



# Mental Health Tracker



**An InstantScripts study**  
September 2022







## About the study

The InstantScripts Mental Health Tracker is designed to track our nation's mental health through a random sample of around 1000 Australians. The six-monthly survey asks respondents the same seven questions around the state of their mental health, mental health symptoms, possible causes and solutions they have pursued – over the last six months. The first Mental Health Tracker, released in April 2022, found that while 70 per cent of respondents had suffered mental health issues in the previous six months, 72 per cent rated their mental health as 'fair' or 'good'.

The second InstantScripts Mental Health Tracker was derived from an independent survey of 1010 Australians. The survey respondents cover a geographical and population spread that is reflective of the Australian population.



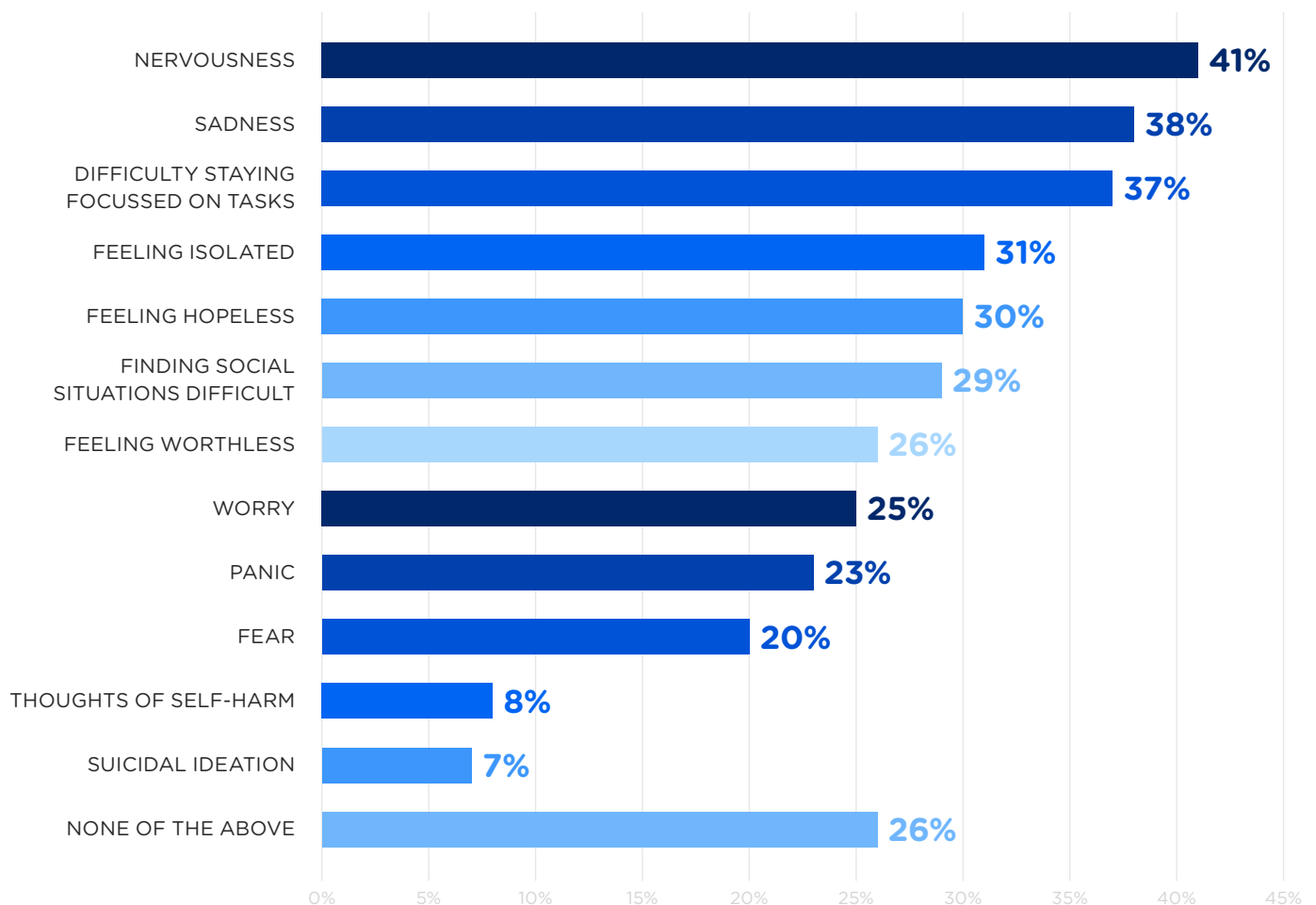
# What mental health symptoms have Australians experienced in the last six months?

InstantScripts asked respondents to identify the mental health symptoms they had experienced in the last six months, from a list of 12. Seven in 10 (74 per cent) respondents selected at least one symptom.

Specifically, 41 per cent of respondents revealed they had experienced feelings of nervousness; 38 per cent reported feelings of sadness unrelated to a particular incident or depression; 37 per cent had difficulty staying focussed on tasks; 31 per cent reported feeling isolated; and 30 per cent said they felt hopeless.

Other symptoms respondents had experienced included finding social situations difficult (chosen by 29 per cent of respondents); feeling worthless (chosen by 26 per cent); worry not related to a particular incident (chosen by 25 per cent); panic (23 per cent); and fear (20 per cent).

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS?





#### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS? BY GENDER.

Response	Gender (%)	
	Men	Women
Sadness not related to a particular incident, or depression	35	41
Nervousness	36	47
Feeling worthless	23	29
Feeling hopeless	27	34
Thoughts of self-harm	7	8
Suicidal ideation	8	6
Finding social situations difficult	25	33
Panic	19	27
Worry not related to a particular incident	23	27
Fear	16	25
Feeling isolated	28	35
Difficulty staying focussed on tasks	35	39
None of the above	29	22

