

# State of the Rural Nation

A Big Picture Report prepared for  
Country TV & Bayer New Zealand

August 2018

*Rural Consumer Insights  
Mental Health*



COUNTRY TV

Big picture

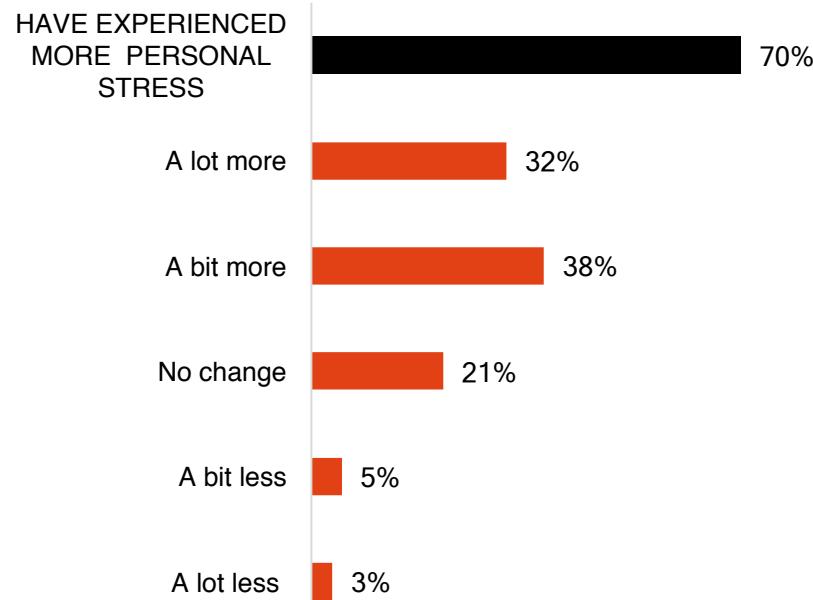
# ***Mental health in rural NZ***

## **KEY FINDINGS**

- Seven in ten people feel more stressed over the last 5 years (70%) – Mainly due to pressures around finances, employment and work/life balance
- Young people in particular are feeling pressure around work/livelihood issues and personal relationships
- Rural Dwellers are also feeling stressed around environmental factors more keenly than urban dwellers
- Almost everyone experiences stress or anxiety from time to time (93%), and half of us find it difficult to talk about with others (52%) Nearly half of these people feel that there is a stigma surrounding mental health which would cause them to be judged negatively (47%)
- Less than half would consult/talk to a health professional if they were experiencing stress or anxiety (39%)
- People living rurally are significantly less likely than urban dwellers to consider talking to health professional if they experiencing stress or anxiety (32% vs 54%)
- Most agree that there are limited resources available rurally for those suffering from mental health – and one in five claims they struggle to access mental health resources
- Interestingly, younger people are significantly more likely to feel that mental health is an issue in rural communities

# Seven in ten people feel more stress over the last 5 years – This is due to pressures around finances, employment and work/life balance

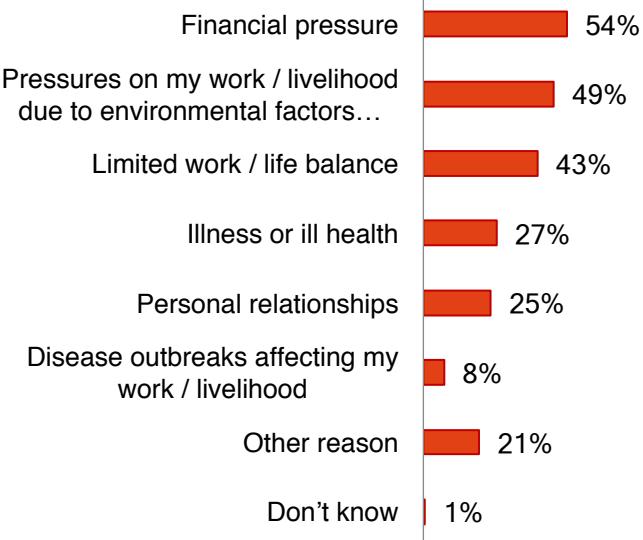
*Overall, would you say you have experienced more or less personal stress in the last five years?*



