

# Mental Health Support Survey

# Mental Health Ireland

Extract from a survey conducted by David McCarthy of  
Behaviour and Attitudes on behalf of Mental Health  
Ireland

January 2023

**B&A**





All aspects of the online survey design were managed by Behaviour & Attitudes internally with the sample drawn from our own Acumen panel using a questionnaire provided by Mental Health Ireland.



B&A's Online Omnibus is strictly quota controlled to reflect the national population and delivers a sample of 1,030 adults aged 16 years plus - controlled by; gender, age, socio-economic status, all within region. Fieldwork on the project took place from the 8<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022.



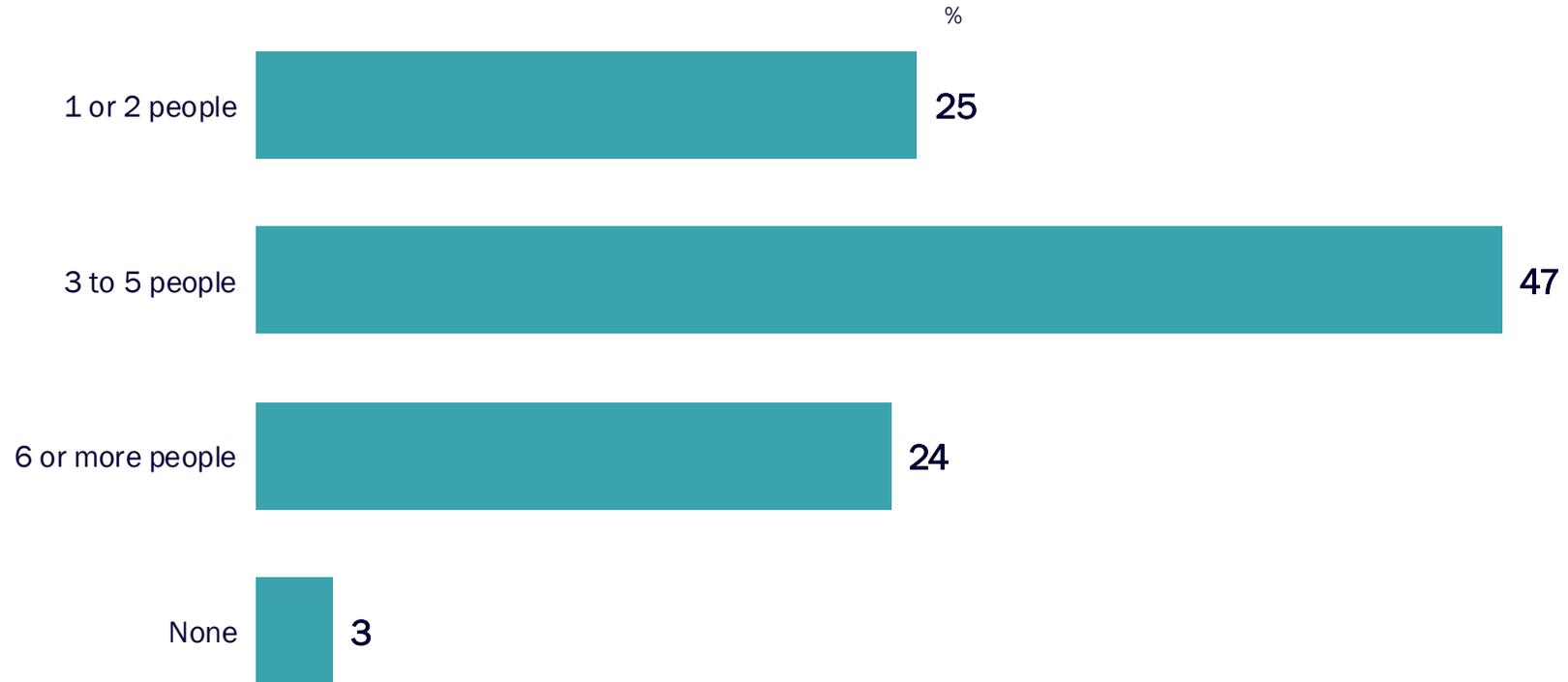
The questionnaire used the Oslo Social Support scale, 2 questions from the Brief Sense of Community Scale, and an adapted version of the General Help Seeking Questionnaire.



