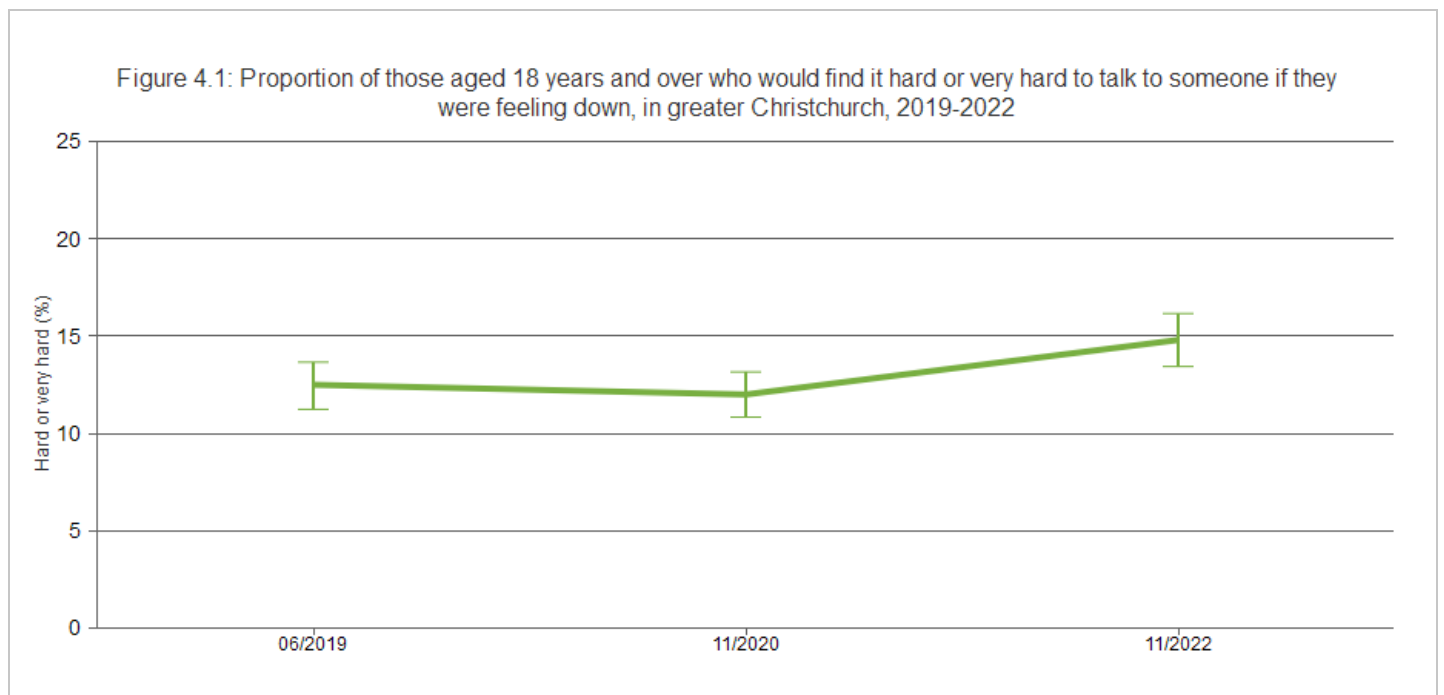


Social Capital: Emotional support

Downloaded from <https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/social-capital/emotional-support/> on 04/04/2025 6:38 PM

