

Mental Health Ireland

Survey findings & key takeouts
August 2025

What we learned

- **One in five people do nothing at all each week for their mental health:** 19.0% engage in zero days per week of intentional mental health activities whilst 42.6% manage only 1-2 days per week.
- **Exercise is the most popular mental health activity:** 57.5% use it regularly, followed by spending time with friends/family (56.7%) - suggesting people prefer DIY approaches to supporting their own mental health.
- **Professional therapy is rarely used:** Only 11.6% access counselling or therapy for mental health support
- **Screen time has become a major barrier:** 35.4% cite excessive screen time as preventing them from supporting their mental health
- **Most people face significant barriers:** Only 20.8% report having no obstacles to supporting their mental health
- **Many don't know what to do:** 20% say they don't know how to support their mental health

Year on year comparisons

When we compare 2025 data to our 2025 benchmark, a troubling picture emerges of Ireland's approach to Mental Health in 2025.

- **The % of people who 'do nothing' to support their mental health doubled:** From 10.7% to 19.0% engaging in zero days of mental health activities/ not engaging in mental health activities at all
- **Every mental health activity declined:** Exercise participation fell 17.7%, time with friends/family dropped 19.8%, therapy access decreased 27.5%
- **Barriers to mental health support increased significantly:** People reporting "no barriers" dropped from 37.8% to 20.8%
- **Knowledge gaps about mental health widened:** People saying "I don't know how to support my mental health" rose from 14.6% to 20.0%
- **Screen time emerged as a new major barrier:** 35.4% now cite it as an obstacle (this wasn't measured in 2024)
- **Declines affected all demographic groups: Mental health disengagement increased across all major demographic groups:** For example, working-age adults (25-34) saw their "do nothing" rate jump from 6.3% to 15.0%, and women saw increases from 10.3% to 19.3%

Deep dive: demographics in 2025

- **Men engage more consistently:** 28.3% of men do mental health activities 3-4 days per week vs 18.8% of women
- **Men are more likely to seek professional help:** 15.1% of men access therapy vs 8.9% of women
- **Women prefer social mental health activities:** 62.2% spend time with friends/family for mental health vs 49.7% of men
- **Young adults (18-24) are least likely to do nothing:** Only 14.2% engage in zero days of mental health activities
- **Older adults (55+) struggle most with engagement:** 25.5% do nothing for their mental health weekly
- **Munster performs best regionally:** 17.5% do nothing for mental health vs 21.9% in Ulster ROI (worst performing region)
- **Income creates a mental health divide:** 23.4% of lower income groups do nothing vs 15.3% of higher income groups

Deep dive: demographics comparison 25 & 24

- **Women's mental health engagement declined more severely:** Female "do nothing" rates increased from 10.3% to 19.3% (87% rise) vs men's increase from 11.1% to 18.5% (67% rise)
- **Young professionals (25-34) experienced the steepest decline:** Their "do nothing" rate jumped from 6.3% to 15.0% (138% increase)
- **Women's exercise participation dropped dramatically:** Fell from 72.2% to 55.4% (23.3% relative decline) vs men's drop from 67.3% to 60.1% (10.7% decline)
- **Men lost more social connection:** Their friends/family activities declined from 63.7% to 49.7% (22% relative drop)
- **Mid-career adults (35-44) lost the most therapy access:** Dropped from 17.4% to 11.3% (35% relative decline)
- **Only pre-retirement adults (45-54) maintained stability:** Their high engagement (5+ days) barely declined from 25.5% to 24.5%
- **Regional gaps widened:** Munster maintained strong performance while other regions declined further

Comparative questions & analysis

A decline in how much time we're dedicating to intentionally supporting our own mental health

Days per week	2024	2025	Change	Impact
0 days	10.7%	19.0%	+8.3pp	77.6% increase
1-2 days	40.0%	42.6%	+2.6pp	6.5% increase
3-4 days	27.8%	23.0%	-4.8pp	17.3% decrease
5-6 days	11.2%	7.6%	-3.6pp	32.1% decrease
7 days	10.4%	7.8%	-2.6pp	25.0% decrease

Question: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?
2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

A reduction in all activities to support our mental health

Activity	2024	2025	Change	Impact
Exercise	69.9%	57.5%	-12.4pp	-17.7%
Time with friends/family	70.7%	56.7%	-14pp	-19.8%
Time in nature	53.5%	44.1%	-9.4pp	-17.6%
Hobbies	51.1%	41.2%	-9.9pp	-19.4%
Mindfulness	26.1%	20.6%	-5.5pp	-21.1%
Therapy	16%	11.6%	-4.4pp	-27.5%

Question: Which of the following activities do you engage in regularly to support your mental health? Please select all that apply. 2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

An increase in the barriers to supporting our mental health

Barrier	2024	2025	Change	Impact
I don't have enough time	32%	36%	+4%pp	12.5% relative increase
I don't know how to support my mental health	15%	20%	+5%pp	33.3% relative increase
It's not something people in my circle do	13%	15%	+2%pp	15.4% relative increase
It is too costly/ I don't have the money	31%	26%	-5%pp	35.5% relative decrease
I spend too much time on screens	n/a	36%	N/A	
I don't have any barriers	38%	21%	-17%pp	44.7% relative increase

Question: What barriers, if any, are there for you in supporting your own mental health? Please select all that apply.
2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Analysis

Ireland has a mental health engagement problem. Nearly one in five people (19.0%) do absolutely nothing for their mental health—zero days per week of intentional activity. Add in the 42.6% who only intentionally do something to support their mental health 1-2 days per week, and you've got almost two-thirds of the country barely maintaining their mental wellbeing.

