

RESIDENT MENTAL HEALTH STUDY



TAMPA BAY THRIVES 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 November and December of 2025, Tampa Bay Thrives and Downs & St. Germain came together to conduct their fourth annual study on the community's perceptions, practices, and experiences related to mental health. The online survey was distributed throughout Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, and Polk counties, yielding 705 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 2024 survey included surveys with residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 8% of respondents (-1% from 2024) reported missing work within the past month due to a mental or emotional condition, and the typical employee missed 2 days during this time. This corresponds to a loss of 545,850 workdays per month, or 6.6 million workdays per year in the Tampa Bay area.



4 However, deciding to seek mental health support is mostly individual and self-initiated (61%), with growing influence from family members (24%), healthcare professionals (18%), and friends (16%).

5 When selecting method of mental health care, video-conferences have increased, reaching in-person consultations levels as the most utilized methods.

6 To find resources and professionals, most residents relied on online searches (40%), followed by recommendations from primary care doctors (26%) and family or friends (25%).



8 Perceptions of others' and own's attitudes towards mental health assistance have been improving towards more overall acceptance. This also includes awareness and acceptance of treatments for opioids and substance abuse.

2 There has been a 9% decrease in residents needing help with mental health problems in the past 12 months and a 5% decrease in residents reporting currently needing help. Similarly, there has been a 2% decrease in residents currently receiving mental health assistance, as well as a 2% decrease in the past 12 months.

3 Residents are increasingly more likely to turn to their friends (non-roommate), significant others, and family members when seeking mental health support. Consistent with the 2024 trend, Tampa Bay area residents feel more comfortable discussing these issues with people in their immediate social circle before relying on primary care and other professional clinicians.



7 Despite a decrease (-2%) in residents not getting care when they need it, the top barriers to seeking care are cost (59%) and lack of insurance coverage (29%).

9 Despite improving perceptions, about 1 in 3 residents still experience some discomfort in talking about mental health with their children. The top 3 reasons include not being able to answer their questions, not wanting to worry the kids, and not having had these discussions themselves when growing up.



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.

This gap between personal beliefs and perceived attitudes of others suggests that stigma surrounding mental health remains prevalent, as residents may privately support mental health treatment while still believing their community holds more negative views toward it.

SPOTLIGHT

Personal and perceived attitudes of others towards mental health remain significantly different in 2025. There is a **widening gap in personal and perceived willingness to accept someone who has received mental health treatment as a close friend** (a 3% gap increase compared to 2024).

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.	83%	52%	31%
I/Most people feel that receiving mental health treatment is a sign of a personal failure.	6%	29%	23%
I/Most people think less of a person who has received mental health treatment.	7%	32%	25%