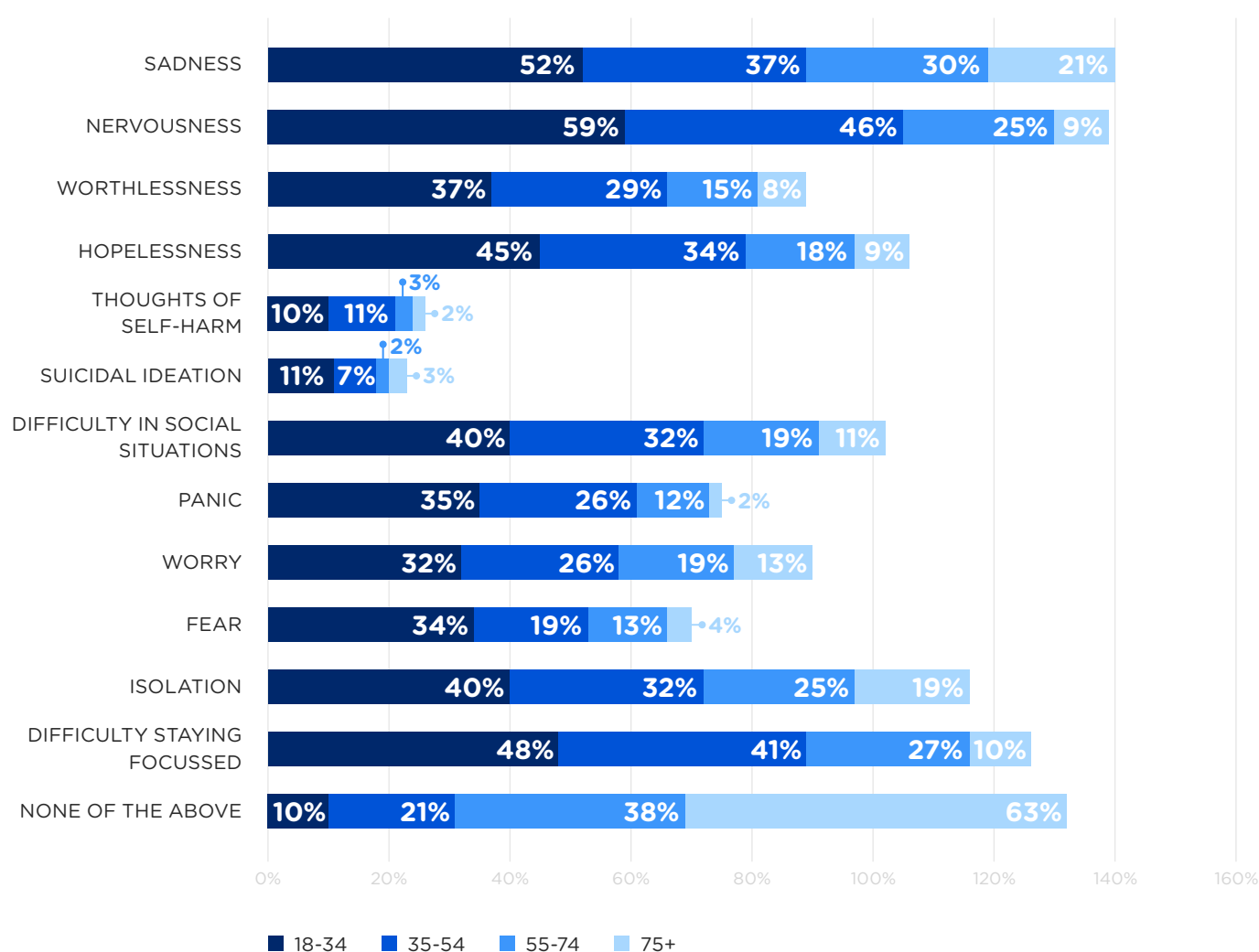
A larger proportion of women experienced mental health symptoms in the last six months: 78 per cent of women selected at least one symptom, compared with 71 per cent of men.

Younger respondents were more likely to experience mental health symptoms in the last six months. The majority of under-35s (90 per cent) selected at least one symptom, compared with 79 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 62 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and 37 per cent of over-75s.

More under-35s respondents also revealed they had experienced nervousness in the last six months, at 59 per cent, compared with 46 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 25 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and just 9 per cent of over-75s.

Feelings of hopelessness were also prevalent among under-35s, at 45 per cent, compared with 34 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 18 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and 9 per cent of over-75s.

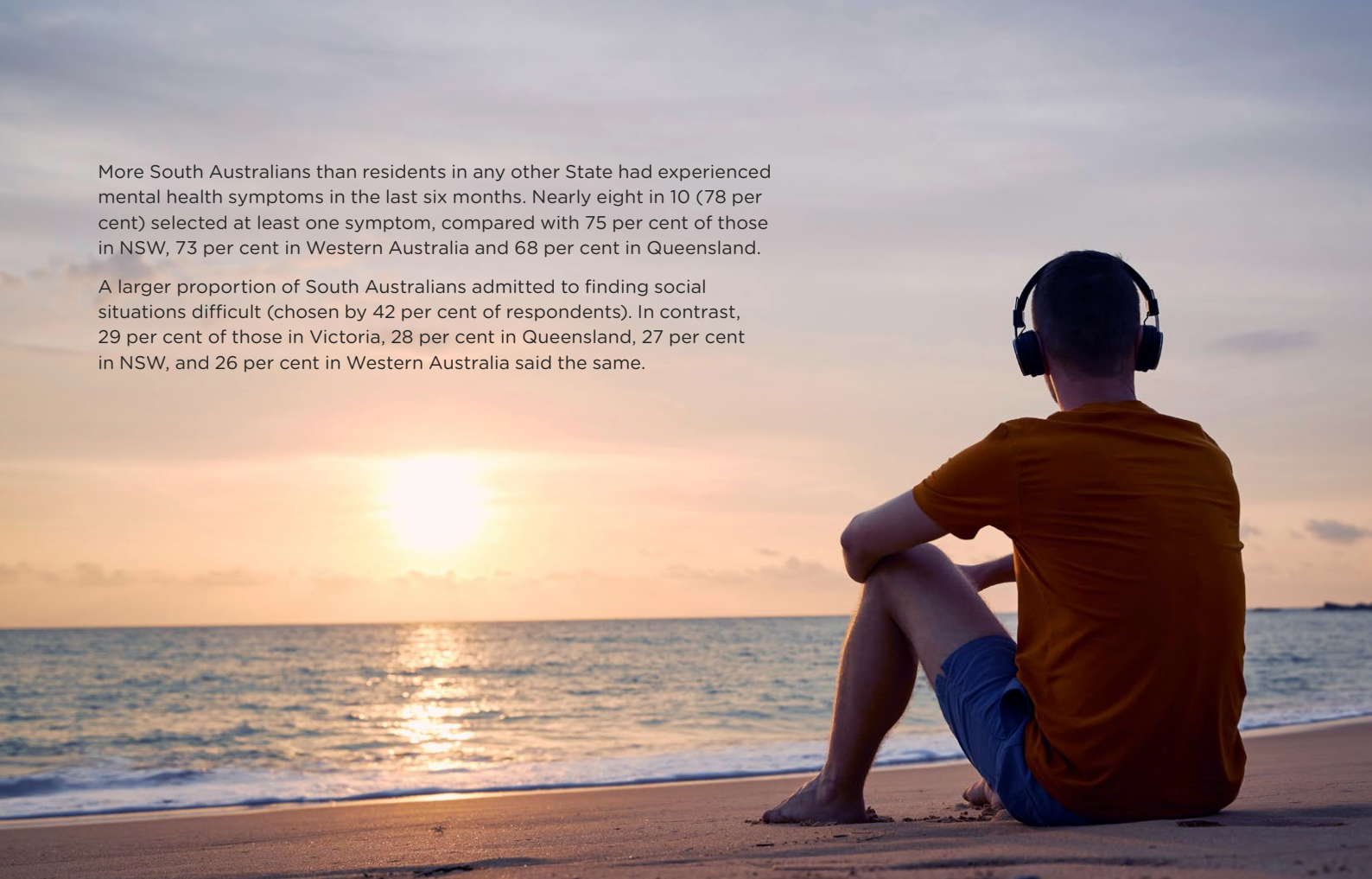
## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS? BY AGE.





