



Farmer and Rural Perceptions of Mental Health



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

December 2021

 MORNING CONSULT

BACKGROUND + METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

The research conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation seeks to understand stigma around mental health among rural adults and farmers/farm workers. Specific research objectives include:

1. *Understand general impressions of mental health including stigma associated with mental health, obstacles to seeking mental health help or treatment, and personal experiences with mental health*
2. *Gauge who rural adults and farmers/farm workers are most comfortable talking with about their mental health*
3. *Measure changes over the past year in awareness of information about mental health resources and comfort level in talking about stress and mental health with others*

TRENDING

Throughout this survey, questions are trended from results from April 2019 and December 2020 among rural adults and farmers and farm workers to understand how experiences, perceptions, and opinions are changing.

METHODOLOGY

Morning Consult conducted this poll on behalf of AFBF between December 10-18, 2021, among a national sample of 2,000 rural adults. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. Results are tracked from a survey conducted between April 4-10, 2019 among a national sample of 2,004 rural adults and December 4-13, 2020 among a national sample of 2,000 rural adults.

AFBF: MENTAL HEALTH AMONG RURAL ADULTS

Key Findings

- 1. Stigma around seeking help or treatment for mental health has decreased but is still a factor, particularly in agriculture.** Over the past year, there has been a decrease in rural adults saying their friends/acquaintances (-4%), people in their local community (-9%) and their place of employment (-7%) attach stigma to seeking help or treatment for mental health. But a majority of rural adults (59%) say there is at least some stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community, including 63% of farmers/farm workers. A quarter (28%) of rural adults say there is more stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community compared to a year ago, while 12% say there is less stigma. (7, 8, 9, 45) *
- 2. Rural adults say stigma and availability of treatment are less of a barrier to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition than in prior years, but these are still barriers.** A majority of rural adults agree that availability (55%), embarrassment (52%), and stigma (51%) would be a barrier if they were seeking help for a mental health condition, but all have decreased in the past year. There was an 11% decrease in farmers/farm workers who say stigma is an obstacle to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition; however, a majority (61%) still agree it is an obstacle. (10, 13)
- 3. Farmers/farm workers are more comfortable talking to friends, family and their doctors about stress and mental health than they were in 2019.** Four in five rural adults (83%) and 92% of farmers/farm workers say they would be comfortable talking about solutions with a friend or family member dealing with stress or a mental health condition. Nearly half of rural adults (48%) and 2 in 5 farmers/farm workers (44%) say they are more comfortable talking to their doctor about personal experiences with stress and mental health compared to a year ago. And the percentage of farmers/farm workers who say they would be comfortable talking to friends and family members has increased 22% since April 2019. (16, 17, 19, 20, 21)
- 4. Farmers/farm workers are most likely to say financial issues (80%), weather or other factors beyond their control (82%), and the state of the farm economy (80%) impact farmers' mental health.** Similarly, about half of rural adults think financial issues (54%), fear of losing the farm (53%), an uncertain future (46%), and the state of the farm economy (46%) impact the mental health of farmers a lot. (25, 29)
- 5. A majority of rural adults (52%) and farmers/farm workers (61%) are experiencing more stress and mental health challenges compared to a year ago, and they are seeking care because of increased stress.** Younger rural adults are more likely than older rural adults to say they are experiencing more stress and mental health challenges compared to a year ago, and they are more likely than older rural adults to say they have personally sought care from a mental health professional. (33, 34, 36, 38)
- 6. Over the past year, rural adults say they have seen more information about mental health, and there is increased acceptance for seeking help for stress or mental health issues.** Rural adults say they have seen more information over the past year about stress and mental health from social media (35%) and government agencies (26%). Two in five of those involved in agriculture say there is more acceptance in the agricultural community for seeking help for stress and mental health today compared to a year ago, including 41% of farmers/farm workers. (43, 47, 48)

* Denotes relevant slide numbers

AGENDA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF
MENTAL HEALTH

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH
MENTAL HEALTH

TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR
MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION
OVER THE PAST YEAR

CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL
HEALTH OF FARMERS

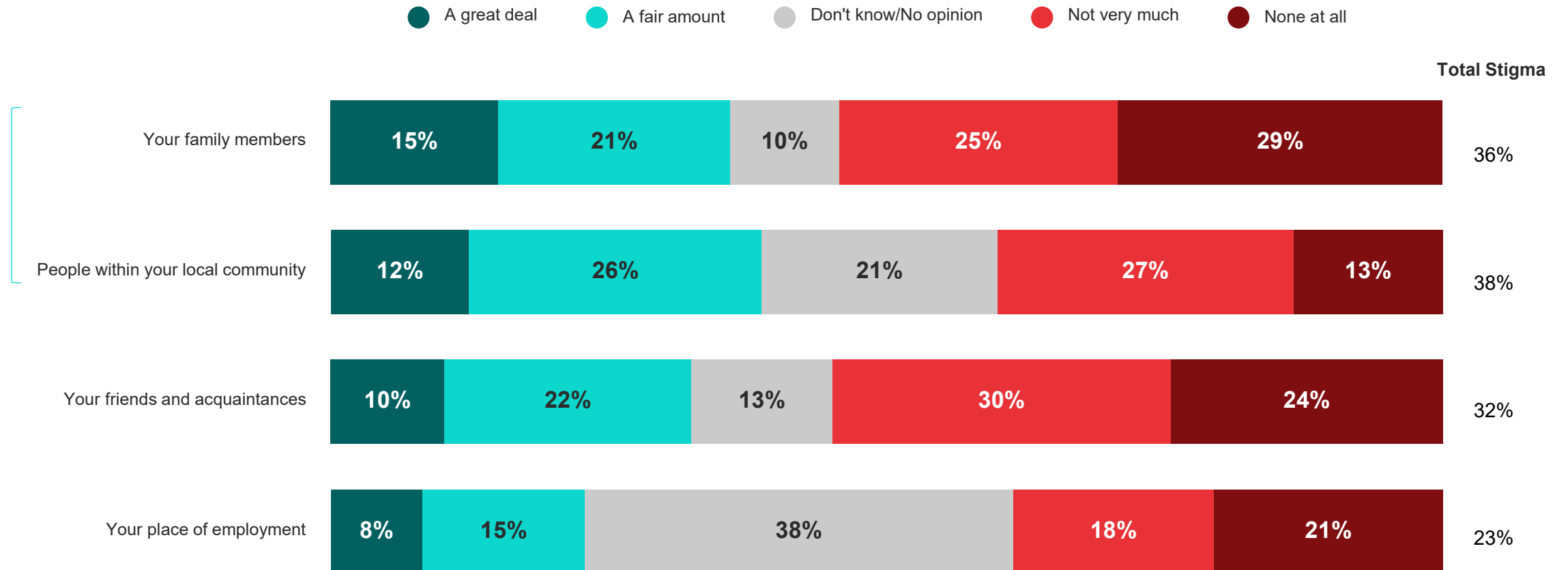


GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Nearly two in five rural adults say their family members (36%) and people in their local community (38%) attach at least a *fair amount* of stigma to seeking treatment or help for mental health.

*In your opinion, how much stigma do the following groups attach to seeking treatment or help for mental health?

RURAL ADULTS



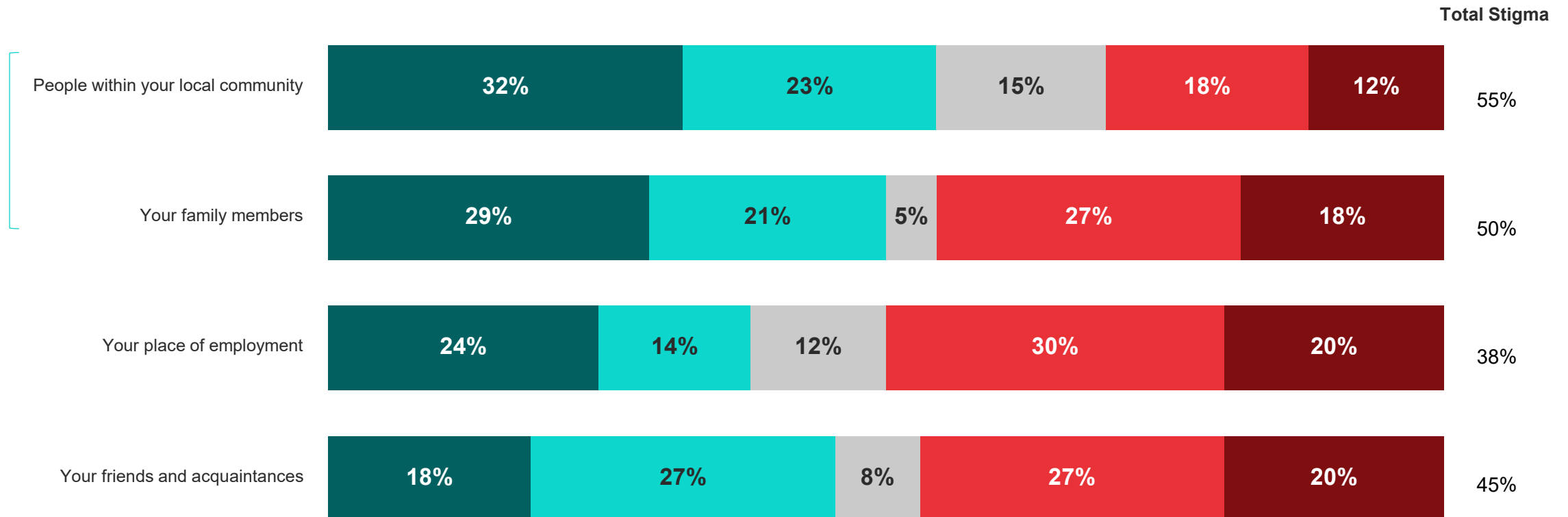
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Farmers/farm workers are more likely than rural adults to think the tested groups attach stigma to seeking treatment or help for mental health, specifically people within their local community (55%) and family members (50%).

In your opinion, how much stigma do the following groups attach to seeking treatment or help for mental health?

****FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● A great deal
 ● A fair amount
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not very much
 ● None at all



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

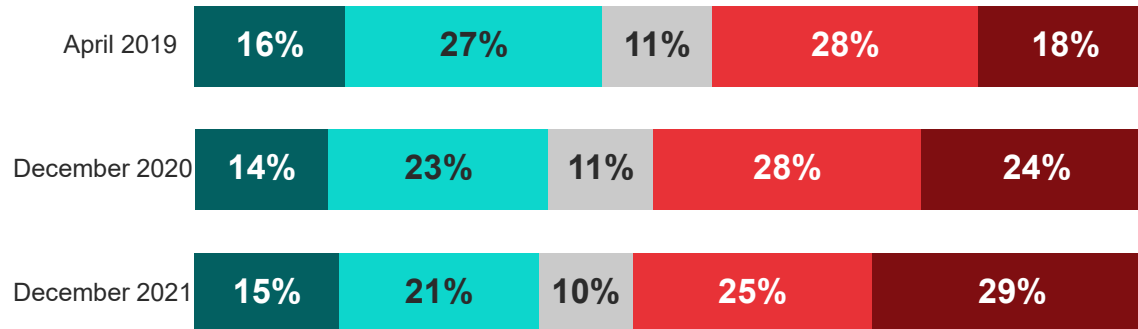
Over the past year, there has been a decrease in rural adults saying their friends/acquaintances (-4%), people in their local community (-9%) and their place of employment (-7%) attach stigma to seeking help or treatment for mental health.

