

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

The state of the nation two years on, and

Special feature on working Australians

October 2013 Lynne Casey PhD MAPS



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01 > SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The *Stress and Wellbeing in Australia Survey 2013* had two main aims this year:

- To assess the stress and wellbeing of the Australian population two years on from the initial administration, and
- To conduct a more in-depth exploration of the stress and wellbeing of working Australians.

1.1 The stress and wellbeing of Australians two years on...

Overall, while the pattern of findings was largely consistent with those reported in 2012 and 2011, the key findings of the *Stress and Wellbeing Survey 2013* indicated that Australians had significantly lower levels of wellbeing and significantly higher levels of stress and distress, and depressive and anxiety symptoms than in previous years.

Levels of wellbeing

- In 2013, Australians reported significantly lower levels of wellbeing compared with findings in 2012 and 2011.
- Older Australians (66-75 years old) continued to report much higher levels of wellbeing compared with younger Australians (particularly the 18-25 year age group).
- Similar to previous years, there were no differences between males and females on levels of wellbeing.

Levels of stress and distress

- In 2013, Australians reported significantly higher levels of stress and distress compared with findings in 2012 and 2011.
- Significantly more Australians reported moderate to severe levels of distress compared with findings of 2012.
- Similar to previous years' findings, younger adults continued to report much higher levels of stress and distress compared with older Australians.

Experience of depressive and anxiety symptoms

- In 2013, Australians reported significantly higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with findings in 2012 and 2011.
- Almost one in seven Australians reported depressive symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range.
- More than one in ten Australians reported anxiety symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range.
- Similar to previous years' findings, younger adults continued to report much higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with older Australians.
- Unemployed Australians and students reported the highest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms.



Causes of stress

- Financial issues remain the leading cause of stress amongst Australians with more than half of Australians identifying finances as a cause of stress
- Almost one in four Australians reported mental health issues as a source of stress, up slightly from last year
- Family and financial issues were the tied leading sources of stress for women while the leading source of stress for men was issues related to personal finance
- Similar to last year's findings, the prevalence of most causes of stress significantly decreased as people got older.

Strategies for managing stress

- Watching TV or movies, spending time with friends or family, listening to music, focusing on the positives and reading remain the most frequently cited strategies used for managing stress.
- Significantly more Australians reported visiting social networking sites, eating, or sleeping more to help manage their stress compared with findings in 2012.
- Similar to last year findings, four in five Australians rated their use of stress management strategies as moderately to highly effective.

Impact of stress on physical and mental health

- Similar to findings in 2012, just over seven in ten Australians reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health, with almost one in five reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- In contrast to findings in 2012, significantly more Australians were reporting that current stress was having at least some impact on their mental health with one in five reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.
- Similar to findings in 2012, Australians who had recently gone through a family or relationship breakdown were significantly more likely than the rest of the sample of Australians to perceive their stress levels as having a strong impact on their mental and physical health.

Help-seeking behaviour for managing stress

- Australians were most likely to seek help to manage their stress from family, friends and general practitioners.
- Similar to previous years' findings, almost one in five Australians reported seeking help from psychologists or other mental health professionals to manage their stress.

1.2 Psychological health of Australians in the workplace

Workplace stress and wellbeing

- Working Australians reported significantly lower overall workplace wellbeing in 2013 (as measured by the Workplace subscale of the UK wellbeing scale) compared with findings in 2012 and 2011.
- Working Australians reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction compared with previous years.
- Working Australians reported significantly lower levels of interest in their job compared with 2012.
- Similar to previous years' findings, almost half of working Australians rated issues in the workplace as a source of stress.

Workplace factors and psychological health and wellbeing

Working Australians were asked about a number of workplace factors that have been shown to represent features of a psychologically healthy workplace.

- Half of working Australians reported that their employer valued their contribution and cared about their wellbeing
- More than four in five Australians reported being clear about what is expected of them in their work role
- Three in five Australians reported having sufficient opportunities for learning and development
- Less than half of working Australians reported that they regularly received relevant feedback and recognition for their work
- Almost seven in ten working Australians reported feeling very involved in their job
- Seven in ten Australians reported that their employer was serious about safety at work
- Six in ten working Australians reported that their employer supports staff with physical injuries while just half of working Australians reported that their employer supports staff with mental health issues
- Working women were significantly more likely than working men to report that their immediate managers were available to help them when they needed support to do their job.
- Working Australians who were positively aligned with these workplace factors (that is, those who reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the workplace factor statements) reported significantly higher levels of wellbeing, lower levels of stress and distress, and lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than working Australians who were not positively aligned with these workplace factors.



02 > SURVEY REPORT

2.1 Introduction

This year marks the third year the APS has commissioned a ‘state-of-the-nation’ survey on a representative¹ sample of adult Australians to examine the levels of stress and wellbeing experienced by Australians. While everyone experiences stress at times, research evidence indicates that excessive amounts of stress have been linked to impaired functioning across a range of areas including home, work life, relationships, and physical and psychological health. Periodic assessment of the stress and wellbeing levels within the Australian community provides important information to understand and enhance the psychological and physical health of the population.

The findings of the survey are launched as part of APS’s National Psychology Week held each year in the second week in November and forms an important part of APS’s commitment to promoting community mental health awareness and psychological wellbeing.

Findings of the *Stress and Wellbeing in Australia Survey 2012* and *2011* found a similar pattern of findings with Australians experiencing levels of stress and distress comparable to other Western countries, and younger adults reporting the highest levels of stress. Last year’s survey included some additional questions around the impact of stress on mental and physical wellbeing, as well as exploring the stress and wellbeing of two ‘at-risk’ groups: carers of an ageing or chronically ill person, and people with chronic health conditions (such as diabetes and arthritis)².

The *Stress and Wellbeing in Australia Survey 2013* had two main aims:

- To assess the stress and wellbeing of the Australian population two years on from the initial administration to allow year-on-year comparisons, and
- To conduct a more in-depth exploration of the psychological health of Australians in the workplace.

A focus on working Australians and workplaces was identified as an important area for inquiry in light of the current post GFC³ economic climate and the growing recognition of the role and responsibilities that workplaces have on employee productivity, engagement, and health and wellbeing.

¹ See page 8 under ‘Survey methodology’ for more detail on the methodology undertaken to obtain a representative sample of Australians.

² See the *Stress and wellbeing in Australia in 2012: A state-of-the-nation survey report* available to download at www.psychology.org.au/NPW

³ GFC = Global financial crisis

2.2 Survey methodology

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) in conjunction with an online research company conducted the survey of a sample of Australians. The survey participants were comprised of approximately equal numbers of men and women and were representative of the Australian adult population (18 and above) for age, gender, geographical location and work status (matched on Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]) as shown in Tables 1-4⁴.

A total of 1548 people completed the online survey, which was conducted over a two and a half week period from 18 July to 5 August 2013.

TABLE 1 Gender of survey participants and ABS data comparison

	Survey participants	ABS
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%

TABLE 2 Location of survey participants and ABS data comparison

	Survey participants	ABS
VIC	26%	25%
NSW	33%	33%
QLD	18%	20%
SA	8%	8%
WA	10%	10%
TAS	3%	2%
ACT	2%	2%
NT	1%	1%

⁴ Due to the survey only being available online, it is acknowledged that while participants were matched against APS statistics on relevant demographic variables, the sample is restricted to online data gathering processes only.



TABLE 3 Age range of survey participants and ABS data comparison

	Survey participants	ABS
18-25 yrs	13%	14%
26-35 yrs	19%	18%
36-45 yrs	21%	19%
46-55 yrs	18%	18%
56-65 yrs	14%	14%
66-75 yrs	10%	9%
76+ yrs	5%	8%

TABLE A4 Work status of survey participants and ABS data comparison

	Survey participants	ABS
Engaged in paid work of some kind	65%	65%

Psychological health of Australians in the workplace

Drawing from the complete survey population of 1548, a sub-sample of 999 working Australians was identified. The working Australian sub-sample was defined as those survey participants who engaged in paid work of some kind (61% employed full-time; 30% employed part-time; 9% other). The sub-sample was comprised of approximately equal numbers of men and women and although not methodologically sampled to match on ABS statistics, a review of ABS statistics⁵ from the May 2012 census provided a reference point for several of the demographic variables of the sub-sample of working Australians including age, gender, proportion of full versus part-time working Australians, and occupation, as shown in Tables 5-10.

⁵ Note that the ABS's employment figures are expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 or above and engaged in paid work of some kind; Full-time workers are defined as employed persons who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs), or those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more in the survey reference week. Part-time workers are defined as employed persons who usually work less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs), and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week (ABS, 2013).

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TABLE 5 *Gender of working Australians and ABS data comparison*

Gender	Survey participants	ABS
Male	50.7	49.9
Female	49.3	50.1

TABLE 6 *Age of working Australians and ABS data comparison*

Age	Survey participants	ABS
18-25	13.3	15-19 20-24
		6.1 10.6
26-35	23.4	25-34
		22.6
36-45	23.6	35-44
		22.3
46-55	20.7	45-54
		21.6
56-65	14.2	55-64
		13.9
66 or above	4.7	65 or above
		3

TABLE 7 *Gross annual income range of working Australians*

Gross annual income range	%
Less than \$15,000	8.6
\$15,000 to \$30,000	14
\$31,000 to \$60,000	31.6
\$61,000 to \$90,000	23.6
\$91,000 to \$120,000	13.9
\$121,000 to \$150,000	5.1
More than \$150,000	3.2



TABLE 8 Primary occupation of working Australians and ABS data comparison

Primary occupation	Survey participants	ABS
Managers	13	12.8
Professionals	27.4	22.2
Technicians and Trades Workers	7.8	14.7
Community and Personal Service Workers	5.5	9.5
Clerical and Administrative Workers	18.5	14.7
Sales Workers	9.3	9.3
Machinery Operators and Drivers	2.8	6.6
Labourers	5.7	10.1
Other	9.9	-

TABLE 9 Average number of work hours per week of working Australians

Average number of work hours per week	%
1-10 hours	11
11-20 hours	13.3
21-34 hours	18
35-44 hours	44.4
45 hours or above	13.2

TABLE 10 Proportion of full-time vs. part-time working Australians and ABS data comparison

Full-time/Part-time employment	Survey participants	ABS
Full-time employees	60.6	63.1
Part-time employees	30.0	36.9

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The survey

This year's online survey included 37 questions comprising the core survey questions enabling the re-administration of last year's survey, and nine additional questions focused on workplace factors as part of a special feature on the psychological health of working Australians.

The questions incorporated standardised measures of stress, wellbeing, anxiety and depression, as well a number of additional questions.

Standardised measures

The stress and wellbeing levels of survey participants were assessed using the following validated and standardised measures which were used in both the 2012 and 2011 survey.

- The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Score (WEMWBS) (Tennant et al., 2007)
- The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983)
- The Kessler K10 Index (Coombs, 2005)
- The *Anxiety and Depression* Indices of the DASS21 (Lovibond, & Lovibond, 1995)
- The Workplace sub-scale of the UK Well-being Measure (Huppert et al., 2009)

Additional questions

A number of specific questions were included to examine the following issues.

- Relationship to demographic variables, including work status, level of education, level of income, marital status, country of origin, cultural identity, geographical location and living arrangements.
- Major sources of stress
- Strategies used to manage stress
- Perceived impact of current stress on physical and mental health (added in 2012)
- Service utilisation to help manage stress, e.g., seek help from a GP
- Caregiver status and perceived adequacy of support (added in 2012)
- Presence of one or more chronic health conditions (added in 2012)
- Workplace satisfaction, and
- The psychological health of Australians in the workplace (added in 2013).

Data analysis

The data presented in this report has been selected on the basis of a preliminary analysis of noteworthy findings.