•Those aged 18-39 are feeling most stressed – 85% agree they have experienced more stress over recent years, vs 67% of those aged 40+

Among those who have experienced more personal stress in the last five years: *Why is that?*

## Reasons have experienced more personal stress



•Indications that men feel the pressure of a limited work – life balance more than women (52% of those who have experienced more stress feel this is a factor, vs only 38% of women)

# Young people are feeling pressure around work/livelihood issues and personal relationships

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	Aged 18-39 years	Aged 40-54 years	Aged 55+ years
I have not experienced more personal stress in the last 5 years	15%	28%	36%
I have experienced more personal stress, due to:	85%	72%	64%
• Pressures on my work / livelihood due to environmental factors (i.e. drought, floods, hail)	49%	37%	28%
• Financial pressure	47%	52%	27%
• Limited work / life balance	34%	44%	21%
• Personal relationships	30%	16%	14%
• Illness or ill health	21%	15%	20%
• Disease outbreaks affecting my work / livelihood	6%	5%	5%
• Other reason(s): [see list of verbatims]	15%	12%	15%

*Q: Overall, would you say you have experienced more or less personal stress in the last five years? Why is that?*

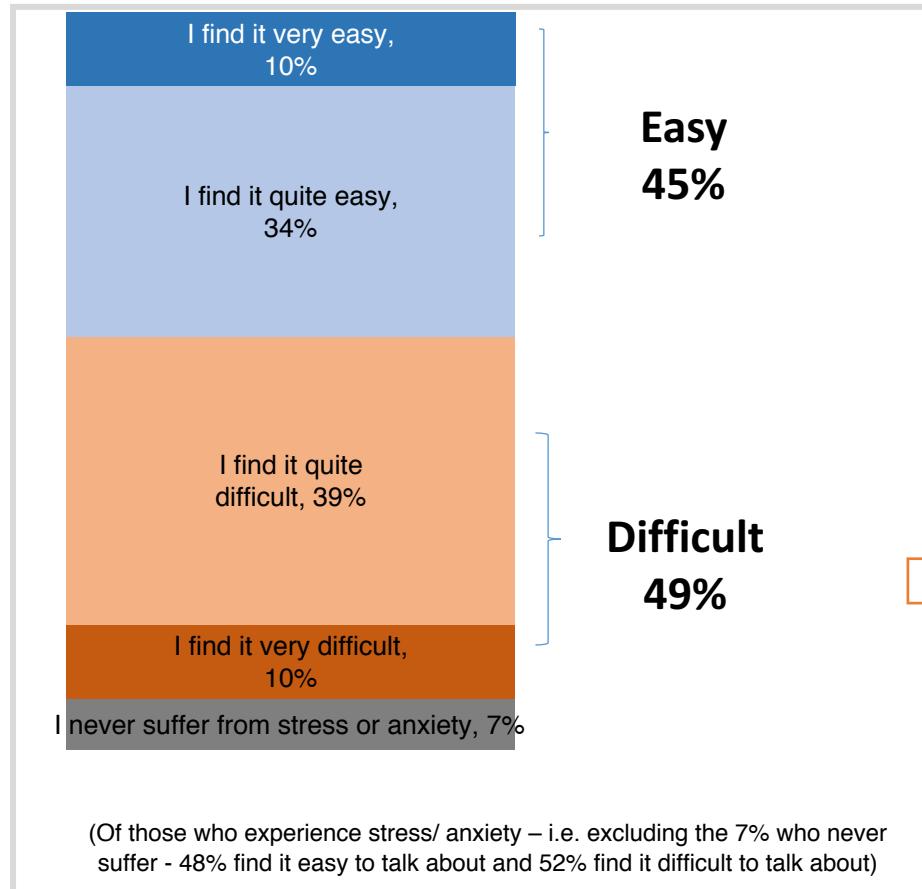
# Not surprisingly, Rural Dwellers are feeling stress around environmental factors a lot more keenly than Urban Dwellers

