

# 2022 NATIONAL CARER SURVEY

## Caring for a person living with mental illness

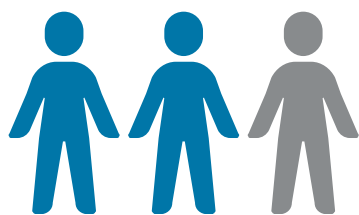
Fact sheet 4, May 2023

The 2022 National Carer Survey heard from a total of 6,825 carers from across Australia, of whom 1,789 (26.1%) were caring for someone living with mental illness. The majority (84.8%) of these carers identified as female. They were slightly younger on average than other respondents, with an average age of 56.5 years. Just under 1 in 5 were born overseas; 1 in 10 spoke a language other than English at home and 3.7% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The 2022 National Carer Survey was conducted from June to July 2022 by Carers NSW with the support of the State and Territory Carer Organisations and funding from the NSW Government. A carer is any individual who provides care and support to a family member or friend who lives with a disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age.

### About the people they care for

The carers of people living with mental illness who responded to the Survey were most commonly caring for their child, including adult children (61.7%) or their partner (32.7%). Just over 1 in 4 were caring for a child or young person, and around 1 in 3 for someone aged 65+. Nearly 3 in 4 respondents reported caring for a person who also lives with disability.



**2 in 3**  
were the only carer

### About the caring experience

While 53% cared for only one person, carers of someone living with mental illness were more likely than other carers to be caring for multiple people. They spent an average of 94.7 hours per week caring, with 42.8% providing 24/7 care. Almost 2 in 3 had been caring for 10+ years and the majority (82.6%) were living with the person they care for. Nearly 2 in 3 did not receive any support with providing care from other family members or friends.

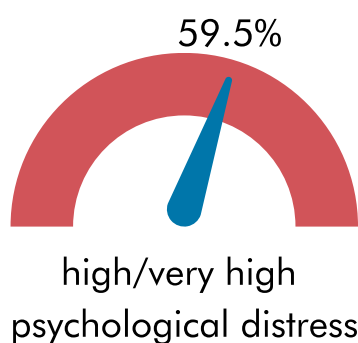
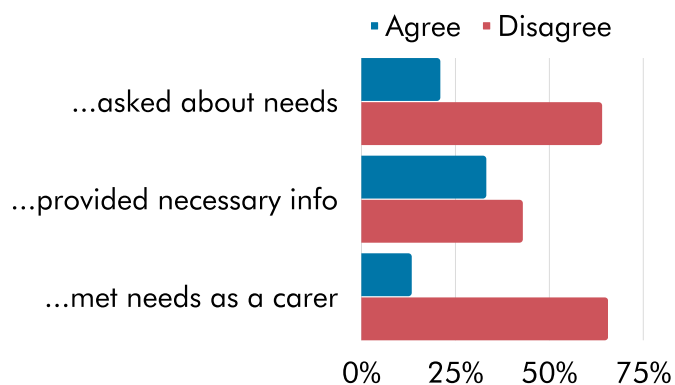
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## Experiences accessing services

The Survey asked carers about their experiences accessing services with or on behalf of the person they care for. Most carers of people living with mental illness (79.8%) were caring for someone accessing mental health services. Approximately half were caring for someone accessing disability services, around 1 in 4 were caring for someone accessing aged care services, and just over 1 in 10 were not accessing any services.

More than 2 in 3 carers reported they were not asked about their needs, and only around half reported they were involved in treatment discussion and planning. Only 1 in 3 felt that they were given all the information they need as a carer, and only 13.4% reported that the service met their needs as a carer. The most commonly reported service issues were long wait times to access services (48.2%), interruptions as a result of COVID-19 (47.1%), difficulty finding information (37.7%), and service costs being too high (33.5%).

### Mental health services...



## Key challenges

Carers for someone living with mental illness were more likely than others to report impacts of caring on paid work and 70.9% reported at least one experience of financial stress,. Nearly 2 in 3 were socially isolated and the majority (59.5%) had high or very high psychological distress. Carers for someone living with mental illness also reported lower overall wellbeing than other carers.

### Key points

- Carers for someone living with mental illness responding to the 2022 National Carer Survey were most commonly caring for their child (including adult children)
- They generally had long term caring roles involving many hours of care per week with little support from others
- Carers of people living with mental illness reported higher psychological distress, financial stress and social isolation than other carers, as well as lower wellbeing