

OCTOBER 2024



RESIDENT MENTAL HEALTH STUDY



ABOUT TAMPA BAY THRIVES

Tampa Bay Thrives is a nonprofit and Mental Health America affiliate formed in 2019. We are a diverse, cross-sector coalition connected to mental health with deep commitment and support from local organizations and community leaders. At Tampa Bay Thrives, we envision an emotionally healthy community where mental health is a priority and all thrive together. To learn more, visit www.tampabaythrives.org.

MISSION

To mobilize the community to strengthen behavioral health outcomes for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder, with a focus on improving early intervention, access, and awareness.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In June and July of 2024, Tampa Bay Thrives and Downs & St. Germain came together to conduct their third annual study on the community's perceptions, practices, and experiences related to mental health. The online survey was distributed throughout Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota counties, yielding 955 responses. Results are weighted by gender, age, and race to be representative of the population. Year-over-year differences may partially be due to the change in the survey population since the 2023 survey did not include Manatee and Sarasota counties.

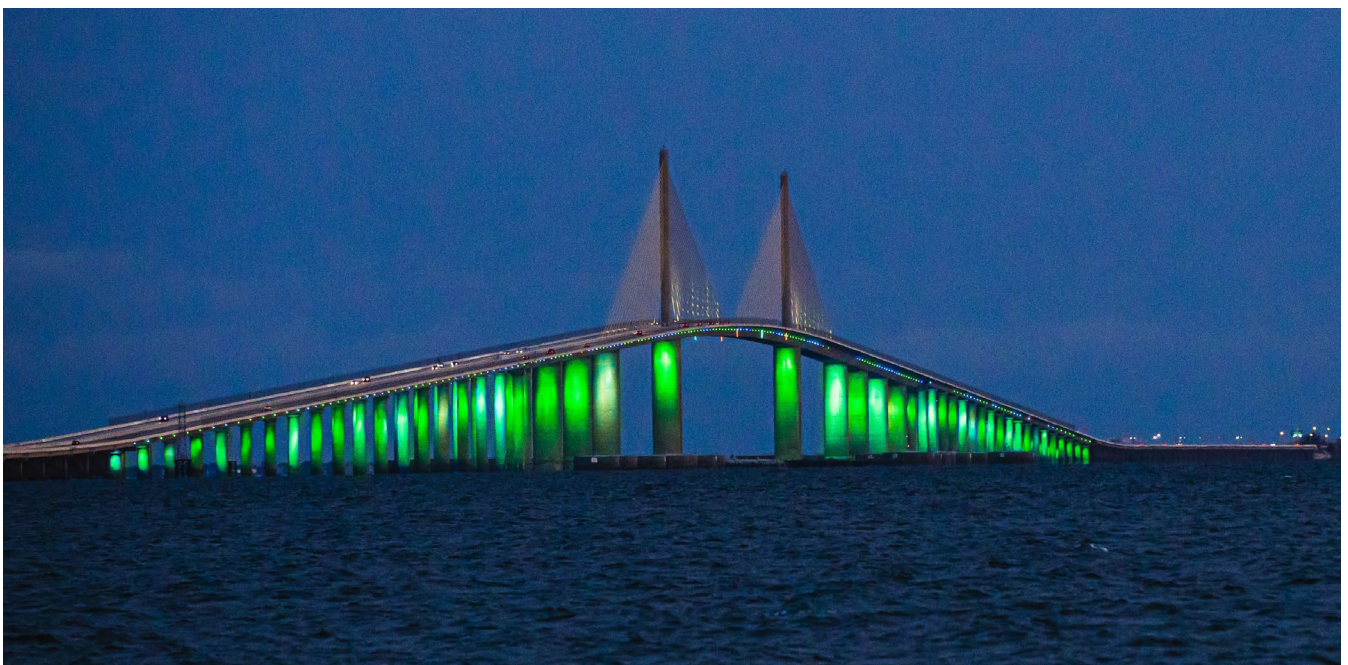
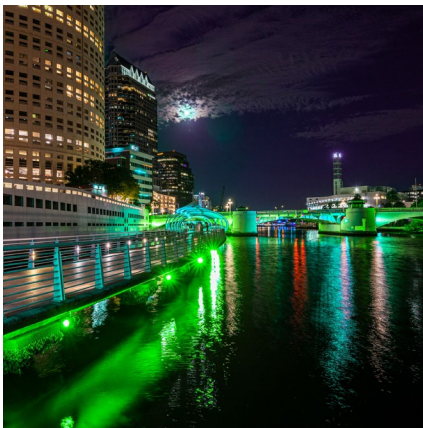


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FEELINGS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

Residents were asked about their feelings regarding their own mental health and their assumptions of how others felt about mental health. Responses indicate residents are more likely to have positive feelings about mental health. However, they feel that others do not.

Due to social desirability bias, the respondents' true feelings may align more closely with these perceived negative attitudes, underscoring a **broader stigma** within the community.