*In your opinion, how much stigma do the following groups attach to seeking treatment or help for mental health?

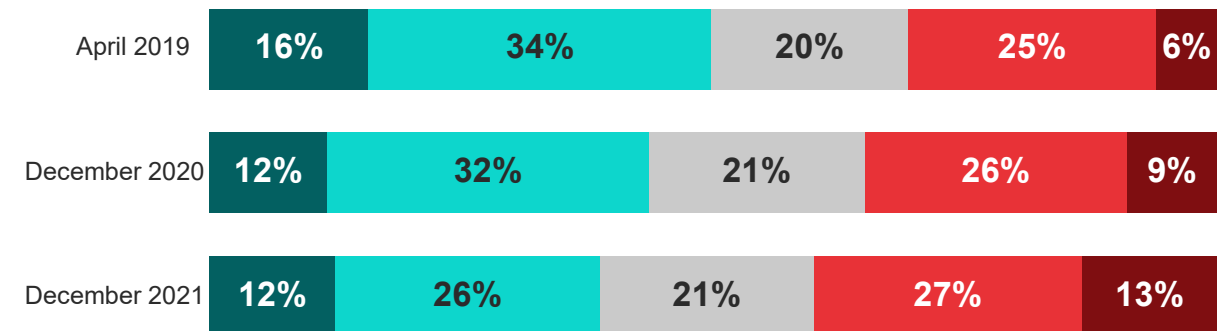
RURAL ADULTS

● A great deal
 ● A fair amount
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not very much
 ● None at all