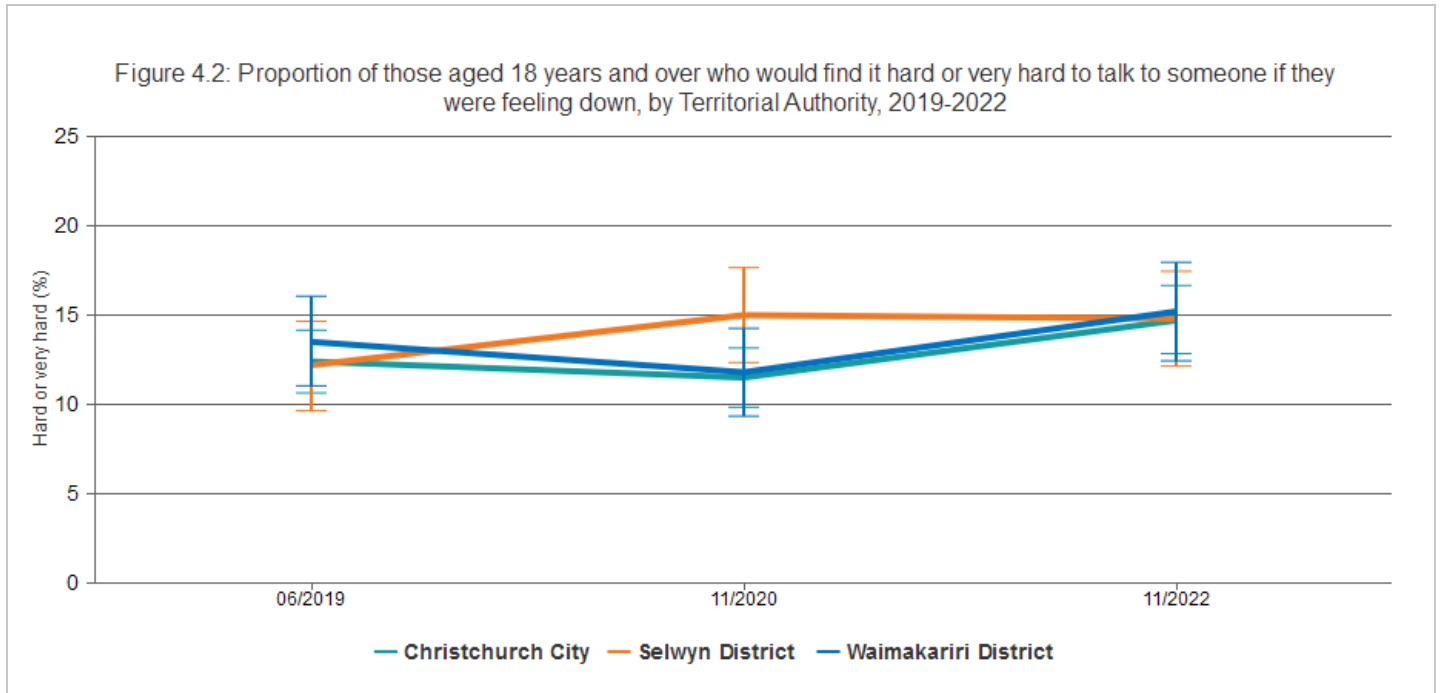
Emotional support refers to support from people in one’s social network in the form of love, caring, acceptance, sympathy, understanding, encouragement, and/or esteem or value [14]. Emotional support is commonly understood to be a part of the wider concept of *social support* (along with instrumental support or help with practical things; and advice on expert matters, typically from professionals). Easy access to emotional support (or support that is perceived to be readily available) [15] can have a positive influence on physical and psychological wellbeing [16-18]. These positive effects probably accrue via buffering stress and/or by influencing health-related behaviours [19,20]. Early social experiences tend to influence physical health and mental wellbeing across the lifespan, making emotional support a particularly important resource for young people [20] and for those experiencing life transitions [21].

This indicator presents the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down or a bit depressed and wanted to talk with someone about it, as reported in the Canterbury Wellbeing Survey.