More South Australians than residents in any other State had experienced mental health symptoms in the last six months. Nearly eight in 10 (78 per cent) selected at least one symptom, compared with 75 per cent of those in NSW, 73 per cent in Western Australia and 68 per cent in Queensland.

A larger proportion of South Australians admitted to finding social situations difficult (chosen by 42 per cent of respondents). In contrast, 29 per cent of those in Victoria, 28 per cent in Queensland, 27 per cent in NSW, and 26 per cent in Western Australia said the same.



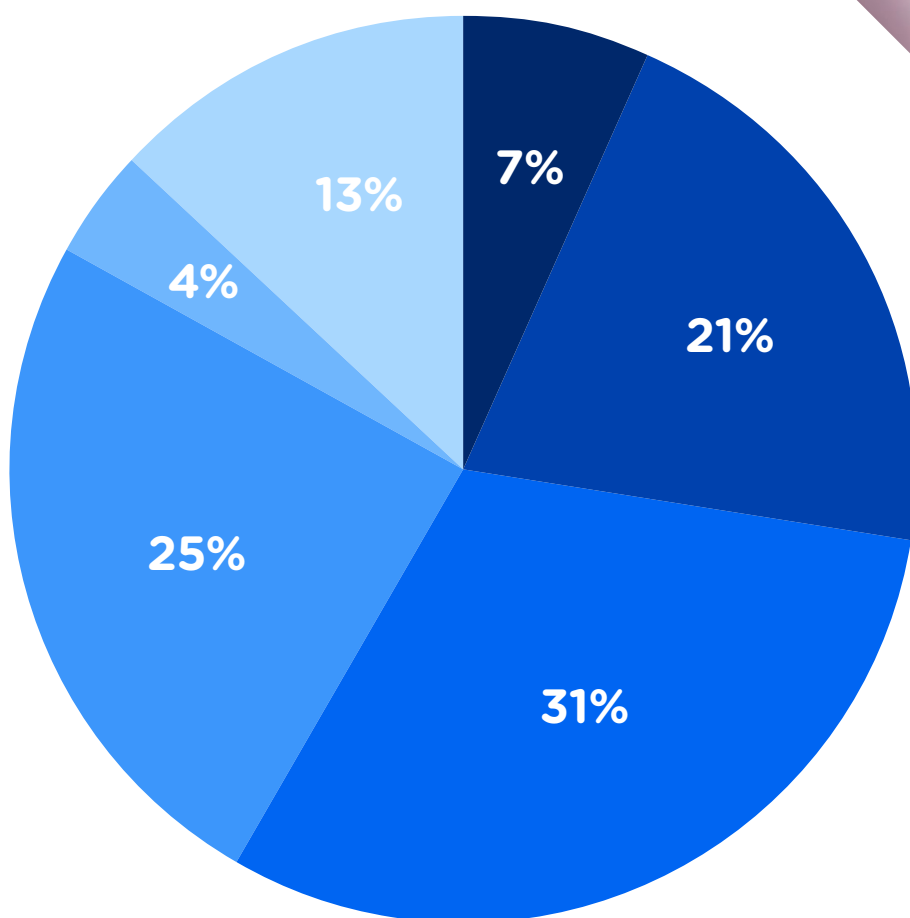
HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS? BY STATE.					
Response	State (%)				
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
Sadness not related to a particular incident, or depression	38	36	33	43	38
Nervousness	38	44	38	39	47
Feeling worthless	26	27	25	25	25
Feeling hopeless	30	30	26	35	36
Thoughts of self-harm	8	7	7	7	8
Suicidal ideation	7	8	5	7	11
Finding social situations difficult	27	29	28	26	42
Panic	22	21	23	29	26
Worry not related to a particular incident	25	24	23	21	25
Fear	24	18	17	19	17
Feeling isolated	30	31	27	34	43
Difficulty staying focussed on tasks	38	38	30	41	39
None of the above	25	24	32	27	22

Across the regions, a larger proportion of Australians in rural areas identified fear as a mental health symptom they'd experienced in the last six months. A quarter (26 per cent) of rural Australians identified this symptom, compared with 21 per cent of those in metro areas and 17 per cent in regional areas.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS? BY REGION.			
Response	Region (%)		
	Metro	Regional	Rural
Sadness not related to a particular incident, or depression	40	33	40
Nervousness	43	36	45
Feeling worthless	26	25	32
Feeling hopeless	33	25	29
Thoughts of self-harm	9	6	7
Suicidal ideation	8	4	11
Finding social situations difficult	30	27	32
Panic	25	20	21
Worry not related to a particular incident	24	25	29
Fear	21	17	26
Feeling isolated	33	27	34
Difficulty staying focussed on tasks	40	32	32
None of the above	23	32	27

## How often are Australians experiencing these symptoms?

InstantScripts asked respondents how often they experience mental health symptoms. Nearly a third (31 per cent) said they experience symptoms weekly, while a fifth (21 per cent) experience them daily, and 7 per cent several times a day or continuously. A quarter (25 per cent) revealed they experience symptoms a couple of times a month, while 13 per cent had symptoms less than monthly and just 4 per cent experienced them monthly.



### HOW OFTEN ARE AUSTRALIANS EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS?

- SEVERAL TIMES A DAY OR CONTINUOUSLY
- DAILY
- WEEKLY
- COUPLE OF TIMES A MONTH
- MONTHLY
- LESS THAN MONTHLY



## HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXPERIENCE THESE SYMPTOMS? BY GENDER.

Response	Gender (%)	
	Men	Women
Several times a day or continuously	7	6
Daily	19	23
Weekly	30	31
Couple of times a month	29	22
Monthly	3	4
Less than monthly	12	14

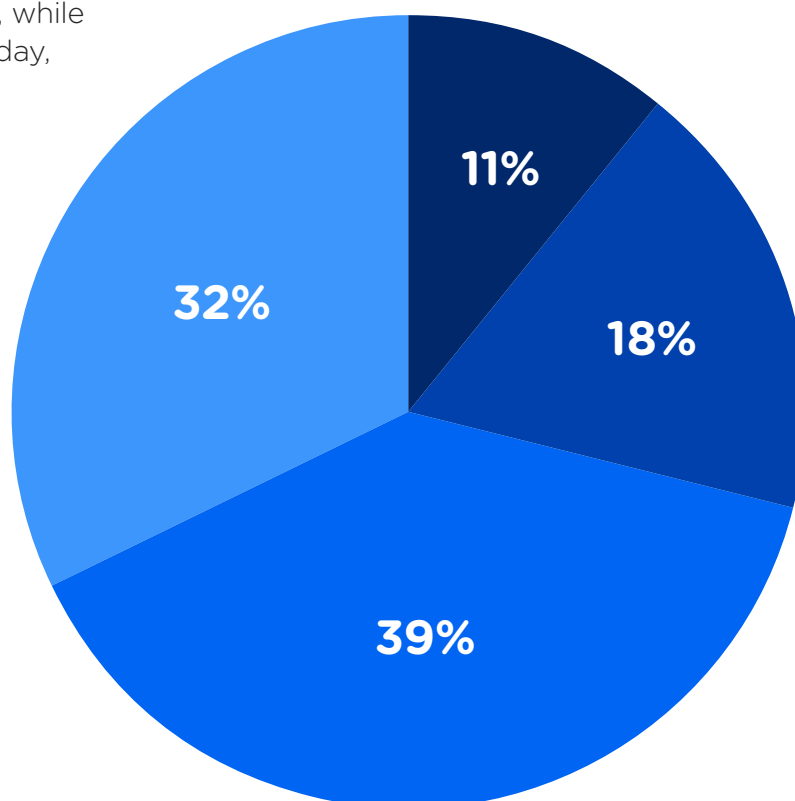
Men were more likely to experience symptoms less frequently: 29 per cent of men experienced symptoms a couple of times a month, compared with 22 per cent of women.