SPOTLIGHT

Personal and perceived attitudes of others towards mental health remain significantly different in 2024. There is a widening gap in personal and perceived willingness to accept someone who has received mental health treatment as a close friend (a 6% gap increase compared to 2023).

Percent Agreement (Strongly Agree + Agree)	How I feel	How other people feel	Difference
I/Most people would willingly accept someone who has received mental health treatment as a close friend.	82%	54%	28%
I/Most people feel that receiving mental health treatment is a sign of a personal failure.	9%	37%	28%
I/Most people think less of a person who has received mental health treatment.	7%	40%	33%

SIDE EFFECTS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

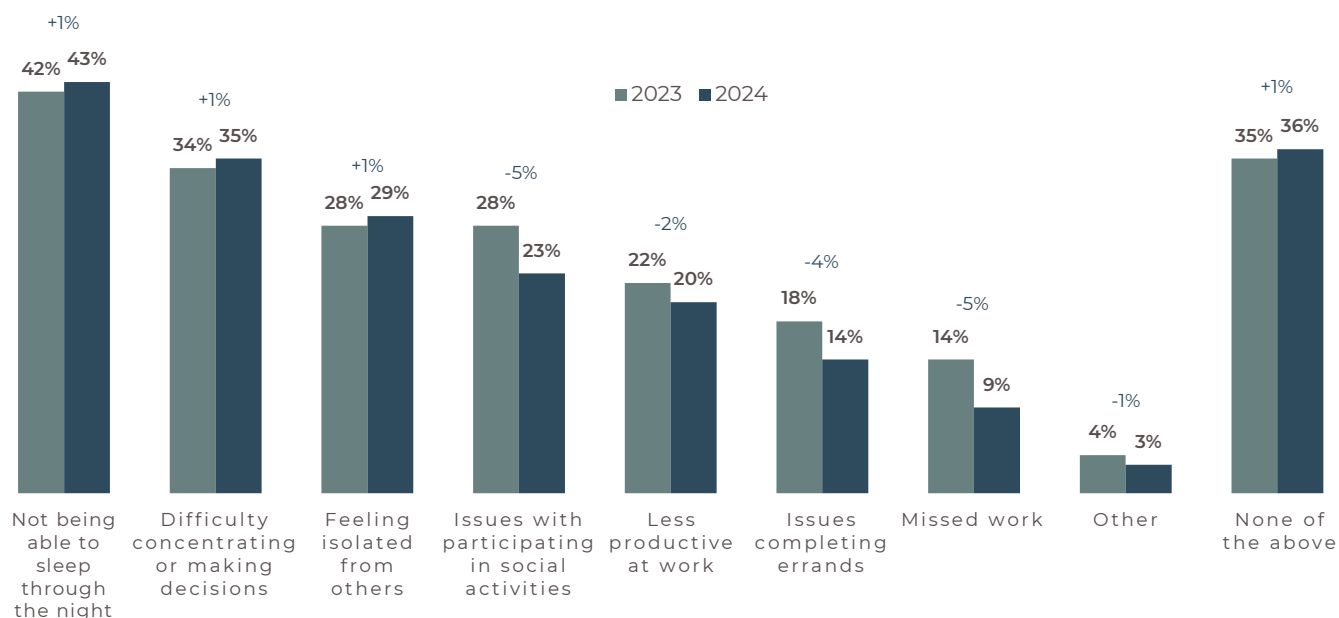
Mental health challenges can lead to several comorbidities or side effects, often compounding, and may impede recovery efforts if not addressed. The figure below illustrates this year's and last year's responses to the question, "In the last 30 days, have you experienced any of the following because of a mental or emotional health condition?" The most common response all three years was **not being able to sleep through the night**.



7 in 10 Tampa Bay residents experienced at least 1 poor mental health day during the past month. This year, over 50% of residents experienced 3 or more poor mental health days in that same period.

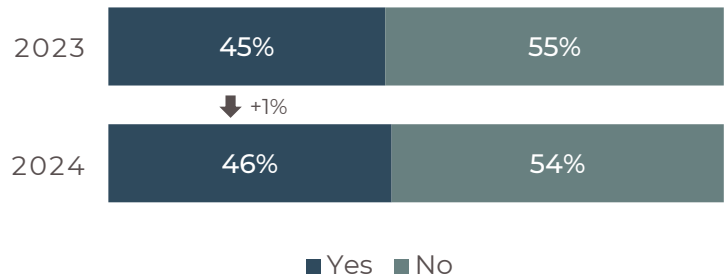


Compared to 2023, there is a decrease in the number of residents who missed work due to poor mental health (-5%). The median decreased to 3 days with 65% reporting missing less than 5 days.