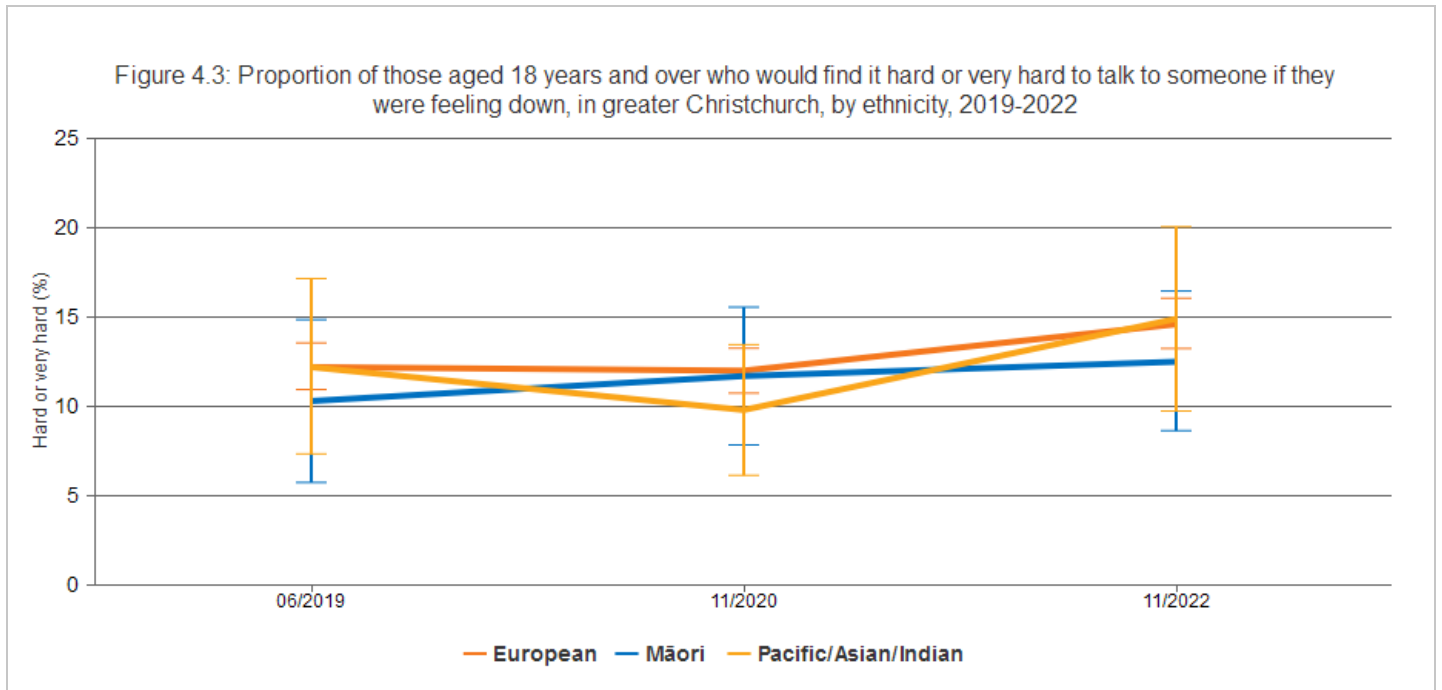
The figure shows the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, in greater Christchurch, as reported in the 2019, 2020, and 2022 Canterbury Wellbeing Surveys. The figure shows that in 2022, 14.8% of respondents indicated that they would find it hard or very hard to access emotional support in times of need. The increase from the 2020 result is statistically significant (12%, 2020 to 14.8% 2022).