## Do Australians find it difficult to conduct daily tasks due to mental health symptoms?

More than two in three (68 per cent) respondents revealed they had found it difficult to carry out their usual, daily activities in the last week due to mental health symptoms. Specifically, 39 per cent found it difficult to conduct daily tasks a couple of times in the last week, while 18 per cent had difficulties every other day, and 11 per cent every day.

### HOW MANY DAYS IN THE LAST WEEK DID YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT YOUR USUAL, DAILY ACTIVITIES DUE TO THESE SYMPTOMS?

- EVERY DAY
- EVERY OTHER DAY
- A COUPLE OF TIMES IN THE LAST WEEK
- HAD NO DIFFICULTY DOING MY USUAL ACTIVITIES



Just 32 per cent of respondents had no difficulty performing their usual tasks.

### HOW MANY DAYS IN THE LAST WEEK DID YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT YOUR USUAL, DAILY ACTIVITIES DUE TO THESE SYMPTOMS? BY AGE.

Response	Age (%)			
	18-34	35-54	55-74	75+
Every day	10	14	8	3
Every other day	23	17	12	3
A couple of times in the last week	42	39	34	33
Had no difficulty doing my tasks	24	30	45	61

Older respondents were less likely to experience difficulties performing their usual, daily tasks: 61 per cent of over-75s and 45 per cent of 55-74-year-olds said they'd had no difficulty with daily tasks, compared with just 24 per cent of under-35s.

### HOW MANY DAYS IN THE LAST WEEK DID YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT YOUR USUAL, DAILY ACTIVITIES DUE TO THESE SYMPTOMS? BY STATE.

Response	State (%)				
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
Every day	8	13	10	13	11
Every other day	18	19	19	13	18
A couple of times in the last week	41	36	30	49	46
Had no difficulty doing my tasks	32	32	41	25	25

A larger proportion of respondents in South Australia and Western Australia had difficulty performing daily tasks, at an equal 75 per cent. This compares with an equal 68 per cent of respondents in NSW and Victoria, and 59 per cent in Queensland.

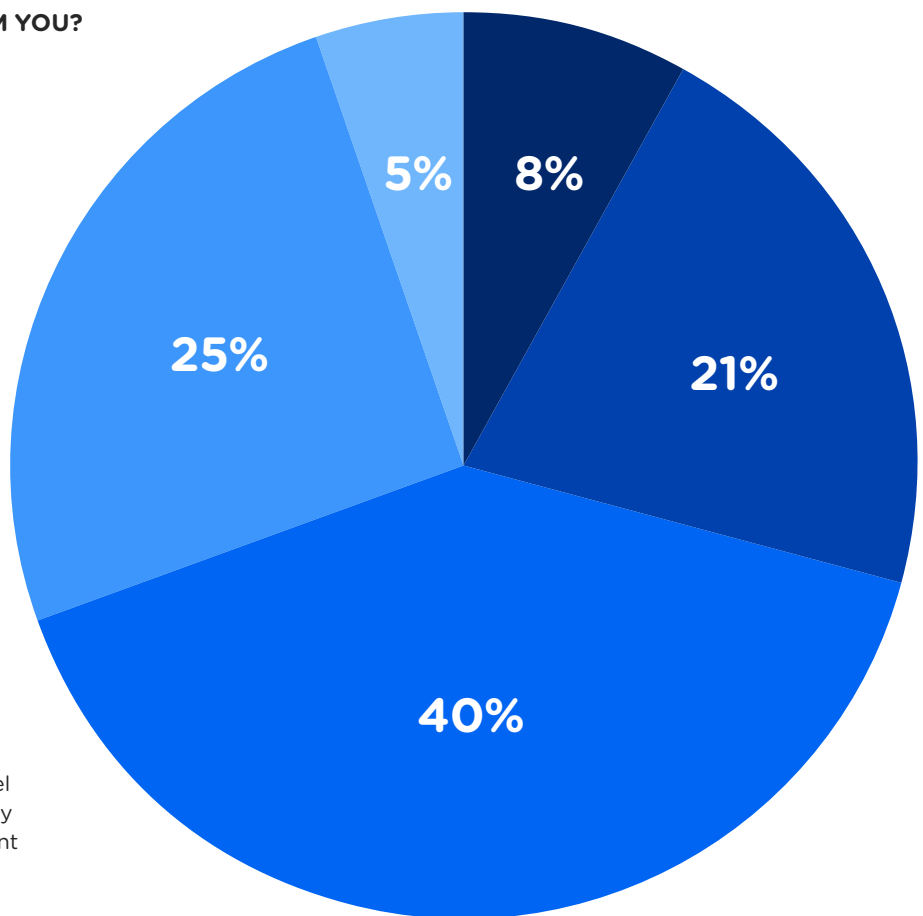


## Are Australians coping with these symptoms?

Nearly seven in 10 (69 per cent) respondents admitted they've found their mental health symptoms overwhelming at some point. Specifically, 40 per cent said they occasionally feel overwhelmed by symptoms, while 21 per cent said they often find them overwhelming, and 8 per cent said they are always overwhelmed by their mental health symptoms.