Demographic variables

Analyses were run for the total sample and across all key demographic variables with the exception of cultural identity⁶. No significant findings emerged for geographical location on any of the key variables of interest.

Preliminary analyses for age, gender, work status, and marital status were significant and sample sizes between groups were sufficient to permit reporting and inclusion in further data exploration⁷.

Level of overall wellbeing

The level of overall wellbeing was derived by summing the scores of the 14 items of the WEMWBS. Item scores on the WEMWBS range from 1-5 with the total scale scores ranging from 14-70. Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing (Tennant et al., 2007)

Level of stress

The level of stress was derived by summing the scores of the 11 scale items of the PSS following reverse scoring of four positively stated items of the scale. Item scores on the PSS range from 0-4 with the total scale scores ranging from 0-44. Higher scores indicate higher levels of stress (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983).

Level of distress

The level of distress was derived by summing the scores of the 10 items of the K-10. Item scores on the K-10 range from 1-5 with the total scale scores ranging from 10-50 and higher scores indicating greater psychological distress. Scores of the K-10 were further categorised into *normal*, *moderate*, and *severe* levels of distress using the interpretation guidelines provided in the K10 manual to assess the impact on individuals' distress on functioning via categorisation (Coombs, 2005).

Level of depression and anxiety

The level of depressive and anxiety symptoms were derived by summing the seven item scores for each of the depression and anxiety subscales of the DASS-21. Scale scores were then multiplied by two to obtain the final score. These scores were also classified into *normal*, *mild*, *moderate*, *severe* or *extremely severe* categories in accordance with the DASS-21 manual (Lovibond, & Lovibond, 1995).

Comparisons between 2013, 2012 and 2011 data

To make comparisons between data gathered in 2013, 2012 and 2011 survey data, one-sample t-test procedures were performed to determine whether the mean levels of variables of interest were significantly different at the 95% confidence interval.

⁶ Cultural identity requires additional individual coding which is beyond the scope of the initial analyses of the survey.

⁷ Preliminary analyses on several other demographic variables such as living arrangements and income levels while producing significant results on a couple of the variables of interest, the small and unequal sample sizes in various cells precluded further statistical analyses on these variables.

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Comparisons between groups

For comparisons between different groups (e.g., males/females, different age groups, with or without recent relationship breakdown), a combination of parametric and non-parametric statistical techniques were applied. These included omnibus F-tests for one-way anovas for independent variables of interest—e.g., testing for effect of age on level of wellbeing, and Games-Howell multiple comparison tests to test for sub-group differences—e.g., work status, as this test does not assume equal variances. Analysing associations between nominal or categorical data involved Chi-square tests of independence—e.g. gender differences and strategies used to manage stress.

Prevalence percentage

Unless otherwise indicated, prevalence percentage includes those participants who rated source of stress as contributing to their overall stress in the past month 'sometimes', 'quite a bit', or 'a great deal'.

Classification on workplace factors

Working Australians were grouped into either *positively aligned* or *not positively aligned* depending on whether they agreed with the workplace factor statements. Those who reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the workplace factor statements were grouped into the *positively aligned* group and those who reported neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed or strongly disagreed were grouped into the *not positively aligned* group.



2.3 2013 Survey results: The stress and wellbeing of Australians two years on...

Two years on, while the overall pattern of findings of the *Stress and Wellbeing Survey 2013* was largely consistent with those of 2012 and 2011, Australians reported significantly lower levels of wellbeing, and significantly higher levels of stress and distress, depressive and anxiety symptoms than previous years which is of concern.

2.3.1 Levels of wellbeing, stress and distress

Two years on – levels of wellbeing, stress and distress among Australians

Table 11 presents the mean scores for wellbeing, stress and distress for survey participants in 2013 compared with 2012, and 2011, whereas Table 12 presents the prevalence of various levels of distress for 2013 compared with 2012 and 2011.

Wellbeing

- Overall levels of wellbeing have significantly declined over the past two years.
- Older Australians continued to report significantly higher levels of wellbeing compared with other Australians, with the lowest levels of wellbeing reported by the youngest group of Australians surveyed (18-25 years of age).
- Women and men continue to report comparable levels of overall wellbeing.

Stress and distress

- Levels of perceived stress and distress have significantly increased over the past two years.
- 26% of Australians reported moderate to severe levels of distress this year which is significantly more than previous years.
- Older Australians continued to report significantly lower levels of stress and distress compared with other Australians, with the highest levels of stress and distress reported by the youngest group of Australians surveyed (18-25 years of age).
- While women continued to report significantly higher levels of stress than men, women and men reported similar levels of distress this year.

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TABLE 11 Mean scores on measures of stress and distress for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

	2013	2012	Significance (2-tailed)	2011	Significance (2-tailed)
WEMWBS score	46.78	47.65	p =.001*	49.11	p =.000*
PSS total score	16.43	15.51	p =.000*	15.53	p =.000*
K-10 score	19.45	18.4	p =.000*	17.94	p =.000*

*Statistically significant (p<.05)

TABLE 12 Prevalence (%) of various levels of distress for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

K-10 Total Scores Interpretation Category	2013	2012	2011
10-19 non significant levels of distress	60.5	66.8	66.4
20-24 mild levels of distress	13.5	10.8	12.7
25-29 moderate levels of distress	8.9	8.5	8.9
30-50 severe levels of distress	17.1	13.9	12.0

Level of wellbeing, stress and distress among various groups within the Australian population

Consistent with previous years' findings, some distinct patterns emerged when the levels of wellbeing, stress and distress were analysed against three particular demographic and life transition variables: employment status, marital status, and recent family/relationship breakdown.

Employment status

- Unemployed Australians continued to report significantly lower levels of wellbeing compared with other Australians with the exception of students and homemakers.
- Students continued to report higher levels of stress and distress than most other Australians, with the exception of those who were unemployed.
- Retired Australians continued to report significantly higher levels of overall wellbeing and lower levels of stress and distress compared with the rest of the population.

Marital status

- Married Australians continued to report significantly higher levels of wellbeing and lower levels of stress and distress than those who have never been married. This finding was true for both men and women.

Recent family/relationship breakdown

- Australians with a recent family or relationship breakdown continued to report significantly lower levels of wellbeing and significantly higher levels of perceived stress and distress than the rest of the population.



2.3.2 Experience of depressive and anxiety symptoms

Two years on – depression and anxiety among Australians

Table 13 presents the mean scores for depressive and anxiety symptoms for survey participants for 2013 compared with 2012, and 2011. Table 14 presents prevalence of various levels of depressive symptoms for 2013 compared with 2012 and 2011, whereas Table 15 presents prevalence of various levels of anxiety symptoms for 2013 compared with 2012 and 2011.

- Levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms were significantly higher this year compared with those of the 2012 and 2011 survey
- 37% of Australians reported experiencing depressive symptoms, with 14% of these Australians reporting depressive symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range.
- 28% of Australians reported experiencing some anxiety symptoms with 12% of these Australians reporting severe to extremely severe levels of anxiety.
- Older Australians continued to report significantly lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with other Australians, with the highest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms reported by the youngest group of Australians surveyed (18-25 years of age for depressive symptoms, and 18-35 years of age for anxiety symptoms).
- Australians in the 46-55 age group reported significantly higher levels of anxiety compared with those reported by this age group in 2012.
- Women and men continued to report similar levels of depressive symptoms.
- Women and men also reported similar levels of anxiety symptoms this year which differed from previous years' findings where women reported significantly higher levels of anxiety symptoms than men.

TABLE 13 Mean scores on measures of depression and anxiety for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

	2013	2012	Significance (2-tailed)	2011	Significance (2-tailed)
DASS-21 Depression	8.72	7.98	$p = .004^*$	7.69	$p = .000^*$
DASS- 21 Anxiety	5.86	5.27	$p = .003^*$	5.11	$p = .000^*$

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

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TABLE 14 Prevalence (%) of various levels of depressive symptoms for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

DASS-21 Depression	2013	2012	2011
Normal	62.9	66.1	67.4
Mild	9.9	9.6	9.5
Moderate	13.7	13	13
Severe	6.4	4.9	4.3
Extremely Severe	7.1	6.5	5.8

TABLE 15 Prevalence (%) of various levels of anxiety symptoms for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

DASS- 21Anxiety	2013	2012	2011
Normal	72	76.5	74.4
Mild	5.6	4.3	6
Moderate	11	8.5	10.7
Severe	3	3.4	3.2
Extremely Severe	8.5	7.3	5.6



Levels of depression and anxiety among various groups within the Australian population

Consistent with previous years' findings, some distinct patterns emerged when the levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms were analysed against three particular demographic and life transition variables: employment status, marital status, and recent family/relationship breakdown.

Employment status

- Unemployed Australians continued to report the highest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with working Australians.
- Retired Australians continued to report the lowest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with the rest of the population.

Marital Status

- Married Australians continued to report significantly lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than those who have never been married.

Recent family/relationship breakdown

- Australians with a recent family or relationship breakdown continued to report significantly higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than the rest of the population.

2.3.3 Causes of stress

Two years on – causes of stress

Figure 1 presents the prevalence of various sources of stress among survey participants for 2013, 2012 and 2011. This year's pattern of findings is very similar to previous years:

- Financial issues remain the leading cause of stress amongst Australians with more than half of Australians (52%) reporting it as a source of stress.
- In addition to finances, the next four leading causes of stress were family issues (47%), personal health issues (43%), issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle (41%) and issues with the health of close ones (38%).
- 34% of all Australians identified issues in the workplace as a source of stress.
- Almost one in four Australians (24%) reported mental health issues as a source of stress.

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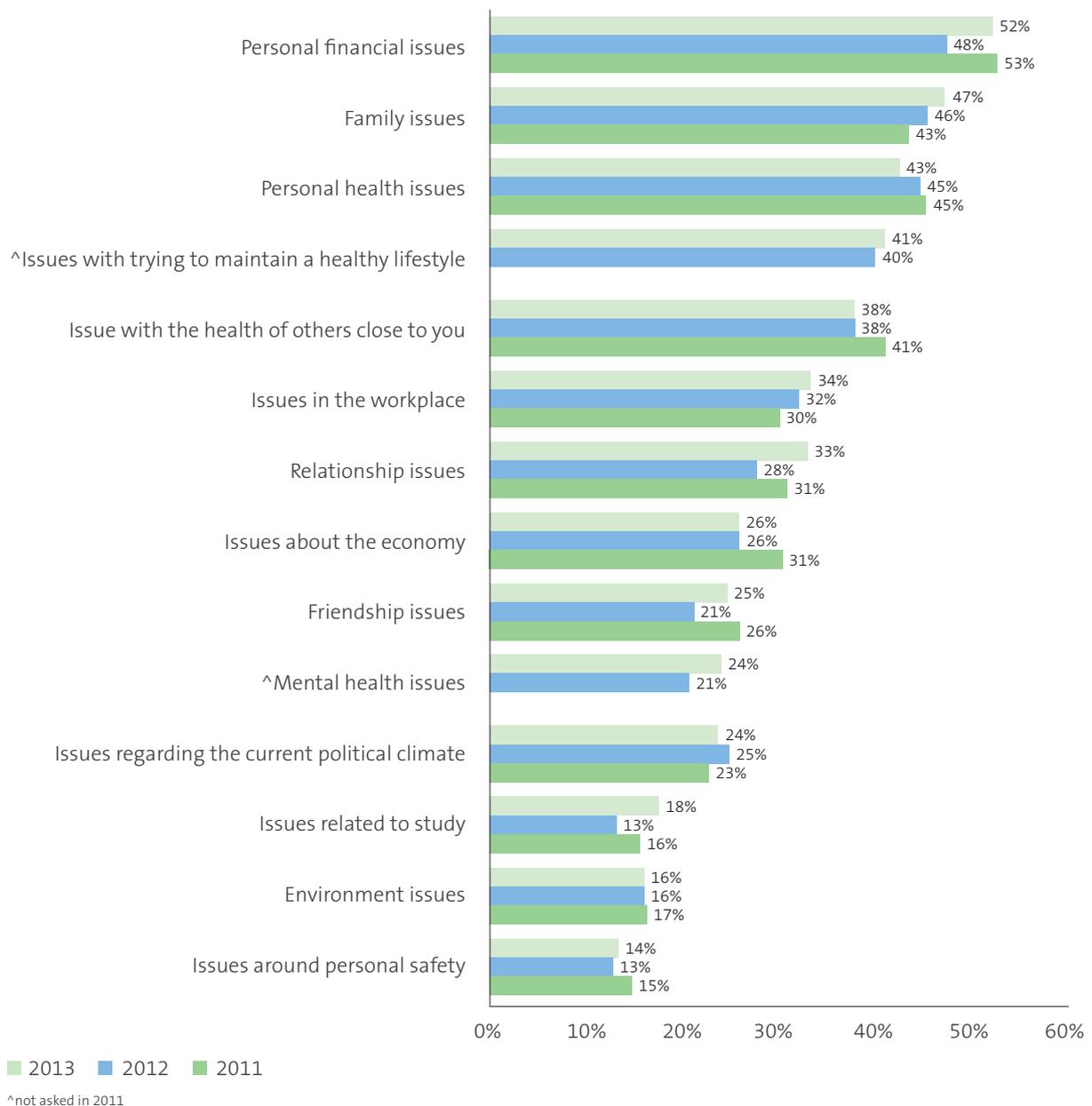


