

Healthy Ireland Survey 2021 - Mental health

- 75% of those who consulted a mental health professional said they found it helpful¹
- 50% of people with bad mental health want to be more active
- 33% want to reduce their stress or be more positive

Positive Mental Health (page 8)

- The average Energy and Vitality Index (EVI) score for the population as a whole is 62.4. This is a decline from 2016, when the average EVI score was 67.8.
- Higher positive mental health is reported by men than women (64.6 and 60.3).
- Positive mental health is highest among those aged 25 to 34 and those aged 65 to 74 (both 64.0) and lowest among those aged 45 to 64 (60.8). Men aged 25 to 34 report significantly higher positive mental health than women of the same age (66.6 and 61.6, respectively).

Negative Mental Health (page 8)

- The average Mental Health Index-5 MHI-5 score is 76.0. This is a decline from an average score of 81.2 in the 2016 survey wave.
- Those aged 15 to 24 were identified as having the lowest MHI-5 scores (72.4).
- Those living in Dublin report lower MHI-5 scores than those living outside of Dublin (73.4 and 77.1, respectively).
- Those whose self-reported health is 'bad' (55.9) and those who are unemployed (71.8) are also more likely to have elevated levels of psychological distress, compared to those whose health is 'good' and those who are employed (both 78.0).

Mental Health and COVID-19 (page 9)

- More people report that their mental health worsened during the pandemic than report an improvement. 30% of respondents say their mental health worsened since March 2020. 64% report no change, with only 5% saying their mental health has improved.
- Among those whose mental health has worsened, 28% say it has declined "a lot", while 71% say it has declined "a little".

Treatment for Mental Health (page 9)

- Overall, 23% would like to improve their mental health. This is highest among women aged 15 to 24 (30%), students (28%), those whose self-reported health is 'bad' (36%) and parents (26%).
- Women (45%) are more likely to have consulted a mental health professional than men (31%), with women aged 15 to 34 particularly likely to have done so (57%).
- Non-parents (43%) are also significantly more likely than parents (29%) to have spoken to a mental health professional in the previous six months.
- 72% of those who consulted a mental health professional in the previous six months due to a significant deterioration in their mental health cite the Covid-19 pandemic as the reason for doing so.
- 75% of those who consulted a mental health professional said they found it helpful, while 13% said it was unhelpful.

Suicide Awareness (page 11)

- Due to the sensitive nature of this issue, this module on experiences of suicide was self-completed by respondents online, with 2,282 respondents choosing to fully complete the module. Individuals for whom suicide resonates more strongly may have been more likely to choose to take part in this module, meaning that caution is necessary when applying the results of this part of the survey to the overall population.
 - Around 1 in every 8 respondents (13%) report that they know someone who was 'close or very close' to them that died by suicide. A further 53% report knowing someone who died by suicide who was less close than this.
 - When asked about the effect the person's suicide had on them, 17% said the death had "a significant or devastating effect" on their life, with around half of this group (47%) saying it still affects them today.
 - 6% of respondents report having attempted to take their own life at some point in the past. Those aged 25 to 34 (10%) are the most likely age group to report a suicide attempt, while those aged 65 and older (<1%) are least likely.
 - There is no difference between men and women in their likelihood of having attempted to take their own life. Women aged under 35 (9%) are marginally more likely than men of the same age (7%) to report having attempted suicide.
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