SIDE EFFECTS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

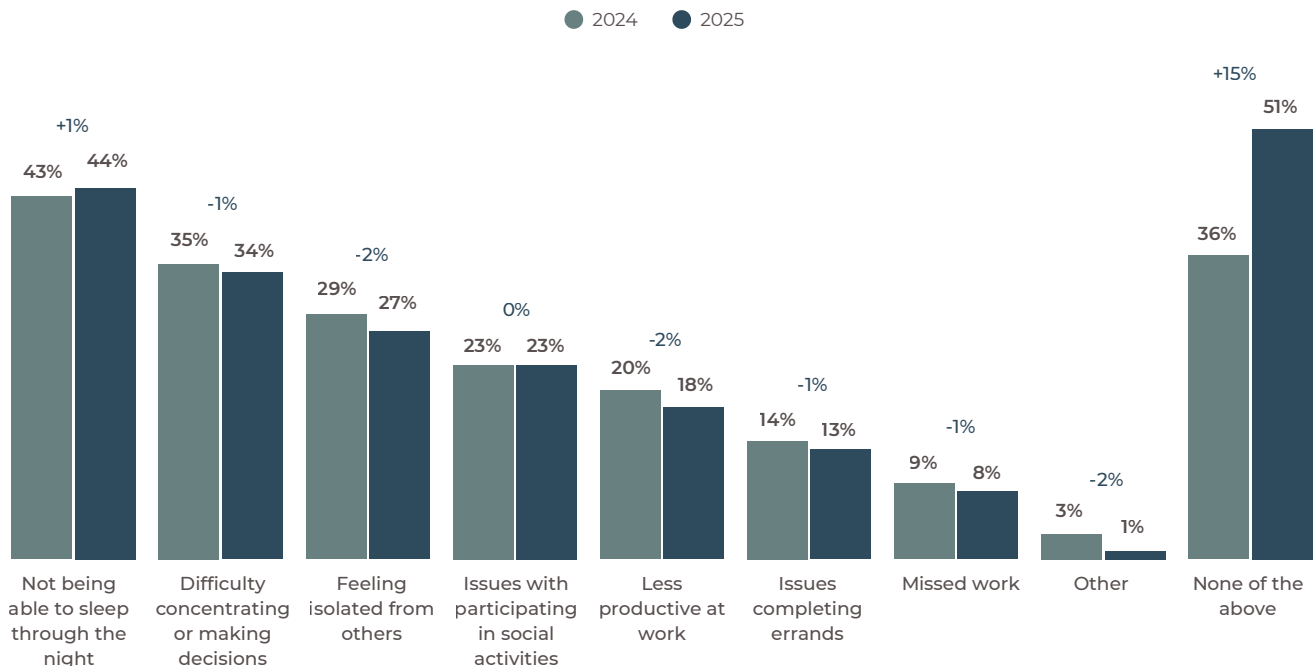
Mental health challenges can lead to a number of comorbidities or side effects, which can often compound and may impede recovery efforts if not addressed. The figure below illustrates this year's and last year's responses to the question "In the last 30 days, have you experienced any of the following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

SPOTLIGHT

Nearly 7 in 10 Tampa Bay residents experienced at least 1 **poor mental health day** during the past month. This year, 48% of residents experienced 3 or more poor mental health days in that same period.

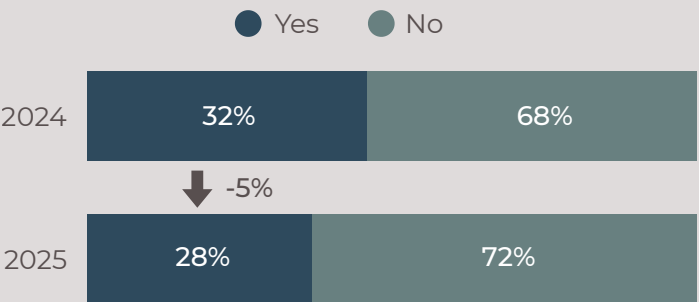
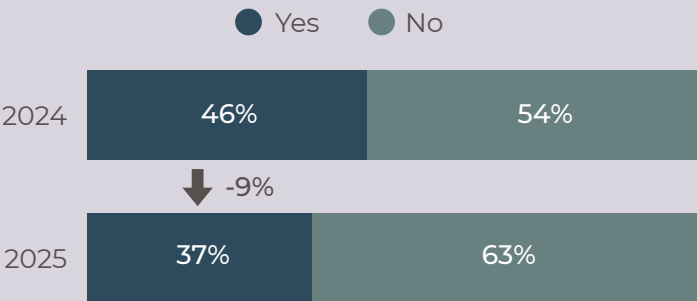
SPOTLIGHT

Compared to 2024, there is a decrease in the number of residents who missed work due to poor mental health (-1%). The **median** remained at 3 days, with 70% 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, 37% responded “yes”; this is a 9% decrease from last year.



When asked about their current mental health state, 28% of respondents indicated they currently need help to address their mental health needs. This is a 5% decrease from last year.

 SPOTLIGHT

There is a 2% decrease in residents who are currently receiving professional mental health treatments compared to 2024. In 2025, 12% 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. Support from those in their immediate social circle is followed by direct health care providers. This suggests a growing willingness to discuss mental health concerns within residents' close social networks.



