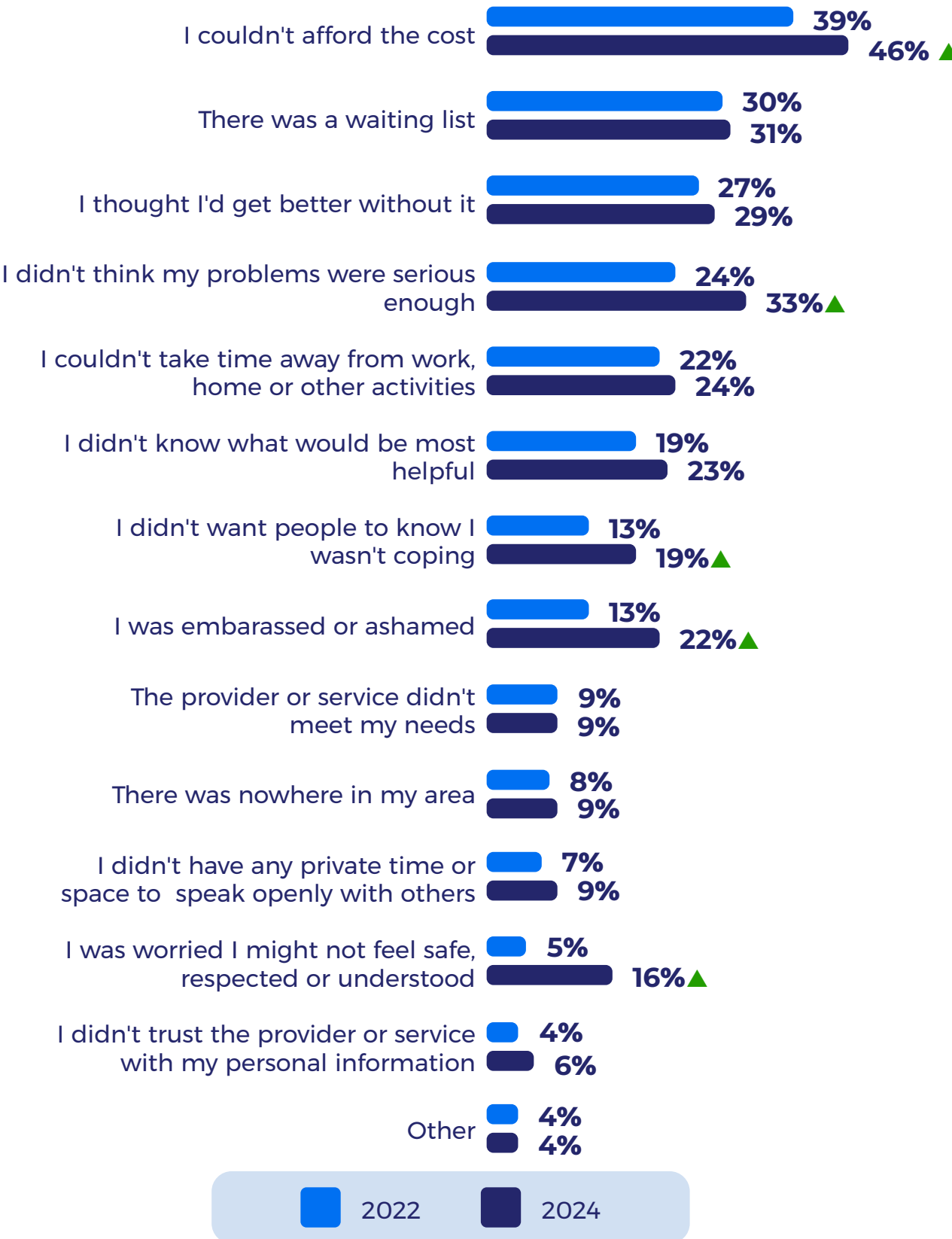
Concerns about psychological safety, respect and being understood have increased since 2022

Another barrier that increased significantly since 2022 was the concern that people ‘might not feel safe, respected or understood’ highlighting increased concerns among the community in relation to the experience of psychological safety when seeking and receiving professional support.