FIGURE 1 Prevalence (%) of sources of stress in 2013 compared with 2012 and 2011



Causes of stress according to age group

Table 16 presents the prevalence of various sources of stress among survey participants according to age group, while Table 17 presents the top five stressors for each of the age groups surveyed.

- The prevalence of most causes of stress significantly decreased with increasing age, such as issues with finances, issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle, friendship issues, mental health issues and issues related to study.
- While younger Australians indicated concerns about finances, family, health, and study, older Australians reported concerns with finances, the economy and the health of themselves and those close to them.

TABLE 16 Prevalence (%) of sources of stress among different age groups

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76+
*Personal financial issues	62%	61%	58%	47%	43%	26%	24%
*Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle	52%	43%	42%	47%	39%	28%	21%
*Family issues	51%	48%	53%	55%	41%	30%	22%
Personal health issues	45%	47%	40%	42%	50%	45%	46%
*Issues related to study	45%	23%	14%	10%	3%	2%	1%
*Friendship issues	42%	30%	27%	21%	12%	8%	8%
*Mental health issues	37%	30%	25%	18%	14%	11%	7%
*Relationship issues	37%	40%	36%	29%	20%	12%	10%
*Issues in the workplace	37%	35%	49%	47%	24%	7%	2%
*Issues with the health of others close to you	32%	40%	39%	36%	45%	33%	36%
*Issues around personal safety	27%	20%	15%	8%	9%	6%	6%
*Environment issues	23%	16%	13%	13%	13%	22%	24%
Issues about the economy	23%	25%	23%	24%	31%	32%	27%
*Issues regarding the current political climate	22%	19%	19%	22%	26%	36%	41%

*Significant age differences ($p < .05$)

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TABLE 17 *Top five sources of stress among different age groups*

	Stressor 1	Stressor 2	Stressor 3	Stressor 4	Stressor 5
Age-group					
18-25	Financial issues	Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle	Family issues	Personal health issues	Issues related to study
26-35	Financial issues	Family issues	Personal health issues	Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle	Issues with the health of others close to you
36-45	Financial issues	Family issues	Issues in the workplace	Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle	Personal health issues
46-55	Family issues	Financial issues	Issues in the workplace	Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle	Personal health issues
56-65	Personal health issues	Issues with the health of others close to you	Financial issues	Family issues	Issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle
66-75	Personal health issues	Issues regarding the current political climate	Issues with the health of others close to you	Issues about the economy	Family issues
76+	Personal health issues	Issues regarding the current political climate	Issues with the health of others close to you	Issues about the economy	Financial issues

Causes of stress according to gender

Figure 2 presents the prevalence of various sources of stress among survey participants according to gender. A similar pattern of findings emerged for 2013 as for previous years.

- Family issues and financial issues were the tied top sources of stress for women (52%) while financial issues was the top source of stress for men (44%).
- Women were significantly more likely than men to be concerned about most sources of stress including financial issues, family and relational issues, health issues – self or other, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, mental health issues, and study issues.
- Men were significantly more likely than women to identify issues regarding the current political climate as a source of stress.
- Women and men reported similar levels of concern about issues with the economy, workplace, the environment and personal safety as sources of stress.

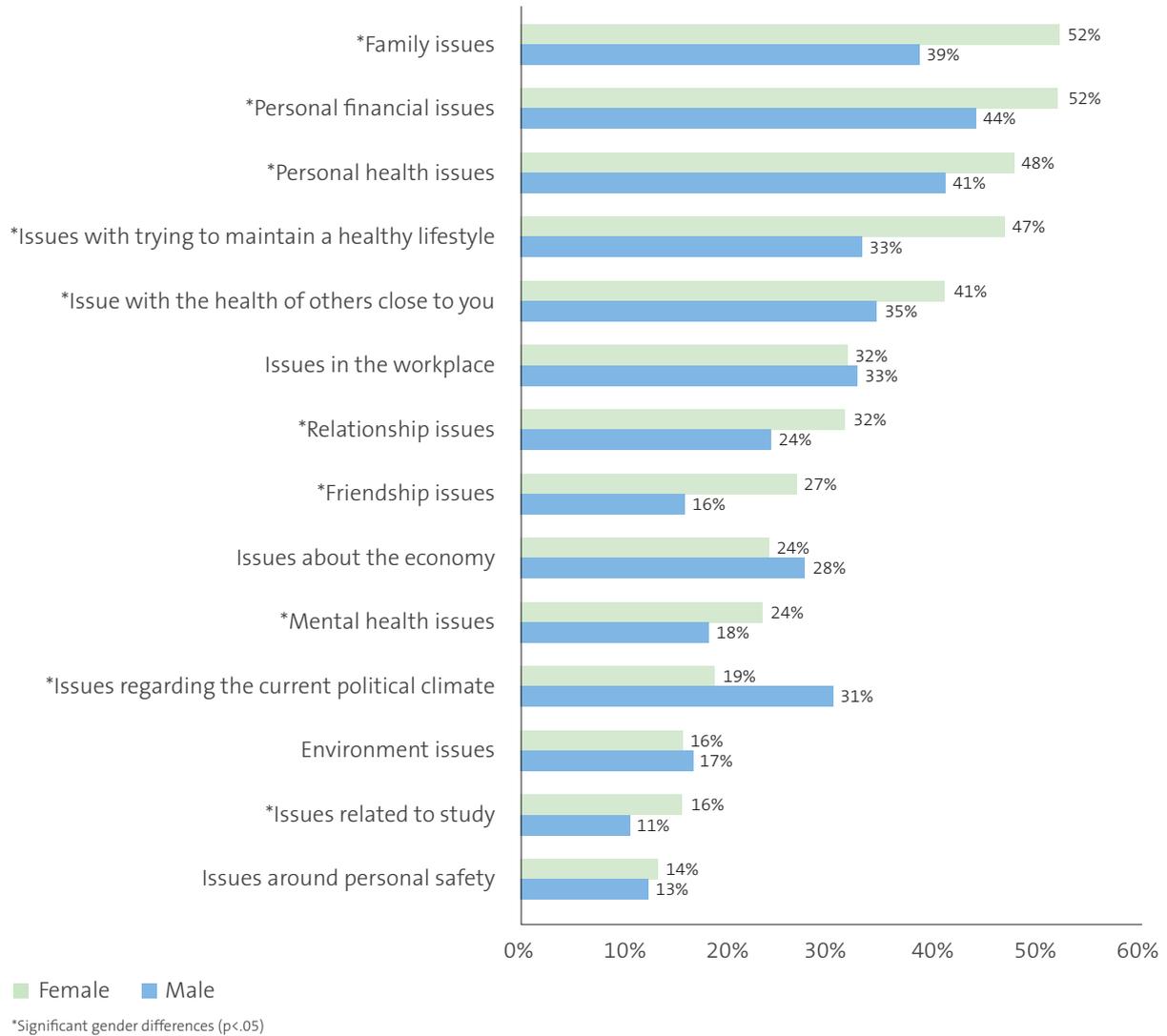


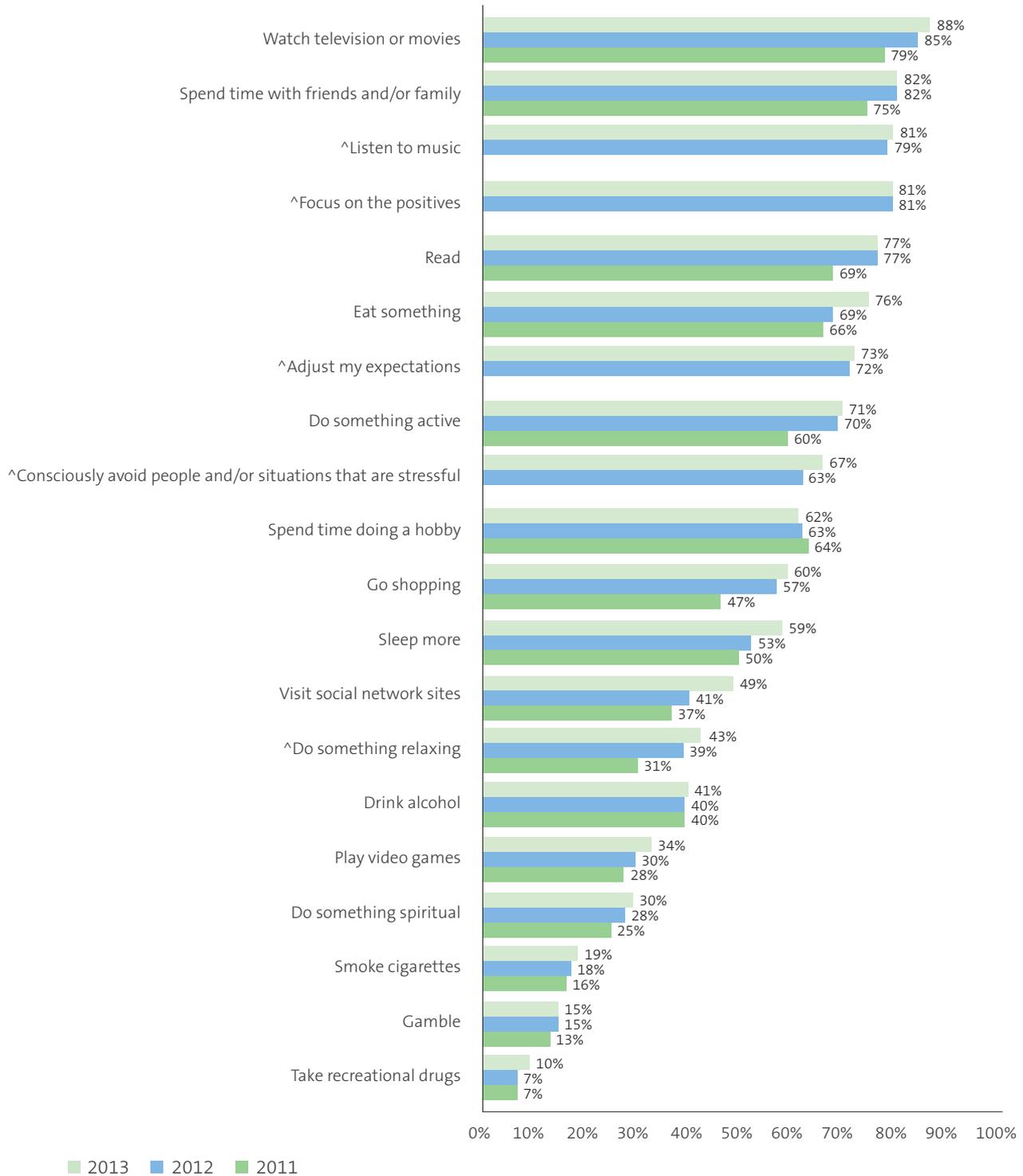
FIGURE 2 Prevalence (%) of sources of stress among women and men

2.3.4 Strategies for managing stress

Two years on – strategies for managing stress and their effectiveness

As with previous years, survey participants reported engaging in a range of activities to manage their stress. The prevalence of use and effectiveness of various strategies in 2013 as compared with 2012 and 2011 is presented in Figure 3 and Table 18.