SPOTLIGHT

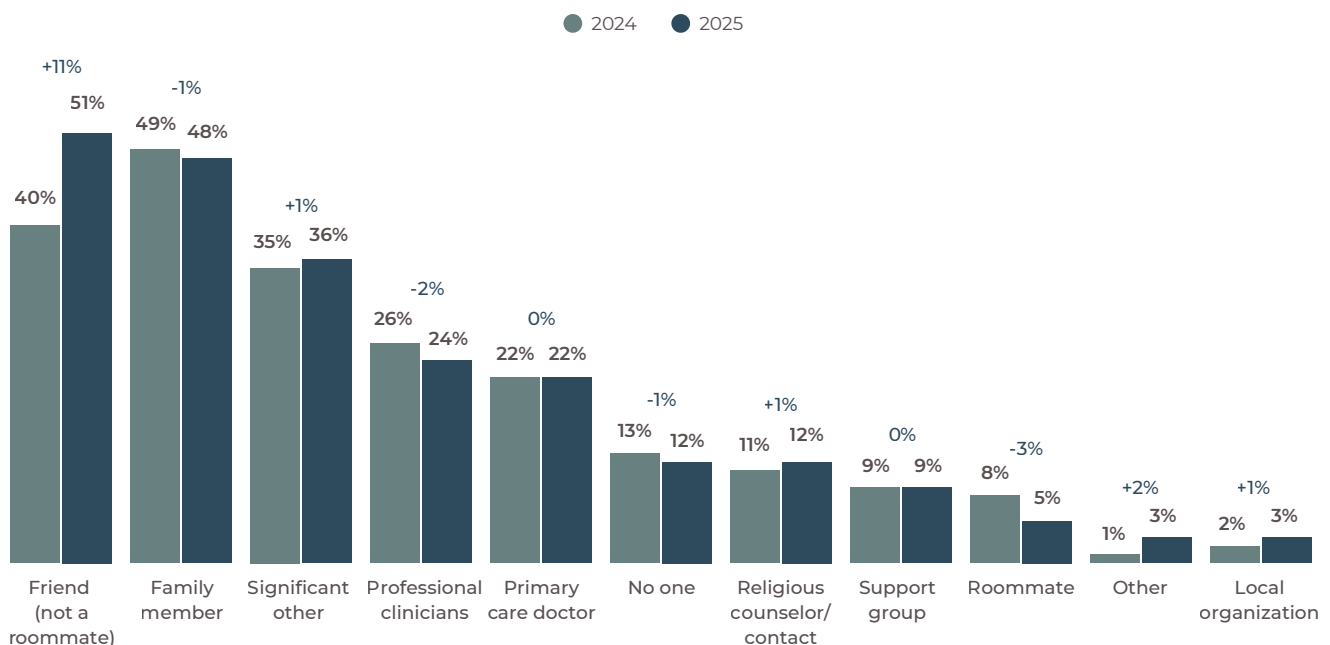
In 2025, 40% of residents are relying on **recommendations from online search** in finding their mental health professional. This a 12% increase from 2024.



SPOTLIGHT

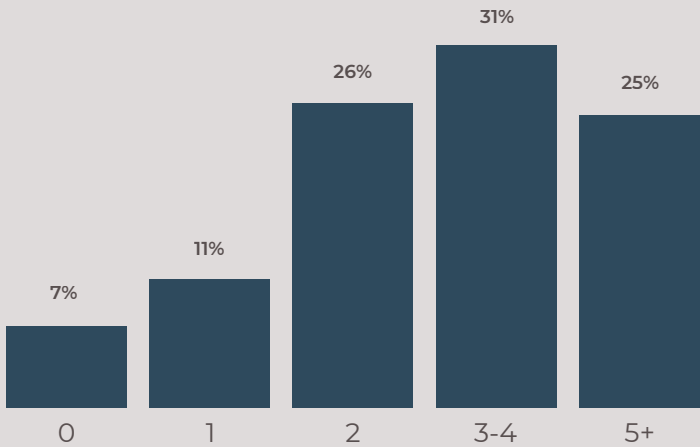
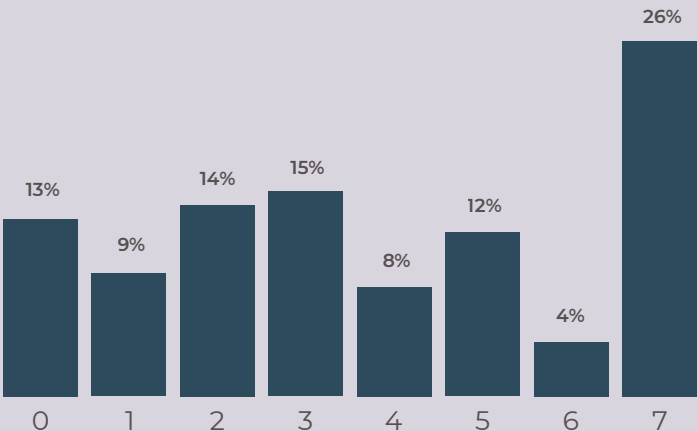
Although in-person care remains the most preferred modality, its share declined substantially (-13%) from 2024. Preference for video-based therapy increased (+4%), reaching the same levels of in-person care. This indicates a **continued shift toward virtual care options**.

