



The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development

Grow National Survey 2023

Report on Recovery Outcomes in Mental Health

National Program Team

April 2024

Table of Contents

- Summary of findings..... 2
- Age and Gender Distribution 3
- Gender and Relationship 4
- Location..... 5
- Grow Meeting Location. 6
- Employment Status. 7
- Grow Meeting Demographics. 8
- Volunteering within Grow. 9
- How people discovered Grow. 10
- Engagement with Health Services. 11
- Personal Objectives in Joining Grow..... 12
- Factors leading to seeking support from Grow. 13
- Coping level day-to-day over previous 3 months. 14
- The Grow Program: What was Helpful ?..... 15
- Meeting Task and Real Life Changes..... 16
- Support from family, friends and others..... 17
- Effect of mental health challenges. 18
- Impact of Grow meetings on day-to-day life..... 19
- Relapses in the last year. 20
- Hospitalization. 21
- Activities outside Grow. 22
- Regular Exercise. 23
- Outlook on Life..... 24
- Optimism towards the future. 25
- What Grow has helped with. 26
- Grow and professional health services..... 27
- Rating Grow’s help. 28

Summary of findings

This report presents the data findings from Grow's National Survey 2023. Surveys were completed by 299 Members using Survey Monkey, MS Forms, or returned by post between November 2023 and February 2024. The survey collected information on the following:

- Socio-demographic characteristics – gender, age, region and current economic status
- Profile of mental health need and engagement with mental health services
- Engagement with Grow and views on weekly Grow meetings
- Individual recovery outcomes and social supports

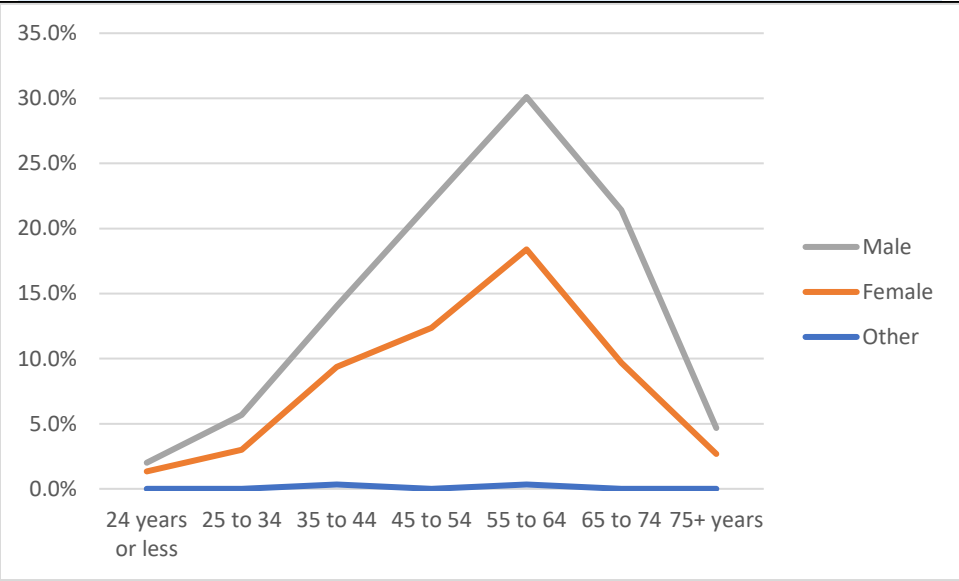
Additional Information was incorporated in this report from our normal gathering of data about meetings, including attendance figures.

Significant findings are:

- Nearly all (98%) rated help as at least good and over half (55%) rated it as excellent.
- Over 40% had reduced or no need of professional help while with Grow.
- Nearly two thirds had improvements in more than three aspects of their mental health.
- Nearly all (98%) felt some optimism for the future.
- Of those hospitalized in the past, 75% had not been hospitalized in the previous year.
- Over half (51%) did not experience an increase in symptoms or a relapse in 2023.
- Overall, 96% said meetings had some positive impact on their day-to-day lives.
- Some 74% of respondents were currently engaged with a mental health professional (Mental Health Nurse, Psychiatrist, Counsellor, Psychologist).
- 75% were in employment, while 15% were unable to work due to illness or disability.
- The majority of respondents were middle aged (52%), with the median age bracket 55-64 years.

Age and Gender Distribution

How old are you?	Female	Male	Other	Total
24 years or less	1.3%	0.7%	0.0%	2.0%
25 to 34	3.0%	2.7%	0.0%	5.7%
35 to 44	9.0%	4.7%	0.3%	14.0%
45 to 54	12.4%	9.7%	0.0%	22.1%
55 to 64	18.1%	11.7%	0.3%	30.1%
65 to 74	9.7%	11.7%	0.0%	21.4%
75+ years	2.7%	2.0%	0.0%	4.7%
Grand Total	56.2%	43.1%	0.7%	100.0%



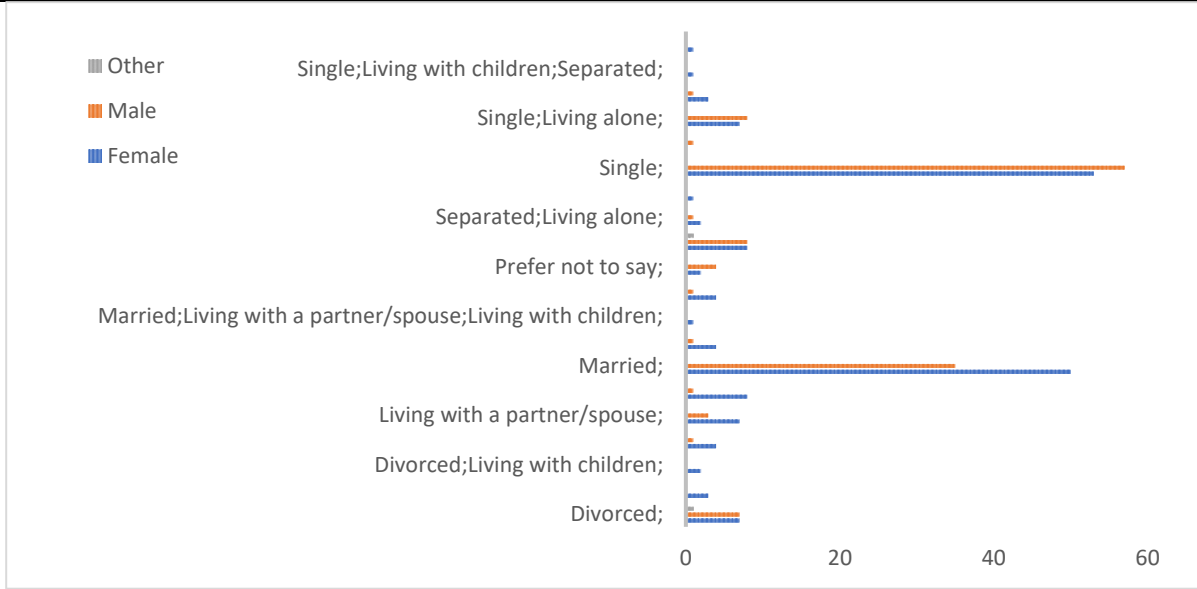
Male and Female show the same age trend. Other genders have too few numbers to draw any conclusions about. Some 56% were male, 43% female and just under 1% identified as another gender.

The majority of respondents were over 35 years of age. Very few respondents were under 25. We are looking at the visibility and access of our services to ensure those who need it are aware of Grow and have a streamlined access route.

It could be argued that under 24s may not have reached a level of understanding of their mental health issues to the point where a peer support group is a viable approach for them, compared to e.g. group therapy or CBT.

