



Children and Youth Mental Health Survey: Getting Help in Ontario

NOVEMBER 14, 2017

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SUMMARY

Summary of findings

Ontarians are split in their opinions about whether the system can deliver quality, timely and convenient services to children and families facing mental health issues.

- Ontarians are just as likely to agree as they are to disagree that they are confident the system can deliver quality services to children and families facing mental health issues: 46% of Ontarians agree vs. 44% disagree, and a further 10% say they don't know.
 - There are some notable regional differences, with those living in the GTA (50%) more likely to say they are confident that the system can deliver quality services to children and families facing mental health issues than those living in the North (30%). Further, those living in the North are more likely to say they are not confident (62%) compared to all other regions in Ontario.
- Fewer Ontarians agree that children and families receive treatments and supports where and when they need it in the community: 34% agree, while 55% disagree, and 10% say they don't know.
 - Those living in the East are more likely to disagree (70%) than those living in the GTA (50%).

Summary of findings

Half of parents have ever had concerns about their child's level of anxiety: one-quarter have missed work days to care for their children facing issues with anxiety.

- Half of parents report having ever had concerns about their child's level of anxiety. One third of parents say their children have missed school due to issues related to anxiety, and a quarter have missed work days themselves to care for their children who were experiencing issues.
- Four in 10 parents say they have talked to a health care professional about their children's anxiety, and one-third have sought help for their child; of those who did, 4 in 10 say they didn't get the help needed or are still waiting.
- In fact, half of parents who sought help said they faced challenges in getting the services they needed. The primary reason cited was long wait times (65% of those who sought help). Other reported challenges include: services don't offer what my child needs (38%), don't know where to go (26%), and don't offer services where I live (14%).

Summary of findings

A significant proportion of youth report having ever had concerns about their level of anxiety.

- We also gained insight into youth (18 to 34) about their experiences with anxiety. Two-thirds report having ever had concerns about their level of anxiety.
- Anxiety affects school performance – almost half say they missed school due to issues related to anxiety.
- Youth are more likely to turn to friends or family members about their anxiety (57%), but a good proportion, 4 in 10, have also sought mental health services. Nearly half of these were not able to get the help they needed (42 per cent) and half found getting services challenging due to a variety of reasons including: not the type of service needed, didn't know where to go, and long wait times.
- Overall, only one-third say they have talked to a health care professional about their level of anxiety.




METHODOLOGY

Methodology

- An online survey was conducted on Ipsos' Omnibus among a representative sample of 806 Ontarians, 18 years and older, between October 24 and 26, 2017. The credibility interval for the total sample is ± 4.0 percentage points, 95% of the time.*
- We also surveyed parents with children under 25 years old (n=289), and 18 to 34 year olds (n=210). We asked 18 to 24 year olds (n=74) about their current experiences, and 25 to 34 years old (n=136) about their youth experiences. The credibility interval for the sample of parents is ± 6.6 percentage points, and for 18 to 34 years olds is ± 7.7 percentage points, 95% of the time.
- Data was weighted to the 2016 Statistics Canada Census proportions by age, gender and region.

Reporting conventions:

- We ran statistical significance testing using a t-test applied across subgroups. The test was done at a confidence level of 95%. Sub-groups are only shown in the report where there are statistical differences, and in cases where there is a reliable sample size.
-  Red and green arrows are used throughout the report to indicate significant differences between subgroups.

** The precision of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a credibility interval. This is similar to standard confidence limits assigned to traditional phone and other surveys, but has been tailored for online surveys.*



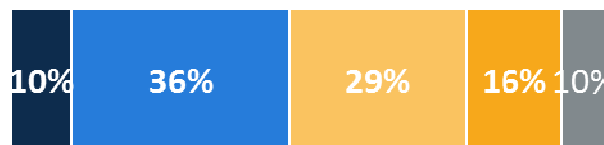
GENERAL POPULATION FINDINGS

CONFIDENCE IN AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Almost half of Ontarians are confident in the quality of mental health services, but fewer say children and families receive treatments and supports where and when they need it.

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE SYSTEM CAN DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FACING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.