- Watching TV or movies (88%), spending time with friends or family (82%), listening to music (81%), focusing on the positives (81%) and reading (77%) remain the most frequently cited strategies used to manage stress.
- Similar to previous years' findings, four in five Australians rated their use of stress management strategies such as spending time with friends and/or family (85%), listening to music (82%), doing something active (82%), spending time doing a hobby (81%), doing something spiritual or relaxing (81%) and focusing on the positives (80%), as moderately to highly effective.
- This year, significantly more Australians reported visiting social networking sites (49%), eating something (76%) or sleeping more (59%) to help manage their stress than in previous years.



^Not asked in 2011 – note that instead of doing something relaxing, 'Have a bath, spa or massage' was used in 2011.

FIGURE 3 Prevalence (%) of strategies used to manage stress in 2013, 2012 and 2011.

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TABLE 18 *Effectiveness of strategies for managing stress (%)*

Strategies	2013	2012	2011
Spend time with friends and/or family	85%	83%	80%
Listen to music	82%	82%	75%
Do something active	82%	85%	75%
Spend time doing a hobby	81%	81%	73%
Do something spiritual	81%	83%	66%
^Do something relaxing	81%	85%	68%
^Focus on the positives	80%	78%	-
Read	78%	81%	69%
^Adjust my expectations	75%	74%	-
Watch television or movies	72%	73%	70%
Play video games	70%	67%	56%
Go shopping	69%	65%	49%
^Consciously avoid people and/or situations that are stressful	69%	70%	-
Take recreational drugs	68%	74%	56%
Smoke cigarettes	64%	69%	57%
^Sleep more	60%	51%	-
Eat something	55%	53%	44%
Gamble	54%	51%	25%
Drink alcohol	52%	50%	47%
Visit social networking sites	51%	55%	42%

^Not asked in 2011 – note that instead of doing something relaxing, 'Have a bath, spa or massage' was used in 2011.



Age and gender differences in managing stress

A similar pattern of results emerged for strategies used to manage stress according to age and gender for 2013 compared with previous years with a number of distinctive findings relevant to this year.

Age

- Strategies such as focusing on the positives, reading, and engaging in a hobby to help manage stress increased with increasing age.
- Conversely, strategies such as watching TV or movies, visiting social networking sites, eating, sleeping more, and consciously avoiding stressful people or situations to help manage stress decreased as Australians got older.
- In contrast to previous years, no significant age differences were reported for using the strategies of going shopping or spending time doing a hobby as ways of managing stress.

Gender

- Women continued to be significantly more likely than men to report watching TV or movies, spending time with friends or family, reading, eating something, shopping, doing something relaxing or consciously avoid people and/or situations that are stressful to help manage their stress.
- This year, men were significantly more likely than women to report playing video games, taking recreational drugs, and gambling to help manage their stress which was not the case in 2012.
- In contrast to previous years, men and women were not significantly different in their use of doing something spiritual, focusing on the positives or adjusting expectations to help manage their stress.

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2.3.5 Impact of stress on physical and mental health

One year on – the impact of stress

Since 2012, in order to understand more about how stress is impacting on the physical and mental health of Australians, participants were asked to rate the impact of their stress levels on both their physical and mental health. Figure 4 and 5 present the perceived impact of stress on the physical and mental health of participants.

- Similar to findings in 2012, almost three-quarters of Australians (73%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health, with almost one in five (17%) reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- In 2013, significantly more Australians were reporting that current stress was having at least some impact on their mental health (65%), with one in five (20%) reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.
- The impact of stress on physical and mental health decreased with increasing age. This finding was similar to 2012.
- Consistent with last year's findings, women were significantly more likely than men to report that stress impacted on their physical and mental health.

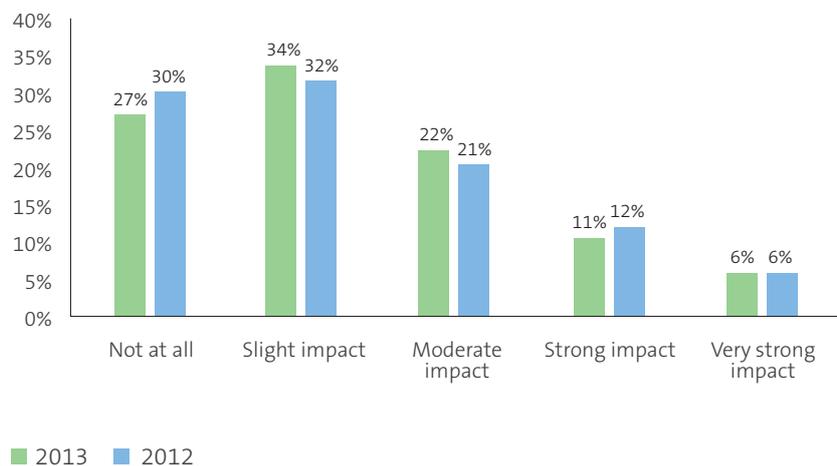


FIGURE 4 Perceived impact of stress (%) on physical health in 2013 and 2012

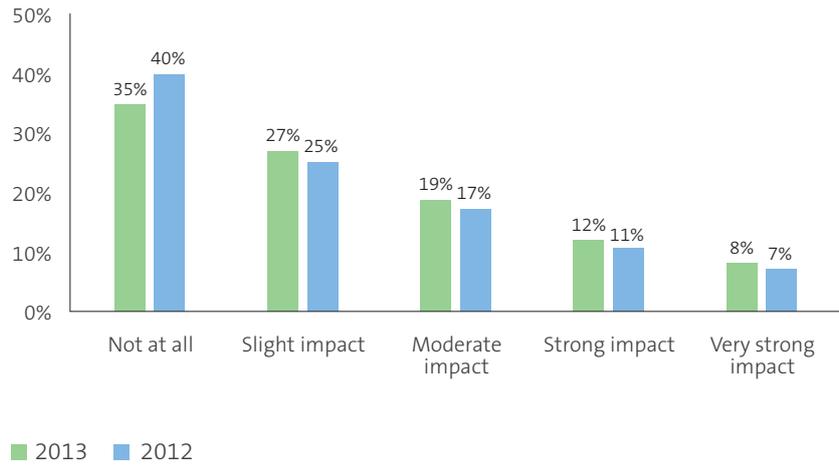


FIGURE 5 Perceived impact of stress (%) on mental health in 2013 and 2012

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

2.3.6 Help-seeking behaviour for managing stress

Two years on - help-seeking behaviour

The prevalence of various sources of help sought for managing stress in the past 12 months are presented in Figure 5 below.

- Overall, a very consistent pattern of findings emerged for 2013 compared with 2012 and 2011.
- Family, friends, and general practitioners were the most likely sources for seeking help to manage stress.
- 16% of Australians reported seeking help from psychologists or other mental health professionals for help to manage stress.

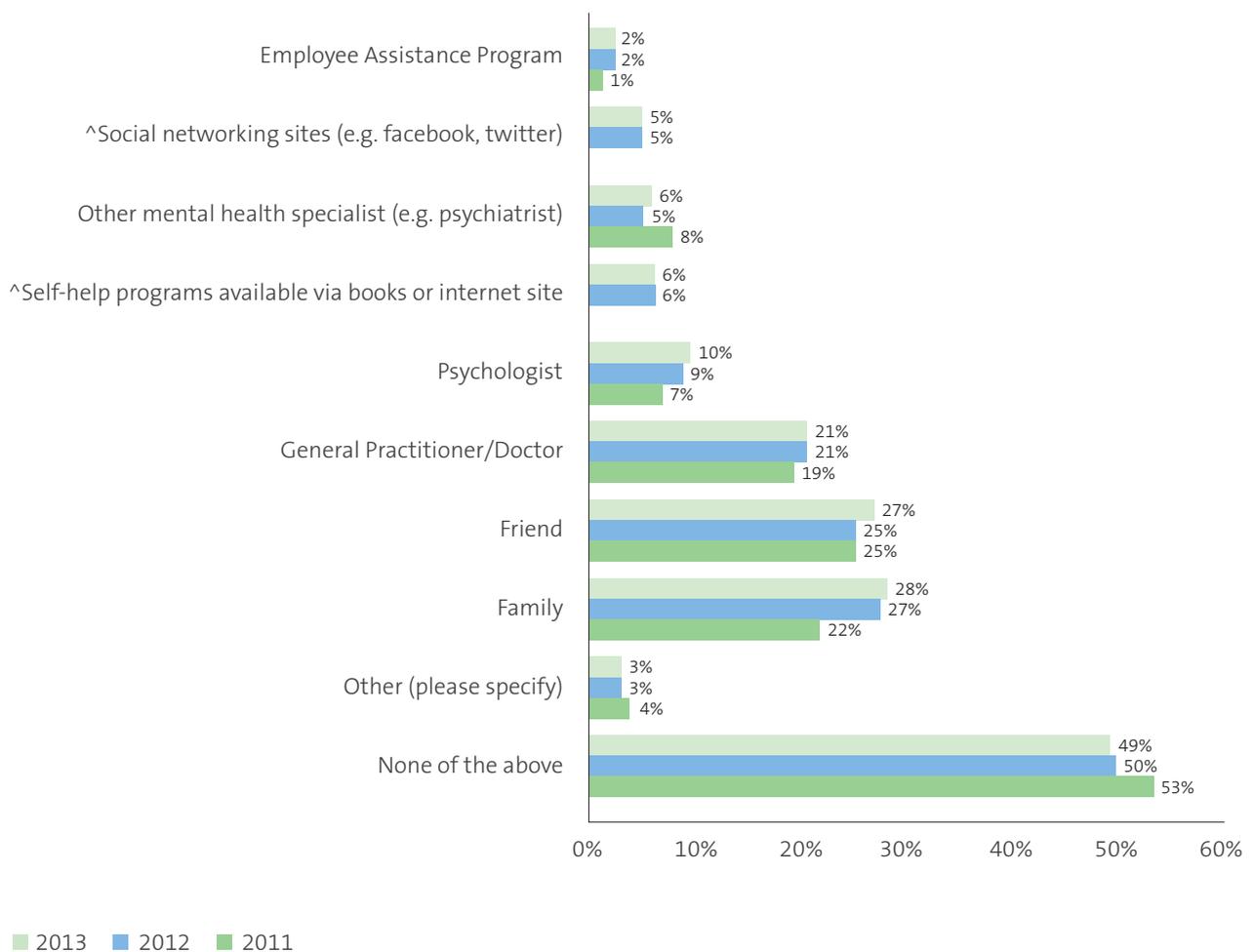


FIGURE 5 Prevalence (%) of sources of help sought in the past 12 months to help manage stress in 2013, 2012 and 2011



2.3.7 Stress and wellbeing for carers and those with chronic health conditions

The stress and mental health of carers and those with chronic health conditions was compared with the rest of survey participants on levels of wellbeing, stress and distress, and depressive and anxiety symptoms. Results were also compared with the pattern of findings reported for 2012.