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



CONNECTION & LONELINESS

New this year, respondents were asked how many days in the last week they had a 10+ minute conversation with someone who does not live in their home. Residents reported frequent engagement with their social circle, with over **1 in 4** residents **having daily conversations** in the past week.



Additionally, respondents were asked how many people they could turn to for support in a week. **Over half** of residents reported **having 3 or more individuals** they can turn to for support.

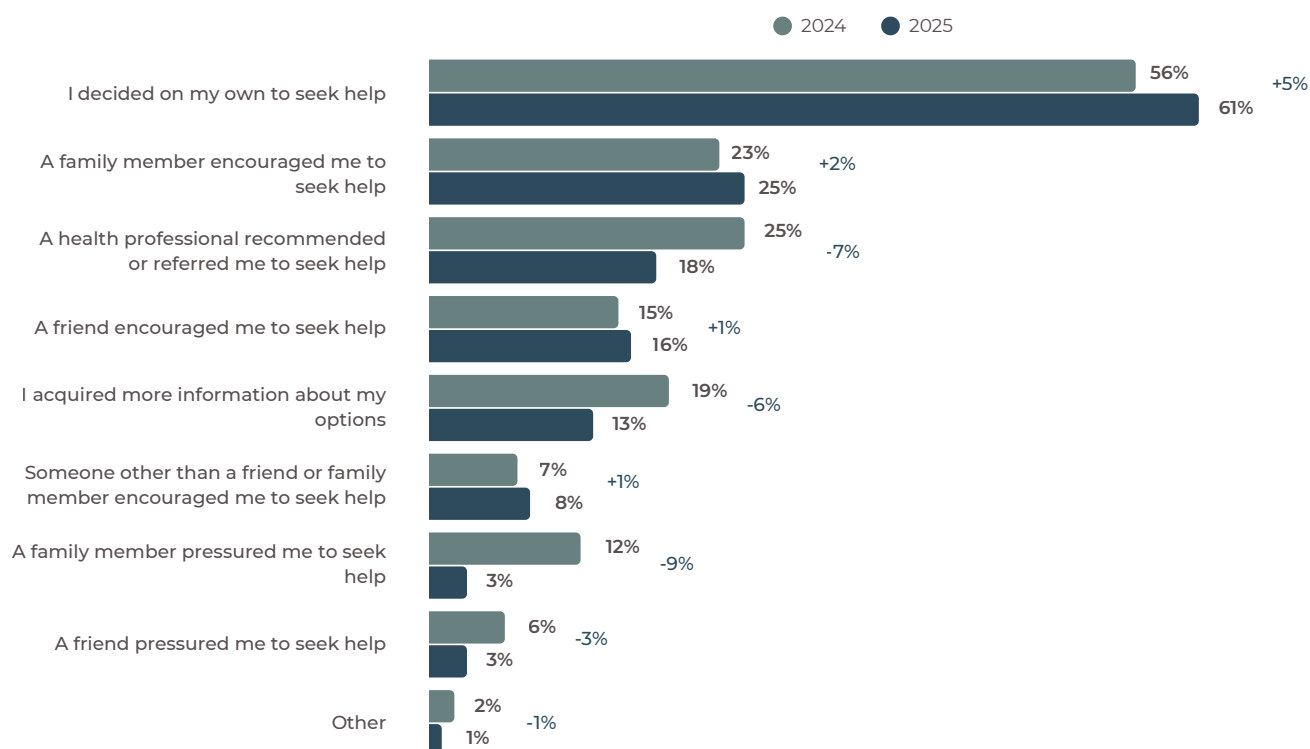
 SPOTLIGHT

In 2025, **27%** of respondents reported **feeling isolated from others** because of their mental or emotional condition. This is a 2% decrease from 2024.