People are sticking to what they know—exercise and hanging out with friends—while professional help remains niche at just 11.6%.

Only one in five people say they have no barriers to mental health support, and the same number tell us they don't know how to support their mental health. The message is clear: people want to help themselves, but they're struggling to find the time, money, or knowledge to do it properly.

The year on year comparisons tell a more concerning story. The number of people doing nothing for their mental health nearly doubled in 12 months. Every single activity tracked took a hit: exercise down 18%, social time down 20%, therapy down 28%. Meanwhile, barriers got worse across the board, and happened everywhere—men and women, young and old, Dublin to rural counties.

Demographic deep dive

By Gender

Days per Week	Female	Male	Gender Gap
0 days	19.3%	18.5%	+0.8pp
1-2 days	47.7%	36.1%	+11.6pp
3-4 days	18.8%	28.3%	-9.5pp
5-6 days	6.3%	9.4%	-3.1pp
7 days	7.8%	7.8%	0.0pp
High Engagement (5+ days)	14.1%	17.1%	-3.0pp

Women report higher engagement 1–2 days per week, while men show slightly higher high-engagement (5+ days)

Gender	Metric	2024	2025	Change	Impact
Female	No engagement	10.3%	19.3%	+9.0pp	87% increase
Female	High engagement	20.0%	14.1%	-5.9pp	30% decrease
Male	No engagement	11.1%	18.5%	+7.4pp	67% increase
Male	High engagement	23.3%	17.1%	-6.2pp	27% decrease

When we compare 2024 benchmark to 2025, both genders show rising disengagement and falling high engagement, with women’s drop in high engagement particularly concerning

Question: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?
2025 Survey (1000 respondents) & 2024 (1000 respondents)

Activity	Female	Male	Gender Gap
Exercise	55.4%	60.1%	-4.7pp
Friends/Family	62.2%	49.7%	+12.5pp
Nature	46.9%	40.5%	+6.4pp
Therapy	8.9%	15.1%	-6.2pp
Mindfulness	20.2%	21.2%	-1.0pp
Hobbies	40.6%	41.9%	-1.3pp

Women lead in social/family activities, while men lead in exercise; therapy and mindfulness remain low across genders.

Question: Which of the following activities do you engage in regularly to support your mental health? Please select all that apply. 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

By Age

Age Group	No Engagement (0 days)	High Engagement (5+ days)	Most Common Pattern
18-24	14.2%	12.1%	1-2 days (52.5%)
25-34	15.0%	11.1%	1-2 days (50.4%)
35-44	18.5%	10.9%	3-4 days (31.5%)
45-54	21.2%	24.5%	1-2 days (39.2%)
55+	25.5%	19.1%	1-2 days (34.0%)

Younger groups (18–34) show higher disengagement and less consistent engagement, while ages 45–54 are most consistently engaged.

Question: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?
2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Age Group	Exercise	Mindfulness	Nature	Friends/Family	Therapy	Hobbies
18-24	58.9%	16.3%	41.8%	58.9%	9.2%	51.1%
25-34	53.8%	20.1%	40.2%	56.0%	17.9%	46.2%
35-44	56.9%	23.8%	41.5%	52.8%	11.3%	30.2%
45-54	57.1%	24.1%	42.9%	54.2%	12.7%	34.9%
55+	62.2%	16.5%	55.3%	63.8%	4.8%	48.9%

Older adults (55+) outperform in almost all activities, especially exercise, nature, and family connections. 25-34s are greater users of therapy than any other age cohort.

Question: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?
2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

By Region

Region	No Engagement (0 days)	High Engagement (5+ days)	Performance Rank
Munster	17.5%	18.9%	1st (Best)
Dublin	18.8%	14.8%	2nd
Connacht	18.9%	11.8%	3rd
Rest of Leinster	20.0%	14.2%	4th
Ulster ROI	21.9%	15.6%	5th (Worst)

Munster has the healthiest balance (lowest disengagement, highest high engagement), while Ulster ROI ranks worst.

Question: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?
2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Activity	Regional Leader	Engagement Rate (Leader)	Regional Laggard	Engagement Rate (Laggard)
Exercise	Rest of Leinster (excluding Dublin)	59.6%	Ulster ROI	51.6%
Mindfulness	Munster	24.8%	Connacht	13.4%
Nature	Munster	45.5%	Ulster ROI	39.1%
Friends/Family	Rest of Leinster (excluding Dublin)	61.1%	Dublin	54.2%
Therapy	Munster	13.6%	Ulster ROI	7.8%

Rest of Leinster leads in exercise and family engagement, Munster dominates nature/therapy, while Ulster ROI lags across most activities

Question: Which of the following activities do you engage in regularly to support your mental health? Please select all that apply. 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

By Socio-Economic Group

Income Level	No Engagement	High Engagement	Exercise	Mindfulness	Nature	Friends/Family	Therapy
ABC1 (Higher)	15.3%	13.7%	60.1%	21.5%	43.4%	55.7%	13.9%
C2DE (Lower)	23.4%	17.6%	54.2%	19.5%	44.9%	57.9%	8.9%
Gap	-8.1pp	+3.9pp	+5.9pp	+2.0pp	-1.5pp	-2.2pp	+5.0pp

Higher-income groups (ABC1) show lower disengagement and higher exercise/therapy use, while lower-income groups (C2DE) rely more on social ties but face higher disengagement — highlighting a socioeconomic gap in mental health support.