Overall the pattern of findings for those with a chronic health condition was similar to those reported in 2012 with Australians who had at least one chronic health condition reporting significantly lower levels of wellbeing, and significantly higher levels of stress, distress, depressive and anxiety symptoms than the rest of the population.

Conversely, for carers, the pattern of findings differed from the findings reported in 2012 such that while carers did report significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms this year, they did not report significantly higher levels of stress and distress, nor anxiety symptoms than the rest of the population. Further, carers who reported low levels of support did not report significantly higher levels of stress, distress, depressive or anxiety symptoms which contrasts last year's findings (Appendix A has more details on this year's findings for carers and those with a chronic health condition).

2.4 Survey results: Psychological health of Australians in the workplace

This year’s survey included a more in-depth exploration of the stress and wellbeing of working Australians than previous years. In addition to asking survey participants about the workplace as a source of stress and their wellbeing at work, a number of additional questions were included about workplace factors such as role clarity, supportive leadership, employee engagement, level of safety concerns in the workplace, and other factors which have been shown in a number of studies to be linked to the psychological health of Australian workplaces and individuals within the workplace⁸.

2.4.1 Workplace stress and wellbeing

Two years on – wellbeing in the workplace

Table 19 presents the mean overall and subscale scores for workplace wellbeing (as measured by the *Workplace wellbeing subscale of the UK Wellbeing Measure*) for working Australians in 2013, 2012, and 2011. Working Australians reported significantly lower overall workplace wellbeing compared with findings in 2012 and 2011.

- Working Australians reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than findings reported in both 2012 and 2011, whereas working Australians reported significantly lower levels of interest in their job than findings reported in 2012.

TABLE 19 Mean scores for overall and subscale scores of workplace wellbeing in 2013, 2012 and 2011

	2013	2012	Significance (2-tailed)	2011	Significance (2-tailed)
Overall workplace wellbeing	4.20	4.28	$p = .032^*$	4.41	$p = .000^*$
Individual Scale items					
Job satisfaction (0-10)	6.33	6.6	$p = .001^*$	6.65	$p = .000^*$
Work-life balance satisfaction (0-10)	6.21	6.31	$p = .198$	6.37	$p = .036^*$
Job interesting (0-6)	3.98	4.11	$p = .005^*$	4.02	$p = .42$
Job stressful (0-6 inversed)	2.72	2.81	$p = .052$	3.02	$p = .000^*$
Appropriateness of salary (1-5)	3.17	3.11	$p = .076$	3.09	$p = .02^*$
Likelihood of unemployment (1-4 inversed)	2.79	2.72	$p = .082$	3.24	$p = .000^*$

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

⁸ For additional statistics on general levels of wellbeing, stress, distress, depression and anxiety symptoms for the working Australian subsample, please see Appendix A.



Working Australians wellbeing at work compared to international standards

Table 20 presents a comparison between the 2013 mean overall and subscale scores of the workplace wellbeing subscale measure with international data on the same subscale.

- Working Australians reported significantly lower overall workplace wellbeing compared with workers in Europe.
- On individual subscales, while working Australians reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction and how interesting they found their job to be than the European sample, they reported significantly higher levels of work-life balance satisfaction and appropriateness of salary compared with European workers.

TABLE 20 Mean scores for overall and subscale scores of workplace wellbeing for 2013 working Australians and international data

	Australia (n=999)	European Social Survey Data ⁹	Sig
Overall workplace wellbeing	4.20	4.39	$p = .000^*$
Individual Scale items			
Job satisfaction (0-10)	6.33	7.03	$p = .000^*$
Work-life balance satisfaction (0-10)	6.21	5.94	$p = .000^*$
Job interesting (0-6)	3.98	4.39	$p = .000^*$
Job stressful (0-6 inversed)	2.72	2.67	$p = .267$
Appropriateness of salary (1-5)	3.17	3.01	$p = .000^*$
Likelihood of unemployment (1-4 inversed)	2.79	3.28	$p = .000^*$

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

Workplace issues as a source of stress

- Almost half of working Australians (47%) rated issues in the workplace as a source of stress, and this finding was consistent with previous years.
- Overall, concerns about workplace issues as a source of stress decreased as people got older with the exception of those aged between 46 and 52 years who reported the same levels of concern about workplace as a source of stress (52%) as the youngest group of working Australians (18-25 year olds reporting 53%).

⁹ The means and standard deviations for Europe workplace wellbeing measures are taken from Appendix 3 of the National Accounts of Well-being report (2009). It is noted that the data from this report was based on information gathered in 2007. This is the latest data available from this European index on wellbeing.

2.4.2 Workplace factors and psychological health and wellbeing

Understanding workplace factors

Working Australians were asked about a number of workplace factors that have been shown to represent features of a psychologically healthy workplace. These workplace factors included:

- Having an employer who values an employee's contribution and cares about their wellbeing
- Being clear about what is expected in a work role
- Having sufficient opportunities for learning and development
- Having a supportive manager
- Receiving regular relevant feedback and recognition
- Having an employer who is serious about safety at work
- Having an employer who supports staff with physical injuries
- Having an employer who supports staff with mental health issues
- Having an employer who supports staff needing to deal with family demands

Table 21 presents the prevalence of working Australians who reported positive alignment with these workplace factors. Findings included:

- Only half of working Australians (52%) reported that their employer valued their contribution and cared about their wellbeing.
- 85% of working Australians reported being clear about what is expected of them in their work role.
- 60% of working Australians reported having sufficient opportunities for learning and development.
- Less than half of working Australians (46%) reported regularly receiving relevant feedback and recognition for their work.
- 67% of working Australians reported feeling very involved in their job.
- 70% of working Australians reported that their employer was serious about safety at work.
- 62% of working Australians reported that their employer supports staff with physical injuries while just half of working Australians (50%) reported that their employer supports staff with mental health issues.



TABLE 21 Prevalence (%) of working Australians who reported being positively aligned¹⁰ with workplace factors

	Positively aligned
Employer values and cares <i>My employer values my contribution and cares about my wellbeing.</i>	52%
Role clarity <i>I am clear about what is expected of me in my work role.</i>	85%
Learning & development <i>I have sufficient opportunities for learning and/or training that is relevant to my job.</i>	60%
Supportive leadership <i>My immediate manager is available to help me when I need support to do my job.</i>	60%
Feedback & recognition <i>I regularly receive relevant feedback and recognition for my work.</i>	46%
Employee engagement <i>I feel very involved in my job.</i>	67%
Concern for safety <i>My employer is serious about safety at work and has good practices and procedures in place.</i>	70%
Concern for physical injury <i>My employer supports staff who have physical injuries.</i>	62%
Concern for mental illness <i>My employer supports staff who have mental health issues.</i>	50%
Support for family matters <i>My employer is supportive of people needing to deal with family demands and pressures.</i>	65%
Casualisation of work <i>I am concerned about being able to pay for essential needs because of uncertainty about the ongoing availability of work with my employer.</i>	27%
Managing change well ¹¹ <i>My organisation is managing these changes well.</i>	52%

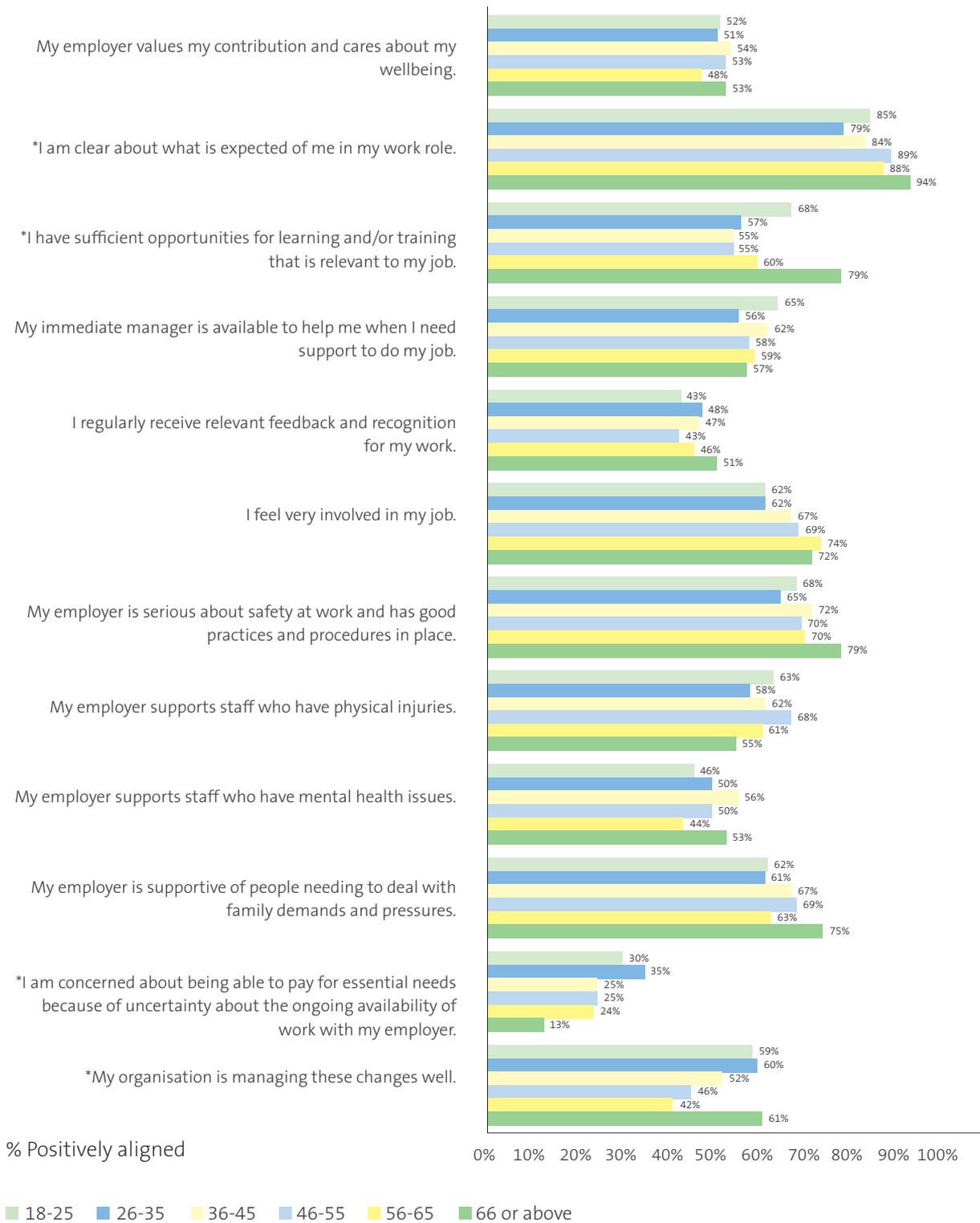
¹⁰ Positively aligned refers to those working Australians who reported 'agree' or 'strongly agree' on each of the workplace factor items.

¹¹ Results reports here are based on 516 Australians who reported recent changes at their workplace.

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Workplace factors according to age

- Overall, there was a similar pattern of findings for different age groups on the workplace factors as shown in Figure 7 with a few differences of note.
- Age differences emerged on the role clarity workplace factor with a trend towards greater role clarity as people got older (with the exception of the youngest age group of Australians who reported similar levels of role clarity to those of the 36-45 year old age group – 85% vs 84% respectively).
- Young working Australians (age 18-35) were more concerned about being able to pay for essential needs because of uncertainty about the ongoing availability of work with their employers than older working Australians.
- Young working Australians aged between 18-25 or those who are 66 or above were most likely to report that they had sufficient opportunities for learning and/or training that is relevant to their job.



*Statistically significant (p<.05)
 ^Results based on 516 Australian workers who reported recent changes at their workplaces.