METHOD OF FINDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Most Tampa Bay residents know where to go if they need help. **73%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if they needed professional help for their mental or emotional health, **they would know where to go.**

There continues to be a decrease in respondents who received mental health care during the past 12 months (19%). These respondents were asked why they decided to seek help for their mental health.



SPOTLIGHT

Residents are increasingly deciding on their own to seek mental health help. There is also a decrease in recommendations from health professionals, and in pressure from family members and friends in the decision to seek help. There has been a slight **increase in encouragement from family, friends, and others.**

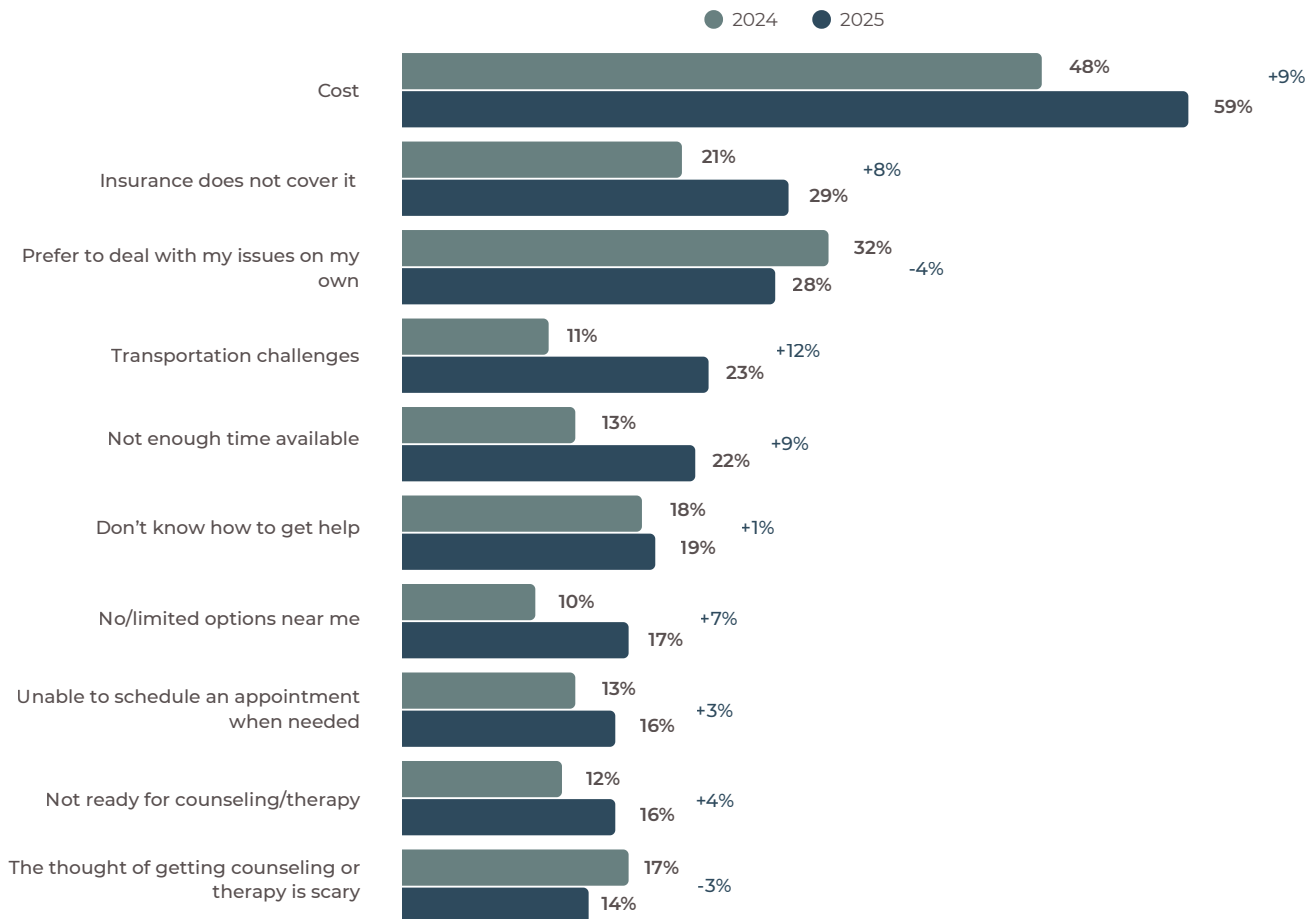
BARRIERS TO RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Access to mental health care is a challenge for many Tampa Bay residents. However, there has been a **gradual decrease** in the percentage of residents who **didn't get the care they needed** in the past 12 months, with 21% indicating this, a 4% decrease from 2024.