Breakdown by Territorial Authority



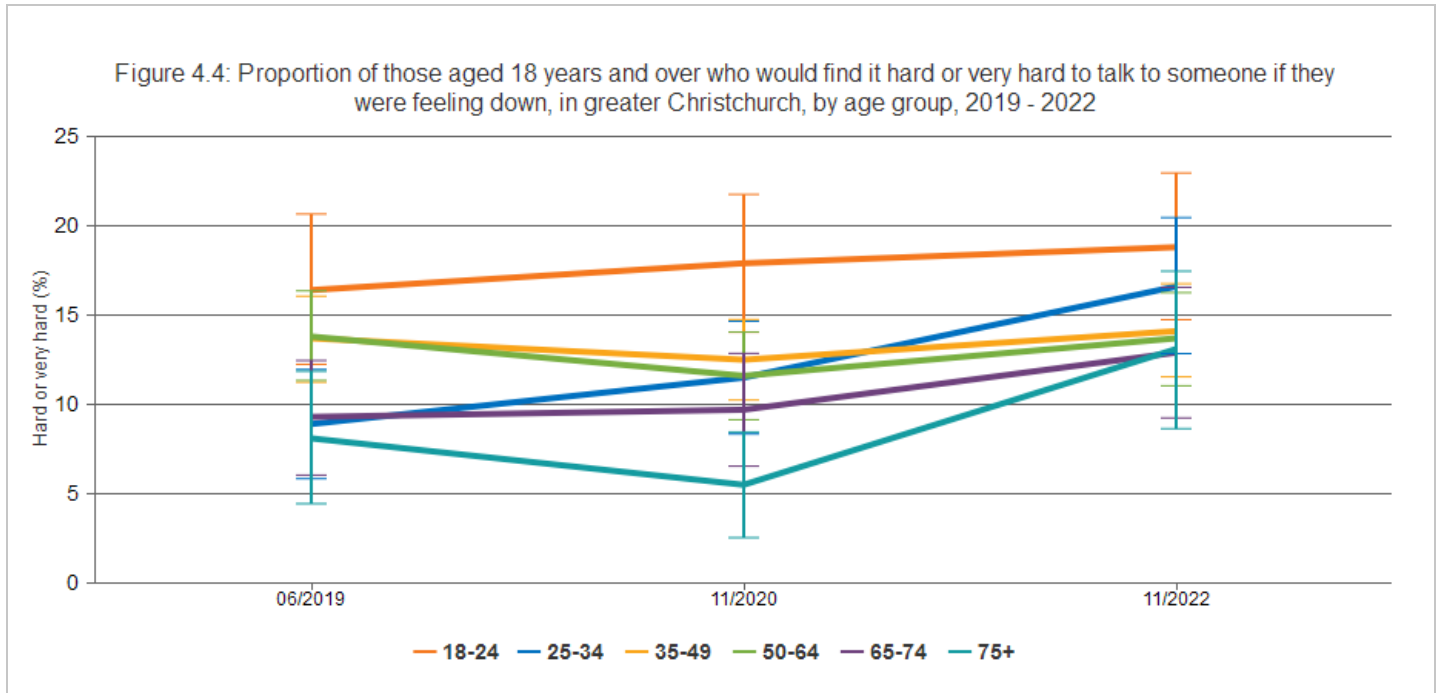
The figure shows the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, for Christchurch City, Selwyn District, and Waimakariri District, as reported in the 2019, 2020, and 2022 Canterbury Wellbeing Surveys (14.7%, 14.8%, and 15.2%, respectively, in 2022). The figure shows that the proportion of those in Selwyn District aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down has increased from 12.2 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2020, and the 2022 result for Selwyn District is now similar to the other two Territorial Authorities (no statistically significant differences between the Territorial Authorities across the time series).