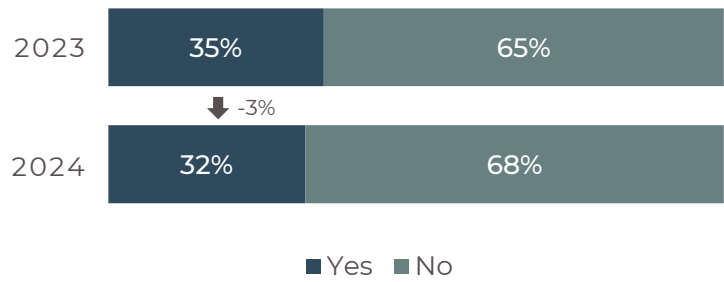


PAST & PRESENT MENTAL HEALTH

When asked if a person has, in the last 12 months, needed help for emotional or mental health problems or challenges such as feeling sad, low, anxious, or nervous, **46%** responded “yes”, this is a 1% increase from last year.



When asked about their current mental health state, **32%** of respondents indicated they currently need help to address their mental health needs. This is a 3% decrease from last year.



SPOTLIGHT

There is a 5% decrease in residents who are currently receiving professional mental health treatments compared to 2023. In 2024, 14% of respondents are currently receiving care.



RESOURCES FOR FINDING HELP

When seeking mental health support, **family members, non-roommate friends,** and **significant others** remain the top 3 sources. There is a shift away from external sources towards support from those in the immediate social circle. This signals an **increased willingness to talk about mental health within their social circle.**



SPOTLIGHT

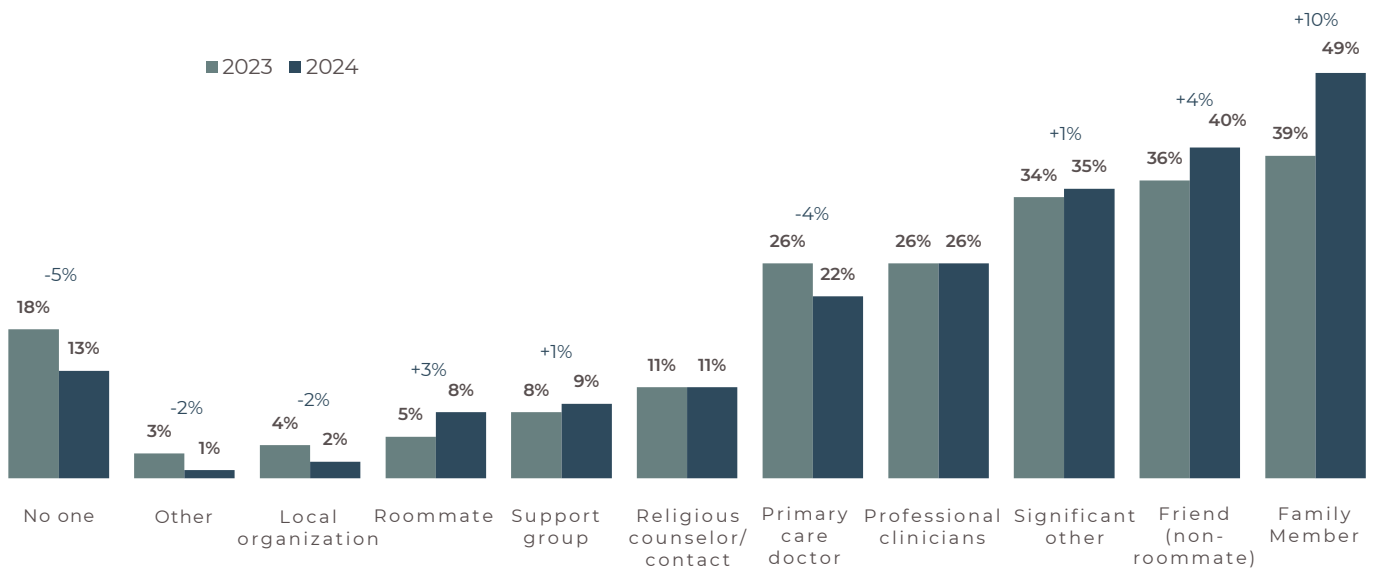
Residents increasingly prefer **in-person visits (+6%)** and **video conferences (+4%)** over other methods of receiving therapy, including by phone or text.



SPOTLIGHT

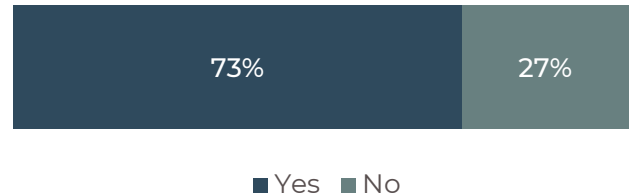
33% of residents rely on **recommendations from friends and family** when finding their mental health professional, a 10% increase from last year. The trend is shifting away from seeking information elsewhere, such as recommendations from doctors (-8%) or local organizations (-8%).

When looking for support or help for mental health, with which of the following sources do you consult?