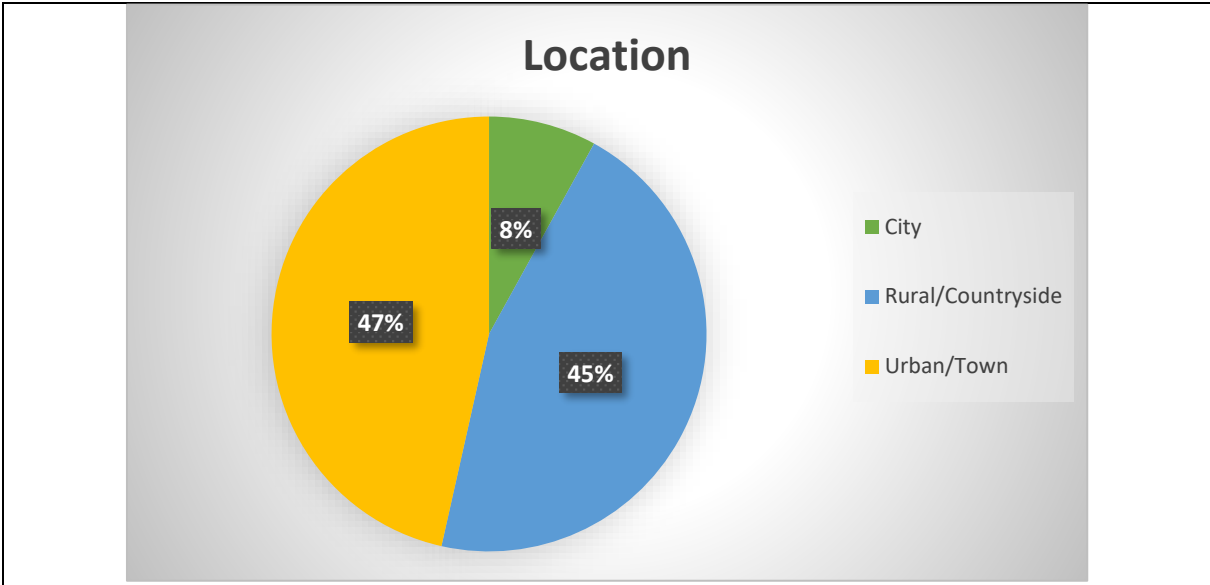
Gender and Relationship

Row Labels	Female	Male	Other	Total
Divorced	7	7	1	15
Divorced, Living alone	3			3
Divorced, Living with children	2			2
Living alone	4	1		5
Living with a partner/spouse	7	3		10
Living with children	8	1		9
Married	50	35		85
Married, Living with a partner/spouse	4	1		5
Married, Living with a partner/spouse, Living with children	1			1
Married, Living with children	4	1		5
Prefer not to say	2	4		6
Separated	8	8	1	17
Separated, Living alone	2	1		3
Separated, Living with a partner/spouse	1			1
Single;	53	57		110
Single, Divorced		1		1
Single, Living alone	7	8		15
Single, Living with a partner/spouse;	3	1		4
Single, Living with children, Separated	1			1
Single, Separated, Living alone	1			1
Grand Total	168	129	2	299



The majority of respondents were either single or married. This trend is broadly the same for male and female respondents, although female respondents did have a higher likelihood of being married.

Location.



Attendance figures from all meeting records (outside the scope of the survey) tell us that 12% of members attend meetings in the Dublin city and county area. These figures seem low given that over 25% of the population of Ireland lives in Dublin County and city. There appears to be an argument here for greater funding to support Dublin meetings.

From meeting attendance figures, South Dublin has twice the number of attendees as North Dublin, reflected also in the higher number of meetings (35% more) in South Dublin compared to North Dublin.

All genders were equally distributed.

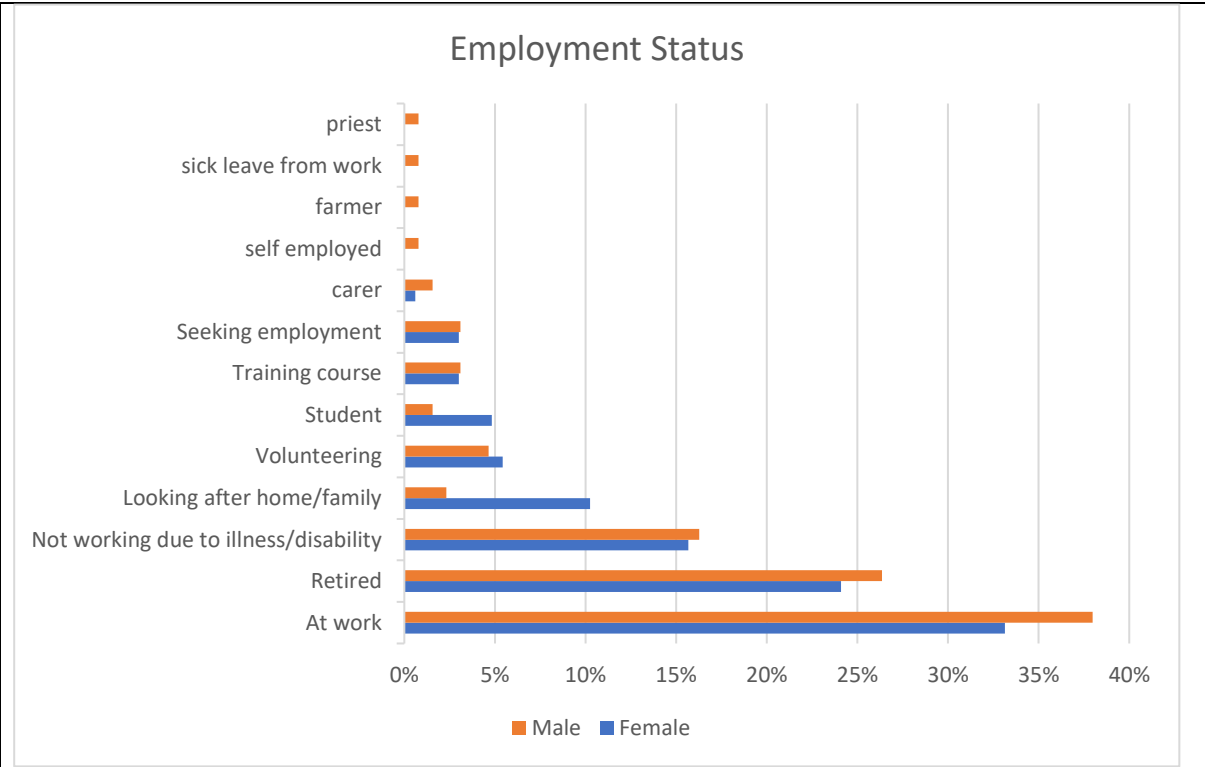
Row Labels	Female	Male	Other	Grand Total
City	7%	10%	0%	8%
Rural/Countryside	48%	43%	50%	45%
Urban/Town	46%	47%	50%	46%

Grow Meeting Location.

We asked members who used face-to-face meetings what county that meeting was in. The majority of members (90%) responding to the survey did use face-to-face meetings.

Grow Meeting County	Female	Male	Grand Total
Limerick	18	22	40
Cork	23	9	32
Donegal	14	7	21
Kerry	10	10	20
Offaly	11	9	20
Sligo	13	5	18
Mayo	8	9	17
Clare	5	5	10
Galway	7	3	10
Monaghan	6	4	10
Roscommon	8	2	10
Wicklow	6	4	10
Wexford	3	5	8
Louth	4	3	7
Westmeath	5	2	7
Cavan	3	3	6
Laois	2	4	6
Dublin	4	1	5
Leitrim	2	2	4
Mullingar	1	2	3
Kildare	2		2
Cavan		1	1
Kilkenny	1		1
Killarney, Co. Kerry		1	1
Meath	1		1
Tipperary		1	1
Grand Total	157	114	271

Employment Status.