### DO THESE SYMPTOMS OVERWHELM YOU?

- YES, ALWAYS
- YES, OFTEN
- YES, OCCASIONALLY
- NO, ONLY RARELY
- NEVER



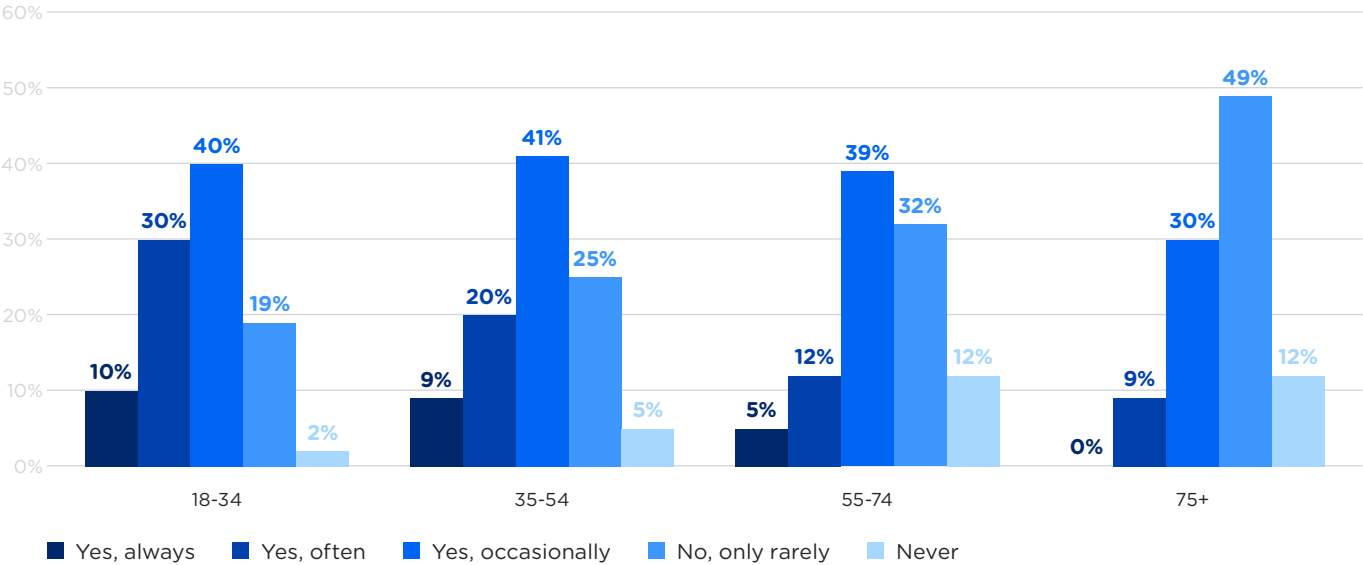
A quarter (25 per cent) said they don't feel overwhelmed by symptoms and when they do, it is a rare instance, while just 5 per cent said they never feel overwhelmed.



A larger proportion of younger respondents admitted they feel overwhelmed by mental health symptoms, at 80 per cent. This compares with 70 per cent of 35-74-year-olds, 57 per cent of 55-74-year-olds, and 39 per cent of over-75s.

Younger Australians were also more likely to feel overwhelmed more frequently: 30 per cent of under-35s said they feel overwhelmed by symptoms often, compared with 20 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 12 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and just 9 per cent of over-75s.

DO THESE SYMPTOMS OVERWHELM YOU?



DO THESE SYMPTOMS OVERWHELM YOU? BY GENDER.		
Response	Gender (%)	
	Men	Women
Yes, always	8	8
Yes, often	19	23
Yes, occasionally	36	44
No, only rarely	31	20
Never	6	5

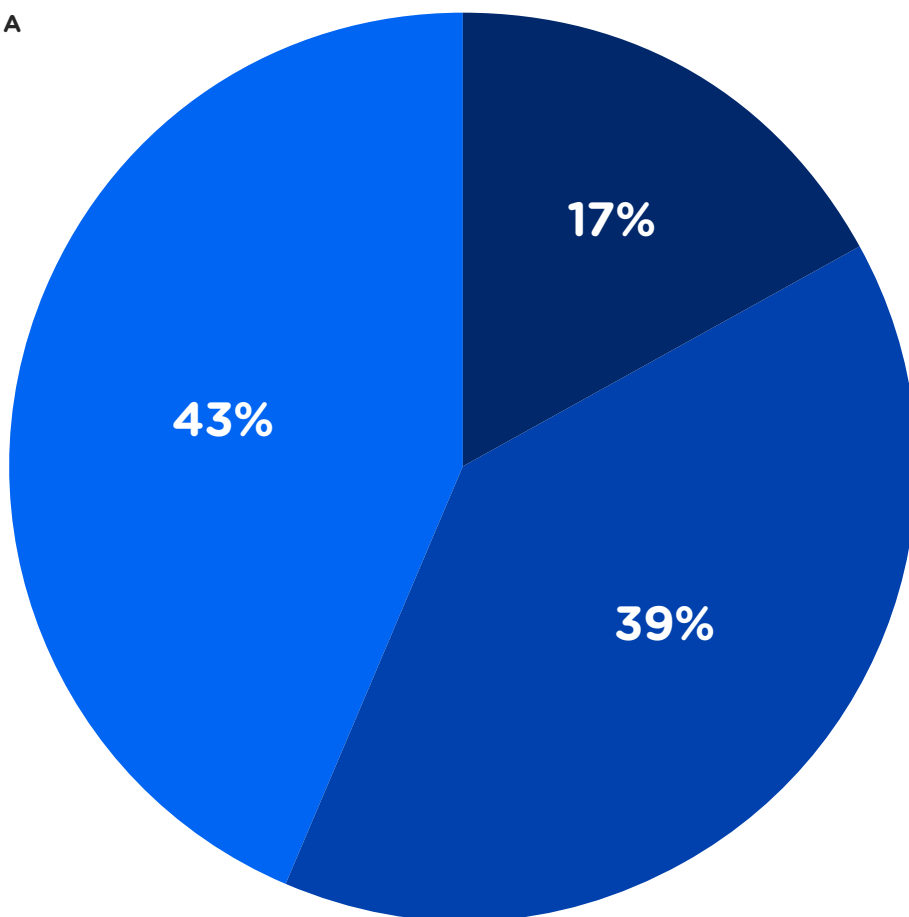
A higher proportion of women admitted to feeling overwhelmed by symptoms often or occasionally, compared with men, at 67 per cent and 55 per cent respectively.

## What proportion of Australians have sought, or are seeking, support from a mental health professional?

The majority of respondents (83 per cent) are not currently or have never sought support from a mental health professional. Specifically, 43 per cent said they have never sought support, while 39 per cent said they aren't currently seeking support but have done so previously. Just 17 per cent are currently seeking support from a mental health professional.