	Urban dwellers	Rural/ minor urban dwellers
<b>I have not experienced more personal stress in the last 5 years</b>	29%	30%
<b>I have experienced more personal stress, due to:</b>	71%	70%
• Pressures on my work / livelihood due to environmental factors (i.e. drought, floods, hail)	26%	37%
• Financial pressure	43%	35%
• Limited work / life balance	31%	30%
• Personal relationships	21%	15%
• Illness or ill health	19%	19%
• Disease outbreaks affecting my work / livelihood	17%	14%
• Other reason(s): [see list of verbatims]	6%	5%

*Q: Overall, would you say you have experienced more or less personal stress in the last five years? Why is that?*

# Almost everyone experiences stress or anxiety from time to time, and half of us find it difficult to talk about with others. Nearly half of these people feel that there is a stigma surrounding mental health which will cause them to be judged negatively

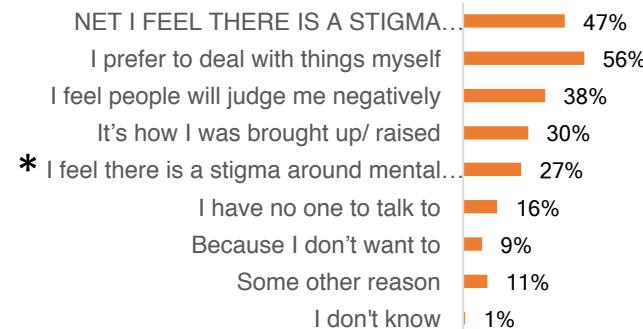
*In general, do you find it easy to talk to others about stress or anxiety when you are experiencing them?*



- No significant differences across different demographic groups

**ASKED OF THOSE WHO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO TALK TO OTHERS:**  
*Why do you find it difficult to talk to others about any stress or anxiety you might be experiencing?*