Breakdown by ethnicity



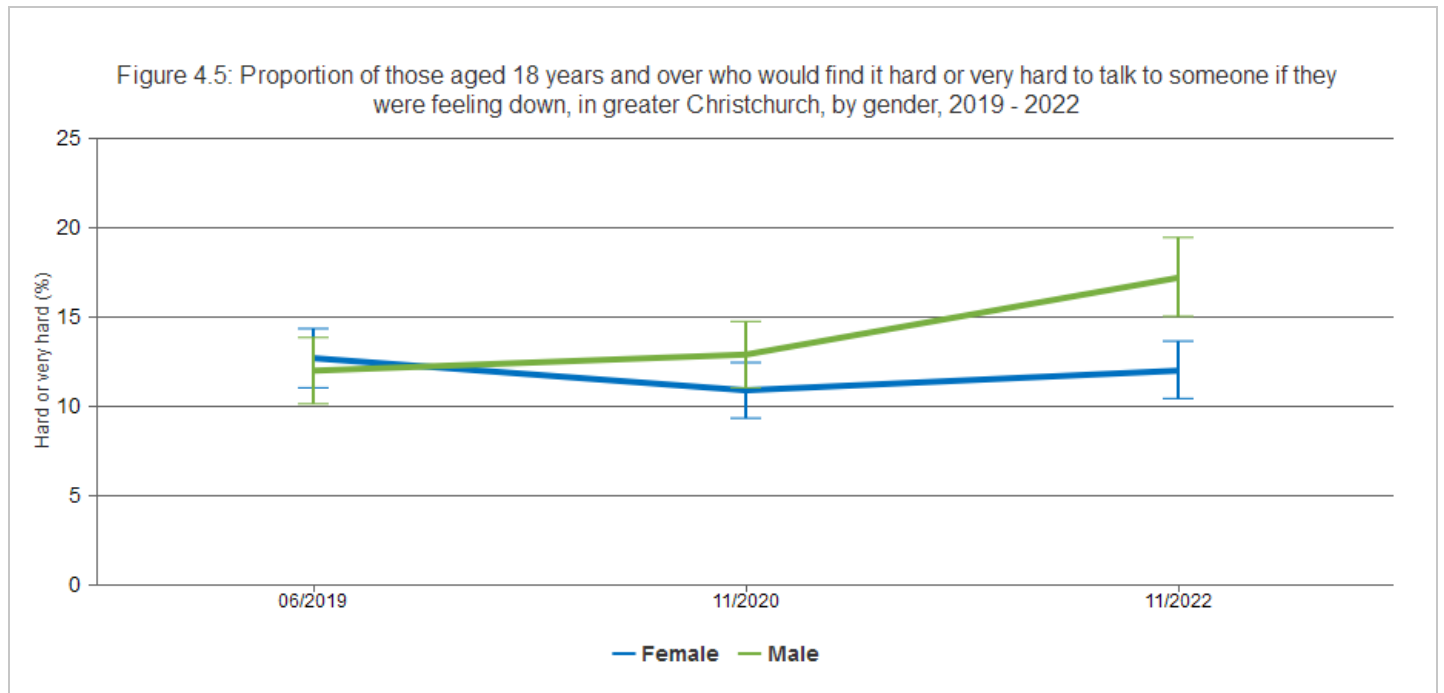
The figure shows the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, in greater Christchurch, by ethnicity, in 2019, 2020, and 2022. The figure shows similar levels of emotional support (the proportion who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down) for European, Māori, and Pacific/Asian/Indian respondents (14.6%, 12.5%, and 14.9%, respectively, in 2022).

Breakdown by age



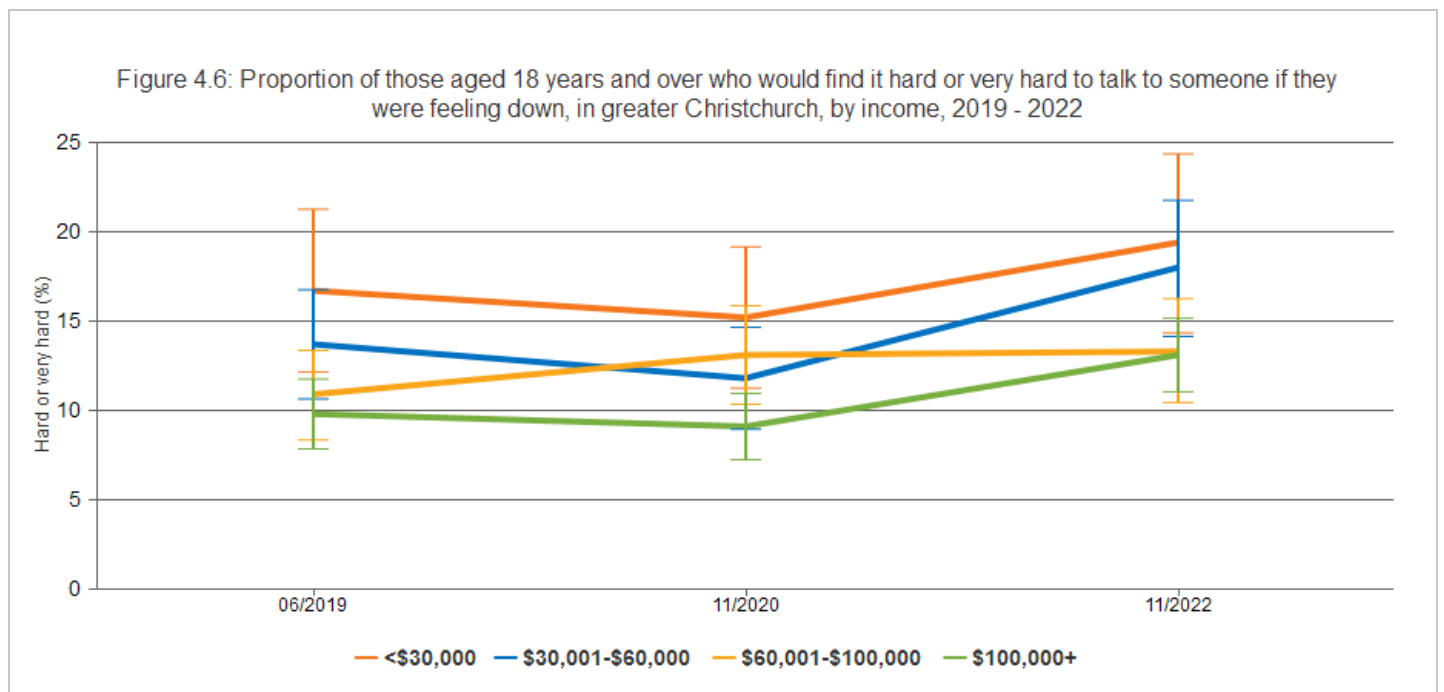
The figure shows the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, for greater Christchurch, by age group, in 2019, 2020, and 2022. The figure shows a clear picture of greater difficulty accessing emotional support for young people aged 18 to 24 (a statistically significantly higher proportion reporting that they would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, compared with the 65-74 years and 75 years and over age groups: 17.9%, 9.7%, and 5.5%, respectively, in 2020, with some convergence to non-significant differences in 2022). The data suggest that access to emotional support may generally improve over the life course (i.e., an age gradient: 18–24 years, 18.8%; 25–34 years, 16.6%; 35–49 years, 14.1%; 50–64 years, 13.7%; 65–74 years, 12.9%, and 75 years+, 13.1% in 2022).