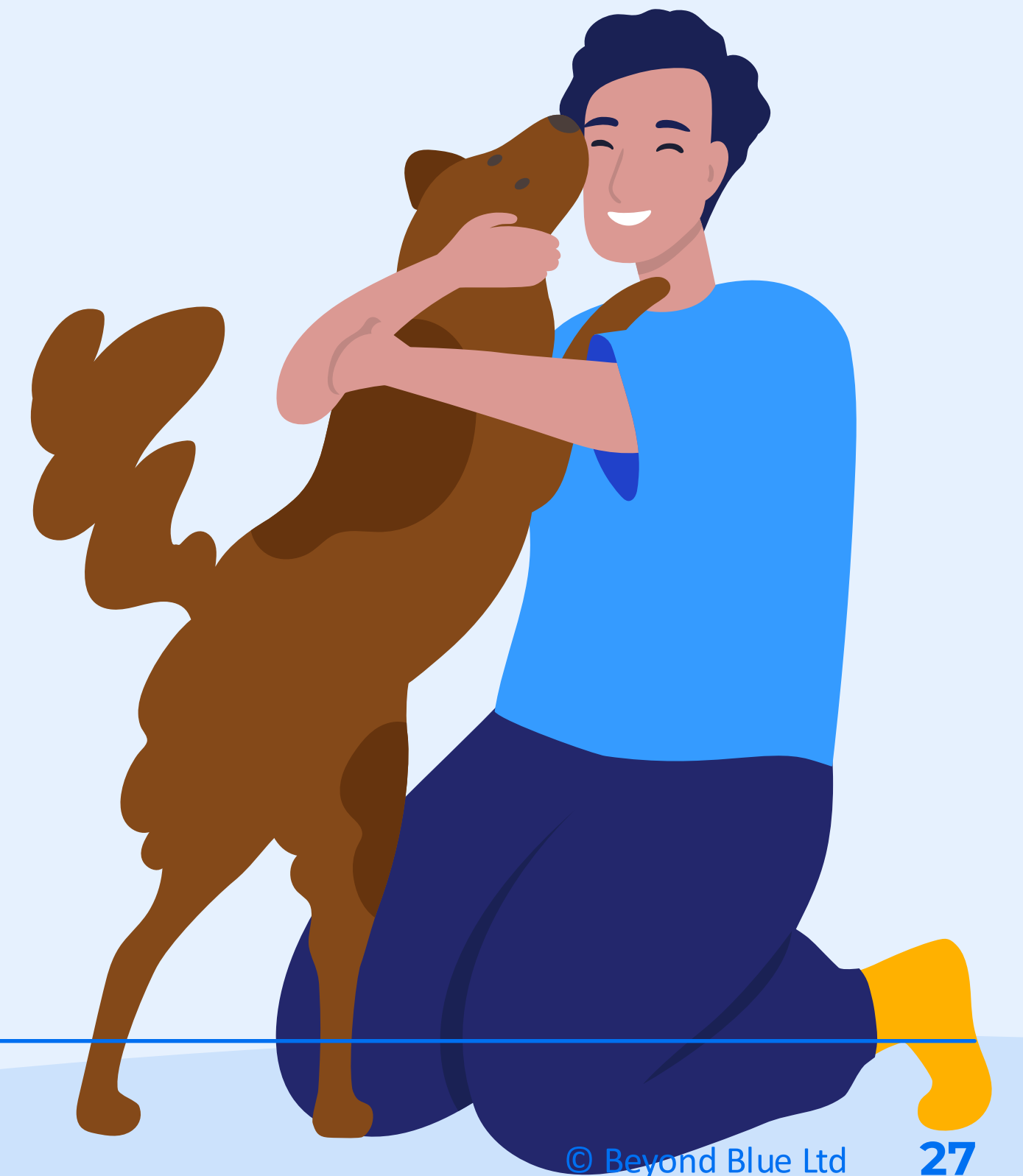
Key takeaway

- Cost and waitlists are the leading barriers to seeking professional support, a trend also found for people experiencing significant mental health challenges. This highlights the need for free or affordable supports that are readily accessible.
- Shame and stigma have substantially increased and remain significant barriers to support seeking from the mental health workforce among people in Australia, including people experiencing significant mental health challenges. The scale, speed and impact of these increases warrant further attention and action.