### ARE YOU SEEKING SUPPORT FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL?

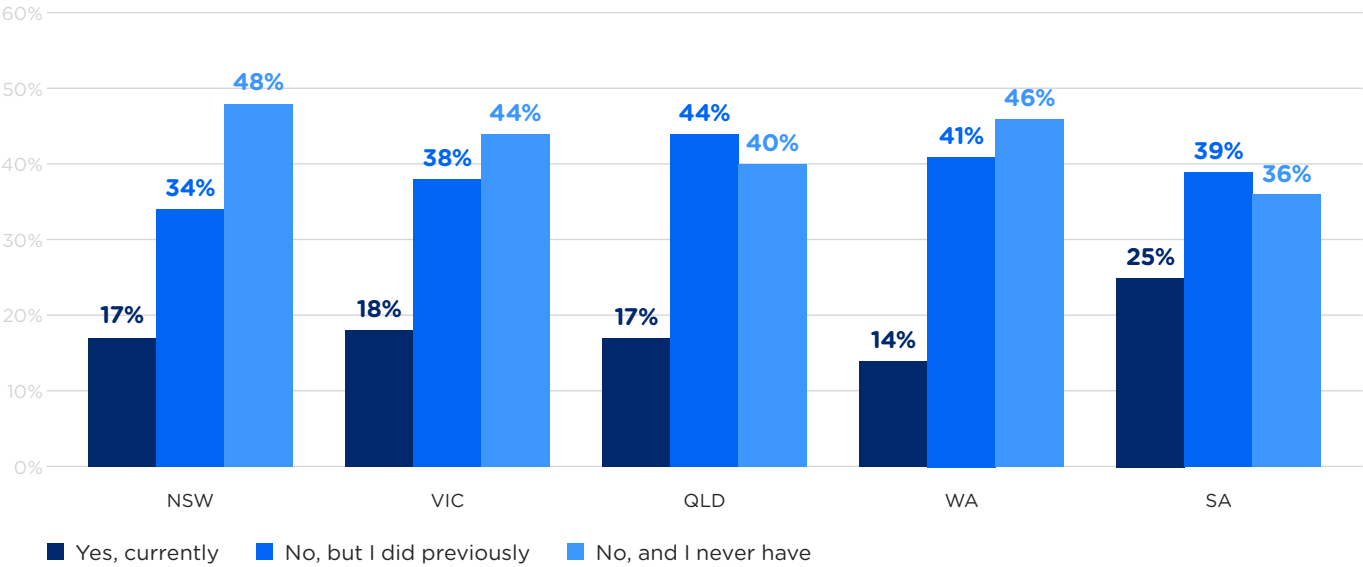
- YES, CURRENTLY
- NO, BUT I DID PREVIOUSLY
- NO, AND I NEVER HAVE



More respondents in NSW than any other State revealed they had never sought support from a mental health professional, at 48 per cent. This was followed by 46 per cent of WA respondents, 40 per cent of respondents in Queensland, and compared with 36 per cent in South Australia.

As such, a higher proportion of SA respondents are currently seeking support from a mental health professional (chosen by 25 per cent of respondents). In contrast, 18 per cent of Victorians, 16 per cent of Queenslanders and 14 per cent of West Australians said the same.

ARE YOU SEEKING SUPPORT FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL?  
BY STATE.



ARE YOU CURRENTLY SEEKING SUPPORT FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL? BY REGION.			
Response	Region (%)		
	Metro	Regional	Rural
Yes, currently	18	16	13
No, but I did previously	39	39	49
No, and I never have	43	45	38

Australians living in metro areas are more likely to seek a mental health professional than those residing in regional and rural areas. Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of respondents in metro areas are currently seeking support from a mental health professional, compared with 16 per cent in regional areas and 13 per cent in rural areas.

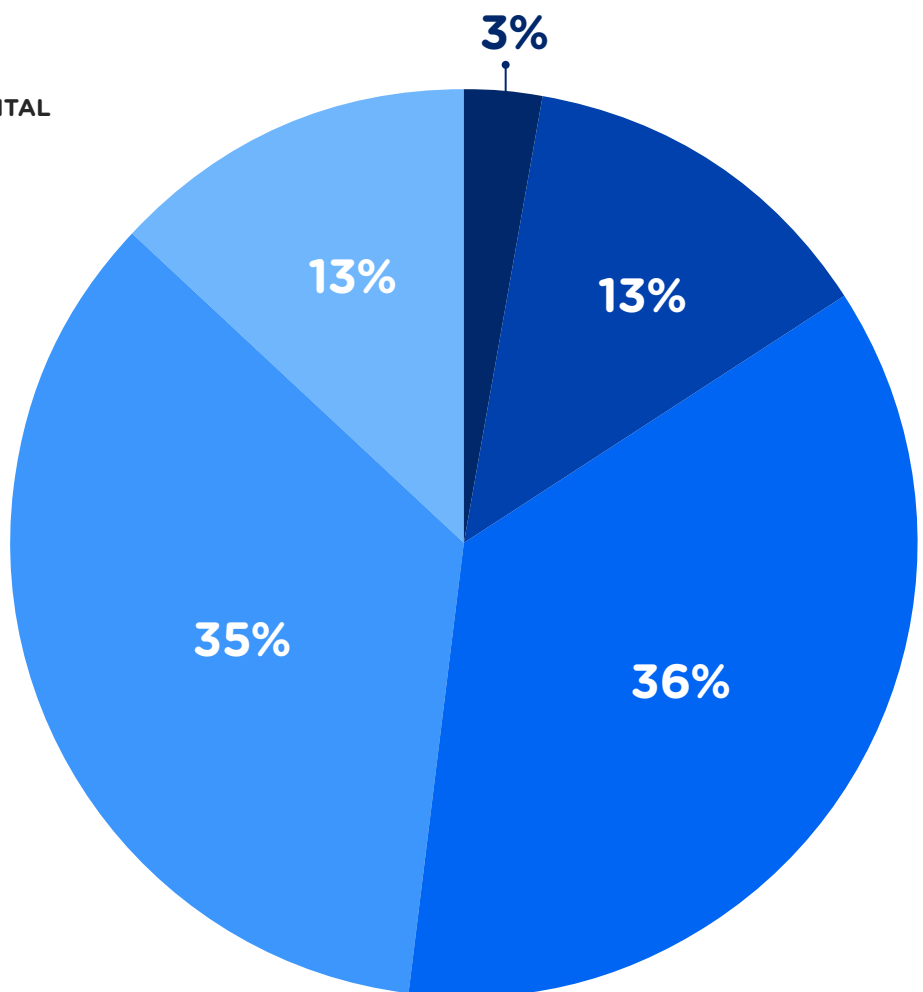


## How would Australians rate their own mental health?

InstantScripts asked respondents how they would rate their mental health out of five – one being 'extremely poor' and five being 'excellent.' The majority of respondents rated their mental health three ('fair') or ('good') at 36 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively. Thirteen (13) per cent of respondents rated their mental health two out of five ('poor') and 3 per cent rated it one ('extremely poor').

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH OUT OF 5?