Breakdown by gender



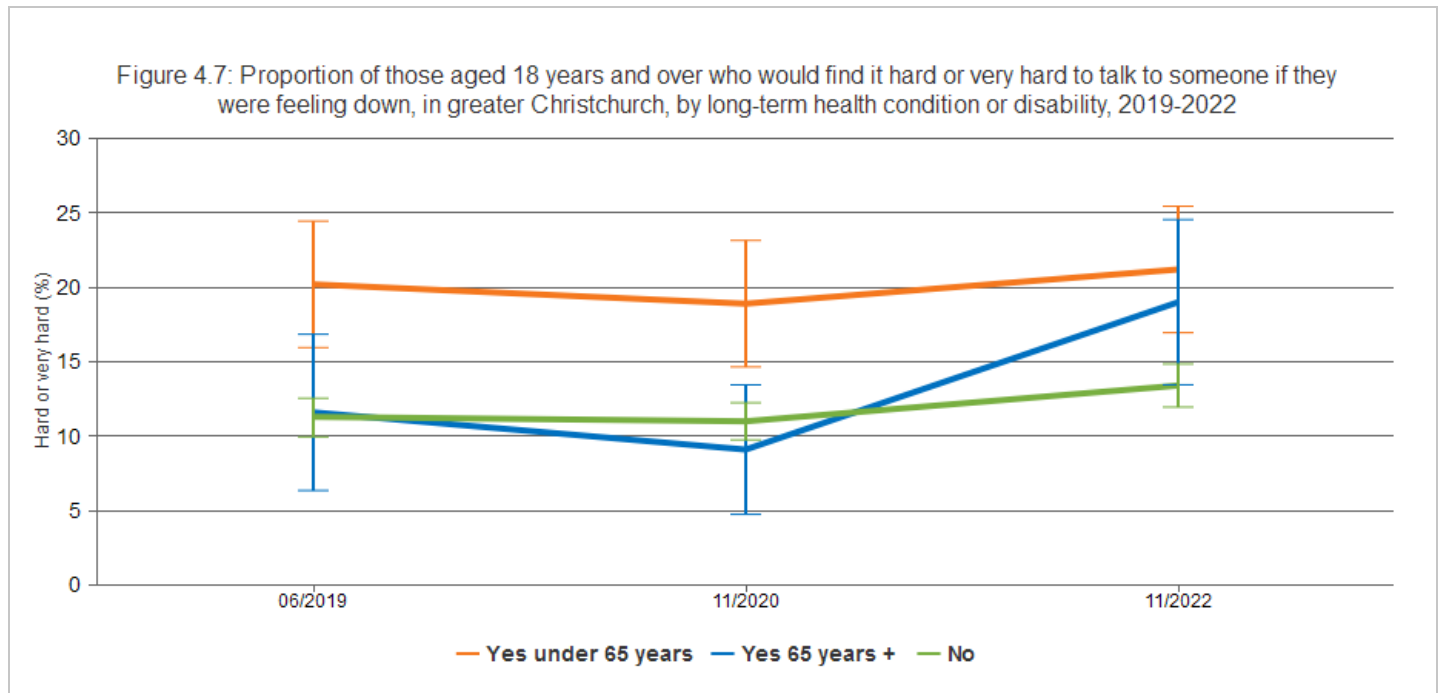
The figure shows the proportion of those aged 18 years and over who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, in greater Christchurch, by gender, in 2019, 2020, and 2022. The figure shows differing levels of emotional support (the proportion who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down) for female and male respondents from 2020 (statistically significantly different in 2022; 12% and 17.2%, respectively).