Figure 21: Professional support-seeking barriers



Mental health literacy, self-management and prevention

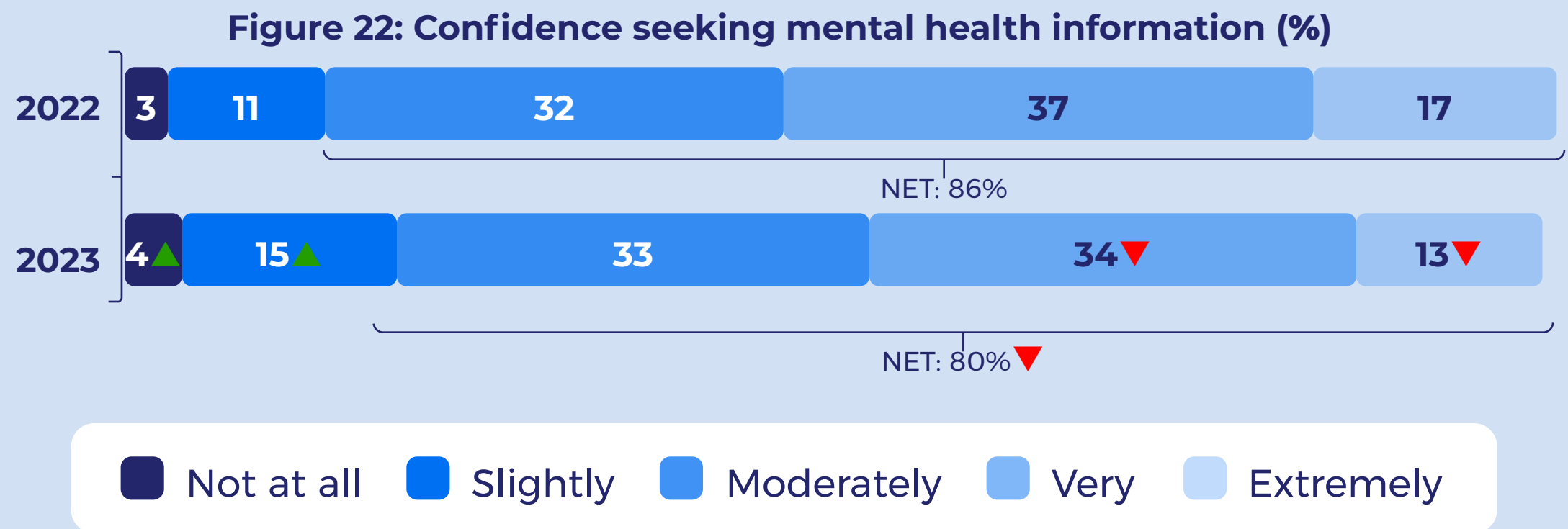


Confidence to seek mental health information is high, but has decreased overall

While confidence to seek mental health information is high overall, one in five are unsure about where to seek it

Confidence in knowing where to go for mental health information is high among the general population (80%), but has decreased significantly since 2022 (86%). Additionally, just under one in five (19%) people expressed feeling not very confident in knowing where to go for information about mental health, representing an increase from 14% in 2022 (Figure 22).

In an increasingly fragmented mental health landscape, these findings highlight the ongoing need for easier person-centred access to information, potentially also including frictionless referral to supports and services.



People recognise when others are in crisis, but are less able to recognise early phases of distress

Findings indicate that people are more able to recognise when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, but less able to recognise the more subtle forms of distress, such as when someone is feeling unsettled or in the early phases of experiencing a mental health challenge.

This gap in early recognition may indicate a need for building mental health literacy about the early signs and symptoms of poor mental health, and motivating action for earlier intervention. Given approximately half of all people who needed support sought it when they were highly distressed, it may be particularly important to promote efforts which encourage people to access support before their symptoms escalate or they reach a point of crisis.

Key takeaway

- While confidence in knowing where to find mental health information is generally high, a notable and increasing portion of the population is facing difficulties in knowing where to go for reliable and evidence-based information or resources.
- In an increasingly fragmented mental health landscape, these findings highlight the ongoing need for easier person-centred access to information, potentially also including frictionless referral to supports and services.

Self-management strategies are widely used to maintain or improve mental health

Healthy eating, sufficient sleep and connecting with others are the leading self-management and prevention strategies

The majority of the population reported using a range of self-management and prevention strategies to maintain or improve their social and emotional wellbeing in the past 12 months.