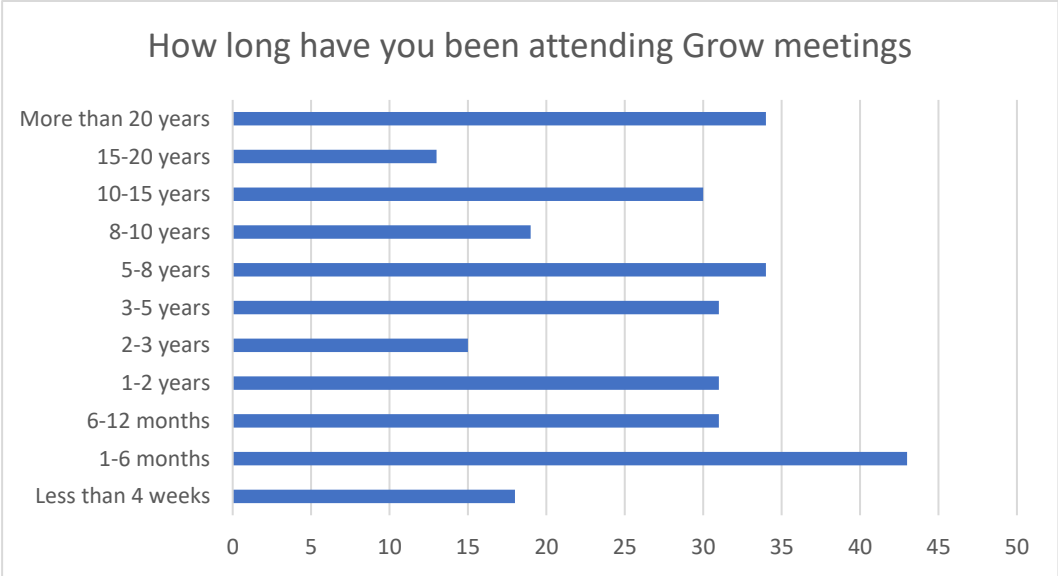
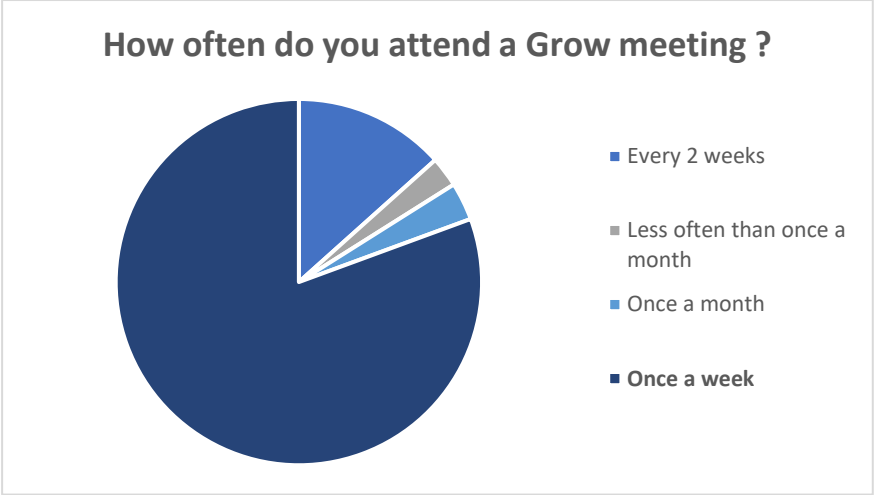
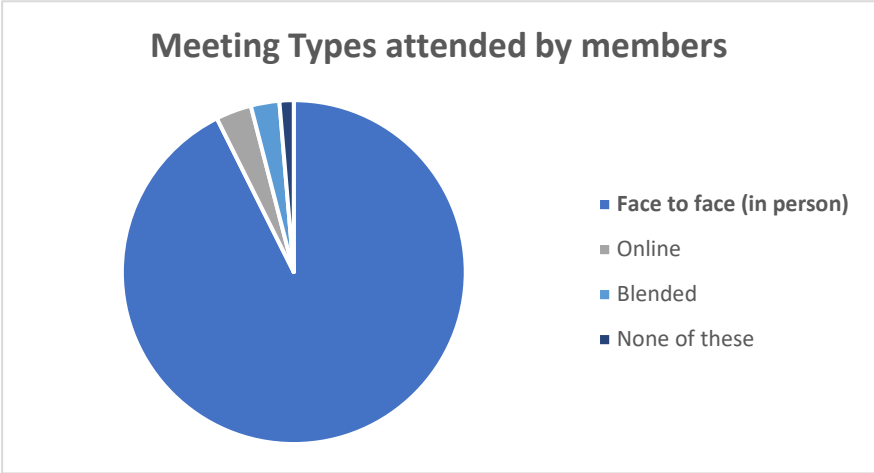
Employment status trends seem to be spread equally amongst the genders, with the exceptions of those who self-categorize as looking after family (mostly female) and as students (again, female). Of the 7% “looking after family”, we find five times as many females as male.

A significant number reported as not working due to illness or disability, about 16% in all genders.

The figure for retired is in line with those aged 65 and above. This suggests that all 16% reporting as not working due to illness or disability are of working age, which means about 20% of respondents of working age cannot work due to illness or disability.

Employment Status	Female	Male	Grand Total
At work	33%	38%	35%
Retired	24%	26%	25%
Not working due to illness/disability	16%	16%	16%
Looking after home/family	10%	2%	7%
Volunteering	5%	5%	5%
Student	5%	2%	3%
Training course	3%	3%	3%
Seeking employment	3%	3%	3%
Carer	1%	2%	1%
self employed	0%	1%	0%
Farmer	0%	1%	0%
sick leave from work	0%	1%	0%
Priest	0%	1%	0%

Grow Meeting Demographics.



Volunteering within Grow.

Some 30% of Grow members responding to the survey volunteer for one or more roles within groups and Grow.

Some 10% of volunteers fill multiple roles.

Volunteering within Grow is seen as a key element of personal development within the program. Volunteering is encouraged.

These roles are:

- Leaders – people who lead meetings, ensuring they follow the Grow program.
- Recorders – people who gather the statistical data we need for reporting purposes.
- Organizers – manage meetings.
- Regional Team members – link with the regional team management and act as a voice for groups within Grow’s internal management.



For the purposes of this survey we are using the term “volunteer” to include Organizers and Recorders. The bulk of volunteers (73%) fill the roles of Organizers (39%) and Recorders (34%).

While a relatively small proportion of respondents identify themselves as Leaders, it should be noted that this role is intended to be held by ordinary members on a week-by-week basis. The objective is to encourage participation and to build self-confidence through this and other volunteering roles. Typically, Organizers and Recorders will also act as “default” Leaders, leading meetings when no one else wishes to take the role in any individual meeting.

How people discovered Grow.

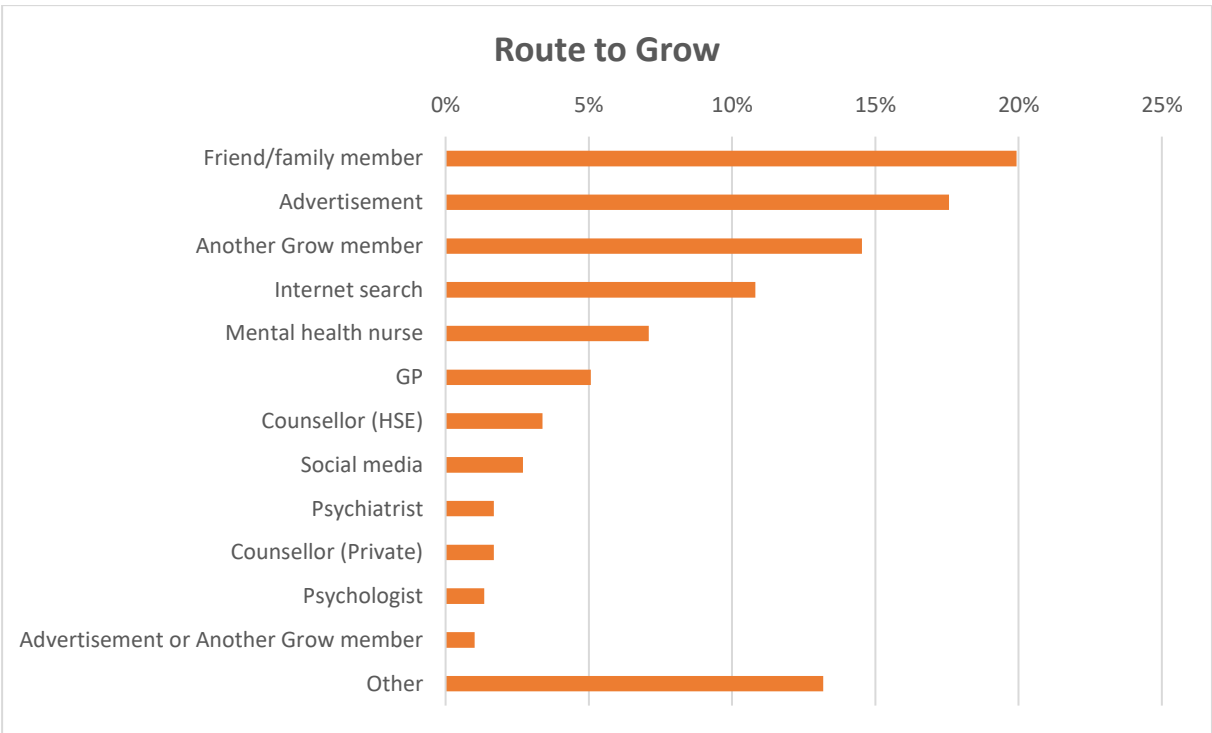
Members found out about Grow in a wide range of ways.

More than half (52%) find Grow through a friend, family member, advertisement or from another Grow member.

“Word of mouth” accounts for about 35% of referrals from friend, family or existing members for respondents to the survey.

Approximately 20% were directed from a medical professional, while about 11% found Grow via the internet.

Note: the “Other” category includes respondents who cited multiple sources for their discovery of Grow, for example an advert and a friend. These multiple source answers would broadly overlap the single source distribution.