Hello, How Are You? is a campaign about connecting with those around us and engaging in conversations about mental health. This survey is designed to inform the campaign and our understanding of social support and help-seeking in the Irish population.

# Having a support network if you have a problem: A quarter of respondents have six or more people they can turn to if they had a serious problem and a half say they have three to five people they can turn to.

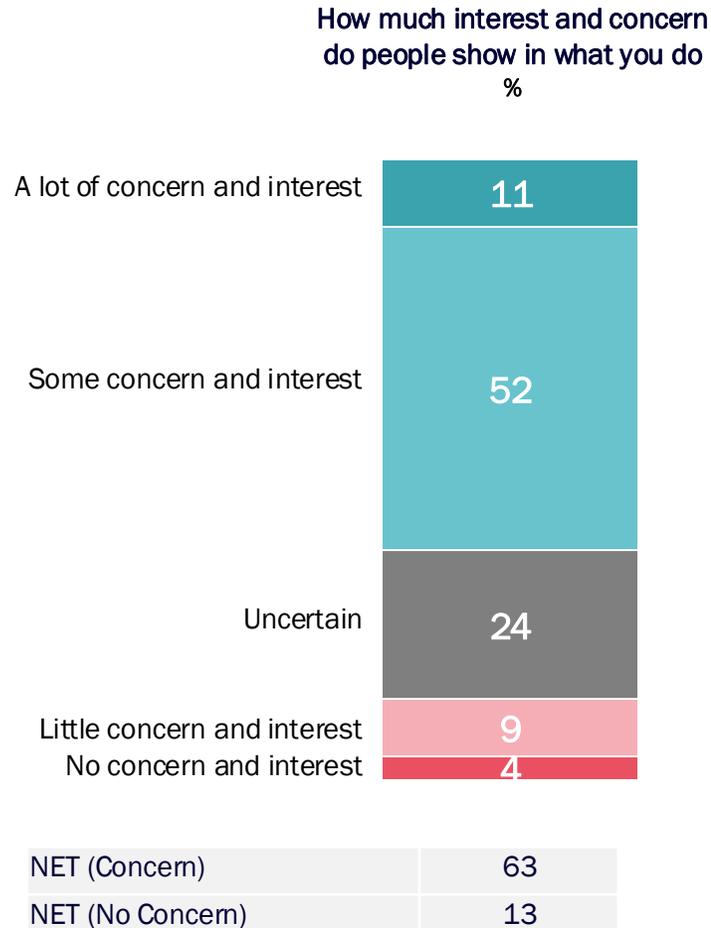
Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030



**A quarter of respondents are reliant on just one or two people and just 3% said they have no one to turn to.**

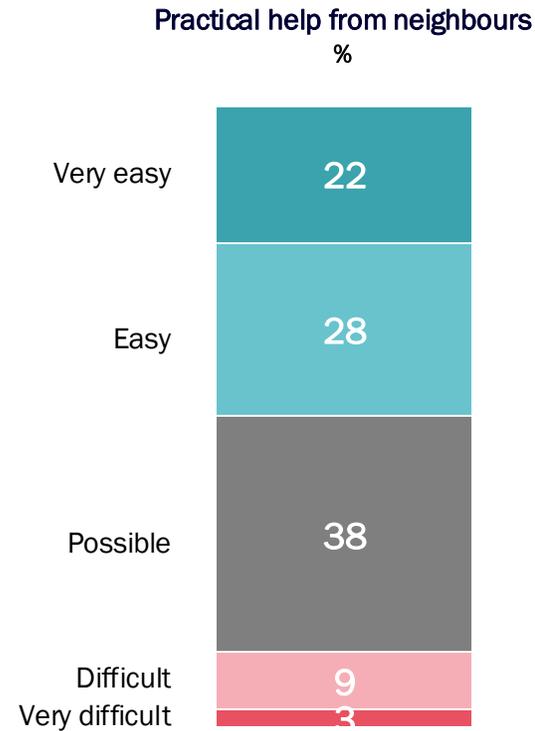
# Interest and concern people show in what you do: Almost two thirds of respondents feel that people have some degree of concern/interest in what they do.

Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030



**Ease of getting help from neighbour: Only one in eight consider it difficult to get practical help from neighbours should they need it. This is perhaps tempered to a degree by a large proportion saying that there is only a possibility.**

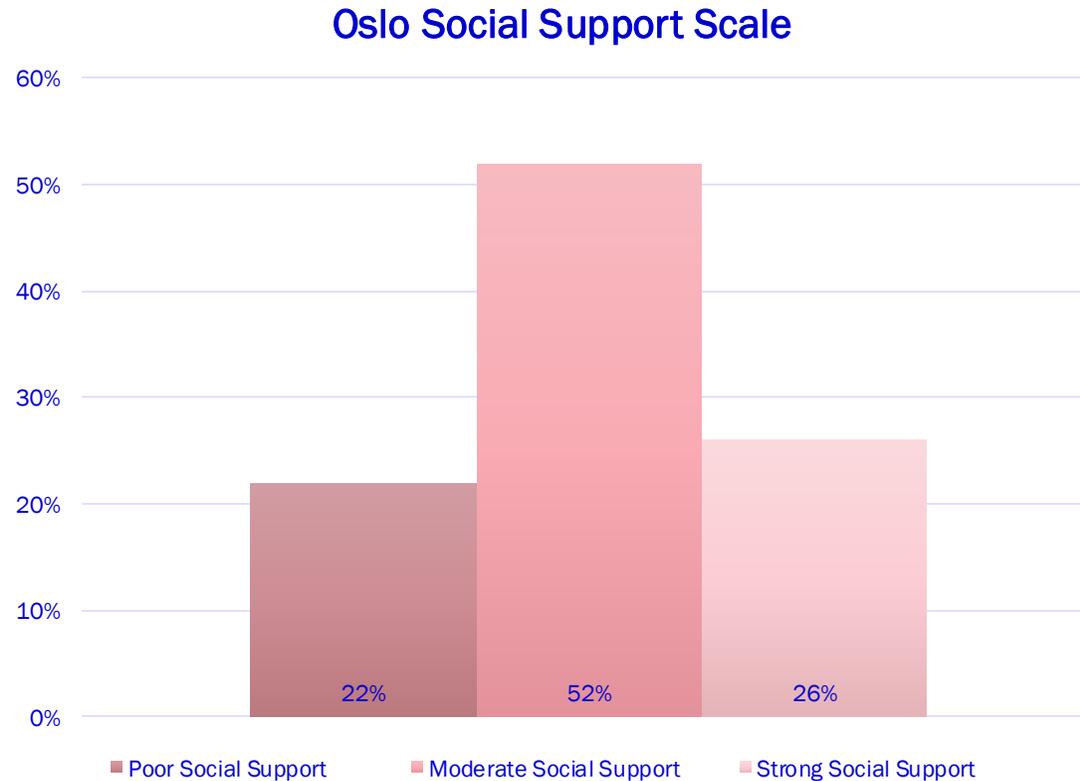
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NET (Easy)	50
NET (Difficult)	12