In 2024, the most common strategy was eating a healthier diet (83%), closely followed by connecting more with friends or family (81%) and practicing better sleeping habits (78%). These were all largely consistent with findings from 2022. The only strategy people applied at a higher rate since 2022 was reducing or cutting out alcohol or drugs (76% in 2024 versus 73% in 2022) (Figure 23).

Key takeaway

- The majority of Australians use a range of self-management strategies to improve or maintain their mental health and wellbeing. The leading strategies include choosing a healthier a diet, connecting with friends and family and practicing better sleeping habits.

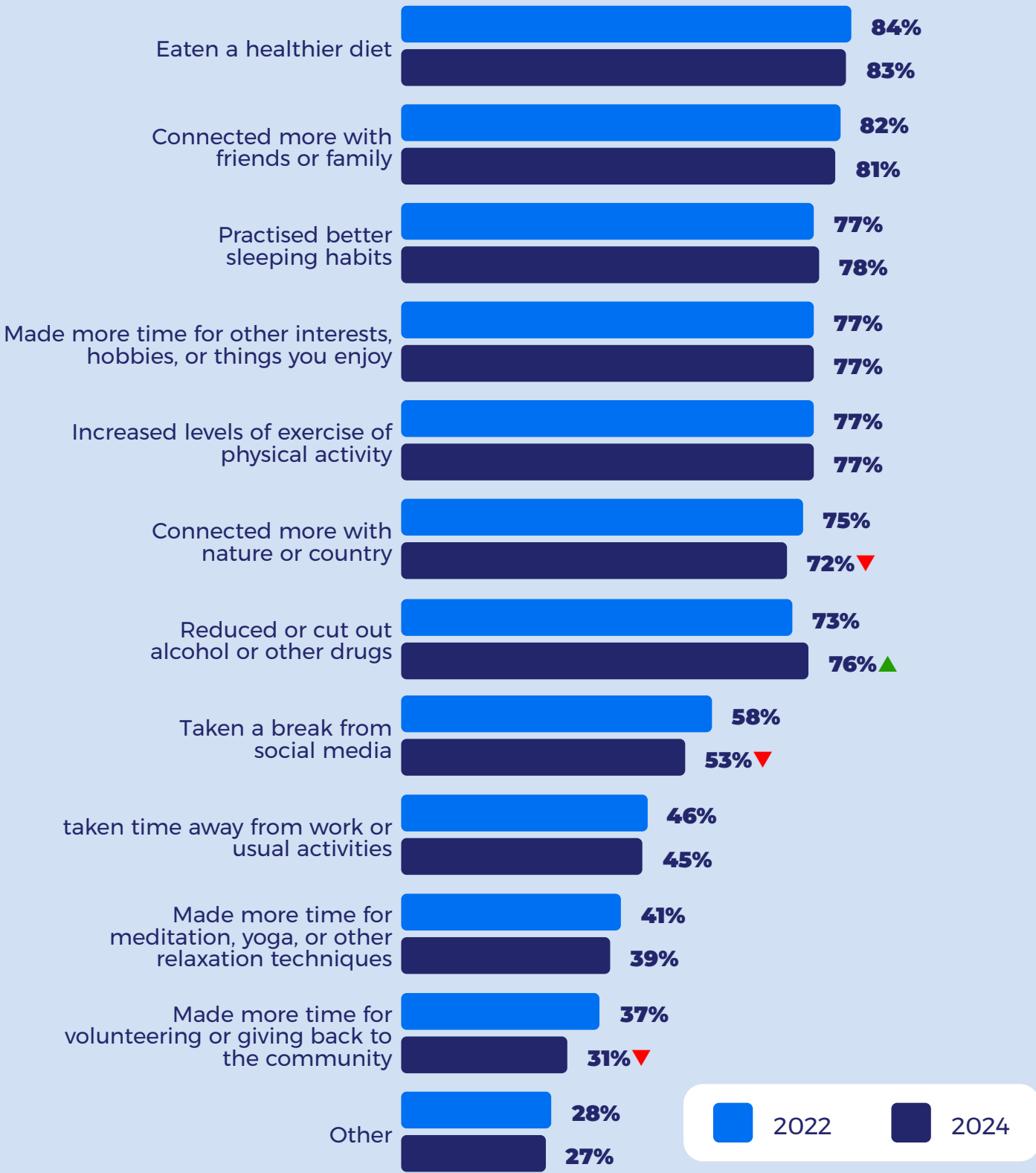
People are less likely to take a break from social media, connect with nature or volunteer than in 2022

Since 2022, people were less likely to take a break from social media, connect with nature or country or volunteer or give back (Figure 23).