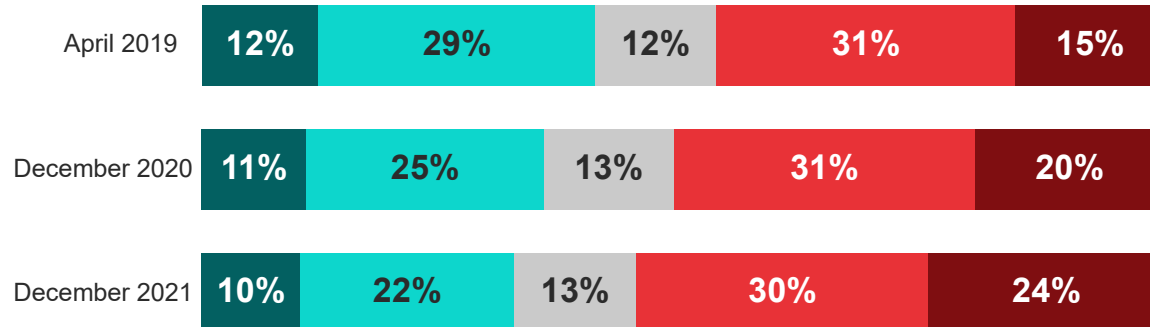
Your family members



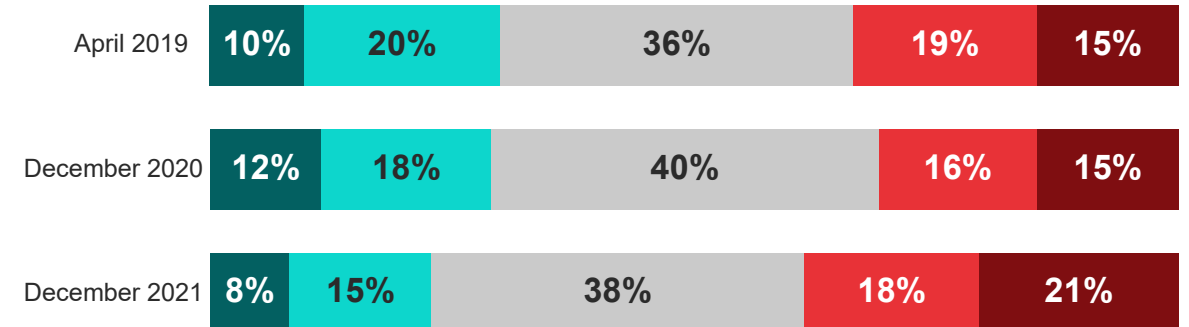
People within your local community



Your friends and acquaintances



Your place of employment

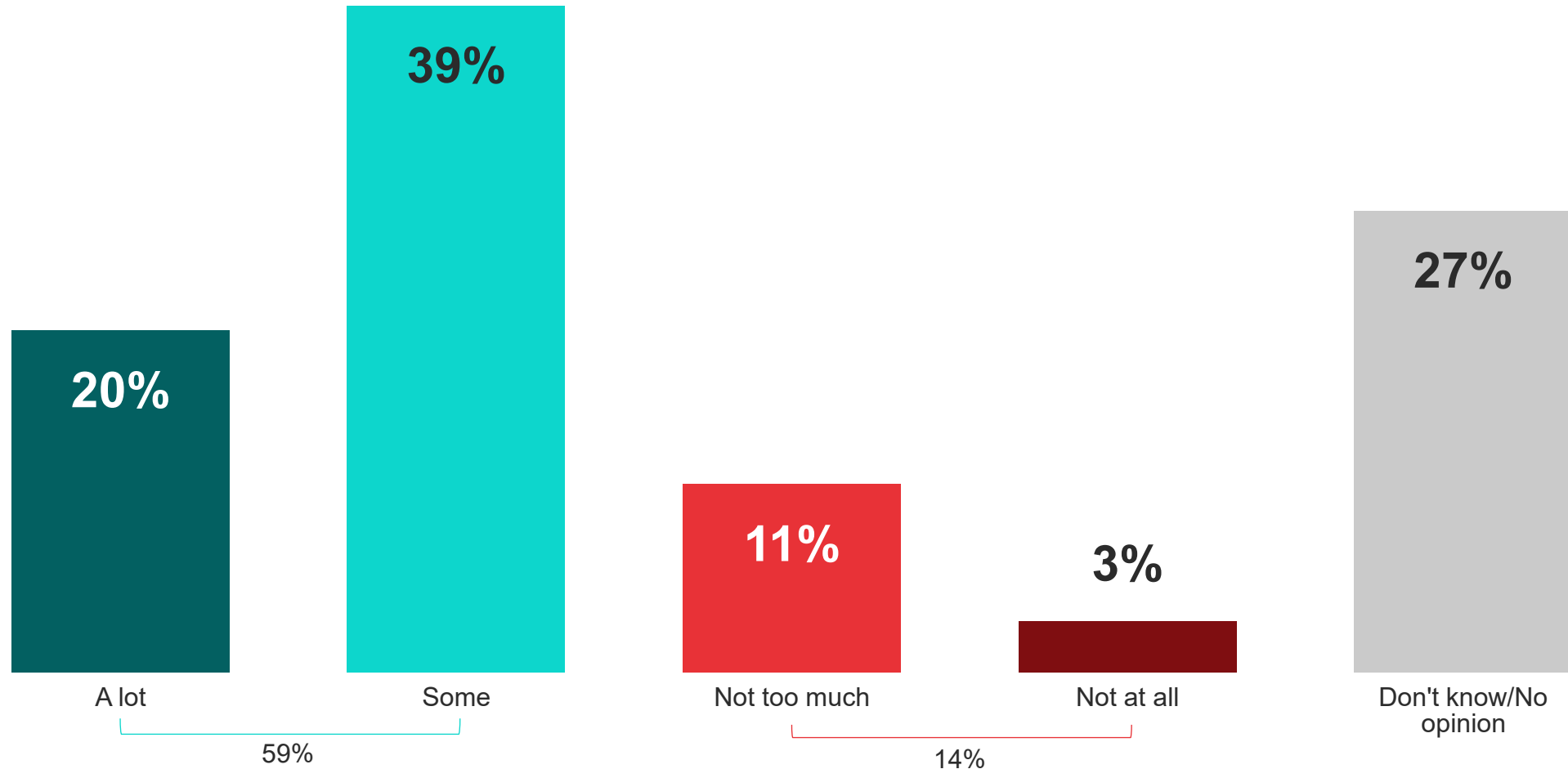


GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

A majority (59%) of rural adults say there is at least *some* stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community.

*In your opinion, how much stigma is there around stress and mental health in the agriculture community today?

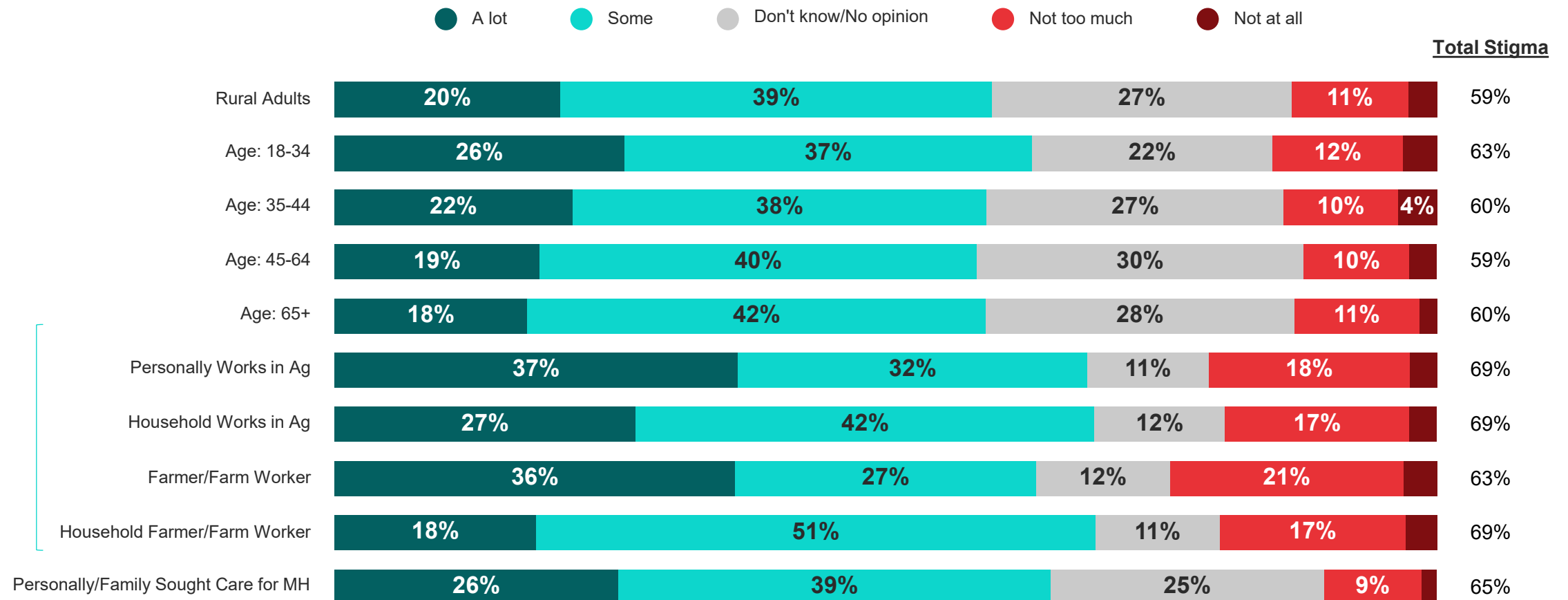
RURAL ADULTS



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

About two thirds of those involved in agriculture say there is at least *some* stigma in the agriculture community around stress and mental health, including 63% of farmers/farm workers.