Despite 93% of respondents indicating they currently have health insurance, **cost is increasingly the number one barrier** (+11%) among those who didn't get the care they needed. The figure below shows the top 10 barriers to receiving mental health care.

SPOTLIGHT

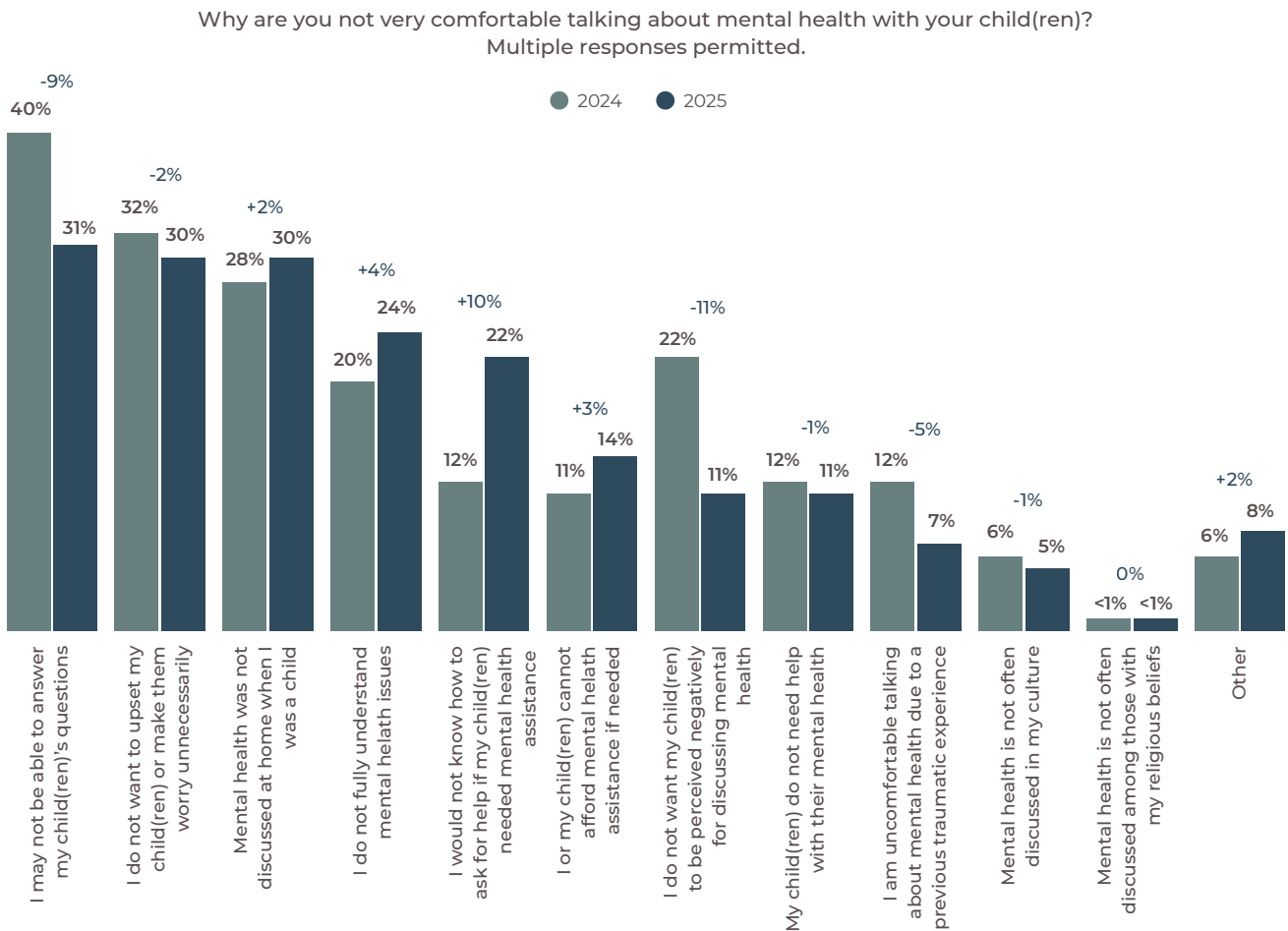
There has been a steady decline of certainty around mental health insurance coverage. In 2025, **60%** of respondents reported that they were **unsure if their health insurance covers mental health care**.



