

MHFF Tas: 2019 Survey for friends, families and unpaid carers of people with mental ill health

*“Communication. Information. Support. Respect.
Empathy. Encouragement.”*

- *Survey response to question 20*

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Demographic Data:

- There were 25 participants in 2019, a slight decrease from the 2018 survey which included 29 participants.
- Almost all (96%) unpaid carers who responded were female (F = 24, M = 1).
- Most carers (68%) were between 45-64 years old (17 participants); the second most common age group (28%) were between 25-44 years old (7 participants); only one participant (4%) was older than 65 and there were none under 24 years of age.
- The majority of respondents (56%) live in southern Tasmania (14 participants), with 6 people living in northern Tasmania (24%), 3 people living in the north-west of the state (12%), and 2 people living on the east coast (8%). There were no respondents from the west coast or outside of Tasmania.

Key Findings:

Employment

- Most carers (56%) were employed in addition to their caring role in either full time (24%) or part time (32%) work.
- All but one carer (96%) stated that their caring role affects their ability to look for work to some degree, with 32% identifying a significant impact.
- However, only 12% of respondents who were unemployed reported looking for work, whilst 16% were either not looking for work or retired.
- *There were 4 participants (16%) who responded 'other', including casual work, permanent part time work, and caring full time, which could be considered as part of the above categories.*

Study

- Although most carers (60%) were not involved in study, 24% of respondents were currently studying either part time or full time (in combined face to face and online courses) with another 16% hoping to enrol in the future.
- Of those currently studying, 85% were studying courses that are part of the health, aged or community sector.
- One participant specifically mentioned dropping out of their community services course due to their caring demands.
- All respondents acknowledged that their caring role has at least some impact on their ability to study/start studying, with 32% claiming either 'a lot' or 'a great deal'.

Living arrangements

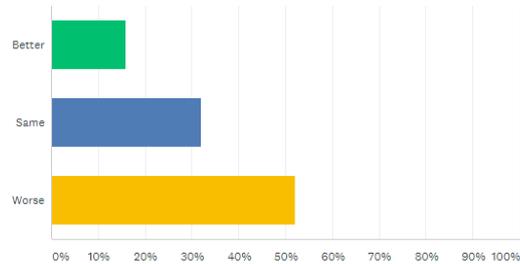
- Most carers (68%) live with the person they support, including 36% that changed their living arrangements to provide better support. A further 8% are considering changing their living arrangements in the future.

Carer Health

- Although most carers only care for one person (64%) there are still some who care for multiple people (36%), typically around two or three people total.
- Two respondents indicated that this was either due to their work within the disability sector or by seeking to provide respite foster care. This highlights the difficulties around the use of the term “carer”, rather than family/friend.

How would you describe your current physical health compared to 12 months ago?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0

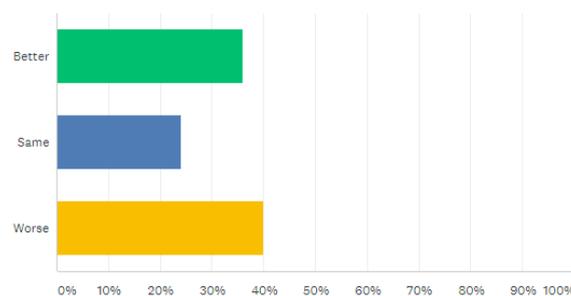


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Better	16.00% 4
▼ Same	32.00% 8
▼ Worse	52.00% 13
TOTAL	25

- A significant proportion of carers (44%) reported their physical health had worsened in the previous six months, which increased to 52% from the previous 12 months. Few carers indicated their physical health had improved.
- Although many carers (40%) indicated that their mental health had declined in the previous 6-12 months, others reported an improvement in their mental health from the previous 12 months (36%) compared to the previous 6 months (28%).

How would you describe your current mental health compared to 12 months ago?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Better	36.00% 9
▼ Same	24.00% 6
▼ Worse	40.00% 10
TOTAL	25

Question 5: What impact does your support/carer role have on your study of your ability to take up study?

Question 6: Does the person you support/care for live with you?

Question 7: Have you changed your housing circumstances to better support the person?

Question 8: Is the person you support/care for registered with the NDIS?

Question 9: If not, what support if any does the person you support/care for receive?

Question 10: Do you support/care for more than one person?

Question 11: How would you describe your current mental health compared to 6 months ago?

Question 12: How would you describe your current mental health compared to 12 months ago?

Question 13: How would you describe your current physical health compared to 6 months ago?

Question 14: How would you describe your current physical health compared to 12 months ago?

Question 15: What, if any, impact has your support/carers role had on your own mental health?

Question 16: Do you attend a support group for families, supporters and unpaid carers of someone living with a mental illness?

Question 17: What can be done better? Tell us how your needs can be better met by government.

Question 18: What can be done better? Tell us how your needs can be better met by Mental Health Services and GPs.

Question 19: What can be done better? Tell us how your needs can be better met by Mental Health Carers Tasmania [now Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania].

Question 20: What can be done better? Tell us how your needs can be better met by other services.

Question 21: Age?

Question 22: Gender?

Question 23: Where do you live in Tasmania?

Question 24: Postcode?

Question 25: Competition entry.

Appendix B: Question responses

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answered</i>	<i>Skipped</i>
1	25	0
2	25	0
3	25	0
4	8	17
5	25	0
6	25	0
7	25	0

8	25	0
9	18	7
10	25	0
11	25	0
12	25	0
13	25	0
14	25	0
15	20	5
16	25	0
17	22	3
18	22	3
19	20	5
20	14	11
21	25	0
22	25	0
23	25	0
24	25	0
25	20	5

- *Total participants = 25*