People who engage with Beyond Blue are more likely to implement self-management strategies

People who used Beyond Blue services were generally more likely to use self-management techniques compared to people who didn't. Specifically, they were significantly more likely to practice better sleeping habits (83% versus 78%), connect more with nature (77% versus 70%), take time away from work (56% versus 43%), make more time for meditation and other relaxation activities (53% versus 37%) or volunteer (41% versus 30%).

Figure 23: Self-management and prevention strategies



Beyond Blue awareness and engagement

One in six people in Australia connect with Beyond Blue in a one-year period

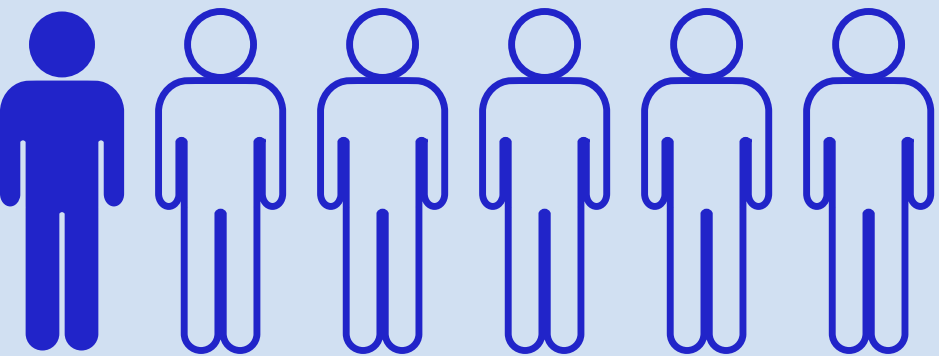
Beyond Blue has almost universal recognition among people in Australia

Beyond Blue is recognised by almost all Australians. 94% say they know something about the organisation (Figure 24). Recognition is particularly high among younger adults, with 33% of people aged 25-34 knowing significantly more about Beyond Blue than the general population (25%).

Figure 24: Beyond Blue awareness



One in six people in Australia engaged with Beyond Blue in a one-year period



One in six respondents (18%) engaged with Beyond Blue in the last 12 months, accessing content and information offered by Beyond Blue and/or seeking support from interactive services such as online forums or the support service which are both offered freely at all times of the day among a range of broader services offered (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Beyond Blue engagement

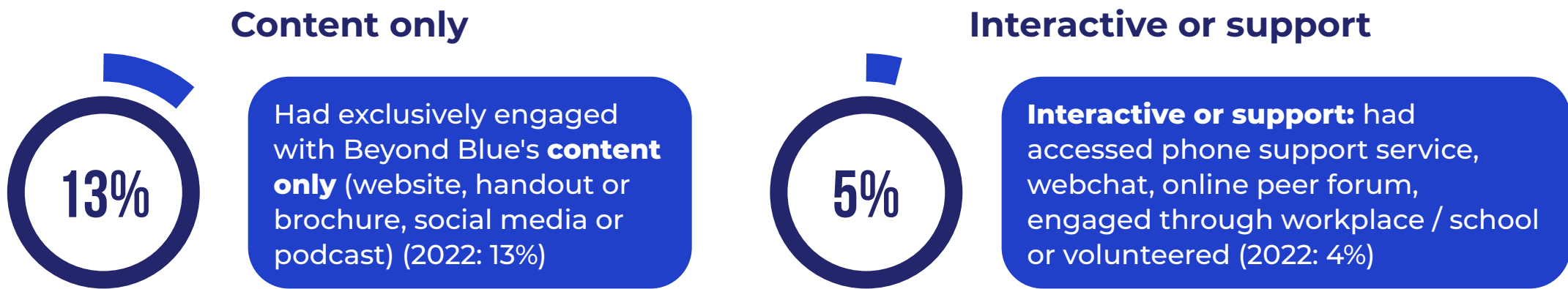
People engaged with a broad range of Beyond Blue services in a one-year period, from online content to interactive supports

Up to 3.9 million Australians (one in six) sought out Beyond Blue content and/or interactive services over the past 12 months. Of the Australian population, 13% engaged with its content (namely, website, social media posts, brochures or podcast), and 5% used a Beyond Blue service, (namely, the

Beyond Blue Support Service, NewAccess or online forums, or engaged through a workplace, school or volunteered) (Figure 26).