% Disagree

44%

Regional differences: Significantly higher agreement in GTA (50%) compared to North (30%); 62% of North disagree, which is significantly higher than all other regions.

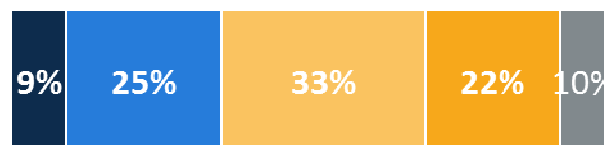
18-24: 36%

35-54: 38%

55+: 59% ▲

Parents ever sought help for child: 62% ▲

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES EASILY RECEIVE THE TYPE OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND SUPPORTS WHERE AND WHEN THEY NEED IT IN THEIR COMMUNITY.



55%

18-34: 54%

35-54: 47%

55+: 66% ▲

Regional differences: East most likely to disagree (70%, significantly higher than GTA at 50%). North also directionally higher disagreement (61%).

Q5. HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS, REP SAMPLE OF ONTARIANS (N=806)



PARENTS (KIDS <25) FINDINGS

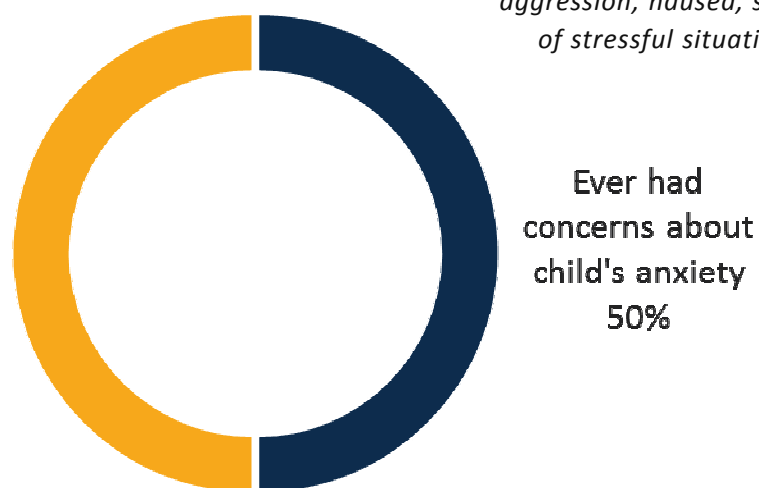
- Child experienced anxiety
- Impacted by child's anxiety
- Resources
- Seeking help for child
- Ease in accessing resources

PARENTS – CHILDREN EXPERIENCED ANXIETY

Half of parents report having ever had concerns about their child's level of anxiety.

Symptoms of anxiety can include:

excessive fear or worry; panic or anxious thoughts; irritability, sadness or aggression; nausea, sleep problems or difficulty performing daily tasks; avoidance of stressful situations (like school, sports and parties)—among other things.