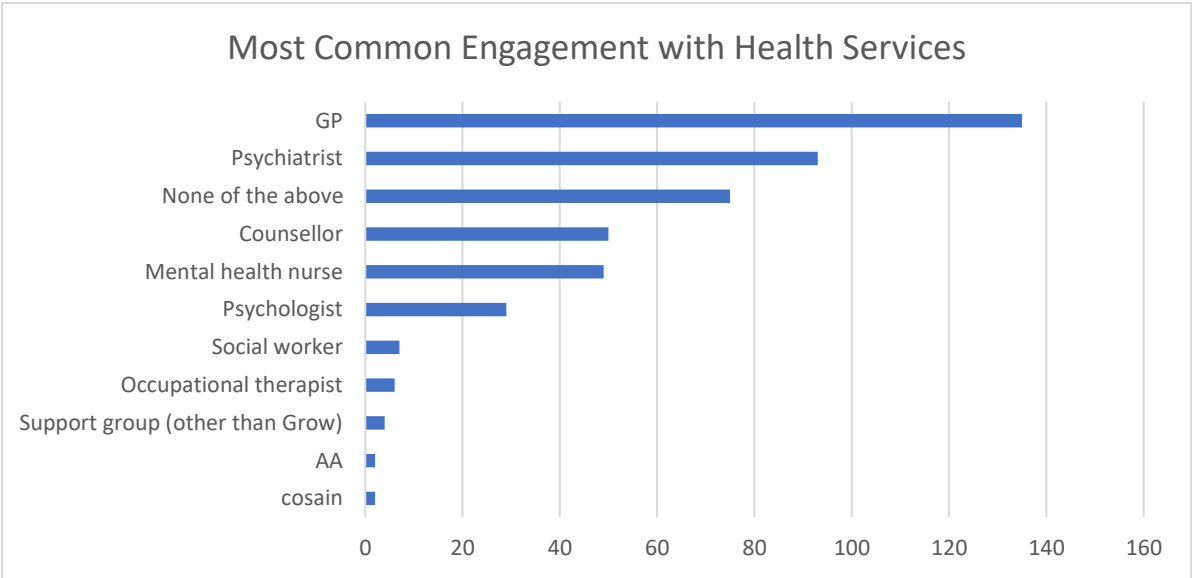
Engagement with Health Services.

The total responding that they used one health service professional (GP, Mental Health Nurse, Psychiatrist, Counsellor, Psychologist) was 120%, indicating that many people used more than one service (it was possible to select multiple answers).

Some 74% of respondents were currently engaged with a mental health professional (Mental Health Nurse, Psychiatrist, Counsellor, Psychologist).

Of respondents, 23% said they had not received a mental health diagnosis from a health professional. That's over 1 in every 5. Putting that in context, only 20% of respondents stated they found Grow through health professionals.

Of those responding, some 25% said they were not using any of the listed services at the time of the survey. Note that Grow is specifically was not listed as a possible response to this question and that 25% were using Grow or could not have participated in the survey.



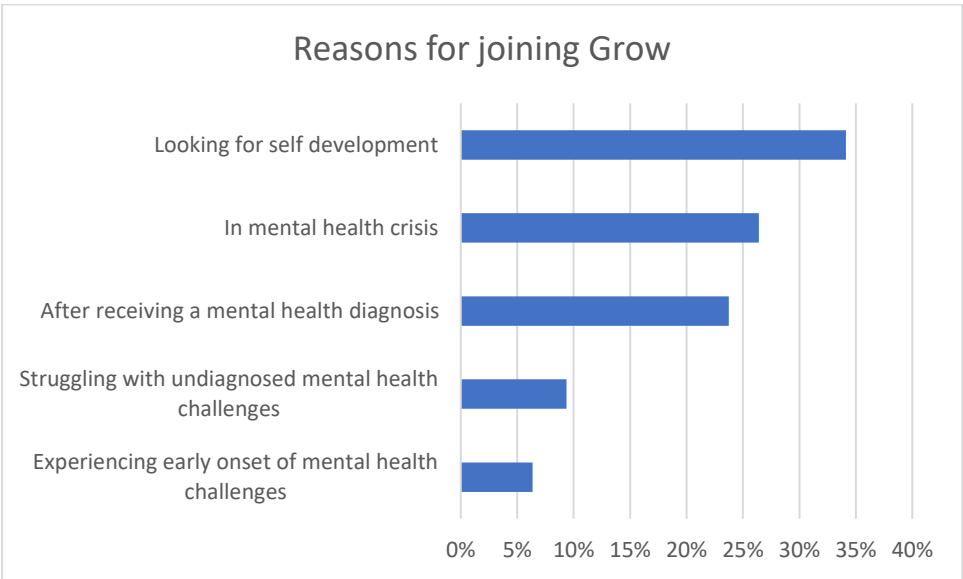
Personal Objectives in Joining Grow.

Over a third (34%) of respondents joining Grow came looking for self-development.

Over a quarter (26%) of those responding came to Grow because they were having a mental health crisis.

Just under a quarter (24%) joined after receiving a mental health diagnosis.

Some 9% were struggling with an undiagnosed mental health problem.

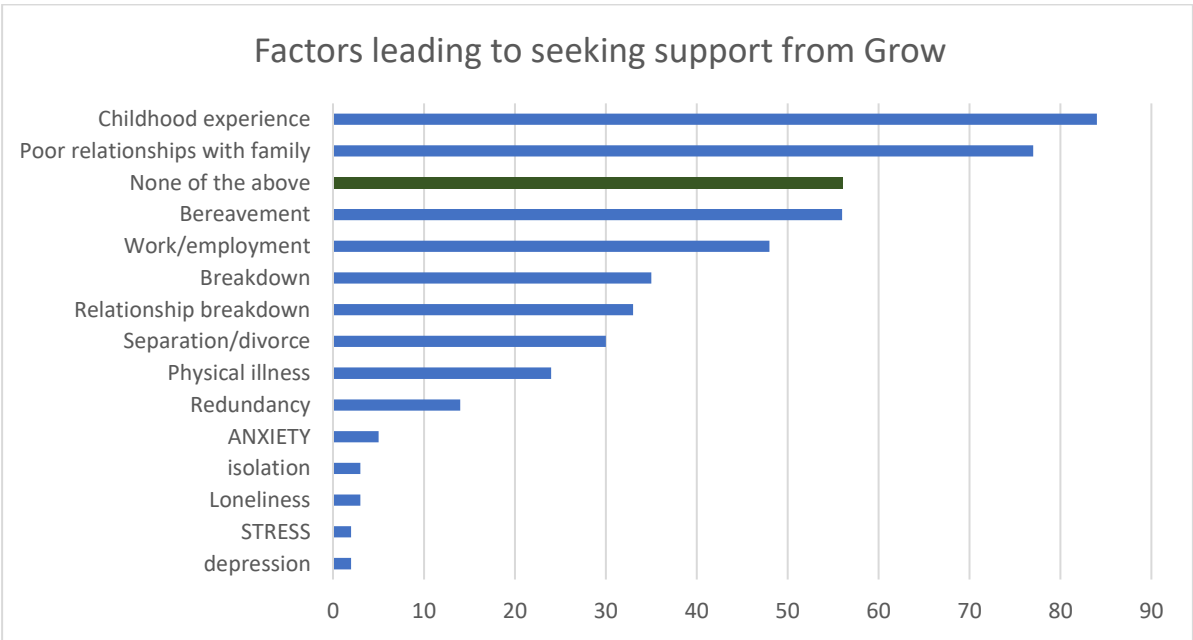


Factors leading to seeking support from Grow.

Some 60% of respondents gave more than one factor in leading to seeking support.

Poor relationships with family and childhood experience were the most common reasons by significant margins.

The high level giving none of the common factors (“none of the above”), at about 18% of respondents, may relate to clinical referrals (direct and indirect), as over 23% of respondents said they went to Grow after receiving a mental health diagnosis.



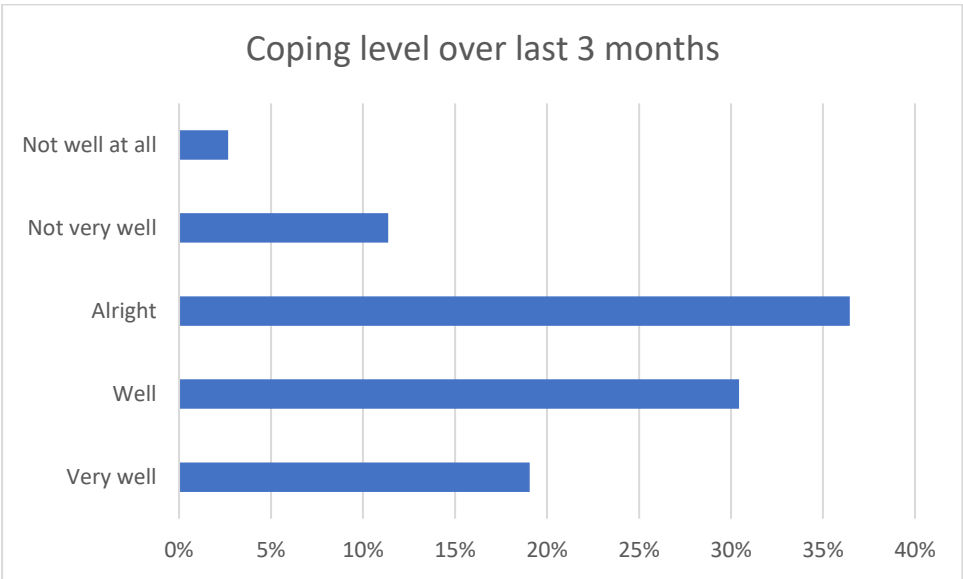
Coping level day-to-day over previous 3 months.