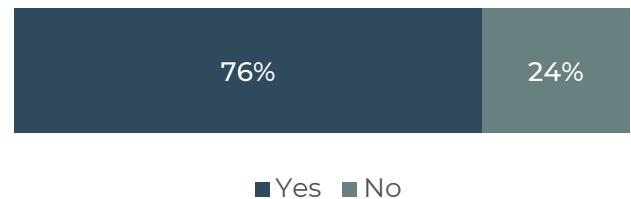


CONNECTION & LONELINESS

In a new question added in 2024, respondents were asked if they had plenty of people they could rely on when dealing with problems. **7 out of 10** people reported **having the needed support** when dealing with problems.



Additionally, respondents were asked if they have enough people they feel close to. Nearly **3 out of 4** residents have enough **people they feel close to**.



SPOTLIGHT

29% of respondents report feeling isolated from others because of their mental or emotional condition.



WHY RESIDENTS ARE SEEKING HELP

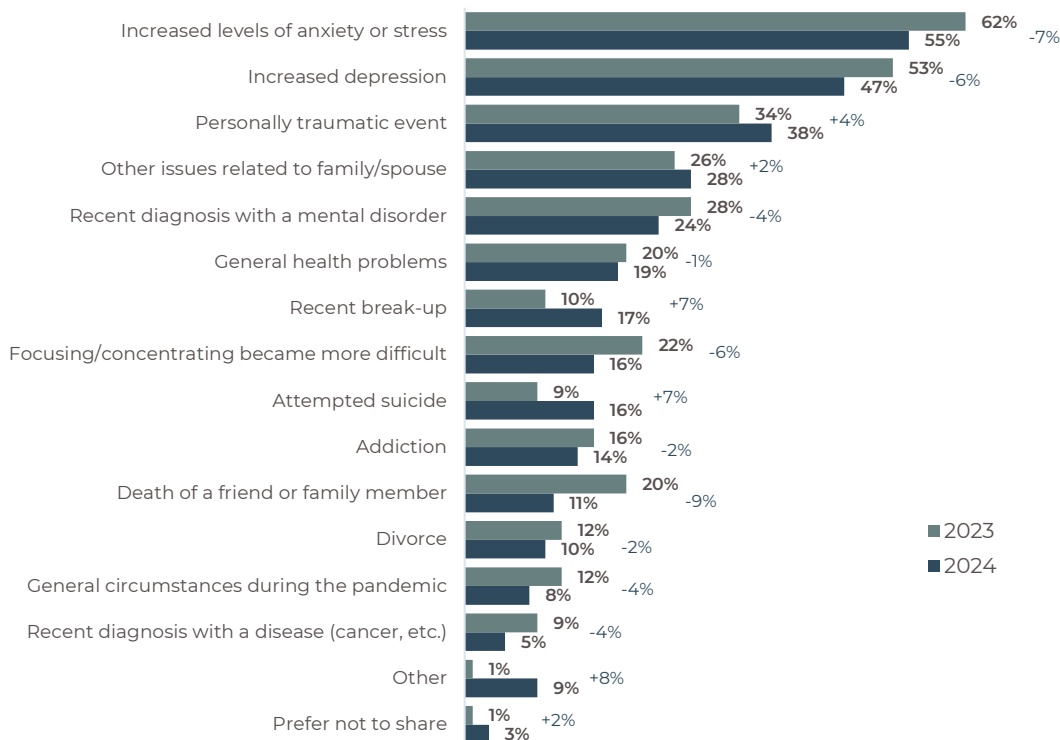

Individuals who indicated that they had received mental health care in the past 12 months were asked if there was something specific that prompted them to seek mental health care. **75%** said “yes.” This is a 5% increase from last year.



SPOTLIGHT

Notably, **16%** of residents sought out care following a **suicide attempt**. This is a 7% increase since last year.

What, specifically, happened that made you decide to seek help from a mental health professional?