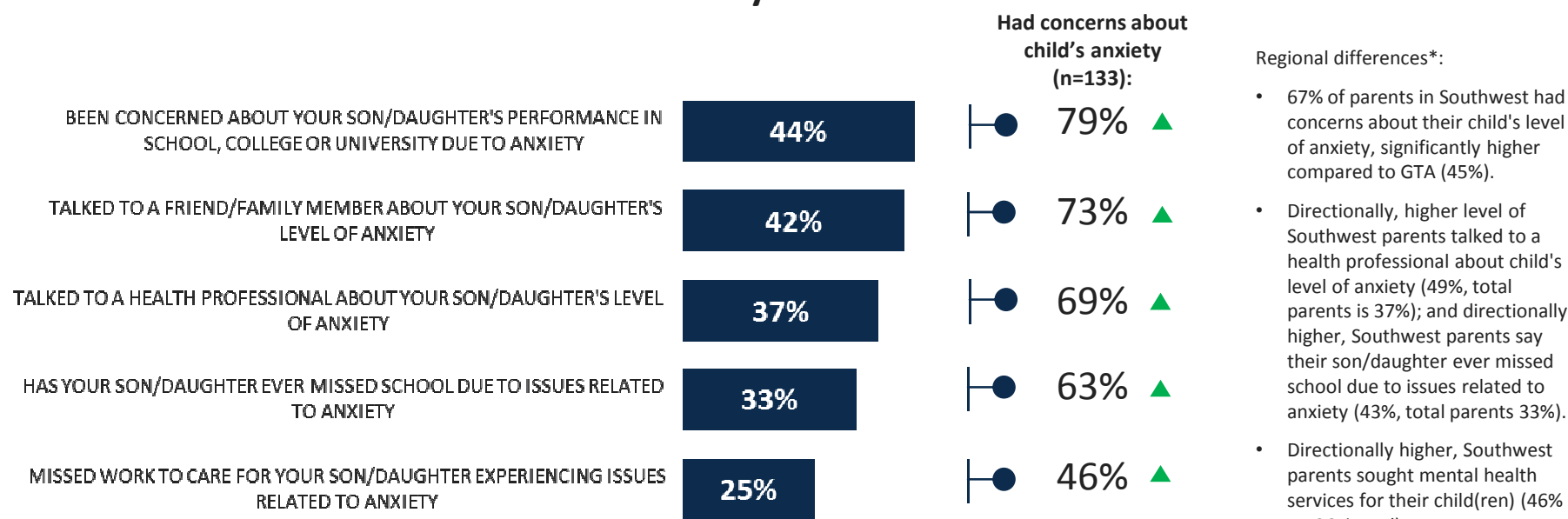


Q6. NOW, A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT ANXIETY. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SURVEY WE'RE REFERRING TO "ANXIETY" AS...HAVE YOU EVER [INSERT ITEM]?

BASE: PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 25) (N=269).

PARENTS – IMPACTED BY CHILD’S ANXIETY

One-third of parents have had a child miss school due to anxiety; one-quarter have missed work to care for their child. This is significantly higher among parents who have had concerns about their child’s anxiety.



Q6. HAVE YOU EVER [INSERT ITEM]?

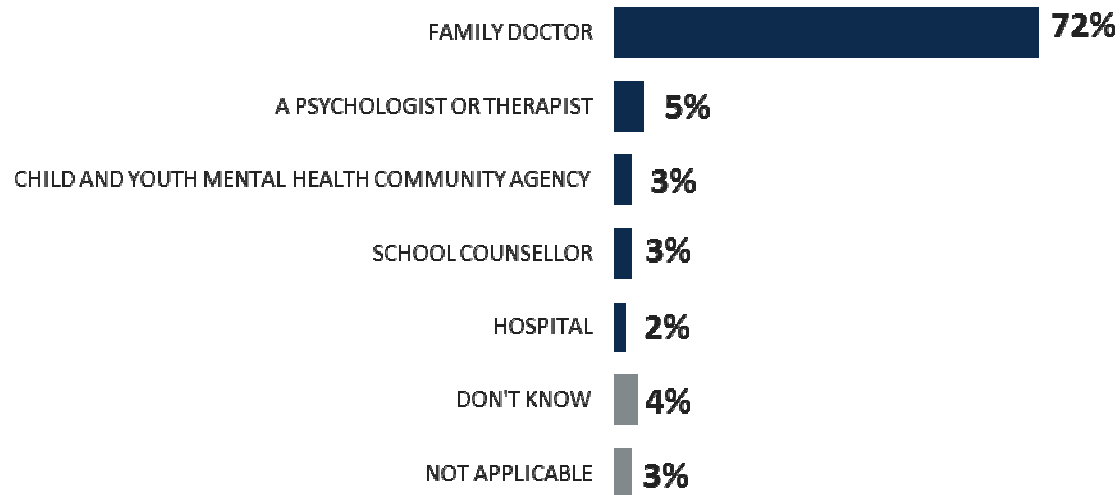
BASE: PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 25) (N=269).

▲ ▼ Indicates a significant difference between subgroups

* Small base sizes for regions. Data should be read as directional higher/lower.

PARENTS – RESOURCES

Most parents would turn to their doctor first for help; 3% would go to a mental health community agency.

