



St Patrick's Mental Health Services Attitudes to Mental Health Survey 2021 Findings

Methodology

- A nationally representative sample of 842 adults aged 18+ was surveyed.
- The survey was completed online.
- The survey was completed using the same methodology as previous years to allow comparability.
- Fieldwork took place from 30 June to 7 July.

Mental health difficulties

- 41% of adults have been treated for a mental health difficulty; a steady increase since 2019.
- 75% of people have had someone disclose to them that they have, or had, a mental health difficulty.
- GPs are the most likely (89% all mentions) place that someone would turn to if concerned about their own or someone else's mental health.
- Face-to-face support is the preferred option for support for a mental health difficulty.
- 17% have accessed mental healthcare services remotely since the onset of the pandemic.

Stigma and attitudes towards mental health

- 72% of people would tell their partner if their child was being treated for depression; 49% would tell a friend; 65% would tell a family member; and 10% would tell no-one.
- 71% would tell their partner if they were on antidepressants; 51% would tell a friend; and 55% would tell a family member. 12% would tell no-one.
- 21% would not tell anyone if they were experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- 17% would not tell anyone that they had been an inpatient for a mental health difficulty.
- 17% would tell no one if they felt they had a substance abuse issue.
- 89% would tell someone if they were experiencing a mental health difficulty.
- 68% agree that Irish people would accept someone with a mental health difficulty as a close friend.
- 51% agree that Irish people would treat someone with a mental health difficulty the same as anyone else.
- 66% believe that being treated for a mental health difficulty is still seen by Irish society as a sign of personal failure.
- 70% agree people who use mental health services often fully recover and lead normal lives.
- 68% agree Irish people would willingly accept someone who has received outpatient treatment.
- 67% think someone who experiences panic attacks could be head of a company.
- 94% would raise it if they were worried their partner was experiencing mental health difficulties.
- 61% would be okay explaining to their boss that they need time off due to a mental health difficulty.
- 61% agree that Irish people would accept someone who received inpatient treatment.
- 78% agree that society tends to view people who spend time as an inpatient differently.
- 96% agree that anyone can experience mental health difficulties.

- 28% think that the public should be better protected from people with mental health problems.
- 62% are afraid of experiencing mental health difficulties in the future.
- 21% of people would consider it a sign of weakness if they sought help for a mental health difficulty.
- 7% would consider it a sign of weakness if a friend/colleague/family member sought help for a mental health difficulty.
- 67% think Irish people would willingly accept someone recovering from a substance abuse problem.
- 87% believe there is a worrying prevalence of anxiety in Irish society.
- 69% think mental health is not talked about enough in the media.
- 74% would be comfortable living next door to someone who has bipolar disorder.
- 69% would marry someone who was hospitalised with depression.
- 23% would not trust someone who previously experienced postnatal depression to look after their child.

COVID-19 and impact on mental health

- 58% are concerned about theirs, or a family member's, mental health due to COVID-19
- 26% are experiencing mental health difficulties for the first time since the onset of the pandemic.
- 43% have sought mental health support or treatment during the pandemic.
- 51% have introduced new ways to support their mental health and wellbeing since the onset of the pandemic including spending increased time outdoors (72%); introducing an exercise regime (60%); and speaking more openly about mental health and wellbeing (40%).
- Economic factors and risk of contracting COVID-19 are the societal challenges respondents are most concerned about over the coming 12 months.
- 55% feel that the pandemic has led to positive changes in the workplace.
- 54% feel that it has led to an opportunity to reflect on values and priorities.
- 25% feel that it has led to reduced mental health stigma.

- 46% feel that the lifting of restrictions has positively impacted their mental health.
- Nearly three in 10 feel that public health restrictions from COVID-19 has positively influenced their view on remote support services.
- 16% would consider it a sign of weakness if they sought help for a mental health difficulty during the pandemic.
- 56% are more comfortable talking openly about their mental health now than before the pandemic.
- 72% believe that Irish society is more open to talking about mental health issues since the onset of the pandemic.
- 23% of parents to under-18s have sought mental health services for their child, of these 57% of children were diagnosed with a mental health difficulty
- 49% of parents believe the pandemic restrictions have negatively impacted their child.
- 62% of parents are concerned about the long-term impact of the pandemic on their child's mental health.
- The main area of concern for parents when it comes to the long-term impact of the pandemic on their child's mental health is the impact of isolation and social distancing (30%).

Children's mental health

- 75% of parents to under-18s worry about their child's mental health.
- 77% of parents believe there is an association between social media and anxiety in children.

Rights and discrimination

- 26% have, or know someone who has, experienced discrimination due to mental health difficulties at work; 31% in the community; and 35% within their family.
- A large proportion of those who have experienced discrimination however, have had positive experiences of disclosing mental health difficulties at work, in the community and within their family (42%, 31% and 62% respectively).