Breakdown by income



The figure shows the proportion of respondents reporting that they would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, by income group, in 2019, 2020, and 2022. The figure shows a general pattern of higher levels of difficulty in accessing emotional support in the lower income groups (<\$30,000, 19.4%; \$30,001-\$60,000, 18%; \$60,001-\$100,000, 13.3%; \$100,000+ group, 13.1%, in 2022). The difference between the lowest income group and the highest income group was statistically significant in 2019 and 2020 but not in 2022.

Breakdown by disability



The figure shows statistically significantly higher proportions of respondents who would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone if they were feeling down, for those aged under 65 years with a long-term health condition or disability, compared with those without a long-term health condition or disability, in greater Christchurch, 2019, 2020, and 2022 (21.2% and 13.4%, respectively, in 2022). Respondents with a long-term health condition or disability who were aged 65 years and over, had a similar proportion indicating they would find it hard or very hard to talk to someone, compared with the under-65 years disability group and those without a long-term health condition or disability, in greater Christchurch, in 2022 (19%, in 2020).

Data Sources

Source: Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury - formerly the Canterbury District Health Board.

Survey/data set: Canterbury Wellbeing Survey 2022. Access publicly available data from Te Mana Ora | Community and Public Health website www.cph.co.nz/your-health/wellbeing-survey/

Source data frequency: Annually.

Metadata for this indicator is available at <https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data>

REFERENCES

This is the full reference list for **Social Capital**.