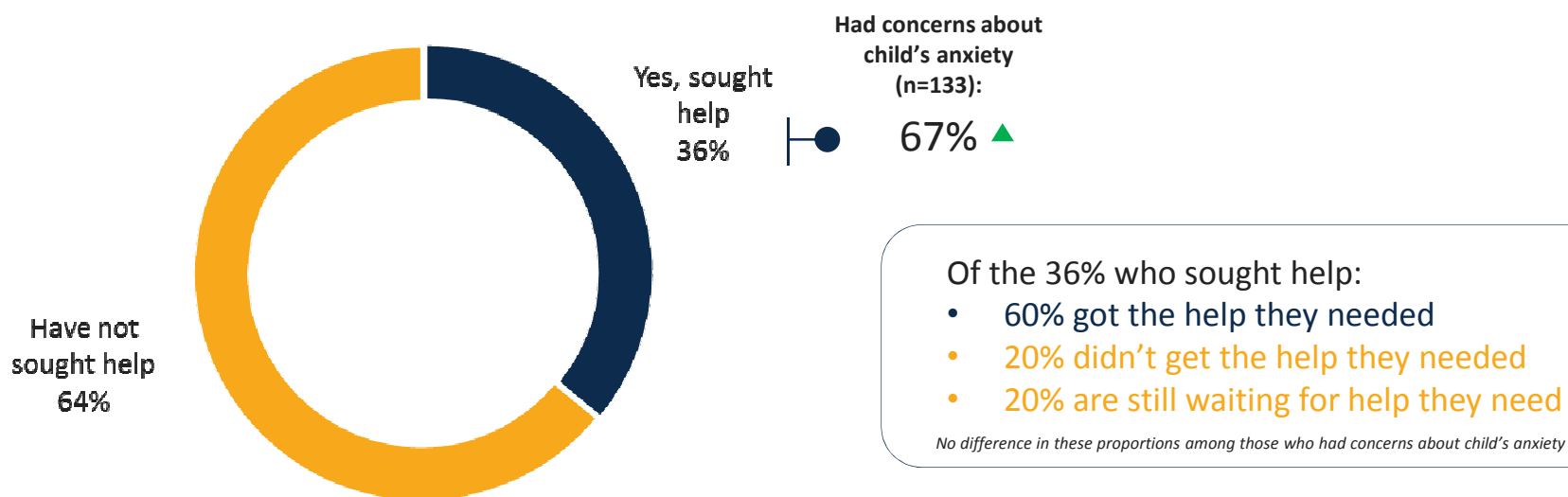


Q7. WHERE WOULD YOU GO FIRST TO SEEK HELP IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER WERE TO EXPERIENCE MILD TO MODERATE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE?

BASE: PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 25) (N=269); NOTE: BASE SIZES TOO SMALL TO REPORT BY AGE, OR OTHER VARIABLES

PARENTS – SEEKING HELP

One-third of parents have sought help for their child; of those who did, 4 in 10 didn't get the help needed or are still waiting.

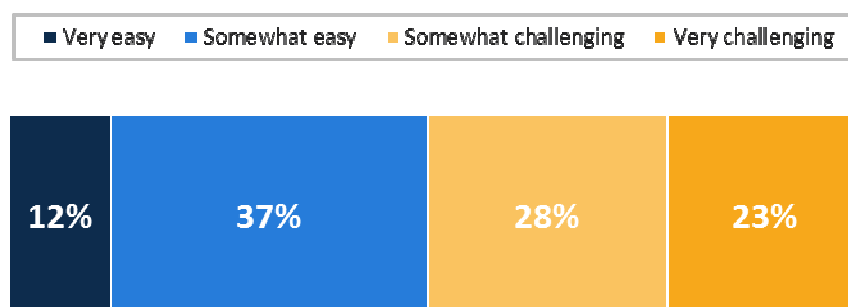


Q8. HAVE YOU EVER SOUGHT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUR SON/DAUGHTER?

BASE: PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 25) (N=269).

PARENTS – EASE IN ACCESSING SERVICES

Half of parents who sought help said they faced challenges in getting the services they needed, primarily due to wait times.