DISCUSSING MENTAL HEALTH WITH CHILDREN

Mirroring previous years' results, **1 out of 3 Tampa Bay residents are uncomfortable discussing mental health with their 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 it.

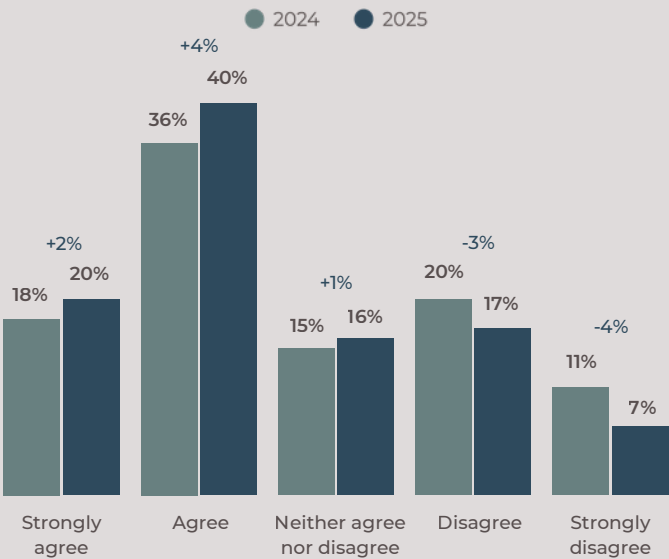
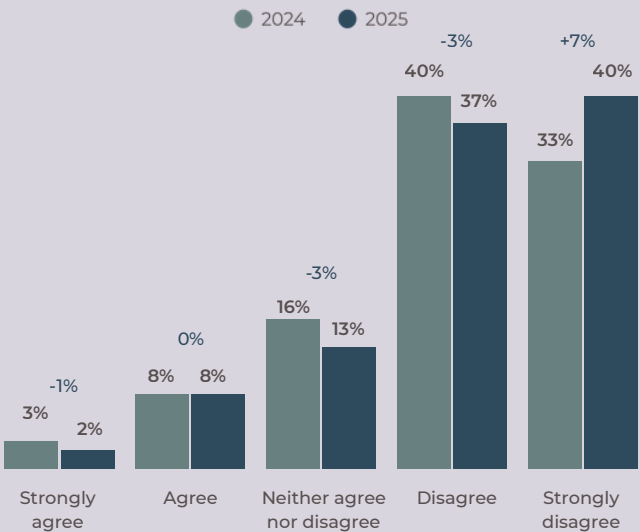


SPOTLIGHT

The top 3 reasons residents avoid discussing mental health with their children remained the same in 2025. The primary reason being that **they may not be able to answer their child(ren)'s questions.**

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.

