

WHO DO NEW ZEALANDERS FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING TO ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH?

The importance of mental health and wellbeing has grown increasingly visible in New Zealand. In the light of persistently high suicide rates and pressure on the mental healthcare system there are calls to expand and diversify the range of services available and improve their effectiveness.

Health professionals encourage people to turn to a trusted support network, so we asked New Zealanders who they feel they can talk to*.

- **Half of New Zealanders** feel comfortable talking to close friends (59%), an immediate family member (58%) or a mental health therapist (55%). However, one third only feel somewhat comfortable talking to these contacts and one-in-ten do not feel too comfortable or are not comfortable at all.
- For those **living with a partner**, the majority do feel comfortable talking about their mental health with them. This was the highest level across the types of people we asked about, but it is important to note that roughly one in six only feel somewhat comfortable or are not comfortable. It is also worth noting that **this source of support is not available to all**, four-in-ten of our representative sample said they are not married or living with a partner.

- Amongst those that attend religious services, half are comfortable discussing their mental health with faith leaders.

There were some differences in comfort with who to talk to about mental health by **age and gender**.

- The **youngest age group surveyed (15-24)** were **less likely** to feel extremely or very comfortable talking to any of the sources of support mentioned and were significantly less likely to feel extremely or very comfortable reaching out to an immediate family member.
- **Female** respondents were also **significantly less likely** to feel extremely or very comfortable reaching out to an immediate family member, compared with male respondents.

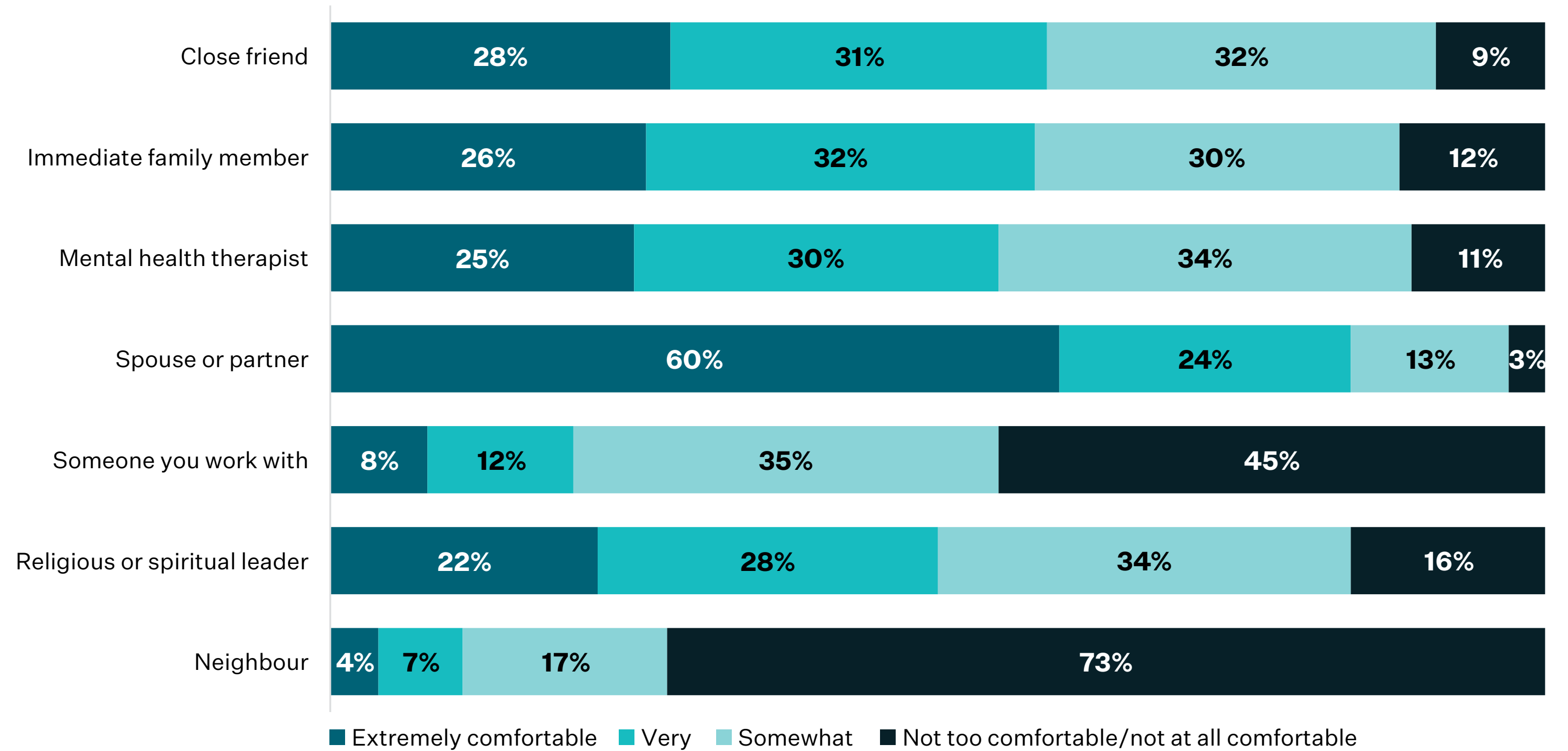
Data comes from a representative sample of New Zealanders surveyed in May 2024. For further information contact liz@researchfirst.co.nz

*This follows a recent survey by the Pew Research Center in the US: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/05/02/who-do-americans-feel-comfortable-talking-to-about-their-mental-health/>

in association with



How comfortable would you be talking about your mental health and emotional well-being with each of the following?



How comfortable would you be talking about your mental health and emotional well-being with each of the following? Total 'extremely' or 'very' comfortable

	Total sample	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Close friend	59%	56%	68%	69%	54%	50%	55%	57%	61%
Immediate family member	58%	44%	55%	64%	58%	55%	70%	63%	54%
Mental health therapist	55%	50%	48%	67%	52%	53%	62%	54%	56%
Spouse or partner	85%	83%	90%	90%	82%	81%	80%	84%	86%