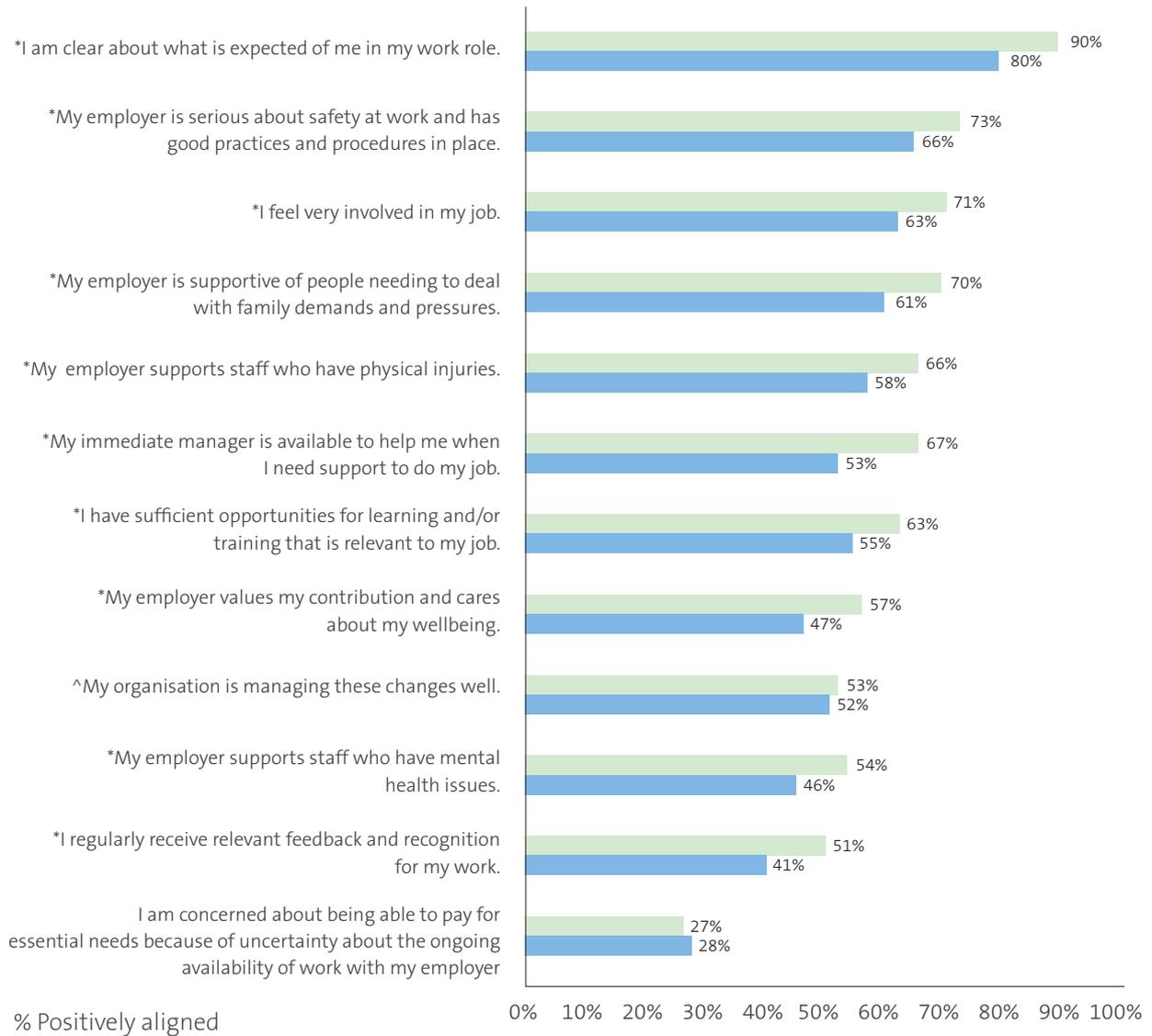
FIGURE 7 Prevalence (%) of working Australians by age groupings who reported being positively aligned with workplace factors

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Workplace factors according to gender

Overall, a number of significant differences emerged between working women and working men on the workplace factors as shown in Figure 8.

- Working women were significantly more likely than working men to report that their employers valued their work contribution and cared about their wellbeing at work.
- Working women were also significantly more likely than working men to report being clear about what is expected of them in their role, and that they had sufficient opportunities for learning and development.
- Working women were significantly more likely than working men to report that they felt very involved in their job, that their immediate managers were available to help them when they needed support to do their job, and that they received regular and relevant feedback and recognition for their work.
- Working women were also significantly more likely to report that their employers were supportive regarding family matters, supportive to staff who have physical injuries or mental health issues, and supportive about concerns for safety in the workplace
- Working men and women were equally concerned about being able to pay for essential needs because of uncertainty about the ongoing availability of work with their employers.



■ Female ■ Male

*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

^Results based on 516 Australian workers who reported recent changes at their workplaces.

FIGURE 8 Prevalence (%) of female versus male working Australians who reported being positively aligned with workplace factor

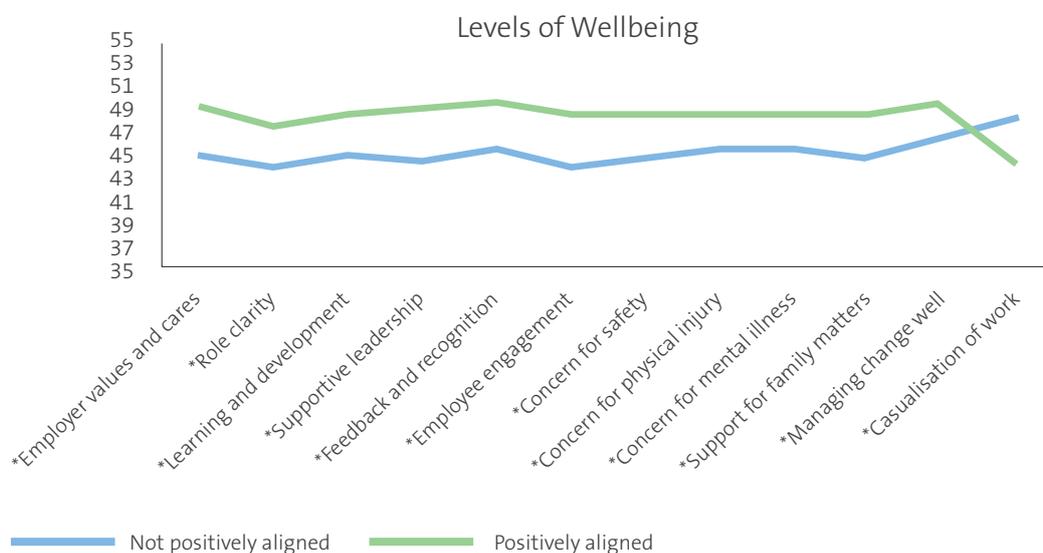
Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

Workplace factors and wellbeing, stress and distress

Chart 1 presents a comparison of the levels of wellbeing of working Australians who were positively aligned with the workplace factors and those who were not. Chart 2 presents a comparison of levels of stress and distress of working Australians who were positively aligned with the workplace factors and those who were not.

- Working Australians who were positively aligned with the workplace factors reported significantly higher levels of overall wellbeing than those who were not positively aligned on these workplace factors.
- Working Australians who were positively aligned with the workplace factors reported significantly lower levels of stress and distress than working Australians who were not positively aligned on these workplace factors.

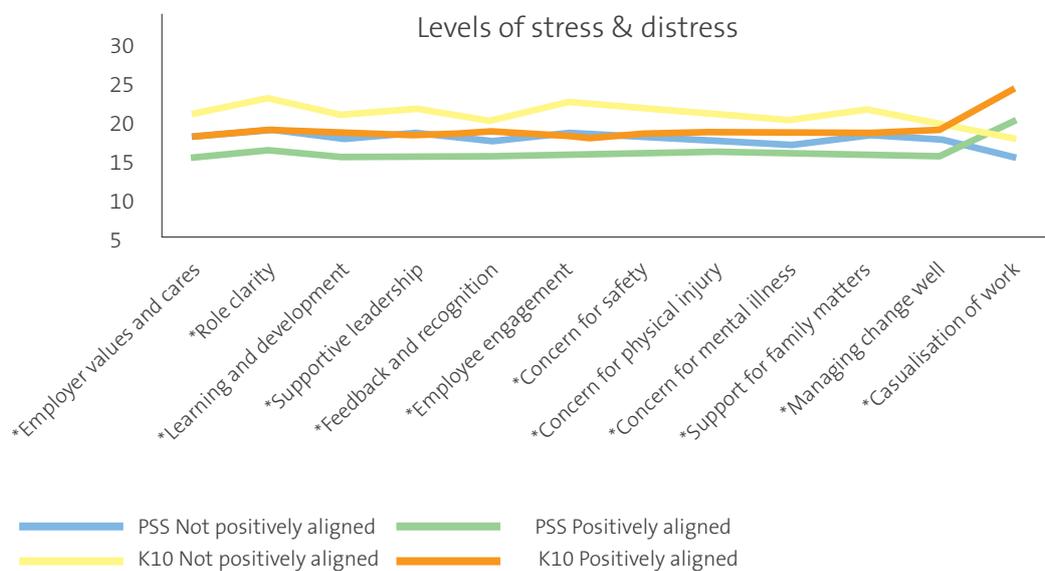
CHART 1 Levels of wellbeing for those working Australians who indicated being positively aligned with workplace factors versus those who did not.



*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

^Results based on 516 Australian workers who reported recent changes at their workplaces.

CHART 2 Levels of stress and distress for those working Australians who indicated being positively aligned with workplace factors versus those who did not



*Statistically significant (p<.05)

^Results based on 516 Australian workers who reported recent changes at their workplaces.

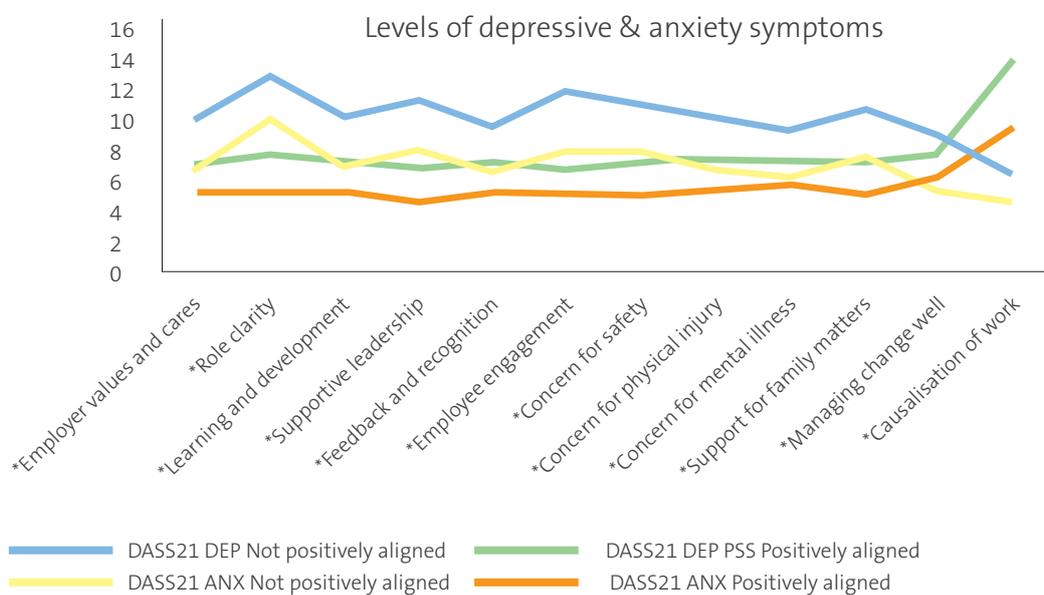
Workplace factors and experience of depressive and anxiety symptoms

Chart 3 presents a comparison of levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms of working Australians who were positively aligned with the workplace factors and those who were not.