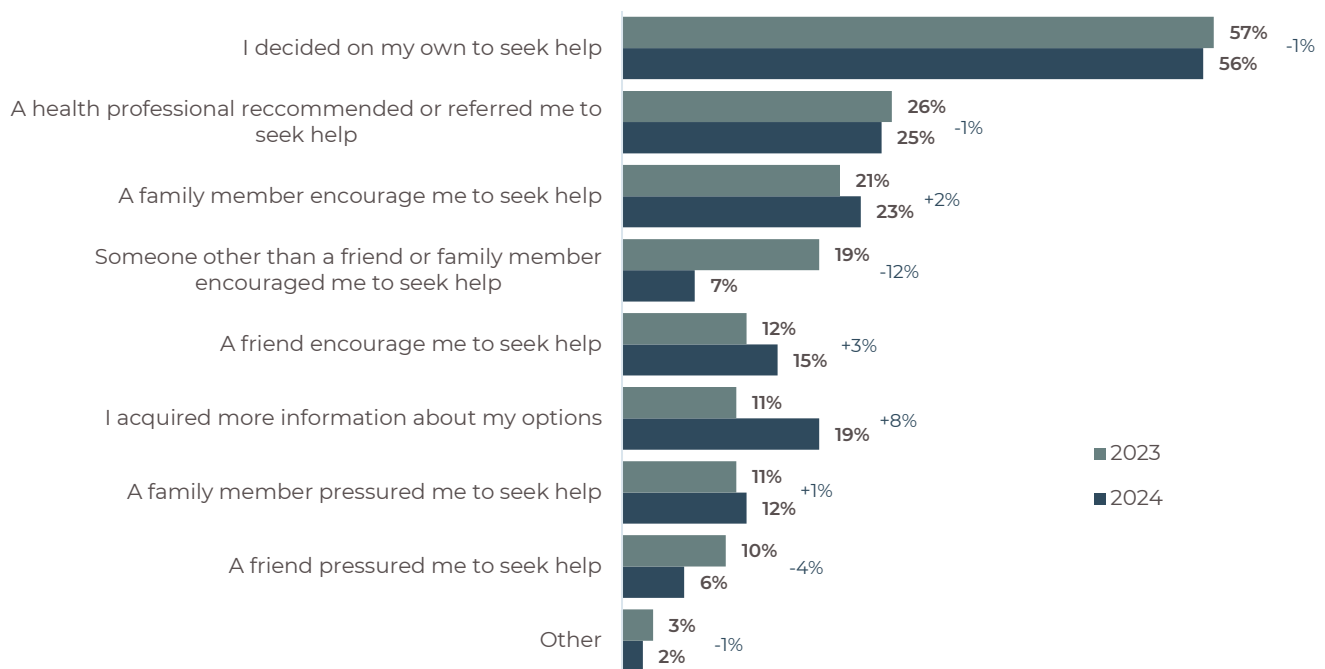
SPOTLIGHT

There were significant **decreases** in residents seeking help due to increased levels of anxiety or stress (-7%), increased depression (-6%), and death of a friend or family member (-9%).

METHODS OF FINDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Compared to 2023, more Tampa Bay residents know where to go if they need help. **74%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if they needed professional help for their mental or emotional health, they **would know where to go**. This is a 3% increase from last year.

There continues to be a decrease in respondents who received mental health care during the past 12 months (21%). These respondents were asked why they decided to seek help for their mental health.



SPOTLIGHT

Fewer residents rely on the encouragement from someone other than a friend or family member to seek professional mental health care, down 12% from last year. More residents were influenced to seek care by acquiring additional information about their options, up 8% from last year.

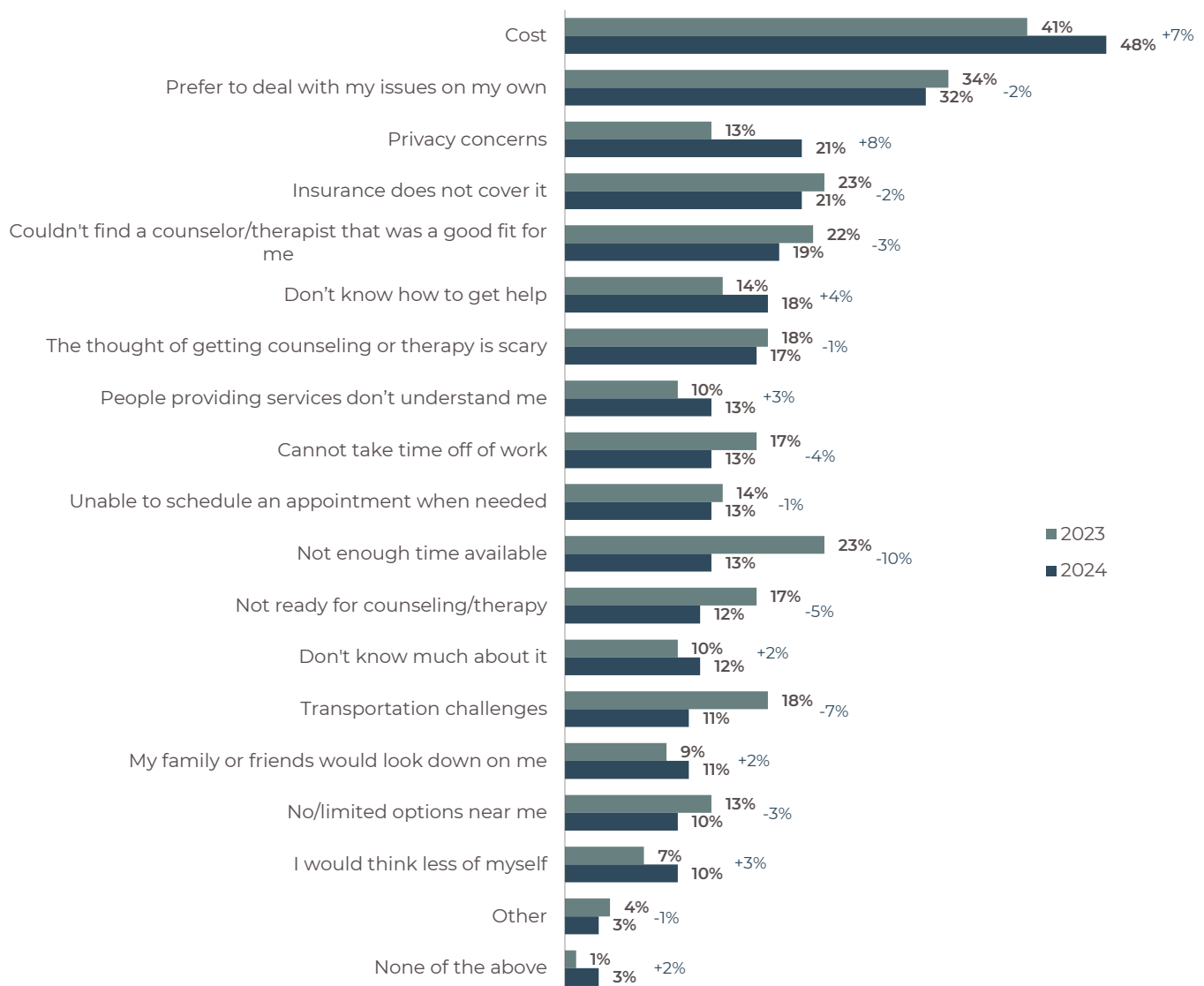
BARRIERS TO RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Access to mental health care is a challenge for many Tampa Bay residents. In the last 12 months, **1 in 4 did not get the care they needed.**