Respondents were asked to rate their ability to cope with their mental wellbeing, day-to-day, over the previous 3 months.

Approximately 85% were doing alright or better.

Nearly half (49%) said well or very well.

Some 15% indicated they were not doing well, with 3% indicating they were doing “not well at all”.



The Grow Program: What was Helpful ?

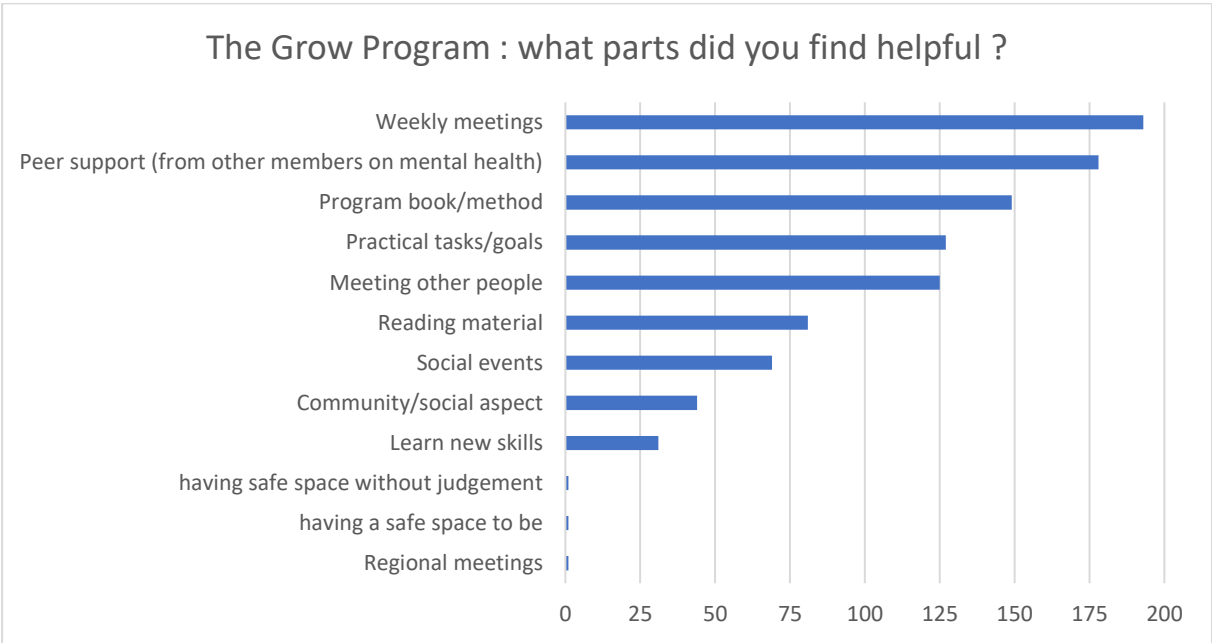
We asked respondents what elements of the Grow Program they found helpful. They could choose more than one part, or none.

Weekly meetings and the Peer support aspect were by far the most helpful, with nearly 60% of all respondents finding them helpful.

Half (50%) found the program book (method) was the next most useful, with meeting people (42%) and taking practical tasks and goals (42%) next.

Over 25% of respondents found additional reading material (i.e. beyond the basic Program Book), helpful.

Social events and the sense of community made were each significant contributors to helping members.



Meeting Task and Real Life Changes.

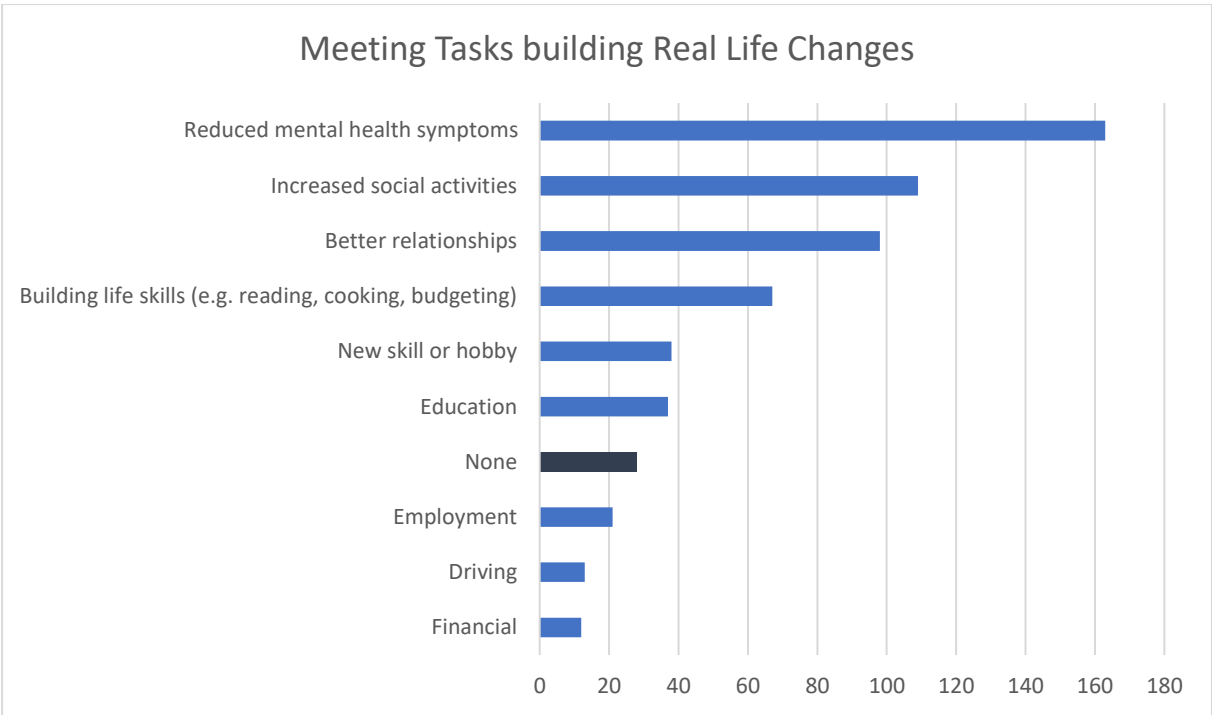
We asked respondents what improvements, if any, they felt were a result of taking tasks for the week ahead during a meeting.

More than half (54%) of those responding report reduced mental health symptoms.

More than a third (36%) report increased social activities.

One third (33%) report having improved relationships.

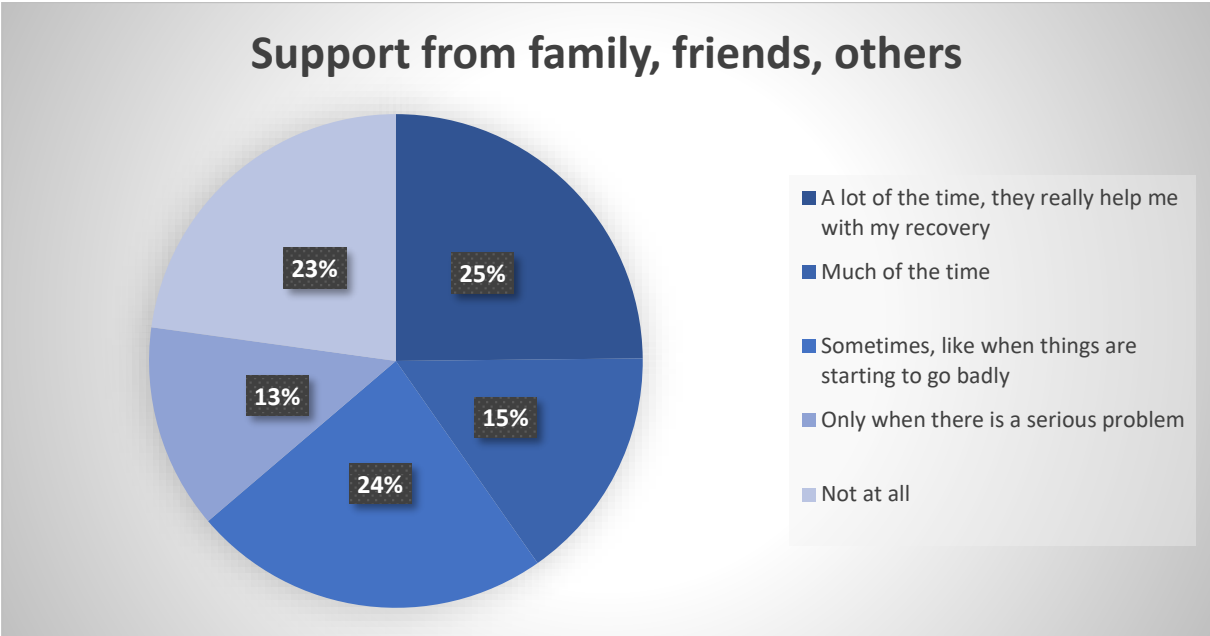
Only 9% report that taking tasks gave no improvement in life skills.