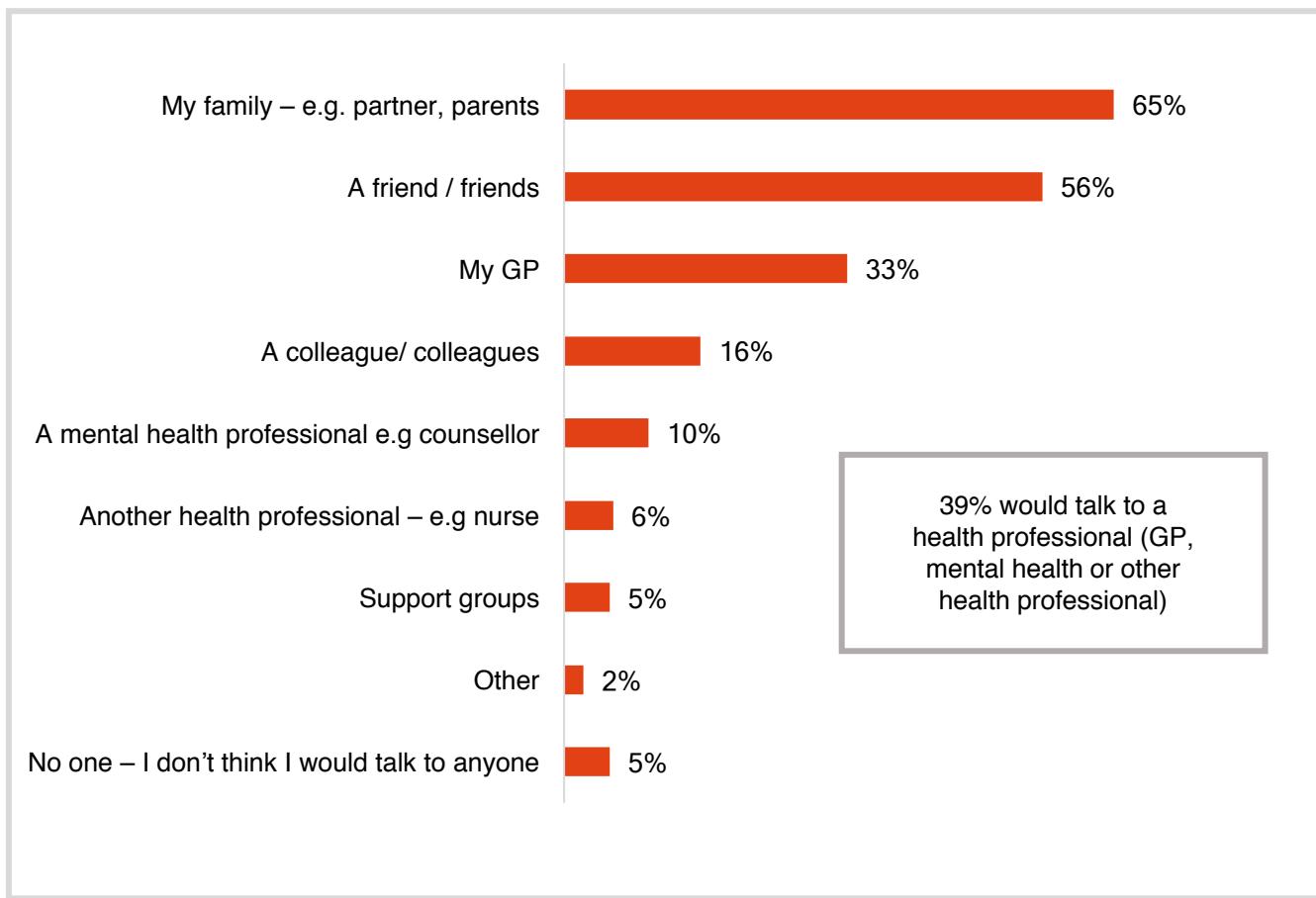
## Reasons I find it difficult to talk to others about any stress or anxiety I might be experiencing



*\* I feel there is a stigma around mental health/ that it is not acceptable for people like me to talk about their feelings*

# Less than half of people would consult/ talk to a health professional if there were experiencing stress or anxiety

*Q. Who would you be likely to talk to if you were experiencing stress or anxiety? ASKED ALL*



# People living rurally are significantly less likely to consider talking to a health professional if they were experiencing stress or anxiety

*Q. Who would you be likely to talk to if you were experiencing stress or anxiety?*