In your opinion, how much stigma is there around stress and mental health in the agriculture community today?

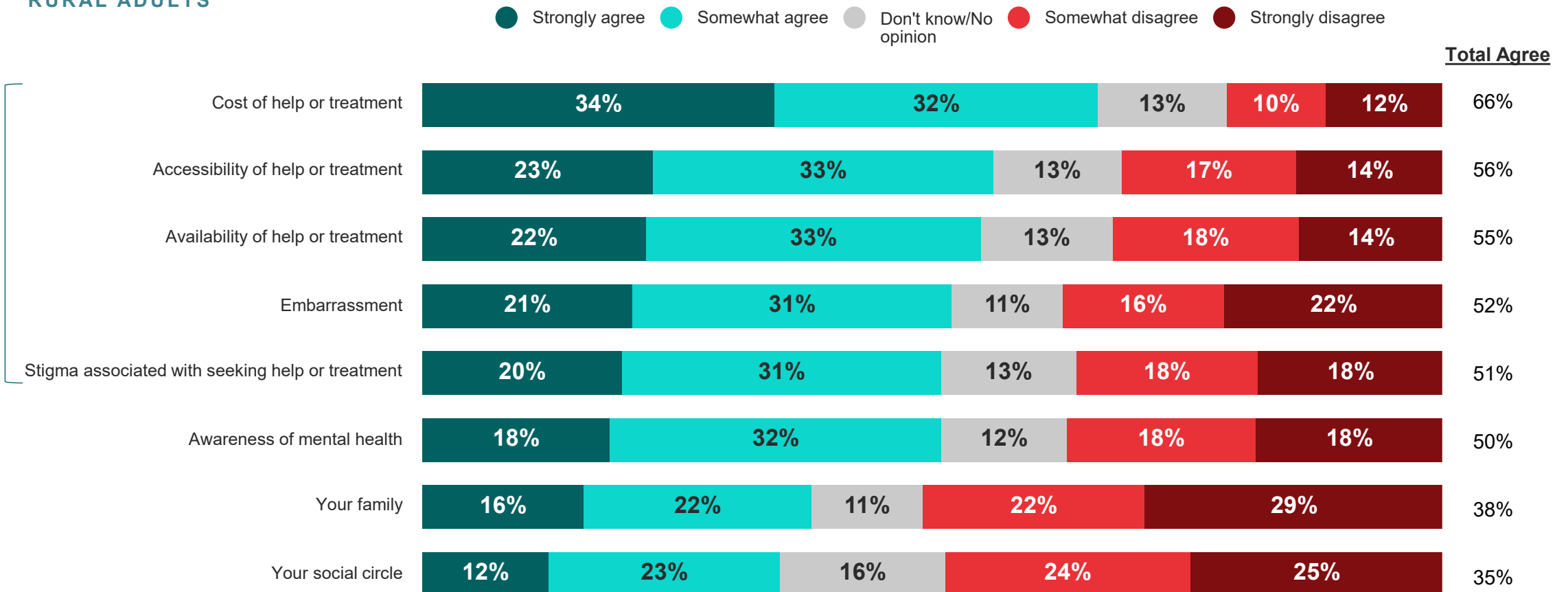


GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

A majority of rural adults agree cost (66%), accessibility (56%), availability (55%), embarrassment (52%) and stigma (51%) would be a barrier if they were seeking help for a mental health condition.

*Some say the following are obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition. Do you agree or disagree that the following would be an obstacle if you were seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition?

RURAL ADULTS



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

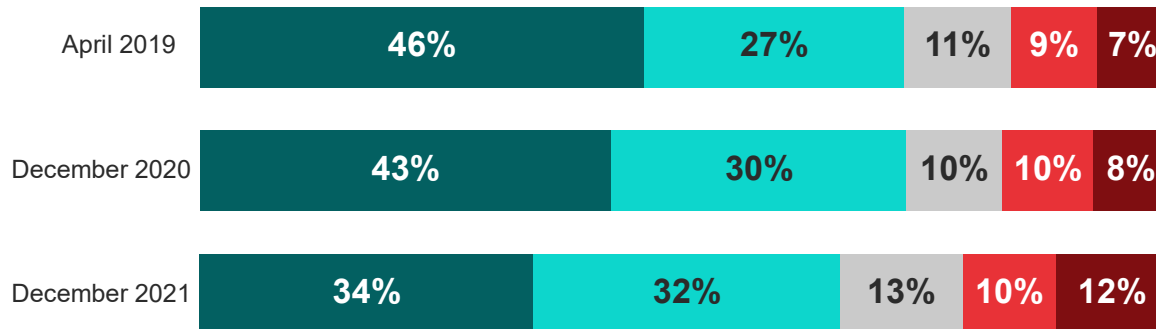
Compared to a year ago, the percentage of rural adults who agree the following items would be obstacles for seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition decreased, specifically stigma (-9%) and availability of treatment (-8%).