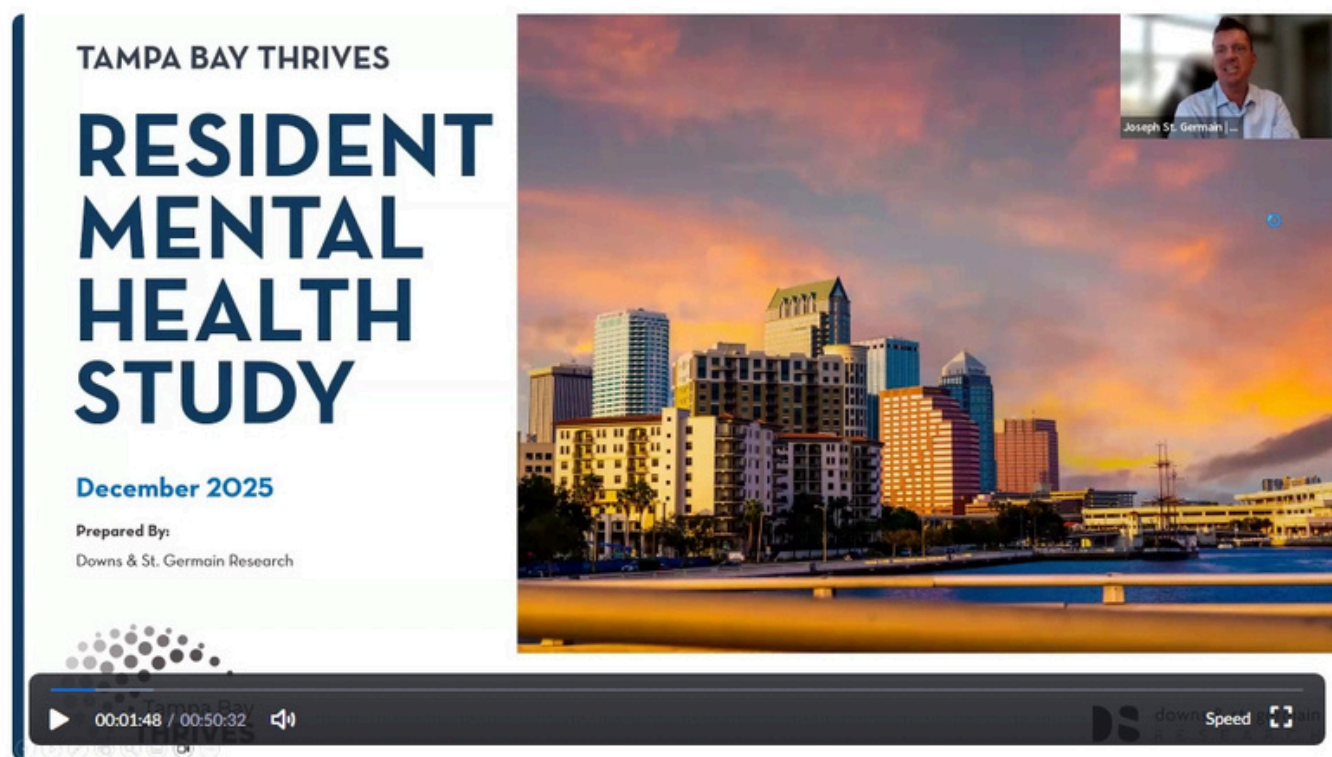


When asked if they agree or disagree with the statement “If I or a family member needed professional help for opioid or substance abuse, I would know where to go”, **60%** of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed**.

 SPOTLIGHT

Personal acceptance of people receiving treatment for opioid or substance abuse remains high and has seen a positive shift. Additionally, the shift towards **more awareness of treatments for opioid or substance abuse** continued in 2025.

WATCH OUR UNDERSTANDING TAMPA BAY'S MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR WITH DR. JOSEPH ST. GERMAIN



Gain valuable insights into how local residents view mental health challenges, access to care, and more. Whether you're a mental health professional, community leader, or simply invested in the well-being of Tampa Bay, this webinar offers a unique opportunity to understand the evolving landscape of mental health in our region.

Scan the QR code to watch the webinar!





GET INVOLVED

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- 5 When selecting mental health care, video-conferences have increased, reaching in-person consultations levels as the most utilized methods.
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- 7 Despite a decrease (-2%) in residents not getting care when they need it, the top barriers to seeking care are cost (59%) and lack of insurance coverage (29%).
- 8 Perceptions of others' and own's attitudes towards mental health assistance has been improving towards more overall acceptance. This also includes awareness and acceptance of treatments for opioids and substance abuse.
- 9 Despite improving perceptions, about 1 in 3 residents still experience some discomfort in talking about mental health with their children. The top 3 reasons pointed out include not being able to answer their questions, not wanting to worry the kids, and not having had these discussions themselves when growing up.