- 1 Putnam RD, Leonardi R, Nanenetti R (1993) *Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 2 Rocco L, Suhrcke M (2012) *Is social capital good for health? A European perspective*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- 3 Islam MK, Merlo J, Kawachi I, Lindström M, Gerdtham U-G (2006) Social capital and health: Does egalitarianism matter? A literature review. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 5: 3.
- 4 Scheffler RM, Brown TT (2008) Social capital, economics, and health: new evidence. *Health Econ Policy Law* 3: 321-331.
- 5 d'Hombres B, Rocco L, Suhrcke M, McKee M (2010) Does social capital determine health? Evidence from eight transition countries. *Health Econ* 19: 56-74.
- 6 Folland S (2007) Does "community social capital" contribute to population health? *Social Science and Medicine* 64: 2342-2354.
- 7 Syme SL (2000) Foreword. In: Berkman LF, Kawachi I, editors. *Social epidemiology*. New York: Oxford. pp. ix-xii.
- 8 Browning CR, Cagney KA (2003) Moving beyond poverty: neighborhood structure, social processes and health. *J Health Soc Behav* 44: 552-571.
- 9 McMillan DW (1996) Sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology* 24: 315-325.
- 10 Sonn CC, Fisher AT (2005) Immigrant Adaptation: Complicating our understanding of responses to intergroup experiences. In: Nelson G, Prilleltensky I, editors. *Community Psychology: In pursuit of liberation and wellbeing*. London, UK: McMillan, Palgrave. pp. 348-363.
- 11 Gusfield JR (1975) *The community: A critical response*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- 12 Sarason SB (1986) The emergence of a conceptual center. *Journal of Community Psychology* 14: 405-407.
- 13 Pinker S (2015) *The village effect: Why face-to-face contact matters*. London: Atlantic Books.
- 14 Thoits PA (1995) Stress, coping, and social support processes: where are we? What next? *J Health Soc Behav Spec*: 53-79.
- 15 Haber M, Cohen J, Lucas T, Baltes B (2007) The relationship Between Self-Reported Received and Perceived Social Support: A Meta-Analytic Review. *American journal of community psychology* 39: 133-144.
- 16 Berkman LF, Syme SL (1979) Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *Am J Epidemiol.* 109: 186-204. doi: 110.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a112674.
- 17 Thoits PA (2011) Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health. *J Health Soc Behav* 52: 145-161.
- 18 Uchino BN, Bowen K, Carlisle M, Birmingham W (2012) Psychological pathways linking social support to health outcomes: a visit with the "ghosts" of research past, present, and future. *Social science & medicine (1982)* 74: 949-957.
- 19 Cohen S, Wills TA (1985) Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychol Bull.* 98: 310-357.
- 20 Uchino B (2006) Social Support and Health: A Review of Physiological Processes Potentially Underlying Links to Disease Outcomes. *Journal of behavioral medicine* 29: 377-387.
- 21 Schonfeld IS (1991) Dimensions of functional social support and psychological symptoms. *Psychological Medicine* 21: 1051-1060.
- 22 Ministry of Social Development (2016) *The Social Report 2016: Te pūrongo oranga tangata*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.
- 23 Ateca-Amestoy V (2011) Leisure and subjective well-being. In: Cameron S, editor. *Handbook on the economics of leisure*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. pp. 52-76.
- 24 Throsby D (2001) *Economics and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 25 Aked J, Marks N, Cordon C, Thompson S (2008) *Five Ways to Wellbeing: A report presented to the Foresight Project on communicating the evidence base for improving people's well-being*. London: New Economics Foundation.
- 26 Arts Council England (2012) *Measuring the economic benefits of arts and culture: practical guidance on research methodologies for arts and cultural organisations*: Arts Council England.
- 27 Wheatley D, Bickerton C (2017) Subjective well-being and engagement in arts, culture and sport. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 41: 23-45.

- 28 Arts Council of New Zealand, Creative New Zealand (2020) *New Zealanders and the arts. Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi. Survey findings for Canterbury residents 2020*. Wellington: Creative New Zealand.
- 29 Arts Council of New Zealand, Creative New Zealand (2020) *New Zealanders and the arts. Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi. Summary Report 2020*. Wellington: Creative New Zealand.
- 30 Directorate-General for Communication (2015) *Special Eurobarometer 437; Discrimination in the EU in 2015*. European Union.
- 31 Harris RB, Stanley J, Cormack DM (2018) Racism and health in New Zealand: Prevalence over time and associations between recent experience of racism and health and wellbeing measures using national survey data. *PLoS ONE* 13: e0196476.
- 32 Tofler IR, Butterbaugh GJ (2005) Developmental Overview of Child and Youth Sports for the Twenty-first Century. *Clinics in Sports Medicine* 24: 783-804.
- 33 Dalziel P (2011) *The economic and social value of sport and recreation to New Zealand, Research Report No. 322*.
- 34 Steptoe AS, Butler N (1996) Sports participation and emotional wellbeing in adolescents. *The Lancet* 347: 1789-1792.
- 35 Office of the European Union (2011) *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Second European Quality of Life Survey: Participation in volunteering and unpaid work*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. 56 p.
- 36 OECD (2007) Measuring and fostering the progress of societies, 2nd World Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, 27–30 June, 2007: Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation.
- 37 Heitmueller A, Inglis K (2004) *Carefree? Participation and pay differentials for informal carers in Britain, IZA Discussion Paper No. 1273*. Bonn, Institute for the Study of Labour.
- 38 Mellor D, Hayashi Y, Stokes M, Firth L, Lake L, et al. (2009) Volunteering and its relationship with personal and neighborhood well-being. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38: 144–159.
- 39 Dolan P, Peasgood T, White M (2008) Do we really know what makes us happy? A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with well-being. *Journal of Economic Psychology* 29: 94–122.