- Working Australians who were positively aligned on the workplace factors reported significantly lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than those working Australians who were not positively aligned.

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CHART 3 Levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms for those working Australians who indicated being positively aligned with workplace factors versus those who did not



*Statistically significant ($p < .05$)

^Results based on 516 Australian workers who reported recent changes at their workplaces.



03 > REFERENCES

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➤ APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Summary statistics for specific groups for 2013

- Additional summary statistics for working Australians

Key findings for working Australians include:

- Working Australians in 2013 reported comparable levels of wellbeing to those in 2012 but significantly lower levels of wellbeing compared with levels in 2011 (WEMWBS¹ mean scores: $M_{2013} = 47.03$ vs. $M_{2012} = 47.50$ vs. $M_{2011} = 48.89$)².
- Working Australians also reported significantly higher levels of stress compared with findings in 2012 and 2011 (PSS³ mean scores: $M_{2013} = 16.52$ vs. $M_{2012} = 15.63$ vs. $M_{2011} = 15.83$).
- Working Australians also reported significantly higher levels of distress compared with findings in 2012 and 2011 (K-10⁴ mean scores: $M_{2013} = 19.39$ vs. $M_{2012} = 18.29$ vs. $M_{2011} = 18.09$).
- Just over one in five working Australians reported moderate to severe levels of distress which was significantly higher compared with findings in 2012 and 2011 (26%_{in 2013} vs. 22%_{in 2012} & 22%_{in 2011}).
- Working Australians reported significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms compared with findings in 2012 and 2011 (DASS 21 – Depression Index mean scores: $M_{2013} = 8.44$ vs. $M_{2012} = 7.57$ vs. $M_{2011} = 7.55$).
- Almost one in seven working Australians reported depressive symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range (13%_{in 2013} vs. 11%_{in 2012} vs. 10%_{in 2011}).
- Working Australians reported significantly higher levels of anxiety symptoms compared with findings in 2012 and 2011 (DASS 21 – Anxiety Index mean scores: $M_{2013} = 5.85$ vs. $M_{2012} = 4.87$ vs. $M_{2011} = 5.08$).
- One in eight working Australians reported levels of anxiety symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range (12%_{in 2013} vs. 10%_{in 2012} vs. 9%_{in 2011}) and while there was a trend towards more people reporting symptoms in the severe to extremely severe range, this trend was not significant.
- Three in four working Australians (75%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health, with 16% reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- Over two-thirds of working Australians (68%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on mental health, with almost one in five (19%) reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.

¹ Warwick Edinburg Mental Well-Being Score

² Comparisons between data in 2013, 2012 & 2011 were based on sub-samples of working Australians from the full survey with n=999 in 2013; n=990 in 2012 & n=917 in 2011.

³ Perceived Stress Scale

⁴ Kessler K10 Index



• Summary statistics for working women

Demographic descriptive statistics for Australian working women in 2013 (n=493)

TABLE A1. *Age range of Australian working women*

Age	%
18-25	18.7
26-35	22.7
36-45	21.5
46-55	20.3
56-65	14
66 or above	2.8

TABLE A2. *Average number of work hours per week for Australian working women*

Work hours/week	%
1-10 hours	13.4
11-20 hours	16.4
21-34 hours	22.9
35-44 hours	40.6
45 hours or above	6.7

TABLE A3. *Gross annual income range of Australian working women*

Gross annual income range	%
Less than \$15,000	12.1
\$15,000 to \$30,000	16
\$31,000 to \$60,000	36.1
\$61,000 to \$90,000	20.6
\$91,000 to \$120,000	10.2
\$121,000 to \$150,000	3.7
More than \$150,000	1.3

TABLE A4. *Primary occupation of Australian working women*

Primary occupation	%
Managers	11.2
Professionals	28.9
Technicians and Trades Workers	2.3
Community and Personal Service Workers	8.7
Clerical and Administrative Workers	31.4
Sales Workers	13
Machinery Operators and Drivers	0.7
Labourers	3.9

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Key findings for working women include:

- Nearly half of Australian working women (48%) rated issues in the workplace as a source of stress.
- One in four (25%) working women reported moderate to severe levels of distress.
- Over 80% of working women (83%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health, with one in five (21%) reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- Almost three in four Australian working women (74%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on mental health, with close to one in four (24%) reporting that current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.
- The top five stress management strategies rated by working women as moderately to highly effective are: spending time with friends and/or family (83%), focusing on the positives (77%), listening to music (76%), doing something relaxing (76%) and reading (76%).
- Almost three in five working women (57%) reported that their employers valued their work contribution and cared about their wellbeing at work.
- 67% of working women reported that their immediate managers were available to help them when they needed support to do their job.
- Working women were significantly more likely than men to report that their employers were supportive of family matters (70%_{female} vs. 61%_{male}) and they were significantly more likely to report being involved in their jobs (71%_{female} vs. 63%_{male}).
- Working women who were positively aligned⁵ on the workplace factors such as supportive leadership, employer support for family matters, physical and mental health issues, and employee engagement, reported significantly higher levels of wellbeing, lower levels of stress and distress, and lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms than those who were not positively aligned with these workplace factors (see Table A5, page 47 for full details).

⁵ Positively aligned = those who reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the workplace factor statements.



TABLE A5. Prevalence (%) of working women who reported being positively aligned with workplace factors

	Positively aligned
Employer values and cares	57%
Role Clarity	90%
Learning & Development	63%
Supportive Leadership	67%
Feedback & Recognition	51%
Employee Engagement	71%
Concern for safety	73%
Concern for physical injury	66%
Concern for mental illness	54%
Support for family matters	70%
Managing Change well [^]	53%
Casualisation of work	27%

[^]Results based on 265 Australian working women who reported recent changes at their workplaces.

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

• Summary statistics for women

Demographic descriptive statistics for women (n=805)

TABLE A6. Age range of the women subgroup

Age	%
18-25	18.1
26-35	19.5
36-45	18.6
46-55	18
56-65	13.7
66-75	8.7
76+	3.4

TABLE A8. Marital status of the women subgroup

Marital status	%
Never married	24.6
Widowed	5.4
Divorced	8.2
Separated but not divorced	3.1
Married	44.2
De facto	14.5

TABLE A7. Prevalence (%) of different living arrangements for women

Living arrangements	%
Live alone	17.5
Live with partner	56
Sole parent	4.9
Live with parents	10.2
Live with other adults	7.1
Other - please specify:	4.4

TABLE A9. Prevalence (%) of different employment status for women

Primary employment situation	%
Employed Full-time	31.0
Employed Part-time/Casual	25.7
Homemaker	13.0
Full-time student	7.1
Part-time student	1.4
Retired	13.0
Unemployed	3.7
Other - please specify	5.1



Key findings for women include:

- Consistent with previous years' findings, women continued to report comparable levels of overall wellbeing compared to men (WEMWBS mean scores: $M_{\text{women}} = 46.80$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 46.77$).
- While women continued to report significantly higher levels of stress than men (PSS mean scores: $M_{\text{women}} = 17.13$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 15.67$), they reported similar levels of distress to men in 2013 (K-10 mean scores: $M_{\text{women}} = 19.66$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 19.24$).
- In contrast to previous years' findings, women reported similar levels of anxiety symptoms to men this year (DASS 21 – Anxiety Index mean scores: $M_{\text{women}} = 5.55$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 6.19$).
- Women and men continued to report similar levels of depressive symptoms (DASS 21 – Depression Index mean scores: $M_{\text{women}} = 8.68$ vs. $M_{\text{men}} = 8.76$).
- The tied top sources of stress for women were family issues and financial issues (52%).
- Women were significantly more likely than men to be concerned about most sources of stress including financial issues, family and relational issues, health issues – self or other, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, mental health issues, and study issues (refer to Figure 2 in the main report for statistics).
- Women continued to be significantly more likely than men to report watching TV or movies, spending time with friends or family, reading, eating something, shopping, doing something relaxing or consciously avoid people and/or situations that are stressful to help manage their stress.
- Consistent with last year's findings, women were significantly more likely than men to report that stress impacted on their physical health (19%_{women} vs. 14%_{men} rated strong to very strong impact) and mental health (24%_{women} vs. 16%_{men} rated strong to very strong impact).

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

• Summary statistics for the unemployed

Demographic descriptive statistics for the unemployed (n=71⁶)

TABLE A10. Age range of the unemployed subgroup

Age	%
18-25	15.5
26-35	16.9
36-45	32.4
46-55	25.4
56-65	9.9
66-75	0
76+	0

TABLE A12. Marital status of the unemployed subgroup

Marital status	%
Never married	38
Widowed	2.8
Divorced	16.9
Separated but not divorced	2.8
Married	25.4
De facto	14.1

TABLE A11. Gender of the unemployed subgroup

Gender	%
Male	57.7
Female	56

TABLE A13. Prevalence (%) of different living arrangements for the unemployed subgroup

Living arrangements	%
Live alone	21.4
Live with partner	35.7
Sole parent	8.6
Live with parents	15.7
Live with other adults	12.9
Other - please specify	5.7

⁶ Caution should be used when interpreting these results due to relatively small sample size for the unemployed subgroup.



Key findings for the unemployed include:

- Unemployed Australians continued to report significantly lower levels of wellbeing (WEBWBS mean score = 41.17) compared with other Australians with the exception of students and homemakers.
- Unemployed Australians continued to report significantly higher levels of stress (PSS mean score = 21.56) and distress (K-10 mean score= 24.90) than those who were employed (both full-timers and part-timers) or retired.
- Unemployed Australians continued to report the highest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms compared with working Australians (DASS 21 – Depression Index mean score=15.15; DASS 21 – Anxiety Index mean score=8.34).
- Issues around personal finances (83%), personal health (63%) and trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle (63%) continued to be the top three contributors to overall stress in the past month for unemployed Australians.
- The top four strategies nominated by the unemployed to help manage stress were: watching television or movies (86%), eating something (84%), reading (77%) and listening to music (74%).
- Nine in ten unemployed Australians (92%) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health, with more than one quarter (27%) reporting that their current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- Almost six in seven (85%) unemployed Australians reported that that current stress was having at least some impact on mental health, with 42% reporting that their current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

• Summary statistics for young adults (age 18-35)

Demographic descriptive statistics for young adults (n=504 with 40.3% age 18-25; 59.7% age 26-35)

TABLE A14. Gender of the young adults subgroup

Gender	%
Male	39.9
Female	60.1

TABLE A16. Marital status of the young adults subgroup

Marital status	%
Never married	49.4
Widowed	0
Divorced	0.2
Separated but not divorced	0.8
Married	31.9
De facto	17.7

TABLE A15. Prevalence (%) of different living arrangements for the young adults subgroup

Living arrangements	%
Live alone	10.4
Live with partner	49
Sole parent	2.8
Live with parents	24.1
Live with other adults	11.8
Other - please specify	2

TABLE A17. Prevalence (%) of different employment status for the young adults subgroup

Primary employment situation	%
Employed Full-time	42.3
Employed Part-time/Casual	19.5
Homemaker	10.1
Full-time student	17.1
Part-time student	2.8
Retired	0.4
Unemployed	4.6
Other - please specify	3.2



Key findings for young adults include:

- Younger adults (age 18-35) continued to report higher levels of stress and distress compared to older Australians.
- Lowest levels of wellbeing were reported by the youngest group of Australians (age 18-25).
- Highest levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms were reported by the youngest group of Australians surveyed (18-25 years of age for depressive symptoms, and 18-35 years of age for anxiety symptoms).
- Issues around personal finances (63%), family (52%) and trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle (49%) were reported by the young adults (age 18-35) as the top three contributors to overall stress in the past month.
- Similar to previous years' findings, younger adults (age 18-35), as compared to older Australians, were more concerned about friendships, relationship issues, personal safety and issues related to study (refer to Table 16 in the main report for details).
- Younger adults (age 18-35) continued to report more concern about mental health issues than other Australians.
- Watching television or movies (91%), listening to music (84%) and spending time with friends and/or family (83 %) continued to be the top three strategies nominated by the young adults (age 18-35) to help manage stress.
- Four in five (81%) young adults (age 18-35) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on physical health with over one in five (21%) reporting that their current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on physical health.
- Over three in four (76%) young adults (age 18-35) reported that current stress was having at least some impact on mental health, with 28% reporting that their current stress was having a strong to very strong impact on mental health.