% Challenging

51%

Reasons why found it challenging (small base)	n=46
Wait times are long	65%
Services don't offer what my child needs	38%
Don't/didn't know where to go	26%
Services don't exist where I live	14%
Services not offered at convenient times	14%
Services offered are too far from my home	9%
Other	14%

Q9. HOW EASY OR CHALLENGING WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE/HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN IN GETTING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUR SON/DAUGHTER?

BASE: PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH (UNDER 25) WHO SOUGHT SERVICES IN Q8 (N=99).



YOUTH FINDINGS

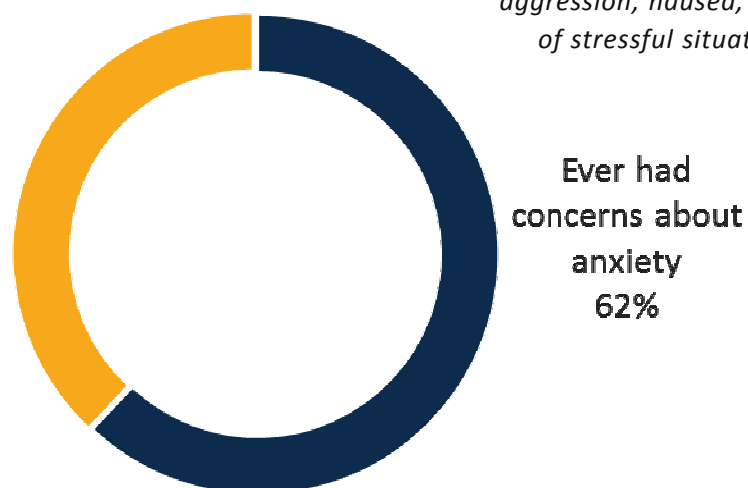
- Experienced anxiety
- Impacted by anxiety
- Resources
- Seeking help
- Ease in accessing resources

YOUTH – EXPERIENCED ANXIETY

Six in 10 youth report having ever had concerns about their level of anxiety.

Symptoms of anxiety can include:

excessive fear or worry; panic or anxious thoughts; irritability, sadness or aggression; nausea, sleep problems or difficulty performing daily tasks; avoidance of stressful situations (like school, sports and parties)—among other things.