Do you agree or disagree that the following would be an obstacle if you were seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition?

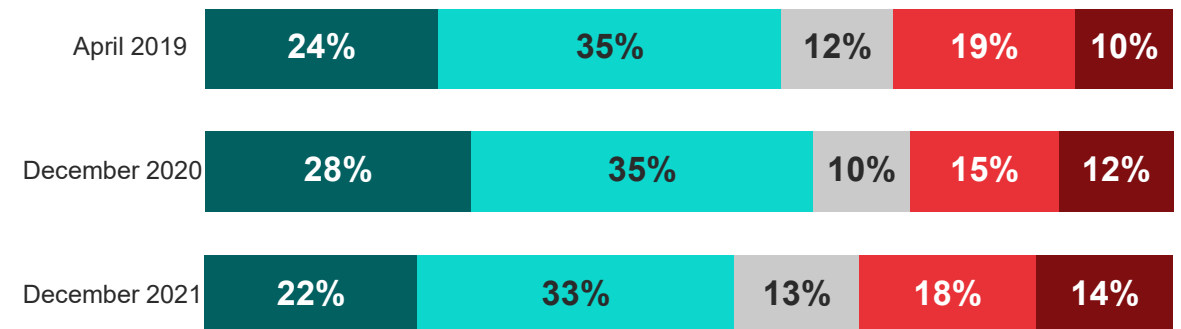
RURAL ADULTS

● Strongly agree
 ● Somewhat agree
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Somewhat disagree
 ● Strongly disagree

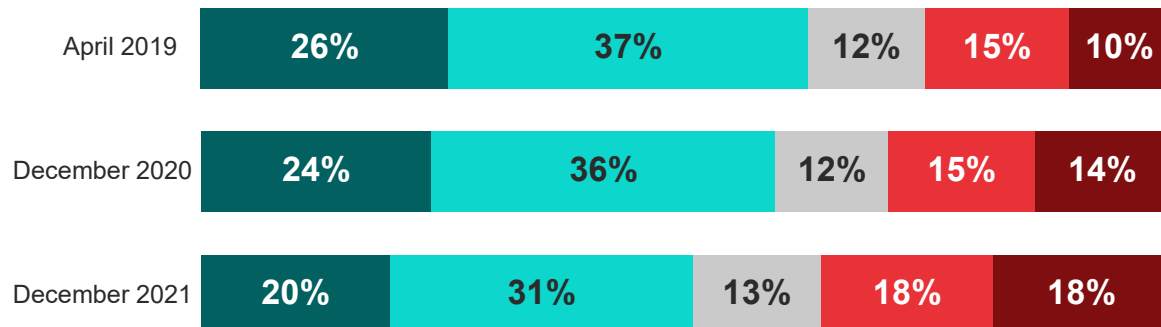
Cost of help or treatment



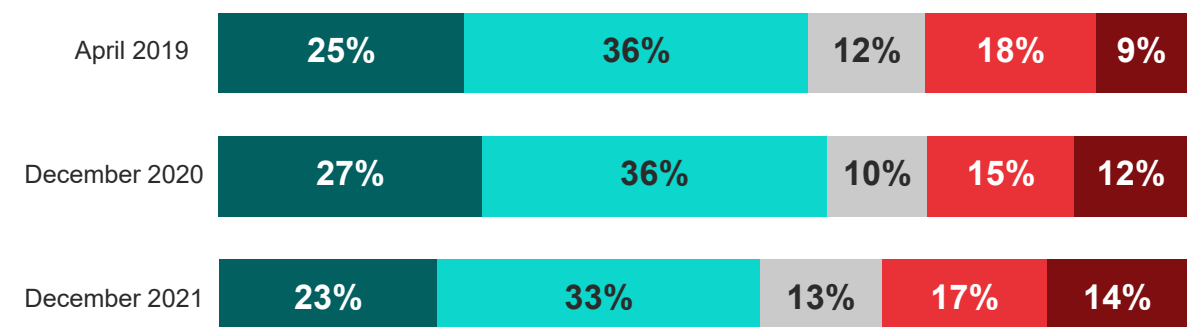
Availability of help or treatment



Stigma associated with seeking help or treatment



Accessibility of help or treatment



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

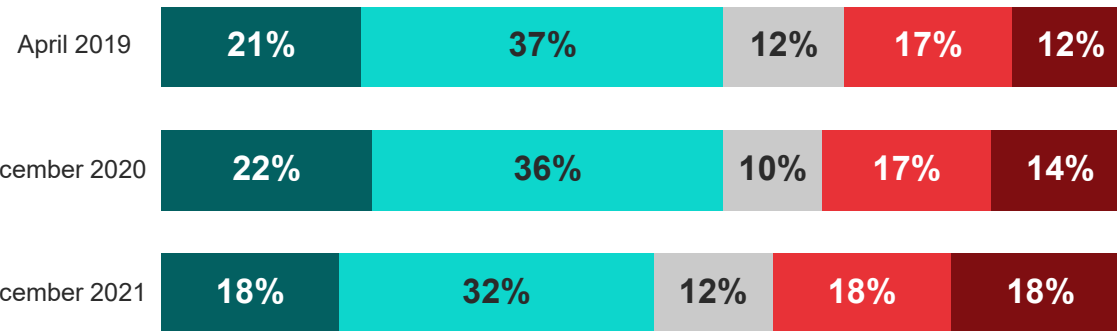
Similarly, over the past year there was a decrease in rural adults who agree awareness of mental health (-8%) and embarrassment (-7%) are obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition.

Do you agree or disagree that the following would be an obstacle if you were seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition?