Support from family, friends and others.

While nearly half (40%) of those responding feel they receive reasonable support or better from their circle of friends and family, over a third (36%) feel they receive minimal or no support.

A little over one in eight (13%) feel they receive no support at all.



Effect of mental health challenges.

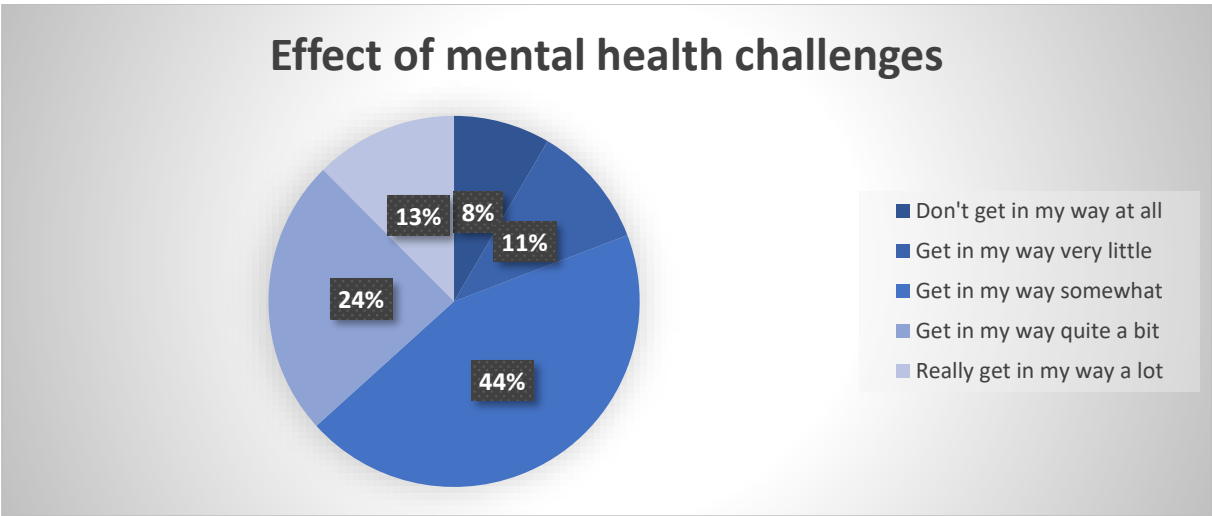
We asked how much mental health challenges get in the way of doing what you would like, or need, to do.

Close to half (44%) said they got in the way somewhat.

One in four (24%) said that that they got in the way quite a bit.

One in eight (13%) said they got in the way a lot.

Only one in five (19%) said they got in the way very little or not at all.



Impact of Grow meetings on day-to-day life.

We asked to what extent Grow meetings contributed to being able to cope with day-to-day life.

Overall, 96% said meetings had some positive impact on their day-to-day lives.

Nearly 2 in 5 (39%) said meetings helped “quite a lot”.

Over one third (34%) said Grow meetings had helped “very much”.

Nearly 1 in 4 (23%) said they help “somewhat”.

Only 4% said that meetings helped “not that much” or “not at all”.



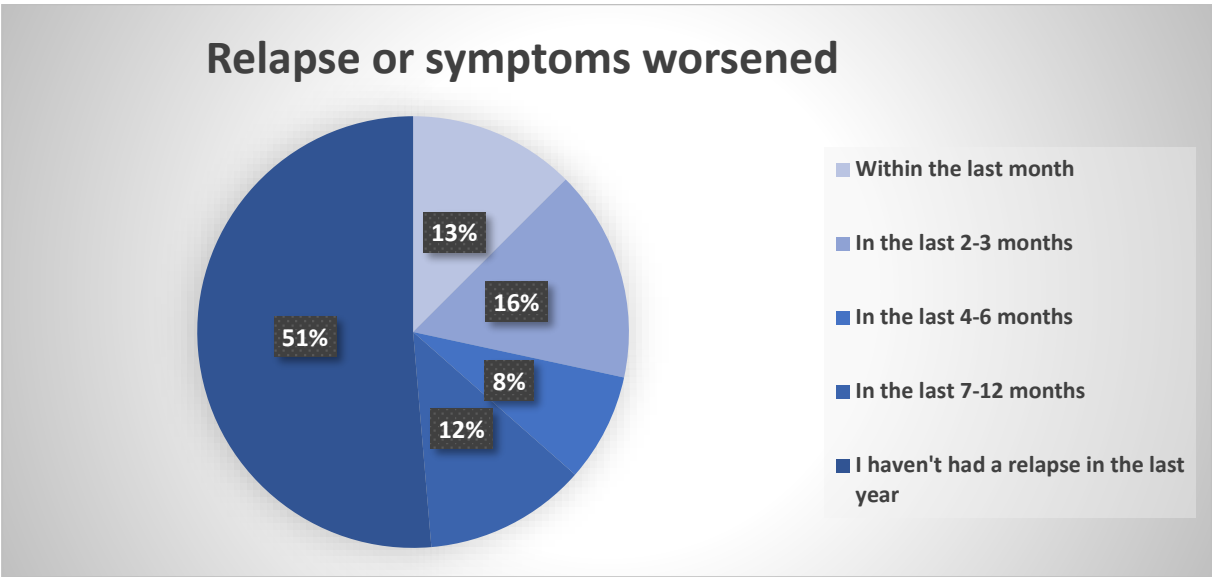
Relapses in the last year.

We asked if people's symptoms had gotten worse over the previous year.

Over half (51%) said they had not had worse symptoms or a relapse in the last year.

A little under a third (30%) said they had worsened symptoms or a relapse within the last three months.

One in five (20%) has a relapse in the last four to twelve months.



Hospitalization.

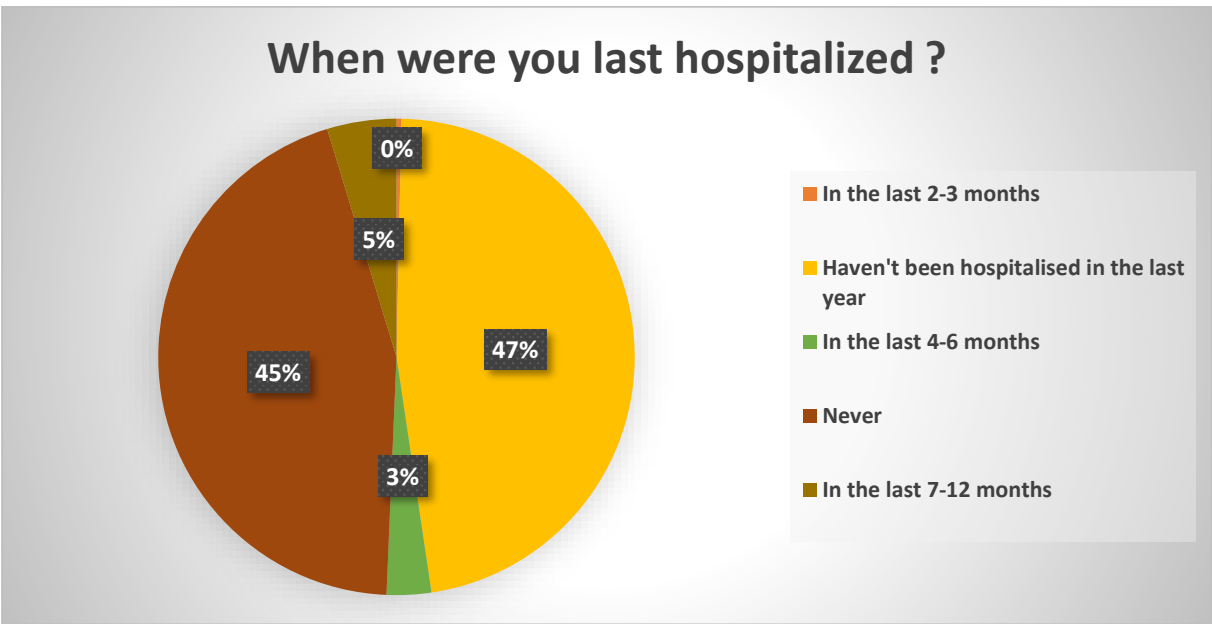
We asked when respondents were last hospitalized for mental health reasons.