Despite 86% of respondents indicating that they currently had health insurance, **cost** is increasingly considered the number one barrier (+7%) among those who didn't get the care they needed. There is also a growing **privacy concern** (+8%) within this segment.



In 2024, around 50% of respondents were unsure if their insurance covered mental health care.



SATISFACTION WITH MENTAL HEALTH CARE

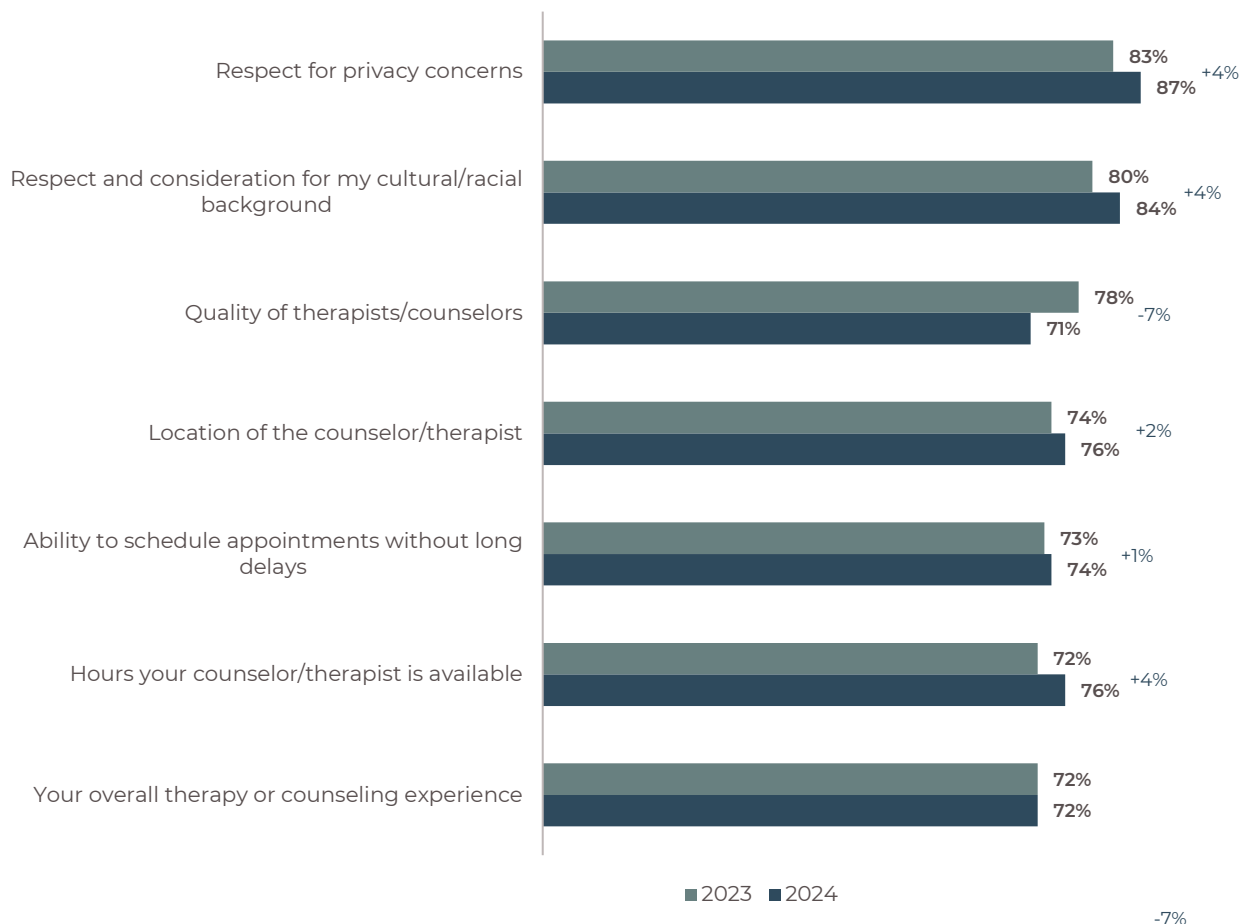
Residents who have received mental health care in the past 12 months were asked about their level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of their experience. The graph below reflects the percentage of residents who were satisfied or very satisfied.