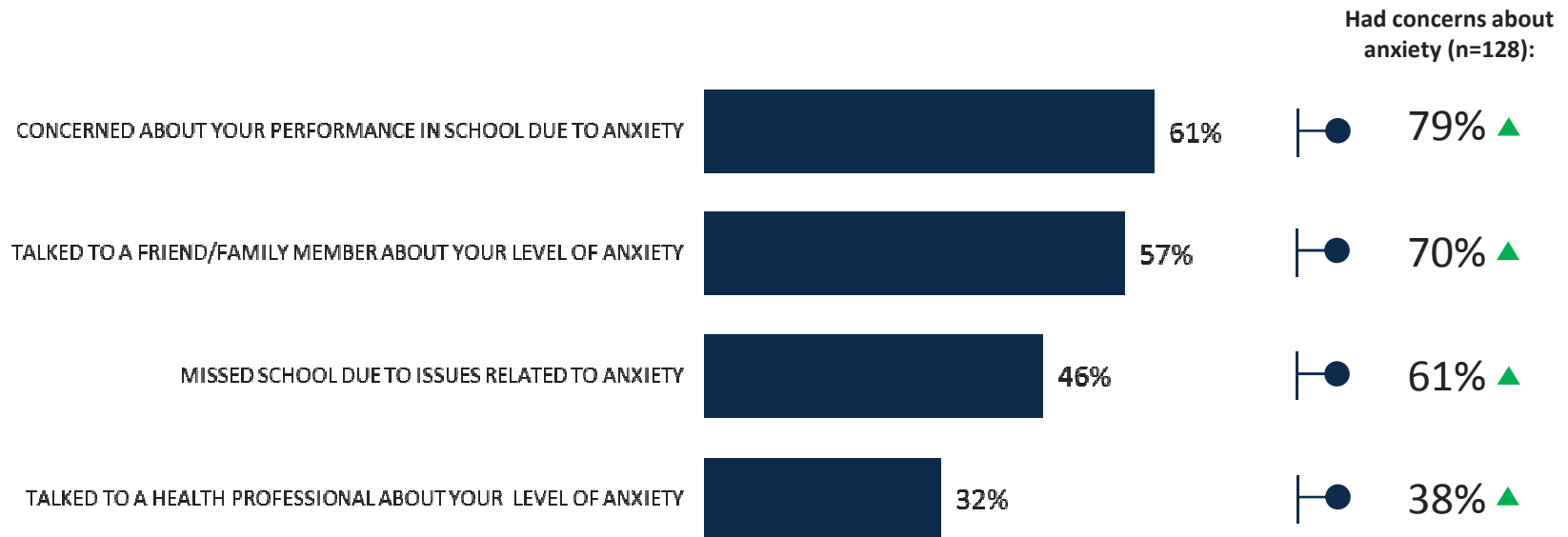


11A_1. HAVE YOU EVER: - HAD CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR LEVEL OF ANXIETY. 11B_1. THINKING BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, SPECIFICALLY UNDER 25, DID YOU EVER: - HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR LEVEL OF ANXIETY.

BASE: 18 TO 34 (N=210)

YOUTH – IMPACTED BY ANXIETY

Almost half of youth have missed school due to anxiety, but only 3 in 10 have talked to an HCP.

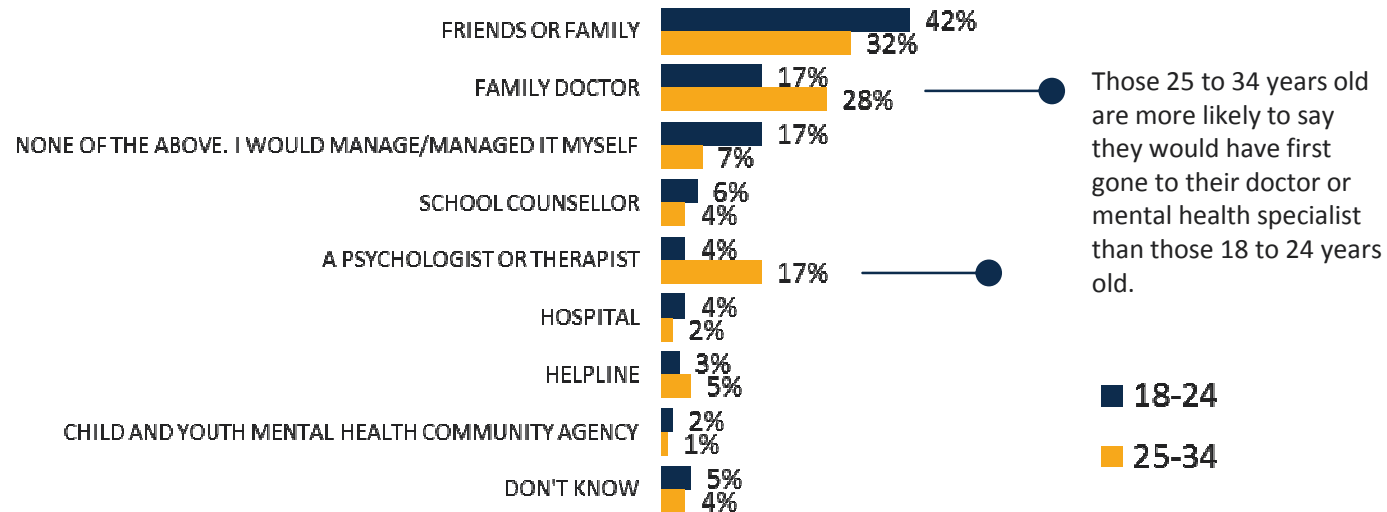


11A_1. HAVE YOU EVER: - HAD CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR LEVEL OF ANXIETY. 11B_1. THINKING BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, SPECIFICALLY UNDER 25, DID YOU EVER: - HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR LEVEL OF ANXIETY.

BASE: 18 TO 34 (N=210)

YOUTH – RESOURCES

Compared to parents, youth would turn first to their support network of family/friends for help, and second to their doctor.