Question: Which of the following activities do you engage in regularly to support your mental health? Please select all that apply. 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

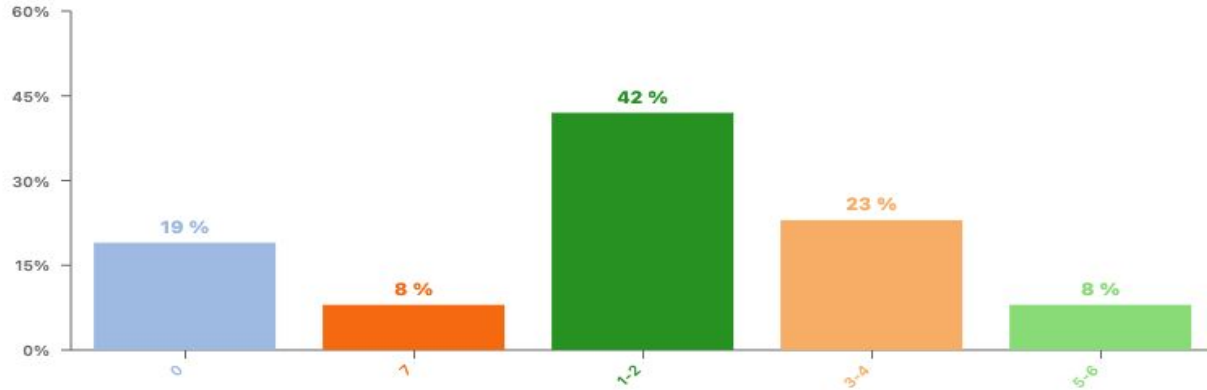
Bounce Analysis

AI enabled data analysis
from Bounce

Key Takeouts

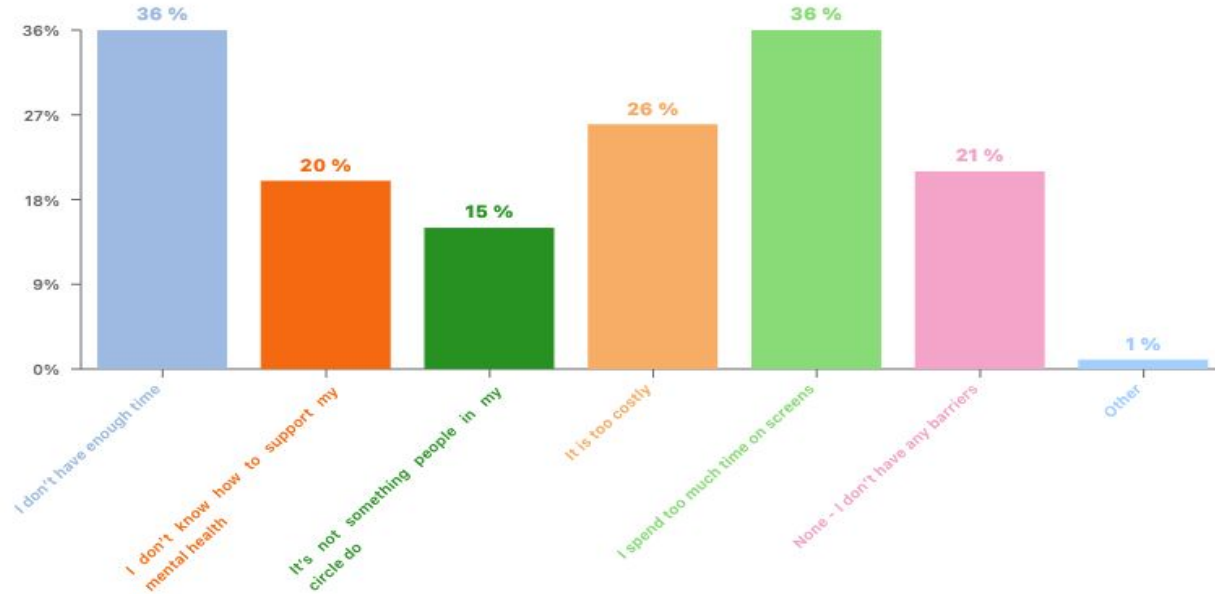
- Gender differences are evident in how males and females manage and seek information for mental health; males prefer volunteering and using workplace sources, while females turn more to family and friends for support.
- Transitioning from younger to older adults, there's a shift in trust towards health sources; older adults prefer GPs over mental health professionals, reflecting reliance on primary healthcare providers as age increases.
- For age groups 25-34 and 55+, community perceptions differ significantly; the younger group values online and interest-based communities, while the older focus on local connections, indicating diverse community dynamics across ages.
- Older respondents, aged 55 and over, are less likely to report time-related barriers to managing their mental health and emphasize nature and family/friends as key support activities, highlighting a more traditional approach to mental health management in this age group.
- A significant number of individuals aged 18-24 are concerned about screen time as a barrier and rely heavily on social media for mental health information, pointing towards digital wellness challenges for younger individuals.

Q1: How many days a week do you intentionally do something for your mental health?



- There is a significant gender difference in how often mental health activities are performed, suggesting that males and females have different patterns of mental health maintenance. Males are more likely to engage in activities 3-4 days a week, whereas females tend to do so 1-2 days a week.
- Older respondents, particularly those aged 55 and up, show a significant tendency to select '0 days' for engaging in mental health activities, indicating potentially lower engagement levels compared to younger individuals.

Q2: What barriers, if any, are there for you in supporting your own mental health? Please select all that apply.