# These three items sum up into the Oslo Social Support Scale.

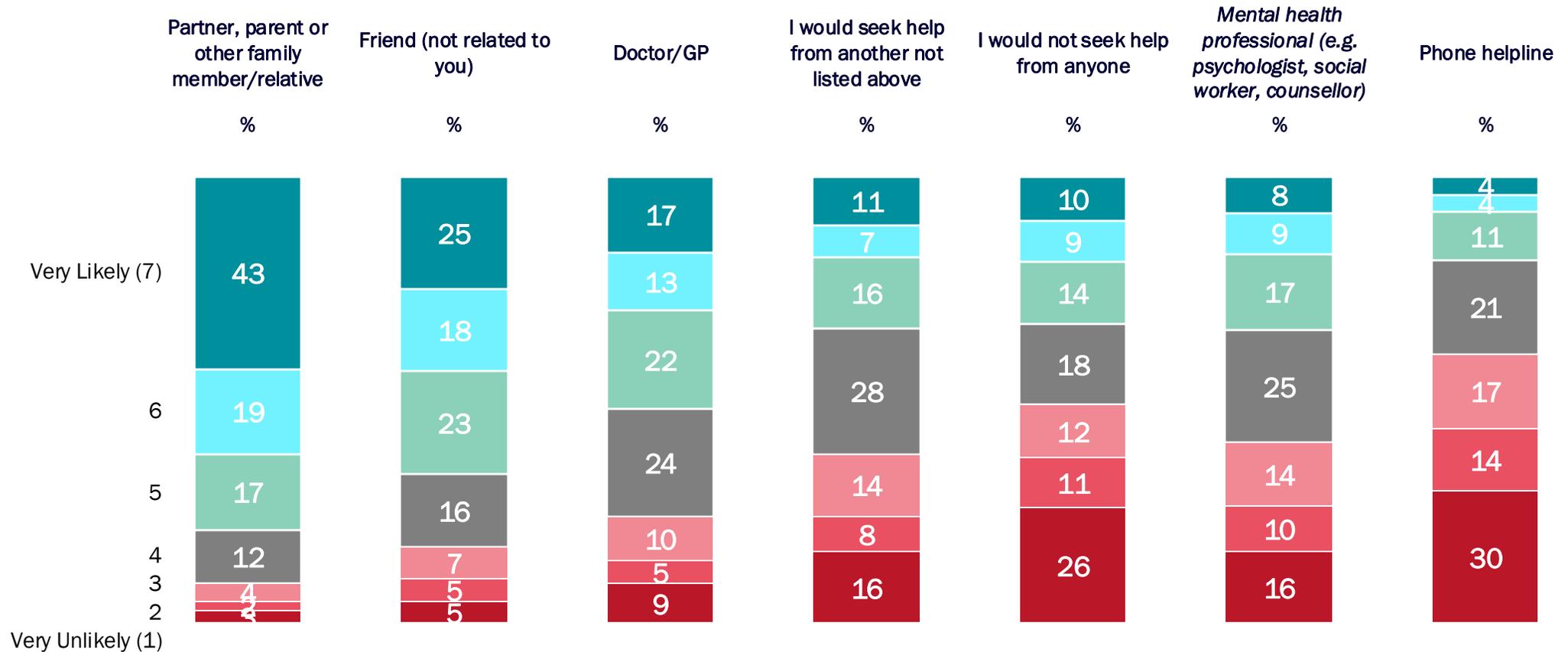
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While 22% had a poor level of social support, 3 in every 4 people had moderate or strong social support

# Likelihood to seek help if you were worried about everyday concerns: Family plays a crucial role when it comes to seeking help, after that friends and Doctor/GP also feature prominently.

