

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL Monday, 5th October 2026 at 8am

Two thirds of people have experience of depression in Aware's annual mental health survey.

The 2026 Aware National Mental Health Survey reveals respondents consider Connection and Understanding as important steps to managing mental health, while Stigma remains a concern.

Marking Aware Mental Health Week 2026 (5-11th October, including World Mental Health Day) Aware, the national organisation for those affected by depression, bipolar and anxiety, have today published their annual National Mental Health Survey with insights from the Irish public on how we understand and support our mental health.

Key findings from Aware's survey include:

- 61% of people surveyed believe they have experienced depression at some point in their life, with 1 in 5 having a diagnosis. **The survey indicates that the prevalence of those who have experienced mental health issues has increased since 2024.**
- Whereas over half of all over 55-year-olds report they have **not** experienced depression **compared with only 28% of 18-24 year olds.**
- A third of people living with a chronic illness (31%) report a current experience of depression.
- The total number of survey respondents who indicated they have never felt depressed, down or hopeless, **has decreased by 10 percentage points** compared with the 2024 National Survey (from 58% to 48%).
- Of those surveyed who experience depression or anxiety, **less than one in five (18%) indicated that they have participated in a mental health education programme to support their mental health, with one in six (16%) of them indicating that they attended regular psychotherapy.**
- In this year's survey **financial pressures emerge as the largest factor impacting on mental health - as money (54%) remains the leading factor negatively affecting wellbeing.**
- Stigma remains an issue as **34% of those who have experienced symptoms cited shame/embarrassment** for delay in accessing supports.

Find the full Aware National Survey for 2026 published at aware.ie/national-survey-2026

Aware Mental Health Week 2026 shines a light on the power of understanding your mental health, using peer supports, and telling real stories, so that nobody faces depression alone.

Aware's Clinical Director, Dr Susan Brannick said: *"Our results show that depression and anxiety remain a challenge for many people with a sizable proportion currently experiencing symptoms of depression (2 in 10) which they report having a significant impact on daily life. Of those surveyed, 21% report a diagnosis of depression, and 4 in 10 of those who reported experiencing anxiety told us they struggle to function on a daily basis because their anxiety is so bad. These results offer a snapshot of how people in Ireland are living with mental health difficulties and highlight the need for responsive and timely mental health supports and services for all."*

"I would advise anyone who is struggling with their mental health or wants to get more education in relation to bipolar or depression to go to Aware, and take a look at the services they offer... I want to continue to be a voice for Aware because mental health is a huge part of my story and that of so many other people, so we need to keep talking about it." **Arlene Bailey, Aware Lived Experience Expert**

ENDS

Notes to editors

Aware is the national charity providing support, therapy, education and information to those affected by depression, bipolar and anxiety - delivering free accessible support to tens of thousands of people across Ireland each year, but **not everyone is Aware of our services as 43% of those surveyed indicated they hadn't heard of what we do.**

Our free services include;

- The Aware Support Line – **1800 80 48 48**
- Support and Self-Care Groups in-person and online
- Solace Café Out-Of-Hours Crisis Supports in Blackrock, Dublin and Waterford City.
- Aware Mental Health Education Programmes
- With additional supports for Relatives and Friends supporting a loved one.
- www.aware.ie

We would appreciate your help in amplifying our message of support and hope for those affected by depression, bipolar and anxiety. Please let us know if you'd like to



interview our Clinical Director Dr. Susan Brannick, an experienced Aware volunteer, or an Aware Lived Experience Expert with personal experience of their own mental health difficulties (bios upon request).

Press Contacts

Frank Dillon, Aware Head of Communications and Fundraising	frank.dillon@aware.ie	086 822 1467
Marie Gordon, Aware Communications Manager	marie.gordon@aware.ie	086 810 2604