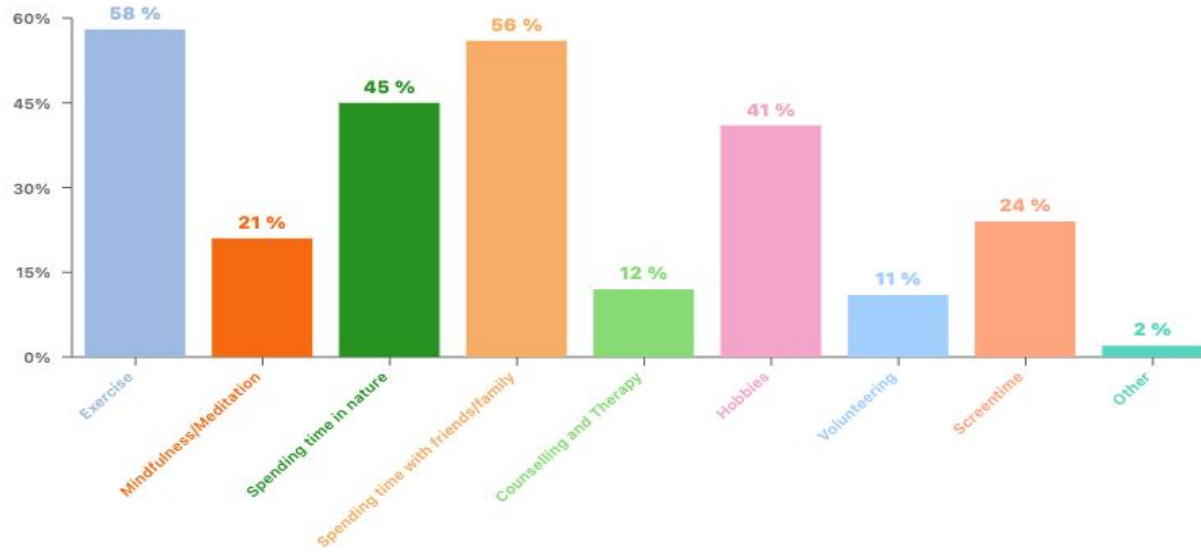


- Respondents aged 18-24 exhibit a statistically significant concern about screen time as a barrier to supporting their mental health, which may highlight a need for interventions focused on digital wellness for this age group.
- Older respondents aged 55 and above are significantly less likely to report time-related barriers in managing their mental health, with only 18% indicating this as a concern, and they also have the highest percentage, 44%, of those reporting no barriers at all.

Other barriers

- Don't drive
- Don't need it / I don't have any problems
- Kids
- Low energy
- Too depressed to function
- There should be a yearly allowance of Mental Health Days
- No / no interest
- No motivation
- Work is too busy
- No knowledge about what is the right thing to do
- I don't really like thinking about my mental health

Q3: Which of the following activities do you engage in regularly to support your mental health? Please select all that apply.

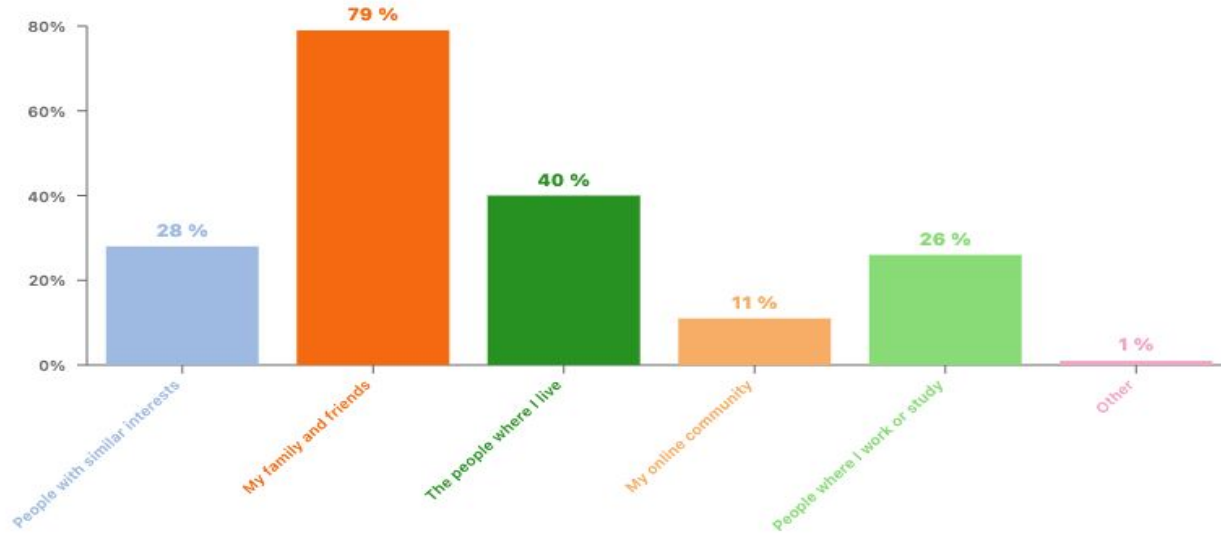


- Those aged 55 and over place more emphasis on spending time in nature and with friends/family as a way to support their mental health, suggesting these activities are key for this age group.
- Male respondents in the survey are significantly more likely than females to choose volunteering as a mental health support activity, indicating gender differences in preferred ways of support.

Other activities

- Coffee
- Tablets
- Holidays
- I do some of this but not specifically for my mental health
- Walking the dogs (x2)
- Walking
- Listen to a podcast
- Reading
- Loud music
- Resting in bed
- Sleep
- Work

Q4: Who do you consider to be your community? Please select all that apply.