Nearly half (45%) of respondents said they had never been hospitalized.

Of the remaining group (who can be assumed to have been hospitalized at some time in their lives for mental health reasons), the vast majority said they had not been hospitalized in that last year.

Of those who had been hospitalized at some time in their lives, only 15% had been hospitalized in that last year.

Only a small number (8%) had been hospitalized in the previous year.



Activities outside Grow.

We asked about opportunities for involvement with community activities and events outside of Grow.

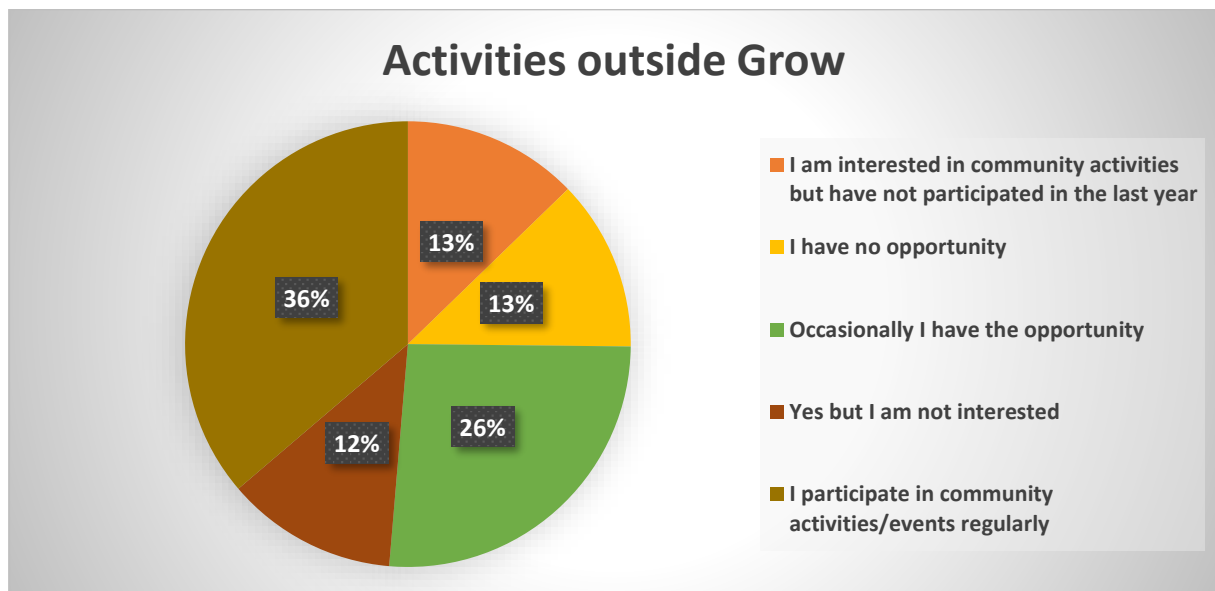
Over one third (36%) participated in activities and events regularly.

A quarter (26%) had occasional opportunities.

One in eight (13%) had no opportunity.

One in eight (13%) was interested in such activities but had not participated in them in the last year.

One in eight (12%) had opportunities but were not interested in them.



Regular Exercise.

We asked if respondents took regular exercise.

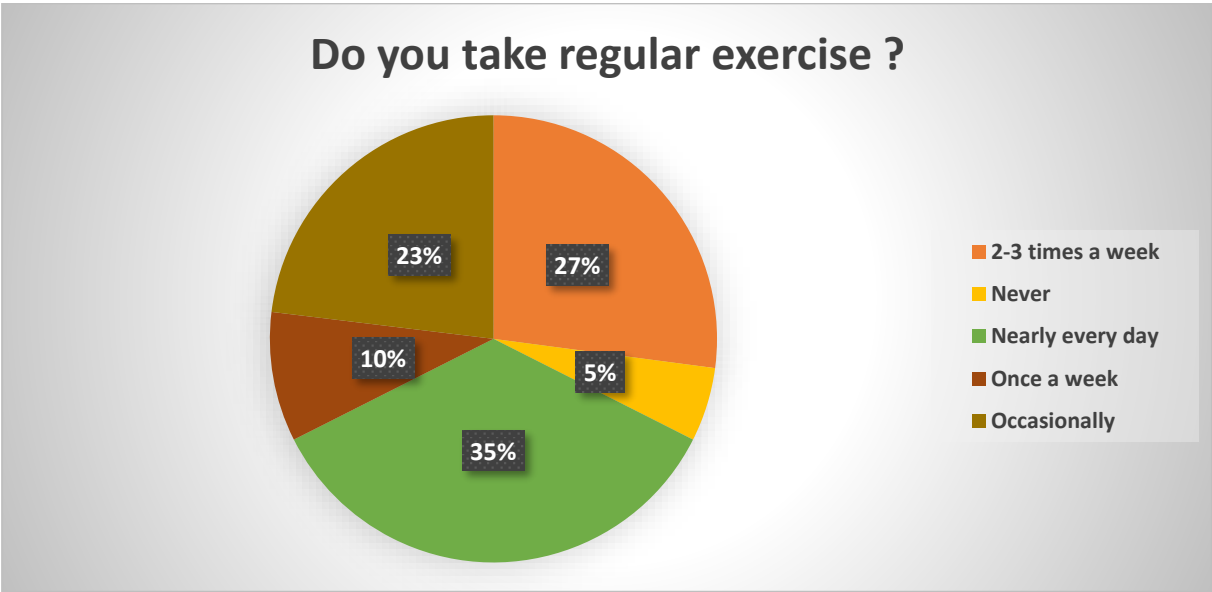
Nearly two thirds (62%) took exercise 2-3 times a week or more.

Over a third (35%) said they exercise nearly every day.

Nearly a quarter (23%) said they exercise only occasionally.

Only 10% took exercise just once a week.

Only 5% never took regular exercise.



Outlook on Life.

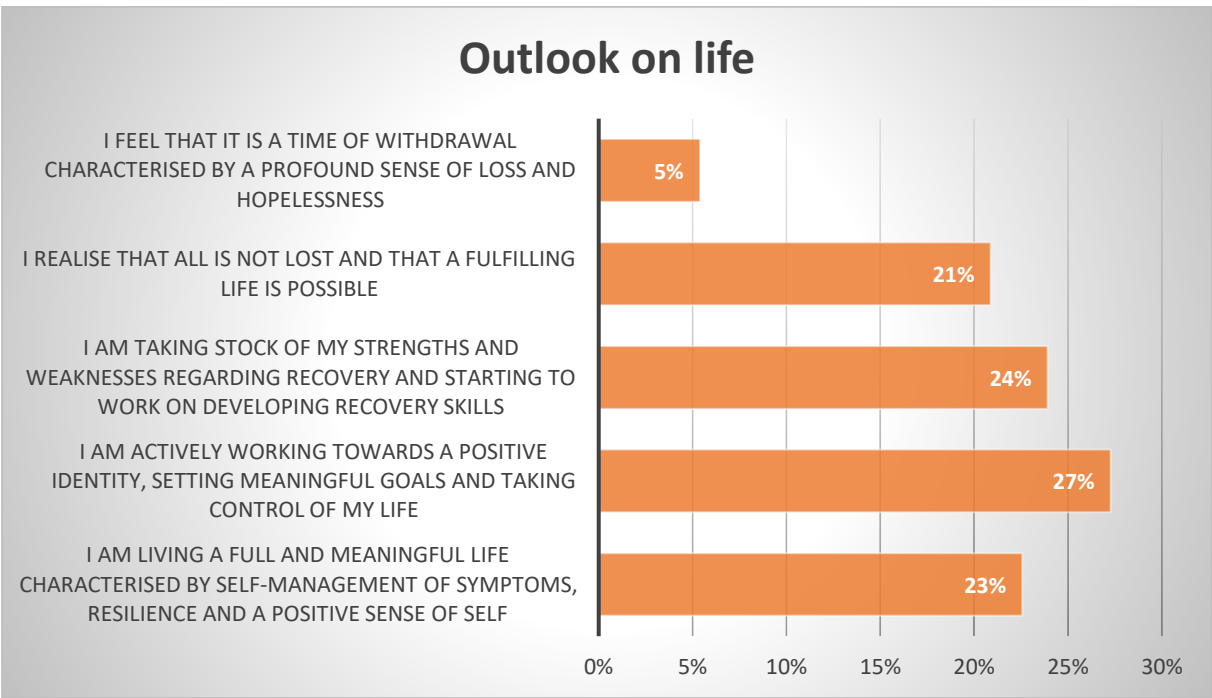
We asked respondents to characterize their current outlook on life.

Nearly half (45%) had some hope or were starting to work on developing recovery skills.

Over a quarter (27%) said they were actively working towards goals and taking control of their lives.