Despite privacy concerns, finding a provider who was the right fit, and finding a provider who understands them being among the top 10 barriers to accessing care, those who are in care report the highest levels of satisfaction with these aspects.



SPOTLIGHT

The top two changes residents would like to see to mental health care continue to be **affordability and availability for everyone (27%)** and **ready and easy access to high quality resources and services (25%)**.



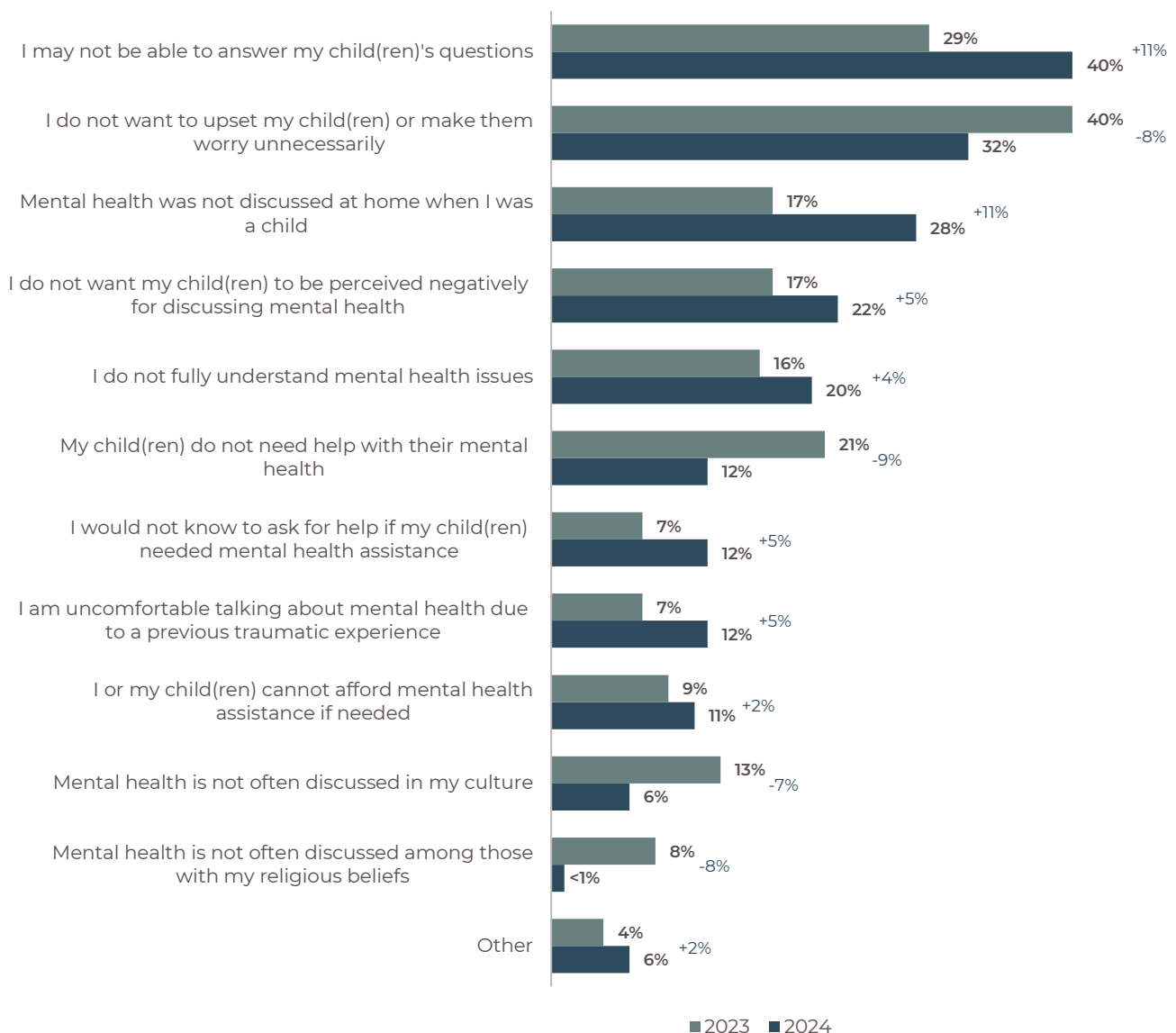
DISCUSSING MENTAL HEALTH WITH CHILDREN

Respondents who answered that they were either not comfortable or only somewhat comfortable discussing mental health with their children were asked why they avoid discussing mental health with their children.