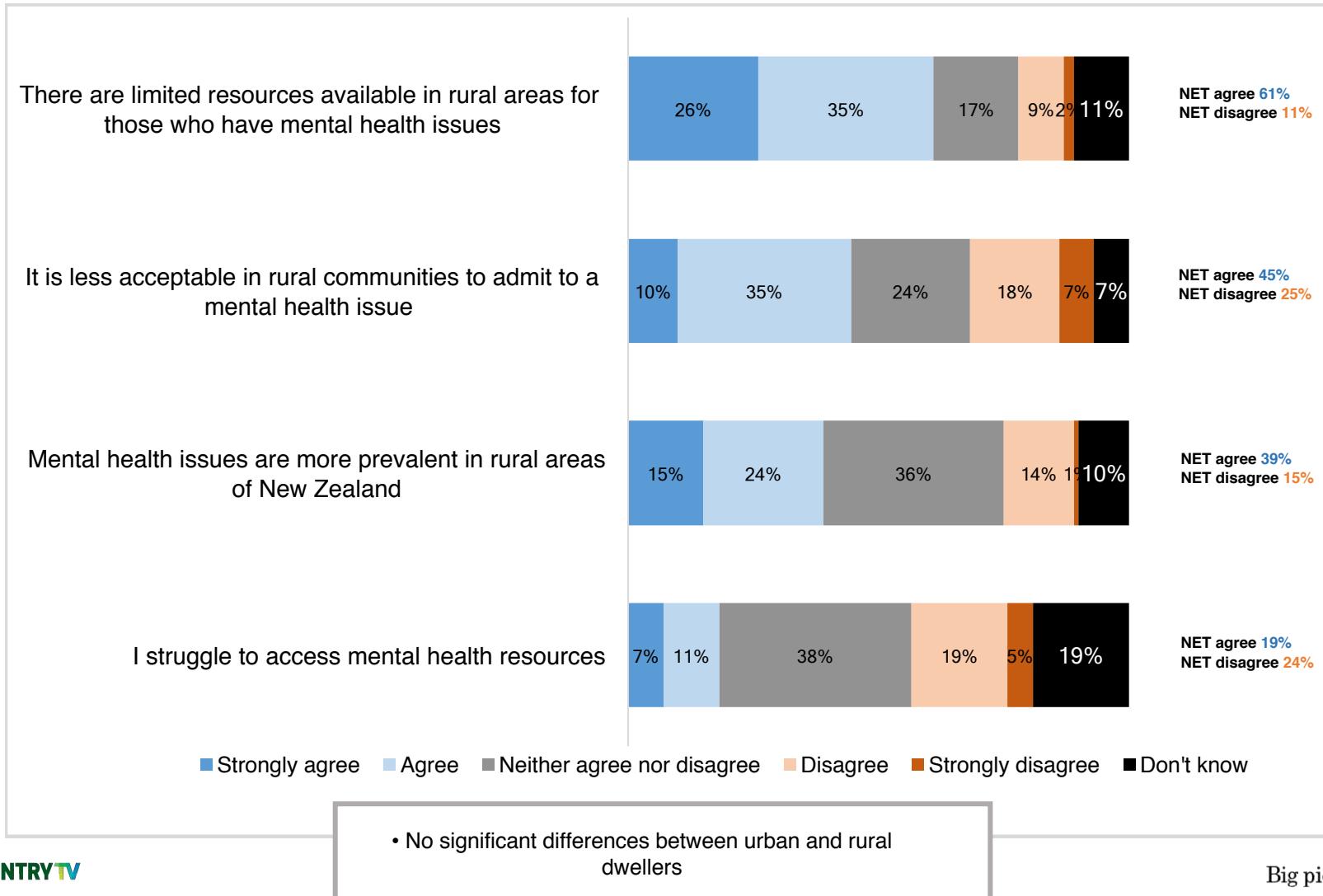
I WOULD TALK TO....	Urban dwellers	Rural/ minor urban dwellers
<b>NET A health professional (GP, mental or other health professionals)</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>32%</b>
• My family/ partner	61%	67%
• A friend/ friends	53%	57%
• My GP	46%	28%
• A colleague/ colleagues	22%	14%
• A mental health professional e.g. counsellor	18%	7%
• Another health professional e.g. nurse	7%	5%
• Support groups	7%	5%
• No one – I don't think I would talk to anyone	4%	6%



Significant differences

# Most agree that there are limited resources available rurally for those suffering from mental health – and one in five claims they struggle to access mental health resources

Q. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? **ASKED ALL**



## Interestingly, younger people are significantly more likely to feel that mental health is an issue in rural communities

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	Aged 18-39 years	Aged 40-54 years	Aged 55+ years
• I AGREE THAT "Mental health issues are more prevalent in rural areas of NZ"	53%	40%	33%

*Q: Overall, would you say you have experienced more or less personal stress in the last five years? Why is that?*



## Do you have anything else you want to add about mental health issues in rural New Zealand?



*“People are starting to talk more openly about mental health and depression which is the best thing that could happen. It's such a taboo subject amongst rural communities, a lot of people don't want to talk about it as they may think they are seen as weak. Yet talking about it is the strongest way of dealing with it”*

*“I think it is really easy for a GP to prescribe medication for depression to people in rural areas. But where I live I have to drive 2 hours if I wanted to attend counselling or any type of therapy, it also means my medication is not being monitored as it would be if I lived nearer to resources.”*