Beyond Blue's content and services are increasingly appealing to people aged under 34, possibly reflecting greater need among younger adults, higher mental health literacy and greater use of digital technology among this cohort.

Figure 26: Beyond Blue engagement type



Key takeaway

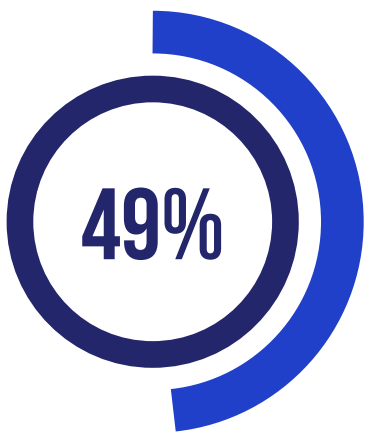
- Beyond Blue is almost universally recognised by people in Australia. A large proportion of the population turned to its supports and services (one in six people) for assistance with their mental health in the one-year period preceding the survey.
- Beyond Blue's supports are increasingly appealing to younger adults, a cohort showing a growing need for mental health support.

Beyond Blue is reaching people experiencing anxiety, depression and suicidal crisis at all levels of need

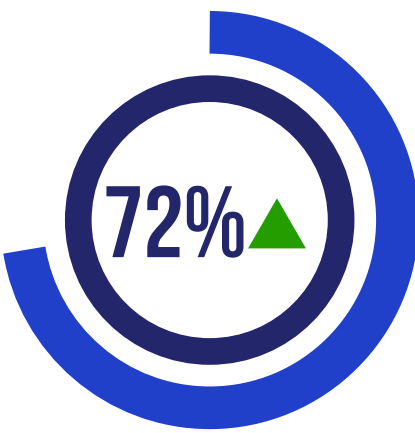
Beyond Blue is reaching people experiencing mental health challenges and suicidal crisis

Beyond Blue is reaching people who are experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms, diagnosed mental health conditions and people who experienced at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue.

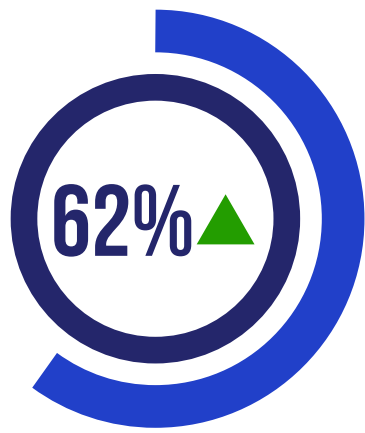
Almost two thirds of all people who engage with Beyond Blue content (62%), and almost three quarters of Beyond Blue service users (72%) had, in the past fortnight experienced anxiety and/or depression symptoms (Figure 27). Further, of those who knew about Beyond Blue, people experiencing at least moderate functional impact from a mental health issue (38%) and people experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviours (40%) used Beyond Blue's services and content at higher rates than the general population (23%).



Had experienced anxiety or depression symptoms in the past 2 weeks (2022: 46%)



Who accessed support or had engagement with Beyond Blue had at least a mild anxiety or depression disorder (2022: 70%)



Who engaged with Beyond Blue's content had at least a mild anxiety or depression disorder (2022: 53%)

Figure 27: Beyond Blue engagement by mental health status

People without symptoms also access Beyond Blue's services, though at lesser rates

A substantial proportion of people who accessed Beyond Blue's resources and services did not report experiencing a mental health issue in the past 12 months. This includes over one in three (38%) who accessed content (such as the website, social media, a brochure, etc.) and just over one in four (28%) who used interactive services (such as contacting the support service, participating in a program or using forums). This indicates that this group may be taking action for preventative or early intervention self-management reasons or due to being in carer or supporter roles.

Key takeaway

- People across the entire range of the mental health continuum turn to Beyond Blue. People with mental health challenges used Beyond Blue's supports and services at higher rates than the general population. People without mental health challenges are also utilising Beyond Blue's supports and services.
- This suggests Beyond Blue's supports and services are appealing to people experiencing mental health challenges, people interested in the maintenance and prevention of mental health and wellbeing, and possibly supporters and carers.