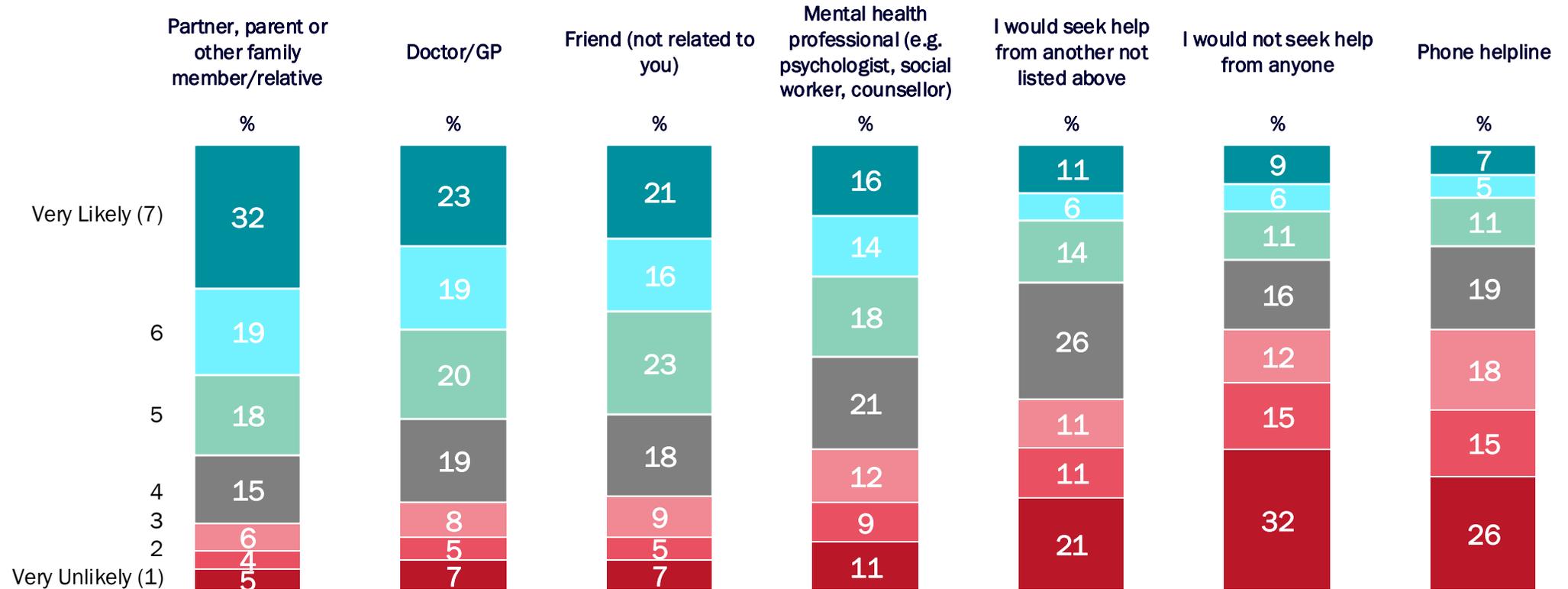
Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030



While it appears that phone helplines play less of a role at a national level they no doubt play a crucial role in a smaller number of serious cases.

# Likelihood to seek support if anxious or depressed: Doctor/GP and Mental health professionals move up the list of channels likely to use when it comes to anxiety/depression relative to everyday concerns.