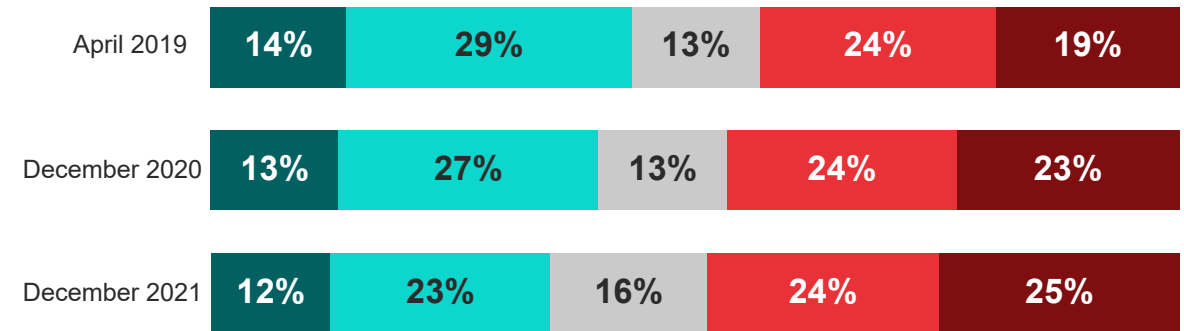
RURAL ADULTS

● Strongly agree
 ● Somewhat agree
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Somewhat disagree
 ● Strongly disagree

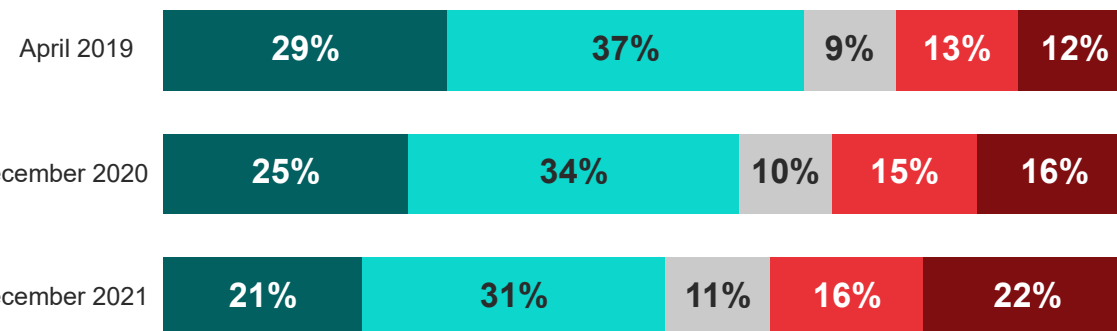
Awareness of mental health



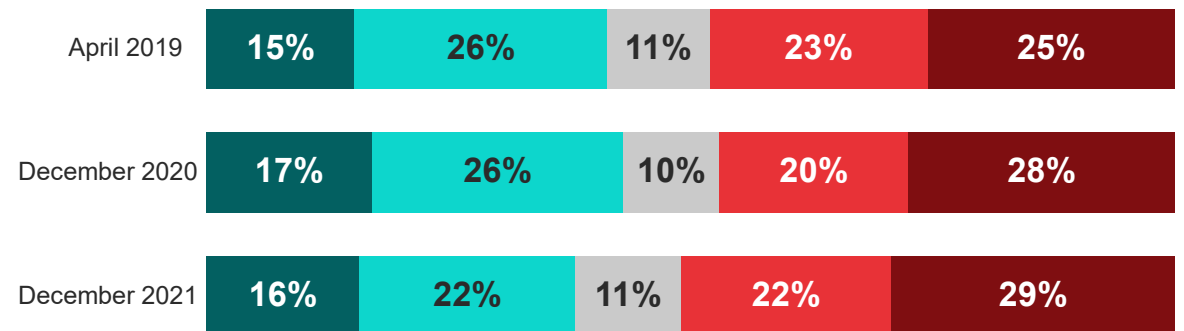
Your social circle



Embarrassment



Your family



GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

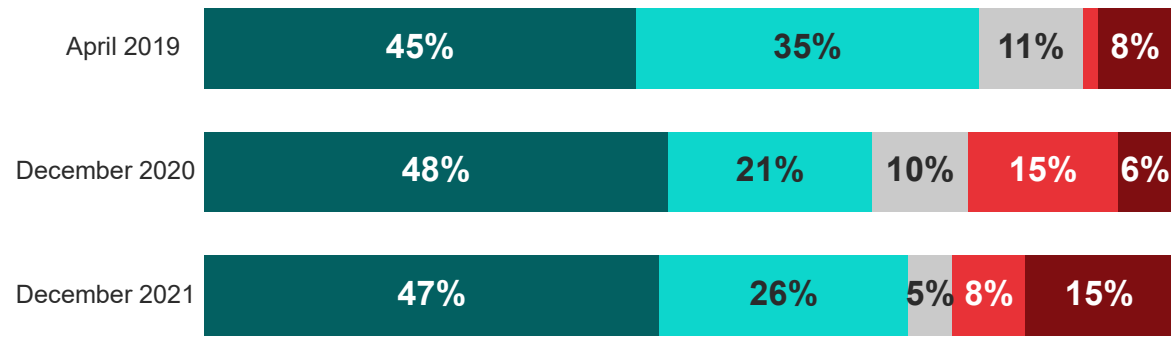
There was an 11% decrease among farmers/farm workers who say stigma is an obstacle to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition; however, a majority (61%) still say it is an obstacle.

Do you agree or disagree that the following would be an obstacle if you were seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition?