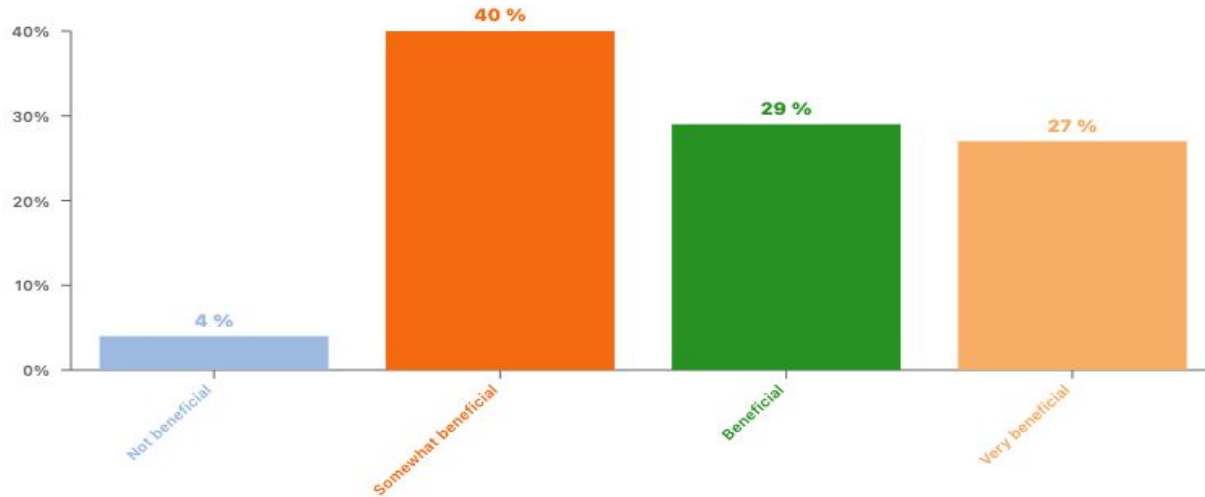


- Individuals aged 25-34 uniquely consider 'People with similar interests' and 'My online community' as their community, while those aged 55+ focus on local connections, suggesting different community dynamics between age groups.
- A notable 84% of those aged 18-24 view family and friends as their community, emphasizing the importance of personal networks for younger individuals.

Community - other

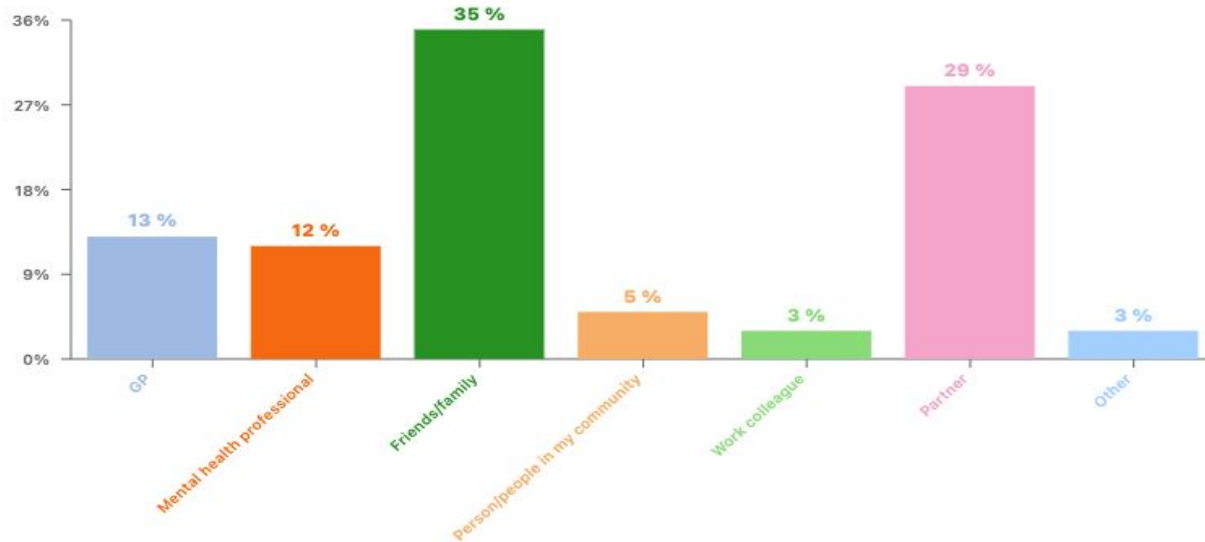
- Don't have one
- GAA club
- I don't feel like I have one
- Myself
- No-one
- None
- My friends and families but they're travellers and don't believe in mental health because they're weirdos

Q5: How beneficial do you believe spending time with your community is for your mental health?



- Those aged 25-34 and 55+ show a significant difference compared to the overall sample in considering spending time with their community as 'Somewhat beneficial', indicating a potentially different perception of community time's value to mental health for these age groups.
- Additionally, the 55+ age group shows a significant difference in viewing it as 'Beneficial', which might suggest a unique appreciation for community engagement in improving mental health in this group.

Q6: Who do you turn to if you need help with your mental health?