- 1 - EXTREMELY POOR
- 2 - POOR
- 3 - FAIR
- 4 - GOOD
- 5 - EXCELLENT



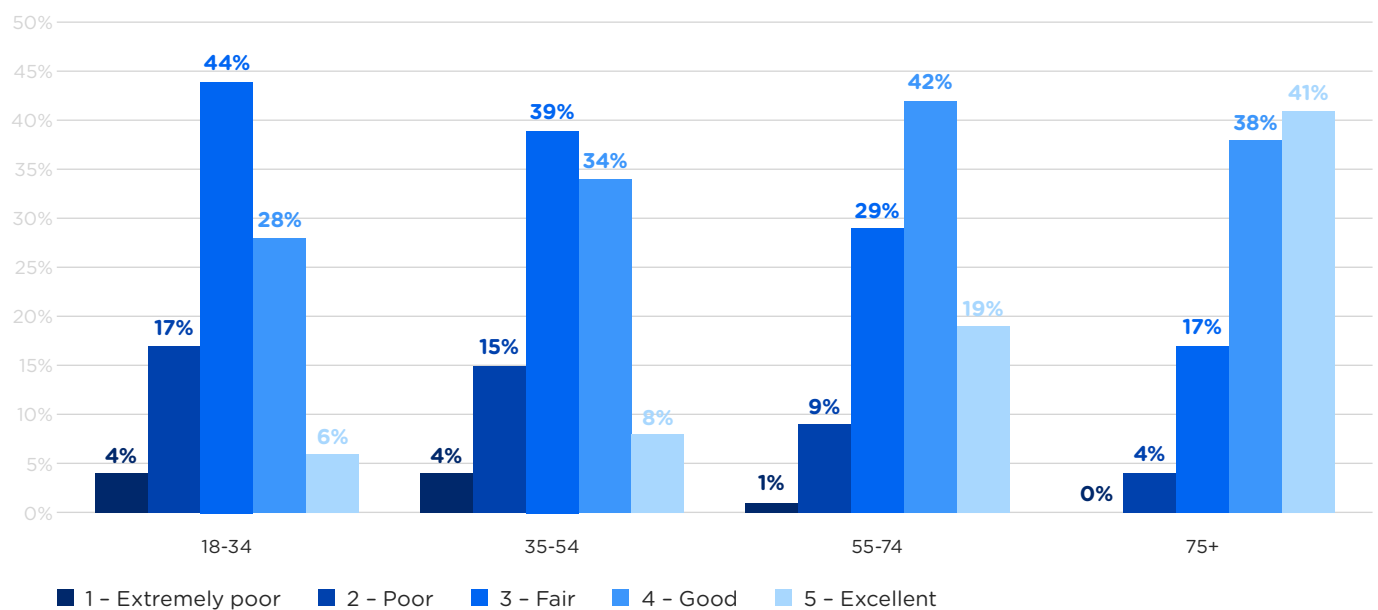
Just 13 per cent rated their mental health five ('excellent').



Younger respondents are more likely to rate their mental health less than favourably. Seventeen (17) per cent of under-35s rated their mental health two out of five ('poor'), compared with 15 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 9 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and just 4 per cent of over-75s.

Nearly half (44 per cent) of under-35s also rated their mental health three out of five ('fair'), compared with 39 per cent of 35-54-year-olds, 29 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and 17 per cent of over-75s.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH OUT OF 5?



# What factors are negatively impacting the mental health of the population?

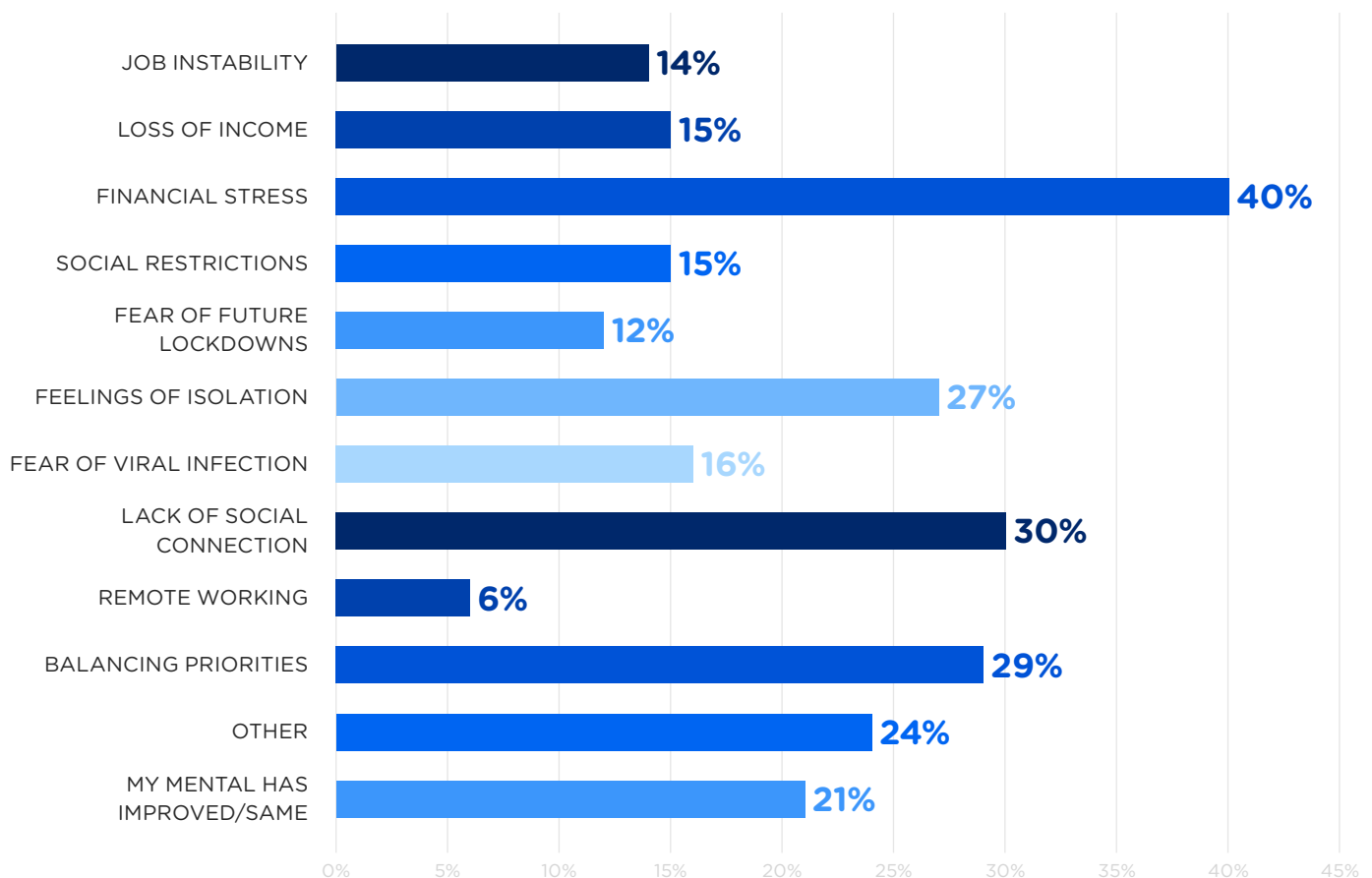
InstantScripts presented respondents with 10 factors and asked them to identify those that had negatively impacted their mental health in the last six months. Respondents could select more than one factor or indicate that another reason not listed in the survey was impacting their mental health. Nearly eight in 10 (79 per cent) respondents selected at least one factor.

Financial stress came out on top as one of the factors having a negative impact on the mental health of the population, chosen by 40 per cent of respondents. Nearly a third (30 per cent) also identified a lack of connection with others as having a negative impact on their mental health.