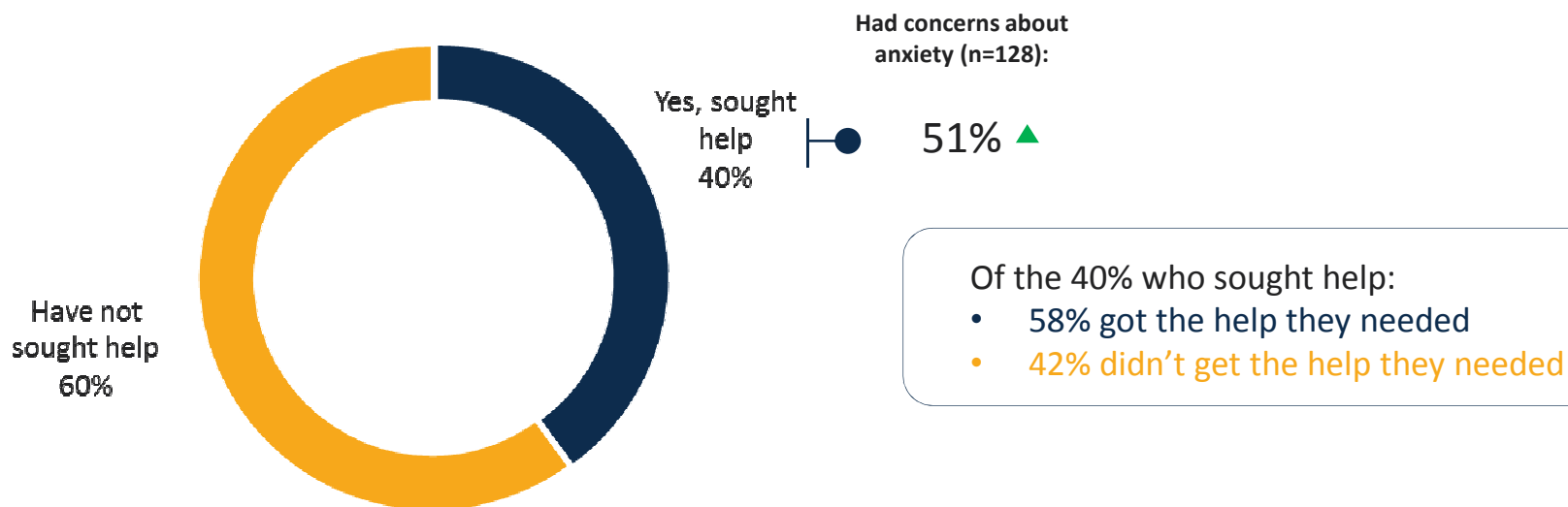


Q12A. WHERE WOULD YOU GO FIRST TO SEEK HELP IF YOU WERE TO EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE SUCH AS ANXIETY? Q12B. WHERE WOULD YOU HAVE GONE FIRST TO SEEK HELP IF YOU WERE TO EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE SUCH AS ANXIETY?

BASE: YOUTH 18-24 (N=74); 25 TO 34 (N=136)

YOUTH – SEEKING HELP

4 in 10 youth have sought mental health services. Almost half of these were not able to get the help they needed.



13A. HAVE YOU EVER SOUGHT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOURSELF? 13B. STILL THINKING BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, DID YOU EVER SEEK MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOURSELF?

BASE: 18 TO 34 (N=210)

YOUTH – EASE IN ACCESSING SERVICES

Half of young Ontarians who sought help found their experiences in getting services challenging, due to various reasons.

■ Very easy
 ■ Somewhat easy
 ■ Somewhat challenging
 ■ Very challenging



% Challenging

50%

Reasons why found it challenging (small base)	n=43
Services don't/didn't offer what I need	44%
Don't/didn't know where to go	39%
Wait times are/were long	34%
Services not offered at convenient times	26%
Services offered are/were too far from my home	25%
Services don't/didn't exist where I live	18%
Other	6%

Q14.. HOW EASY OR CHALLENGING WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE/HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN IN GETTING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?

BASE: ALL WHO SAID THEY SOUGHT SERVICES IN Q13A OR B (N=89)

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