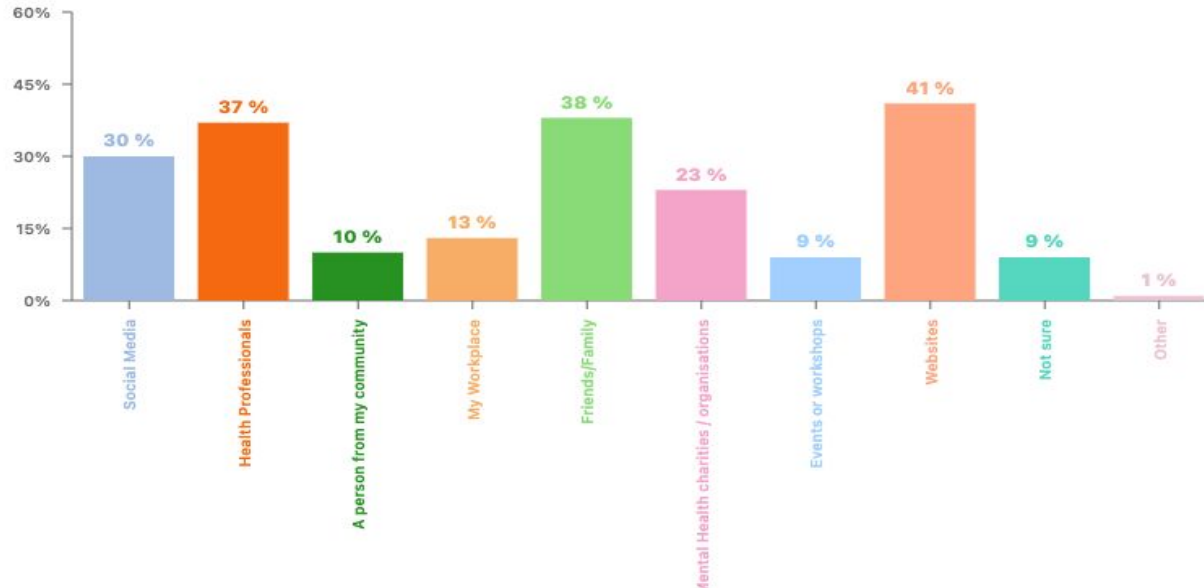


- Females are more inclined than males to turn to friends or family for mental health support, highlighting a gender difference in preference for personal networks.
- Older adults aged 55 and above significantly prefer consulting a GP over a mental health professional for mental health help, indicating trust in primary healthcare providers.

Other

- At this stage nobody. The most you get offered as a low income person is 6 sessions of therapy. You don't come close to scratching the surface in that time.
- ChatGPT/ Internet
- Myself x 12
 - I have nobody/ myself/ no one
 - Suffer in silence / Keep it myself
 - IDK, myself
- Work colleague

Q7: Where do you get your information about mental health? Please select all that apply.

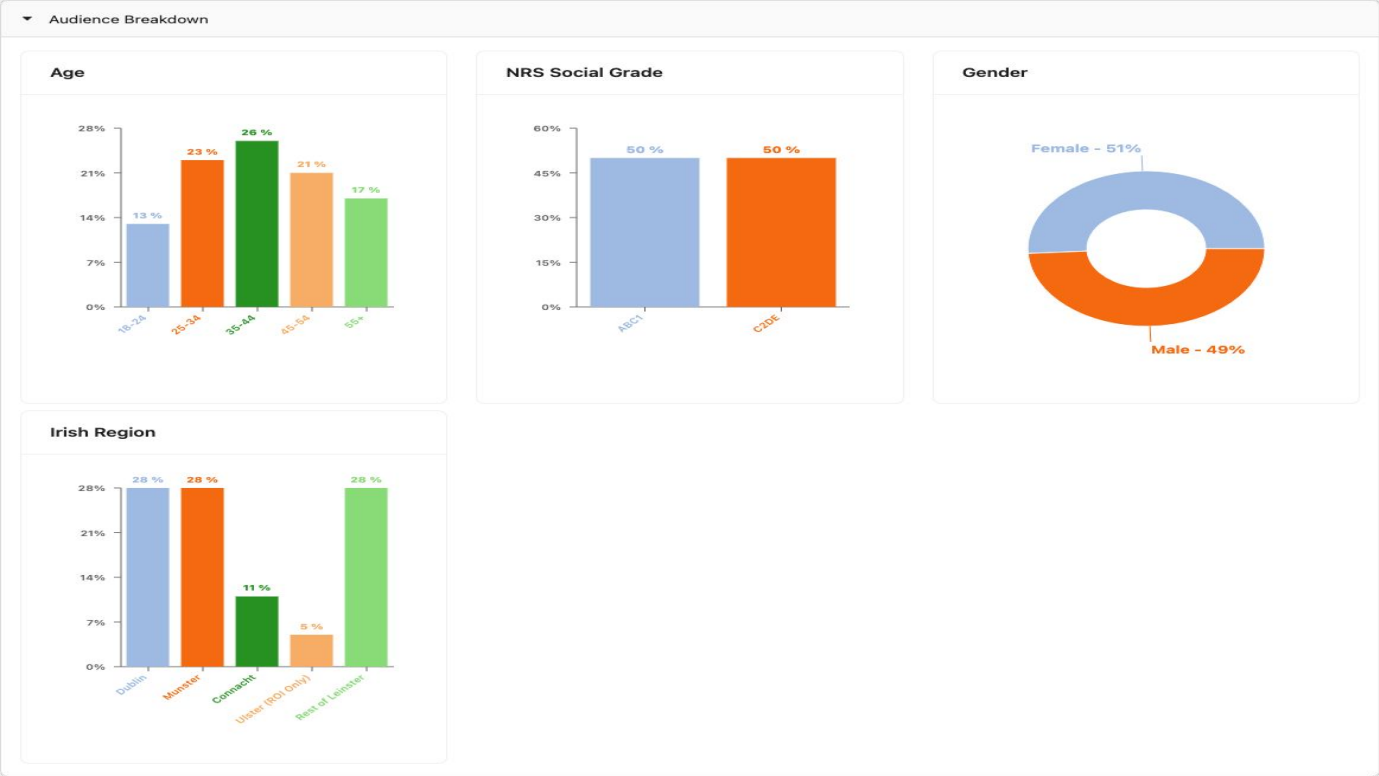


- There is a significant gender difference in seeking mental health information, with males more likely to use community and workplace sources compared to females.
- Respondents aged 18-24 are significantly more likely to rely on social media for mental health information, highlighting the importance of digital platforms for younger individuals.