Other factors that had a negative impact included balancing multiple priorities (chosen by 29 per cent of respondents); feelings of isolation (chosen by 27 per cent); fears of viral infection (chosen by 16 per cent); social restrictions and loss of income (chosen by an equal 15 per cent); job instability (14 per cent); fears of future lockdowns (12 per cent); and remote working (6 per cent).

Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents indicated that there were other factors that had negatively impacted their mental health that weren't listed in the survey, while just 21 per cent revealed their mental health had not been impacted or had improved.

## IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHAT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

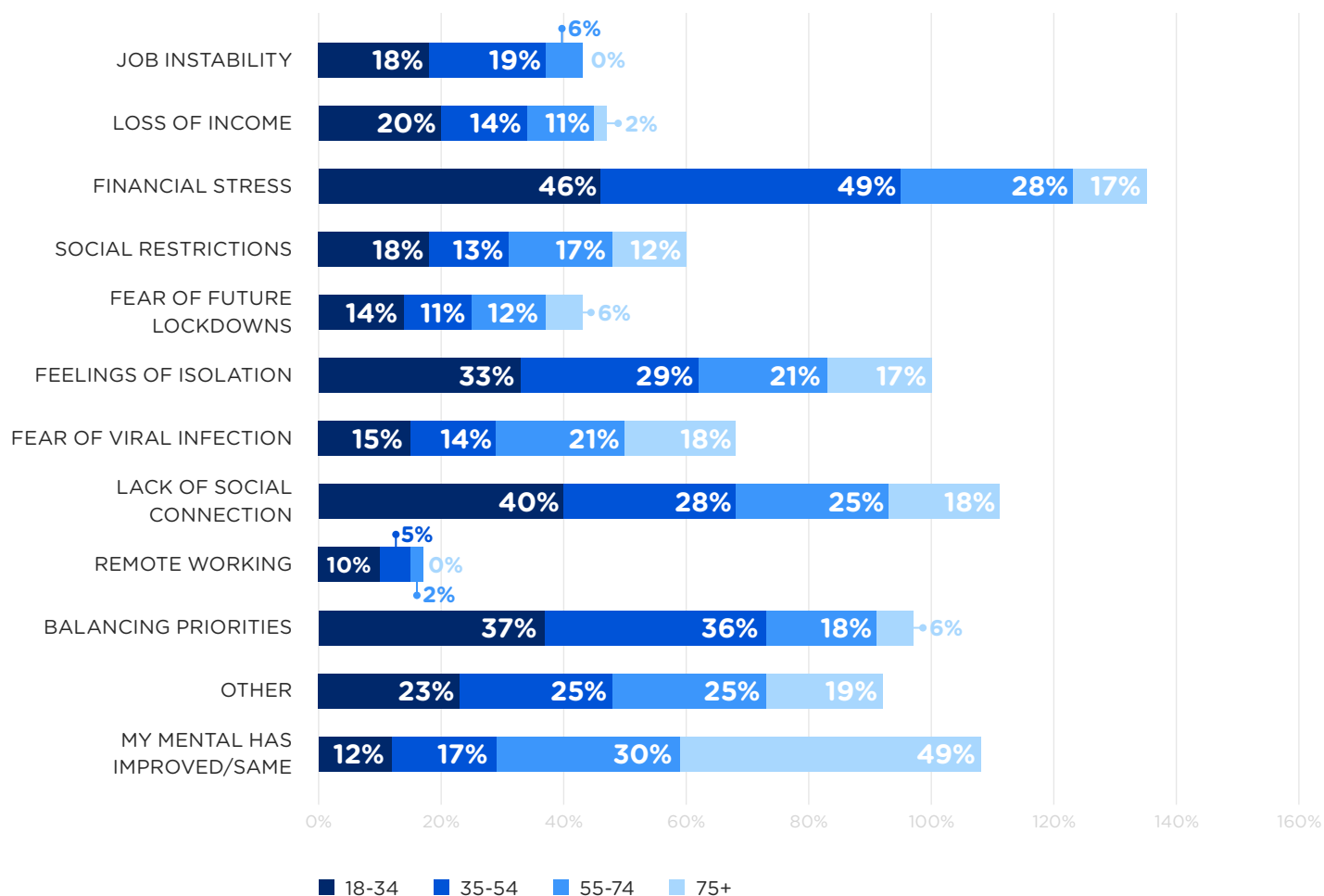






Younger respondents appeared to be more impacted by financial stress than their older counterparts: 48 per cent of under-55s indicated financial stress had negatively impacted their mental health, compared with 28 per cent of 55-74-year-olds and 17 per cent of over-75s.

#### IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHAT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?.



More respondents in South Australia identified financial stress as a factor negatively impacting their mental health, at 58 per cent. This compares with 42 per cent of NSW respondents, 39 per cent in Western Australia, 38 per cent in Queensland and 34 per cent in Victoria.

A larger proportion of South Australian respondents also indicated that a lack of connection with others had impacted their mental health: 42 per cent of respondents in South Australia selected this factor, compared with 31 per cent of those in Western Australia, 29 per cent in NSW and an equal 27 per cent in Queensland and Victoria.

IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHAT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? BY STATE.					
Response	State (%)				
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
Job instability	16	12	14	11	14
Loss of income	15	15	12	12	18
Financial stress	42	34	38	39	58
Social restrictions	17	18	13	15	11
Fear of future lockdowns	16	11	7	11	10
Feelings of isolation	26	29	21	27	35
Fear of viral infection	17	14	18	14	18
Lack of connection with others	29	27	27	31	42
Remote working	9	6	3	3	1
Trying to balance multiple priorities	29	25	26	33	36
Other reasons not listed above	23	26	23	23	19
None of the above – my mental health is the same or has improved	18	23	26	28	10

### IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHAT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? BY REGION.

Response	Region (%)		
	Metro	Regional	Rural
Job instability	15	12	7
Loss of income	15	14	13
Financial stress	40	39	45
Social restrictions	16	16	10
Fear of future lockdowns	13	9	7
Feelings of isolation	29	21	29
Fear of viral infection	17	16	15
Lack of connection with others	32	24	29
Remote working	7	4	2
Trying to balance multiple priorities	30	28	26
Other reasons not listed above	23	27	24
None of the above – my mental health is the same or has improved	19	24	36

A larger proportion of Australians residing in rural areas indicated that financial stress had a negative impact on their mental health, at 45 per cent, compared with 40 per cent of respondents in metro areas and 39 per cent in regional areas.

### IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, WHAT HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? BY GENDER.

Response	Gender (%)	
	Men	Women
Job instability	15	12
Loss of income	14	15
Financial stress	37	43
Social restrictions	17	14
Fear of future lockdowns	13	11
Feelings of isolation	26	28
Fear of viral infection	18	15
Lack of connection with others	25	33
Remote working	8	4
Trying to balance multiple priorities	26	32
Other reasons not listed above	18	30
None of the above – my mental health is the same or has improved	23	20

Women were also more likely be negatively impacted by financial stress than men, at 43 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.



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