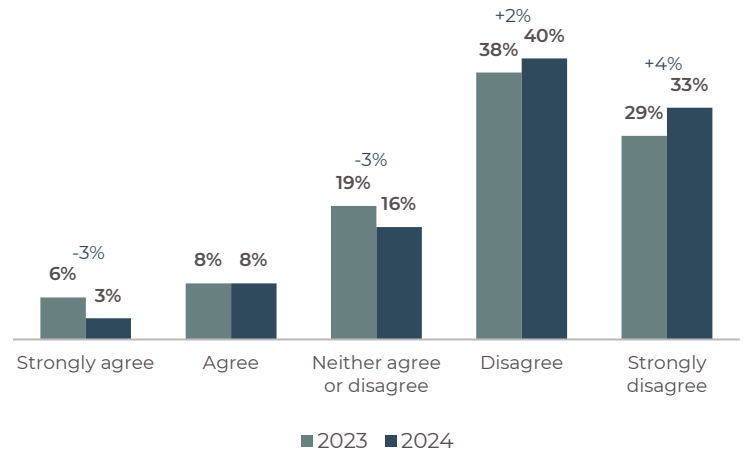
SPOTLIGHT

Mirroring last year's results, **1 out of 3** Tampa Bay residents are uncomfortable discussing mental health with their children.

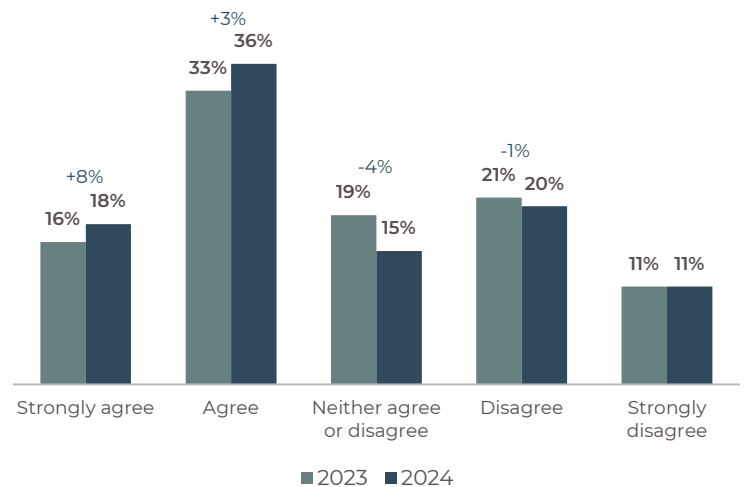


FEELINGS AROUND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the statement, “I would think less of a person who has received treatment for opioid or substance abuse.” As shown, personal acceptance of people receiving treatment for opioid substance abuse is high.



When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “If I or a family member needed professional help for opioid or substance abuse, I would know where to go,” nearly half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed.



SPOTLIGHT

Personal acceptance of people receiving treatment for opioid or substance abuse remains high and has seen an additional positive shift. In 2024, there was a slight shift towards **more awareness of treatments for opioid or substance abuse.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 9% of respondents (-5% from 2023) reported missing work within the past month due to a mental or emotional condition, and the typical employee missed 3 days during this time. This corresponds to **a loss of 735,761 workdays per month or 8.8 million workdays per year** in the Tampa Bay area.
- 2 21% of respondents received professional mental health treatment within the past 12 months. This is a 2% decrease in those who had received professional treatment from 2023.
- 3 There is a decrease in people consulting primary care doctors or local organizations for their mental health care needs. Instead, they are more likely to turn to their family members, friends (non-roommate), and significant others. Consistent with the 2023 trend, **Tampa Bay area residents feel more comfortable discussing these issues with people in their immediate social circle.**
- 4 Fewer people were receiving professional mental health treatment likely due to Tampa Bay area residents increasingly seeking support in their immediate social circle.
- 5 Fewer residents definitely know whether their insurance covers mental health care (+4%). This is possibly due to **many new people moving to the area or getting new jobs and having to learn how to navigate insurance in a new area.**
- 6 In 2024, more residents feel ready and have time available for counseling/therapy.
- 7 The main reason residents avoid discussing mental health with their children is because they cannot adequately answer their child(ren)'s questions (+11%), and thus, may **require additional resources and information to assist them.**
- 8 The cost of care remains the primary barrier to accessing necessary mental health services. Residents continue to prioritize improvements in availability and affordability to enhance mental health care in their area, followed by better accessibility and increased awareness.
- 9 The **lowest-rated** aspects of the mental health care experience in the Tampa Bay area were **the quality of therapists/counselors** and the location of **therapists/counselors.**



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