Other

- Books on philosophy
- Doctor
- Radio
- Nowhere
- Myself
- I don't as I have always taken care of that area of my life

Sample data



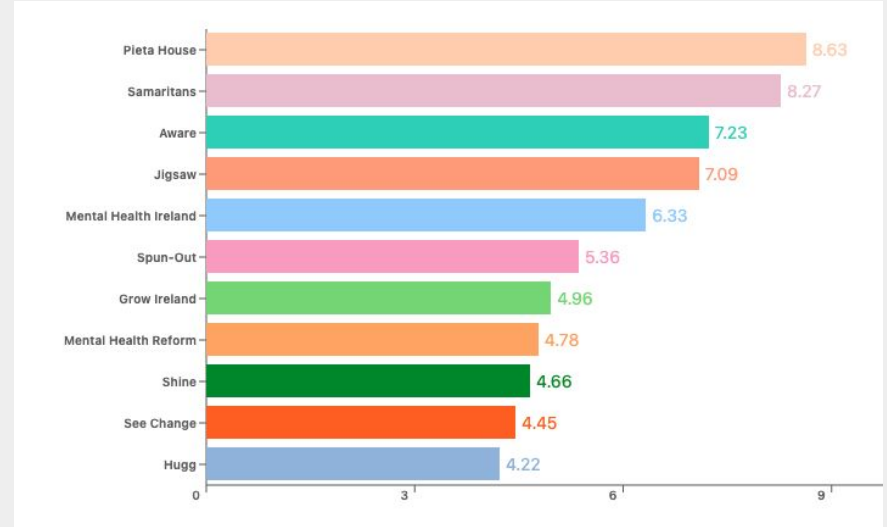
Awareness of mental health charities

Mental Health Charities

Pieta's and Samaritans are clear front runners in terms of Top 2 - with Jigsaw and Aware 3rd/4th.

Mental Health Ireland completes the Top 5, consolidating it's 'mid tier' position.

The others - SpunOut, Shine, See Change, Mental Health Reform, Grow Ireland, Hugg - are almost always bottom-half rankings, suggesting low and static awareness.

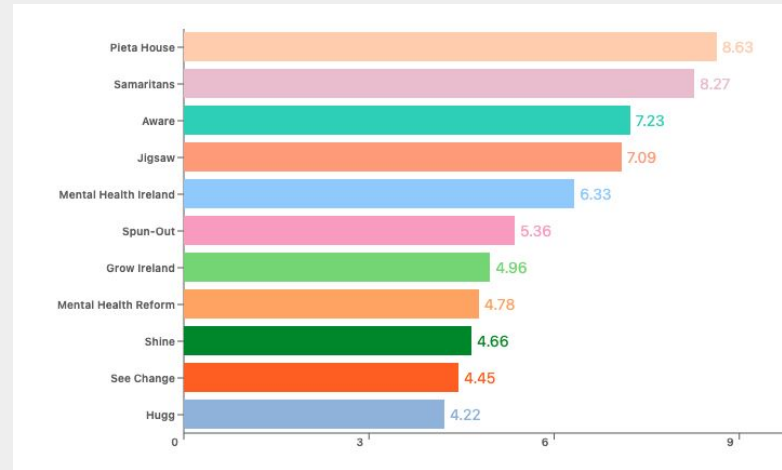


Year on year positions

2024



2025



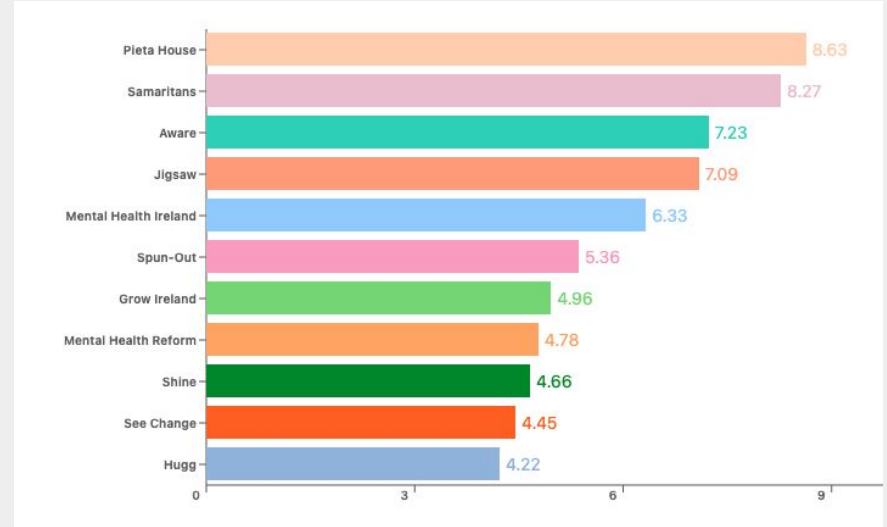
Question: Please rank these national mental health charities in order of your awareness of them – 1 being the most aware. 2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Mental Health Ireland awareness is static

Mental Health Awareness continues to be in the middle of the pack, with identical average rankings between 2024 and 2025 (5.67 out of 11), ranking 5th to 7th in many sequences.

When we assess both 2024 and 2025, MHI is **consistently outside the top 3** in awareness, indicating it is recognised but not top-of-mind.

Mental Health Ireland's moderate awareness levels parallel the survey's finding that only 11.6% of Irish adults access professional mental health services, while 20% report not knowing how to support their mental health.