Beyond Blue helps people take action to address their mental health

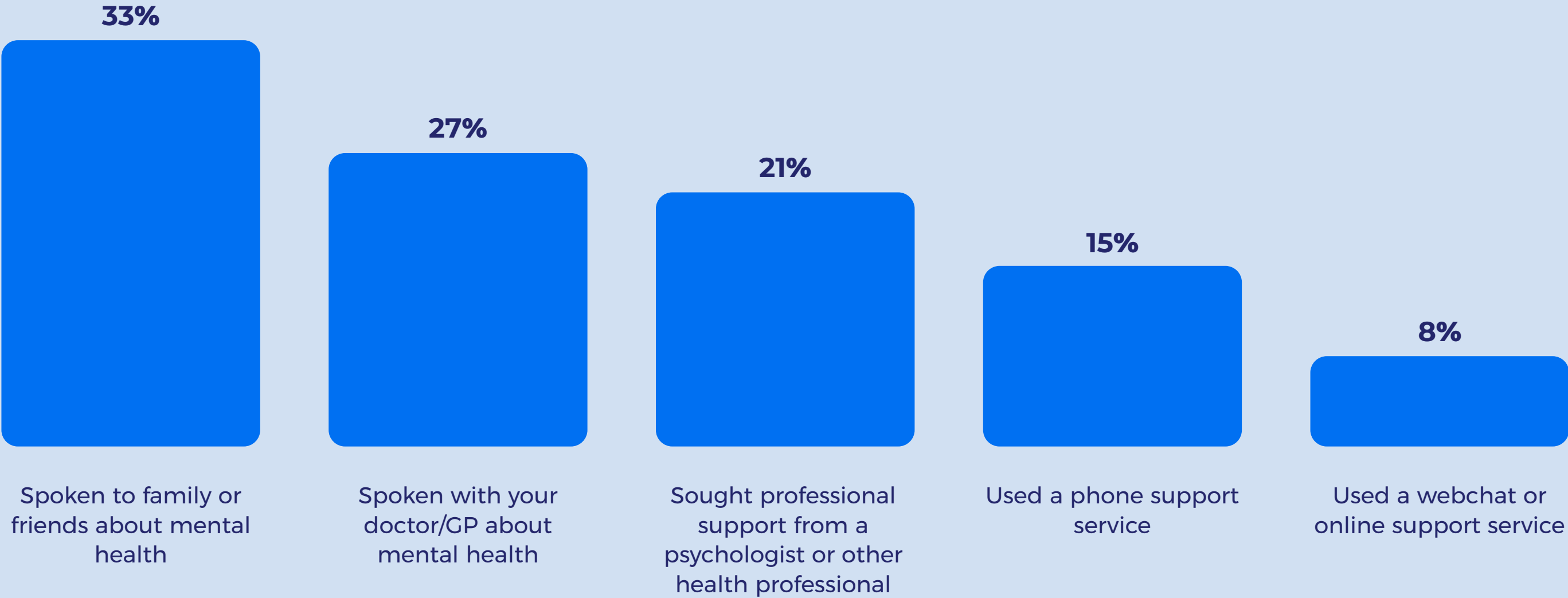
At least half who engage with Beyond Blue take further action to address their mental health

Engagement with Beyond Blue’s products and services was effective at prompting people to seek additional mental health information and support, with 51% taking further action to address their mental health following engagement with Beyond Blue.

The actions people took included speaking to family or friends about mental health (33%), speaking with a doctor/GP about mental health (27%), seeking professional support from a psychologist or other health professional (21%), using a phone support service (15%), and using a webchat or online support service (8%) (Figure 28 - note that not all actions taken are displayed).

People who accessed Beyond Blue’s support services, forums or participated in a Beyond Blue program were even more likely to take action (65%) than people who only accessed content such as the website or social media (46%). People experiencing at least moderate functional impact from mental health issues (61%) were also more likely to take action following engagement than the general population (51%)

Figure 28: Actions taken after engagement with Beyond Blue



Key takeaway

- Findings indicate that Beyond Blue is driving positive behaviour change and action. Engagement with Beyond Blue helps motivate and support at least half of all people who engage to take further action to continue addressing their mental health challenges.



 beyondblue.org.au  1300 22 4636