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

• Summary statistics for carers

Demographic descriptive statistics for carers (n=143)

TABLE A18. Age range of the carer subgroup

Age	%
18-25	4.9
26-35	16.8
36-45	15.4
46-55	30.1
56-65	17.5
66-75	11.2
76+	4.2

TABLE A19. Marital status of the carer subgroup

Marital status	%
Never married	17.5
Widowed	56
Divorced	4.9
Separated but not divorced	10.2
Married	7.1
De facto	4.4

TABLE A20. Gender of the carer subgroup

Gender	%
Male	39.9
Female	60.1

TABLE A21. Mean levels of wellbeing, stress, distress, depression and anxiety symptoms for carers vs. non-carers

	Carers	Non-carers	Significance (2-tailed)
WEMWBS score	46.45	46.82	$p=.678$
PSS total score	16.72	16.39	$p=.598$
K-10 score	20.64	19.33	$p=.092$
DASS depression	10.32	8.55	$p=.045^*$
DASS anxiety	7.04	5.72	$p=.056$



Key findings for carers include:

- 9% of the surveyed Australians identified themselves as a carer of an ageing or chronically ill person. There were slightly more female carers (60%) than males (40%) and over 60% of carers were married.
- The highest proportion of carers was aged between 46 and 55 years.
- Similar to last years' findings, carers' overall wellbeing scores were not significantly different to the rest of the Australian population.
- In contrast to last year findings, no significant differences were found between carers and non-carers' reported levels of stress and distress.
- Although carers reported significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms than non-carer Australians, their levels of anxiety symptoms were not significantly different (see Table A21 on the previous page for details).
- Also in contrast to last year findings, carers and non-carers were equally likely to report that their stress levels had a strong to very strong impact on their physical health (20%_{carers} vs. 16%_{non-carers}) and mental health (24%_{carers} vs. 19%_{non-carers}).
- In terms of sources of stress, carers were significantly more likely to report family issues, relationship issues, issues with the health of close ones and political issues as sources of stress than the rest of the Australian population.
- Carers were significantly more likely than non-carers to report doing something spiritual (39%_{carers} vs. 29%_{non-carers}) and adjusting one's expectations (83%_{carers} vs. 72%_{non-carers}) to help manage their stress.

• Summary statistics for chronic health condition group

Demographic descriptive statistics for chronic health condition group (n=351)

TABLE A22. Age range of the chronic health condition group

Age	%
18-25	4.6
26-35	11.4
36-45	14.8
46-55	23.4
56-65	22.2
66-75	15.1
76+	8.5

TABLE A23. Marital status of the chronic health condition group

Marital status	%
Never married	19.5
Widowed	6.0
Divorced	12.9
Separated but not divorced	4.3
Married	45.0
De facto	12.3

TABLE A24. Gender of the chronic health condition group

Gender	%
Male	49.0
Female	51.0

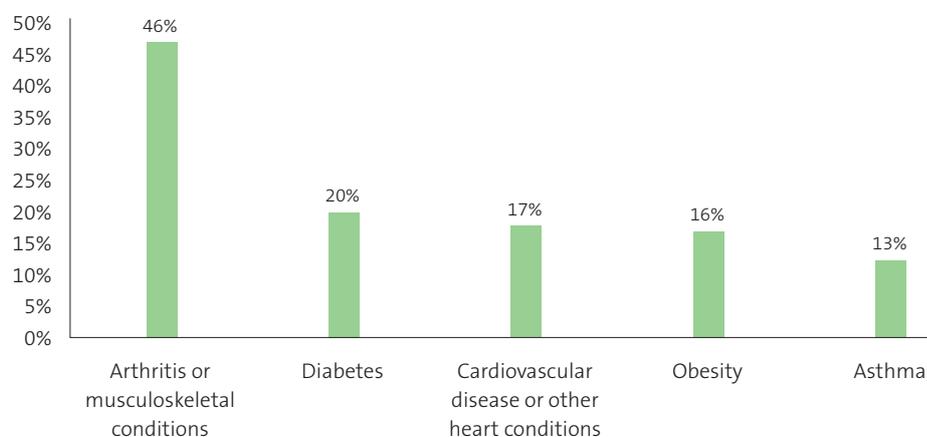


FIGURE A1 Prevalence (%) of the top five chronic physical health conditions reported by Australians who had at least one chronic health condition.



TABLE A25 Mean scores on measures of depression and anxiety for 2013, 2012 and 2011.

	With chronic health condition	Without chronic health condition	Significance (2-tailed)
WEMWBS score	44.21	47.53	$p = .000^*$
PSS total score	18.04	15.96	$p = .000^*$
K-10 score	21.97	18.72	$p = .000^*$
DASS depression	11.97	7.77	$p = .000^*$
DASS anxiety	8.13	5.20	$p = .000^*$

- 23% of the surveyed Australians stated that they were suffering from at least one physical chronic health condition⁷. The top five nominated chronic health conditions were: Arthritis, Diabetes, Cardiovascular diseases, Obesity and Asthma. (See Figure A1 on the previous page for more details).
- Almost one in four Australians identified themselves as having a chronic health condition, with roughly equal numbers of males and females.
- Australians in the 46-65 year age groupings had the highest prevalence of chronic health conditions.
- Similar to last year's findings, Australians with at least one chronic health condition reported significantly lower levels of wellbeing, and significantly higher levels of stress and distress than those Australians with no chronic health condition (please see Table iv for details).
- Australians with at least one chronic health condition also reported significantly higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than those with no chronic health condition (please see Table A25 for details).
- They were also significantly more likely to report their stress levels had a strong to very strong impact on their physical health (29%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 13%_{without chronic conditions}) and mental health (33%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 16%_{without chronic conditions}).
- As with the findings in 2012, similar patterns were observed in the reported sources of stress and ways of managing stress for this chronic health condition group:
 - They were significantly more likely to report personal health issues, issues with trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle and mental health issues as sources of stress than the rest of Australians surveyed.
 - They were significantly less likely to do something active (63%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 73%_{without chronic conditions}) or something relaxing (35%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 45%_{without chronic conditions}) to manage stress.
 - Moreover, this year's survey found that this group was also significantly less likely to spend time with friends/family (77%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 83%_{without chronic conditions}), focus on the positives (76%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 82%_{without chronic conditions}) or adjust one's expectations (69%_{with chronic conditions} vs. 74%_{without chronic conditions}) to manage stress than other survey participants.

⁷ 'Physical chronic health condition' is referred to hereafter as 'chronic health condition'. Those participants who indicated that they were suffering from one chronic health condition that was a mental health disorder — e.g., depression — were excluded from this set of analyses as the focus was specifically on physical chronic health conditions.

Stress and wellbeing in Australia survey 2013

Appendix B: Survey resources

Tips on how to manage everyday stress infographic >

Understanding & managing everyday stress tipsheet >>>>

Stress Tips Video v

For access to these resources and more please visit:
<http://www.psychology.org.au/NPW>



 Australian Psychological Society

tips on how to manage everyday stress

Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound-up, tense and worried. Learning to handle stress in healthy ways is important. Fortunately, it's easy to learn simple techniques that help.



Identify warning signs

Signs you are stressed could include tensing your jaw, grinding your teeth, getting headaches, or feeling irritable and short tempered.



Identify triggers

Triggers can raise our stress levels. If you can identify and anticipate them you can practise calming yourself down beforehand, or even find ways to avoid them. Triggers might include late nights, deadlines, seeing particular people, hunger or over-tired children.



Establish routines

Having predictable rhythms and routines in your day, or over a week, such as regular times for exercise and relaxation, meal times, waking and bedtimes, can be calming and reassuring, and can help you to manage your stress.



Spend time with people who care

Spending time with and sharing your thoughts and feelings with people you care about and who care about you can help you to feel less stressed. It's important not to 'bottle up' your feelings.



Look after your health

Make sure you are eating healthy food and getting regular exercise. Take time to do activities you find calming or uplifting, such as listening to music, walking or dancing. Avoid using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to cope.



Notice your 'self-talk'

Saying things to yourself such as: "I can't cope", or "I'm too busy", or "I'm so tired", or "It's not fair" is called unhelpful "self-talk". Try more helpful self-talk like "I can cope", or "Calm down", or "Breathe easy".



Practise relaxation

Make time to practise relaxation. This will help your body and nervous system to settle and readjust. Consider learning a formal relaxation technique such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation or yoga, or make time to absorb yourself in a relaxing activity such as gardening or listening to music.



when to seek professional help

If high levels of stress continue for a long period of time or are interfering with you enjoying a healthy life, consider seeking professional help. A psychologist can help you to identify and change behaviours that are contributing to high stress.

To find an APS psychologist go to:
www.findapsychologist.org.au



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under- standing and managing **stress**



tips on how to manage everyday stress

Learning to handle stress in healthy ways is very important. Fortunately, it is easy to learn simple techniques that help. These include recognising and changing the behaviours that contribute to stress, as well as techniques for reducing stress once it has occurred. The following tips from the APS can help you look after your mind and body, and reduce stress and its impact on your health.



Identify warning signs

These vary from person to person, but might include things like tensing your jaw, grinding your teeth, getting headaches, or feeling irritable and short tempered.

Identify triggers

There are often known triggers which raise our stress levels and make it more difficult for us to manage. If you know what the likely triggers are, you can aim to anticipate them and practise calming yourself down beforehand, or even find ways of removing the trigger. Triggers might include late nights, deadlines, seeing particular people, hunger or over-tired children.

Establish routines

Having predictable rhythms and routines in your day, or over a week, such as regular times for exercise and relaxation, meal times, waking and bedtimes, can be very calming and reassuring, and can help you to manage your stress.

Spend time with people who care

Spending time with people you care about, and who care about you, is an important part of managing ongoing stress in your life. Share your thoughts and feelings with others when opportunities arise. Don't 'bottle up' your feelings.

Look after your health

Make sure you are eating healthy food and getting regular exercise. Take time to do activities you find calming or uplifting, such as listening to music, walking or dancing. Avoid using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to cope.

Notice your 'self-talk'

When we are stressed we sometimes say things in our head, over and over, that just add to our stress. This unhelpful self-talk might include things like: 'I can't cope', or 'I'm too busy', or 'I'm so tired', or 'It's not fair'. Try more helpful self-talk like 'I'm coping well given what's on my plate', or 'Calm down', or 'Breathe easy'.

Practise relaxation

Make time to practise relaxation. This will help your body and nervous system to settle and readjust. Consider learning a formal relaxation technique such as progressive muscle relaxation, meditation or yoga; or make time to absorb yourself in a relaxing activity such as gardening or listening to music.

when to seek professional help

If high levels of stress continue for a long period of time, or are interfering with you enjoying a healthy life, it is advisable to seek professional help. A mental health professional, like a psychologist, can help you identify behaviours and situations that are contributing to high stress, and help you to make changes to the things that are within your control. Seeking help can be one way to manage your stress effectively.

Learn more and find a psychologist at
www.psychology.org.au/NPW

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