Question: Please rank these national mental health charities in order of your awareness of them – 1 being the most aware. 2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Digging deeper



An interesting insight is that Mental Health Ireland attracts more first-place mentions than Jigsaw — 85 people (8.3%) ranked MHI first compared with 57 people (5.6%) for Jigsaw — but Jigsaw achieves a higher overall ranking because far more respondents (346 people, 33.8%) include it in their top three, compared with 260 people (25.4%) for MHI

Charity	First Choice (%)	Top 3 (%)
Pieta	31.4%	63.3%
Samaritans	25.1%	58.1%
Aware	10.4%	43.2%
Mental Health Ireland	8.3%	25.4%
Jigsaw	5.6%	33.8%

Question: Please rank these national mental health charities in order of your awareness of them – 1 being the most aware. 2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

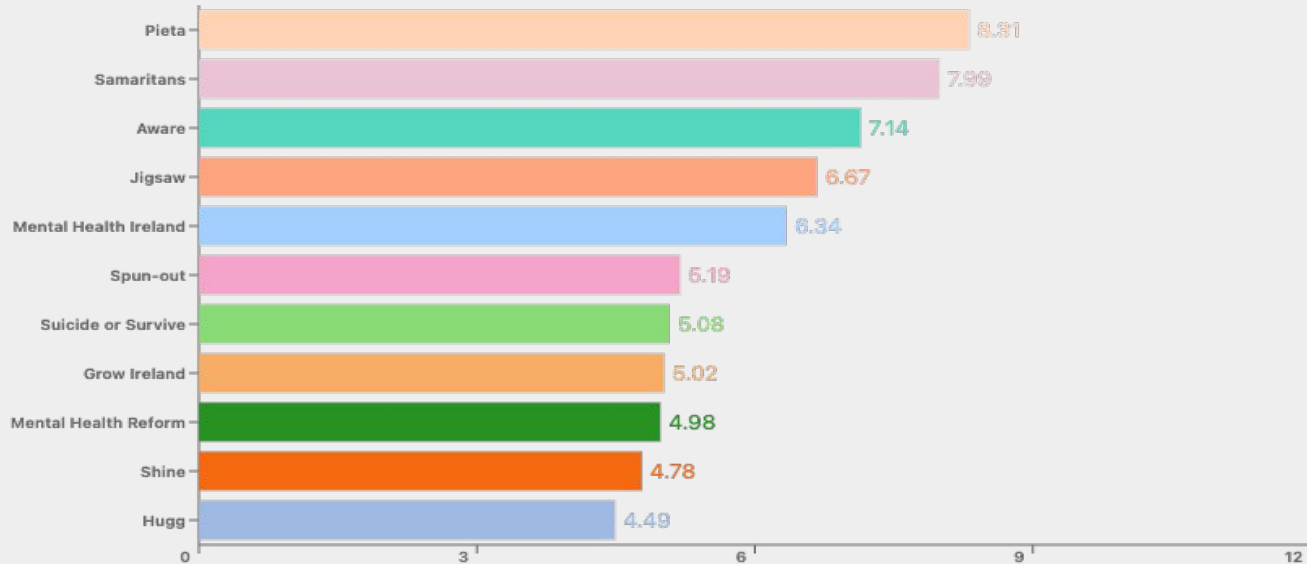
Year on year comparisons

Charity	2024 First Choice %	2024 Top 3 %	2025 First Choice %	2025 Top 3 %
Pieta	34.8	67.1	31.4	63.3
Samaritans	24.2	61.4	25.1	58.1
Aware	9.6	44.2	10.4	43.2
Mental Health Ireland	7.6	27.1	8.3	25.4
Jigsaw	9	37.5	5.6	33.8

Pieta and Samaritans remain Ireland's dominant mental health charities, together taking over half of all first-choice mentions in 2025 (31% and 25% respectively), though both slipped slightly from 2024 (Pieta 35% → 31%; Samaritans 24% → 25%)

Question: Please rank these national mental health charities in order of your awareness of them – 1 being the most aware. 2024 Survey (1000 respondents), 2025 Survey (1000 respondents)

Q8: Please rank these national mental health charities in order of your knowledge of them (1 being most knowledge)



- There is a significant gender difference in the knowledge of mental health charities, with females being more familiar with Pieta than males, suggesting a gender-based distinction in awareness.

Press release input

Some key notes for the press release

New survey shows drop in mental health engagement year-on-year — time and digital pressures on the rise

The *Mental Health Census 2025* reveals that in just one year the share of people reporting **no barriers** to supporting their mental health has fallen from **more than a third (38%) in 2024 to just one in five (21%) in 2025**. The nationally representative survey of **1,000 adults across Ireland** provides an important snapshot of behaviours and barriers to mental wellbeing and was commissioned by Mental Health Ireland

Key findings include:

- **Fewer people engaging:** Almost **1 in 5 adults (19.0%) now say they do nothing to support their mental health** each week — up from 10.7% in 2024.
- **Barriers intensifying:** The share of people reporting “**no barriers**” collapsed from **37.8% in 2024 to just 20.8% in 2025**. Time pressure (36.1%) and, for the first time, **screen use (35.4%)** are the most common obstacles. Screen time was incorporated into the survey for the first time.
- **Declining use of everyday supports:** Fewer people now identify everyday activities as helping their mental health, including **exercise (70% → 57%), friends/family (71% → 57%), and time in nature (53% → 44%)**.
- **Gaps widening:** Women are more likely to cite **friends/family** and **nature** as supports, while men are 70% more likely to report using **therapy**. Younger adults (25–34) are the most likely to disengage, while older adults (55+) remain the most consistent in recognising supports.
- **Regional variation:** **Munster reports the lowest disengagement (17.5%), while Ulster ROI has the highest (21.9%).**
Socioeconomic divide: Lower-income adults are **53% more likely to say they do nothing** for their mental health, while higher-income adults are significantly more likely to identify **therapy** as a support.

Thank you

Appendix

Tempered Thinking 20/08/25