Nearly a quarter (23%) described themselves as living a full life, being positive, feeling resilient and actively self-managing their symptoms.

One in twenty (5%) had a deep feeling of loss and despair.



Optimism towards the future.

We asked people to characterize their optimism towards the future.

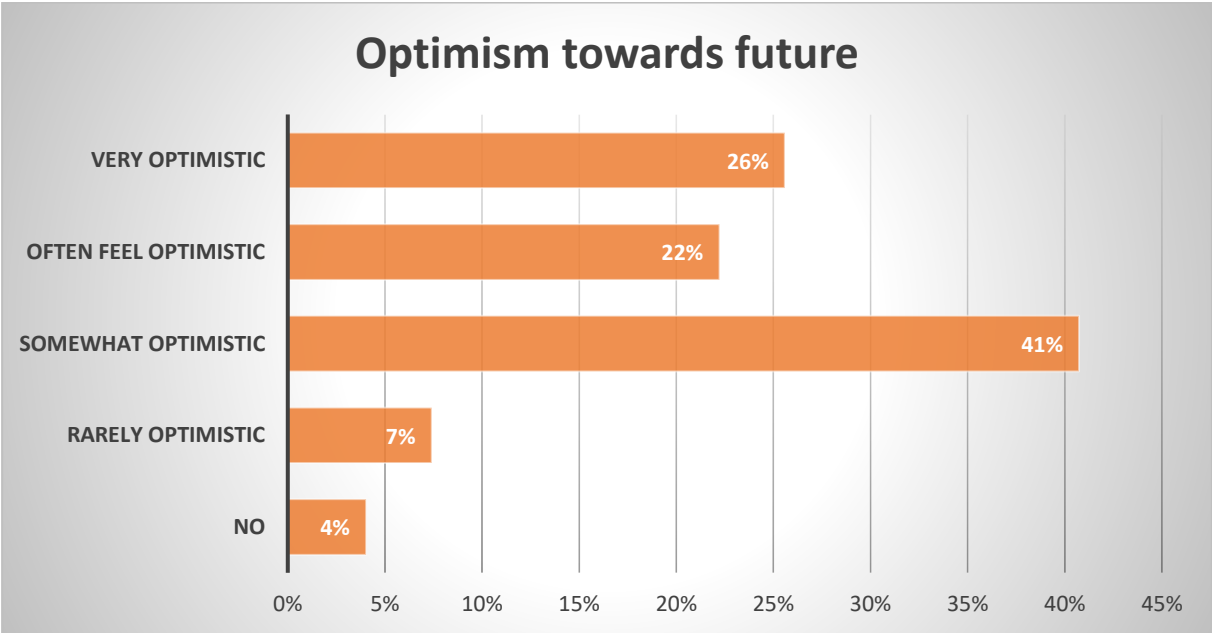
The vast majority (89%) expressed at least some optimism for the future.

Nealy half (48%) felt optimism often or better.

Over a quarter (26%) were very optimistic.

Over a fifth (22%) often felt optimistic.

Only one in nine (11%) said they were rarely optimistic or not optimistic at all.



What Grow has helped with.

We asked has Grow helped with any of the following.

Nearly two thirds (64%) reported help with 3 or more categories.

More than half (51%) reported help in recovery from mental illness.

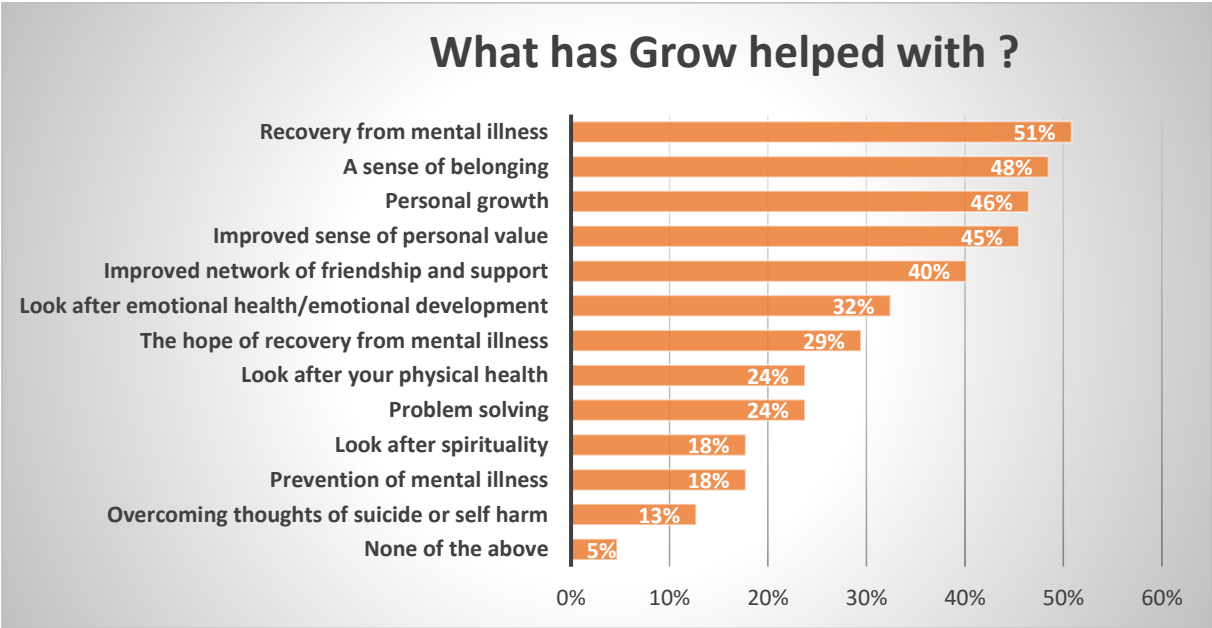
More than 40% reported an improved sense of belonging, personal growth and/or an improved sense of personal value.

Some 40% reported having an improved network of friendship and support.

Three in ten (29%) reported a hope for recovery from mental illness.

Some 28% reported help with 5 or more categories.

Only 5% of respondents found nothing listed they had gained help with through Grow.

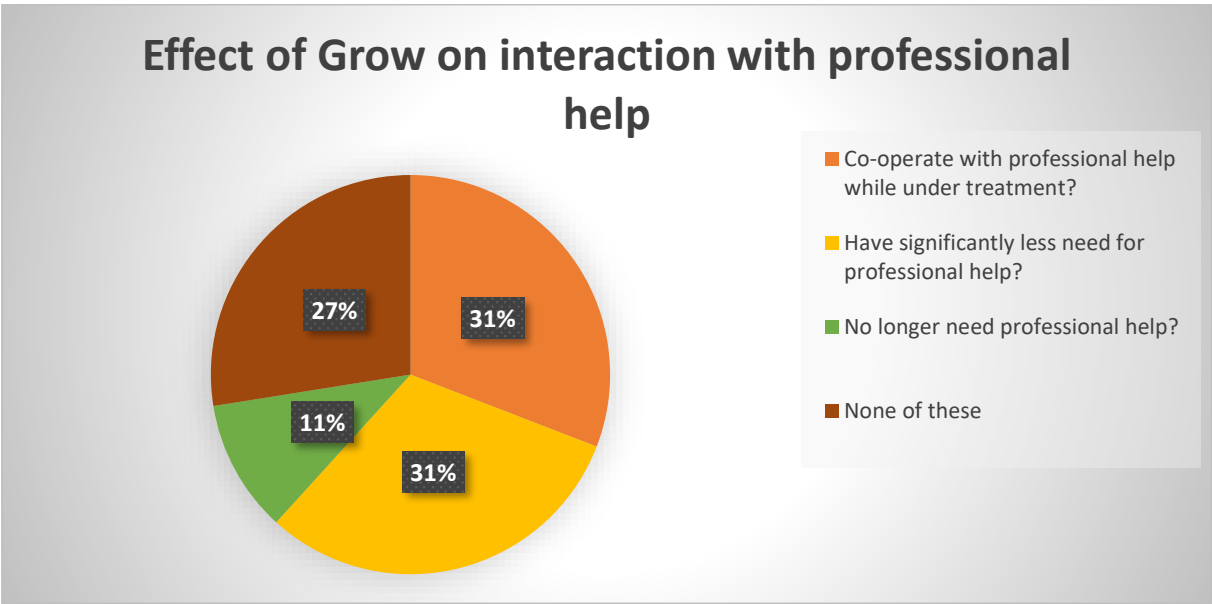


Grow and professional health services.

We asked how Grow has affected respondents' interaction with health professionals.

Over 40% had reduced or no need for professional help.

Nearly a third (31%) found co-operation with help professional while with Grow.



Rating Grow's help.

We asked people to rate the help they have received through Grow.

Nearly all (98%) rated help as at least good.

Over half (55%) rated help as excellent.

Only 2% rated help as fair.