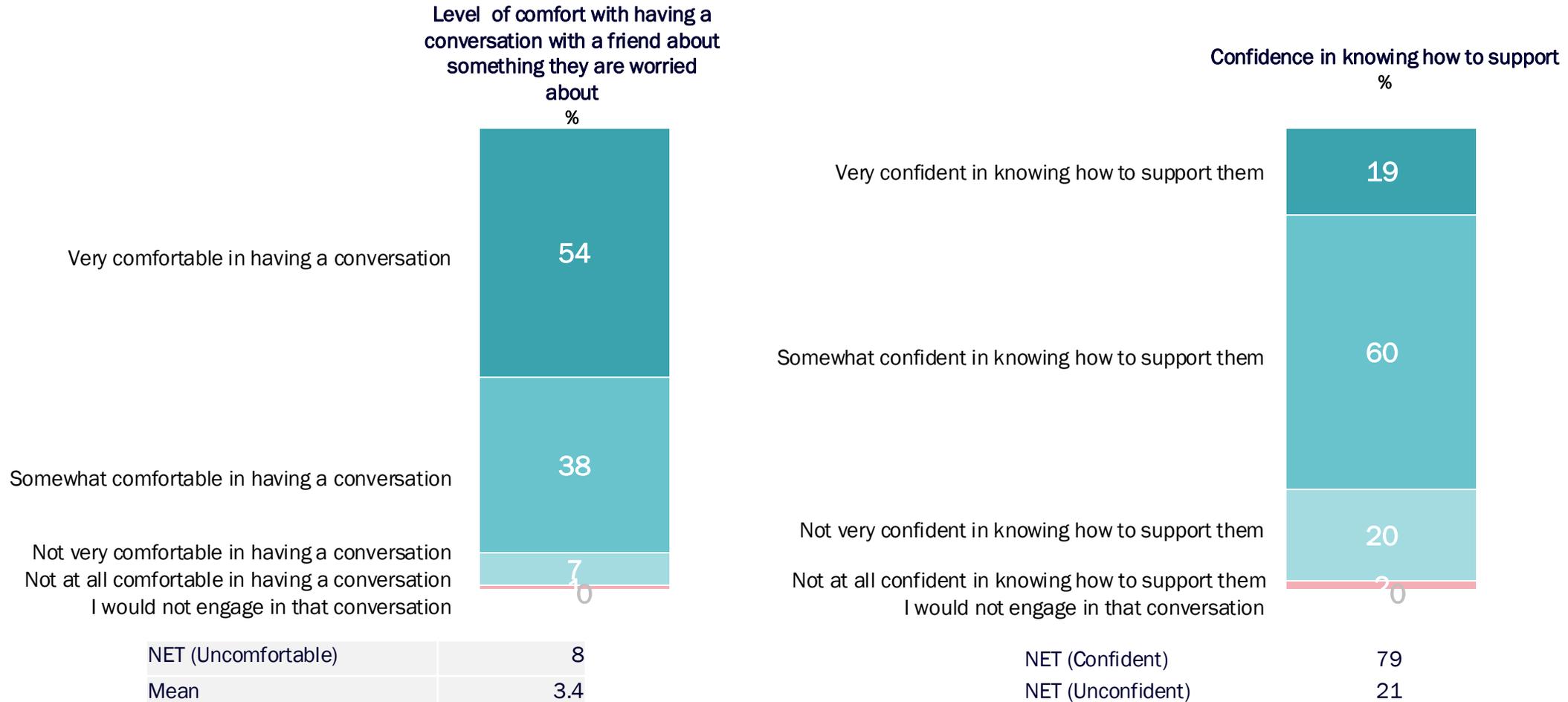
Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030



Family again plays a crucial role when it comes to seeking help for anxiety/depression though not to the same degree as seen for more everyday concerns.

# Comfort and support in helping: Interestingly a large proportion stated that they are very comfortable in having a conversation with a friend about something they are worried about but only one in five feel they would be very confident in knowing how to support them.

Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030

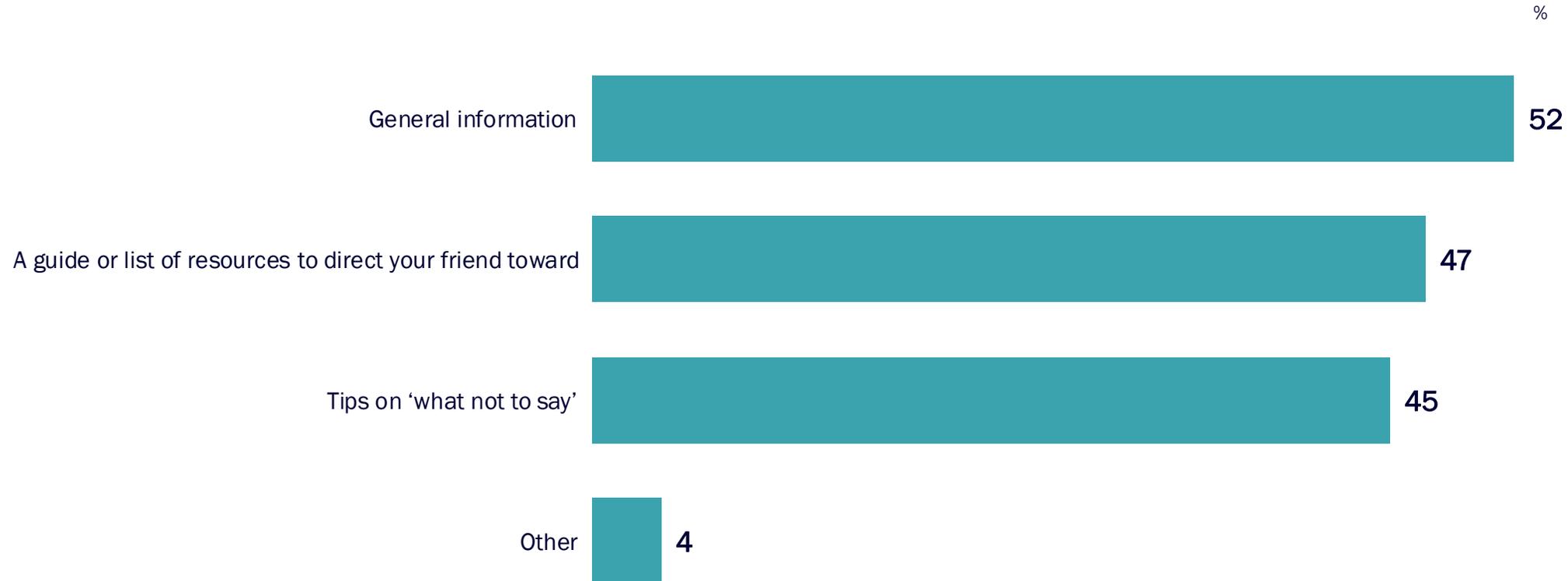


**Intent to help is strong, but there is a sense from these two questions that there is a need for more education/resources in this area.**



# Resources that would help people feels more comfortable/confident in having a conversation with a friend who needed help.

Base: All adults 18+ n – 1,030



There is a very high level of support for the three resources mentioned with general information mentioned marginally more.



# Key Highlights

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## Having a support network if you have a problem

- A quarter of respondents have six or more people they can turn to if they had a serious problem, while half say they have three to five people they can turn to.
- A quarter of respondents are reliant on just one or two people and 3% said they have no one to turn to.
- Overall, a positive finding is that more than three quarters of people have moderate or strong social support.
- However, about one in five people have poor social support.

## Likelihood to seek help if you were worried about everyday concerns/ if anxious or depressed

- Family plays a crucial role when it comes to seeking help about everyday concerns, after that friends and Doctor/GP also feature prominently.
- When asked specifically about seeking help in relation to anxiety and depression Family and friends are again key but Doctor/GP and Mental help professionals move up the list of channels likely to use compared to everyday concerns. Those with just one or two people they can rely on are significantly less likely to seek help from professionals.

## Comfort and confidence in conversations

- Interestingly, over half of the population stated that they are very comfortable in having a conversation with a friend about something they are worried about.
- BUT, only one in five feel they would be very confident in knowing how to support them. Males are significantly less confident in this area.



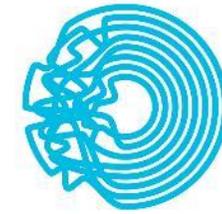
The conversation card developed for the Hello How Are You Campaign, provides practical tips so that people are more confident in knowing how to support family and friends.

# Thank You

Many thanks to Behaviours and Attitudes and  
to the 1030 participants who took part in the survey.

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