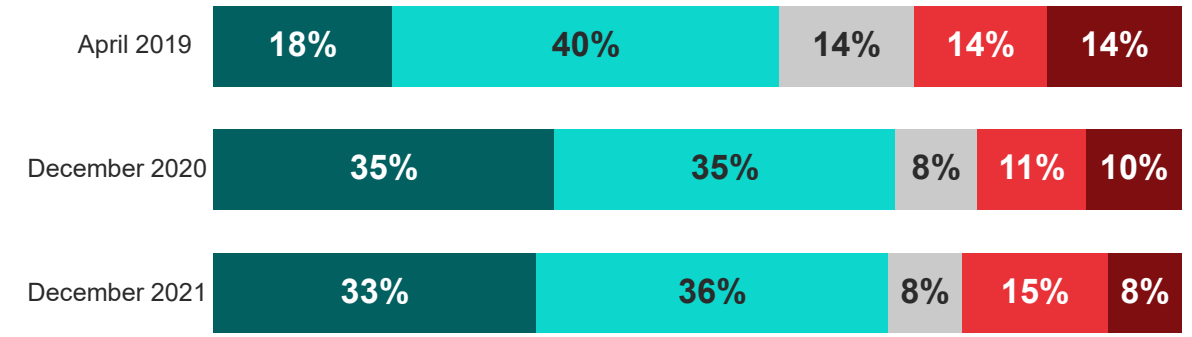
***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● Strongly agree
 ● Somewhat agree
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Somewhat disagree
 ● Strongly disagree

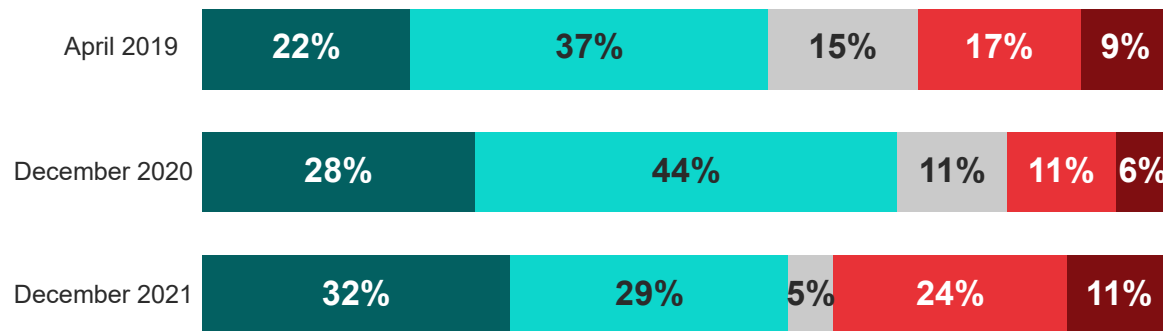
Cost of help or treatment



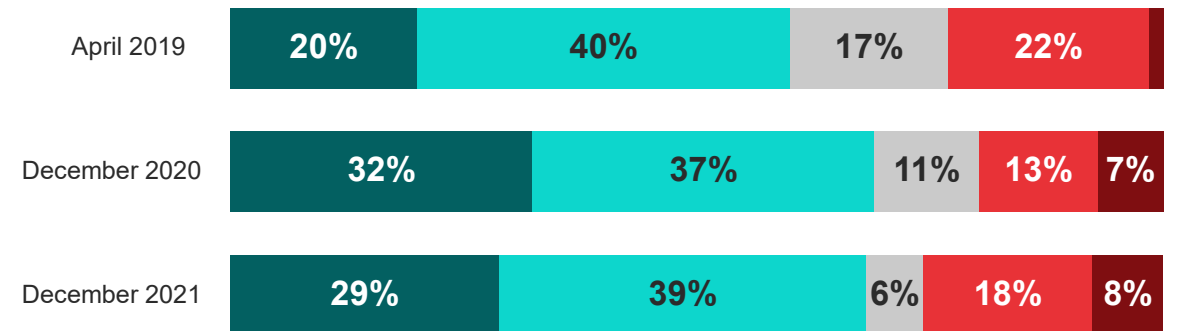
Availability of help or treatment



Stigma associated with seeking help or treatment



Accessibility of help or treatment



*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

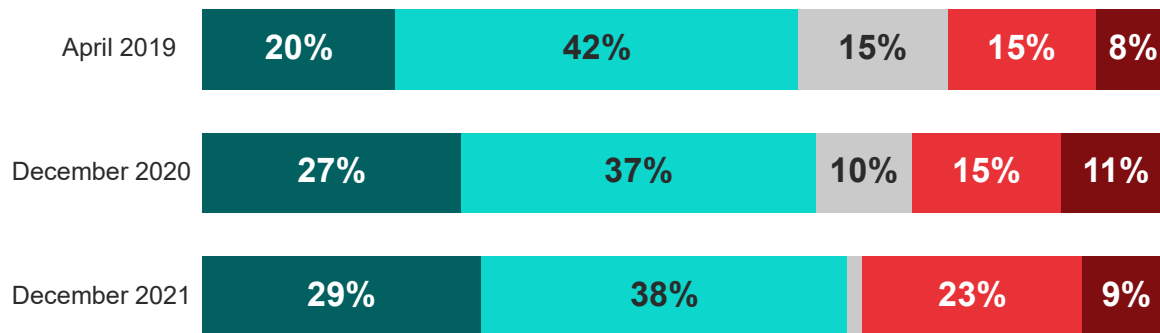
The percentage of farmers/farm workers who agree that awareness of mental health, embarrassment, their social circle and family are obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition remained consistent with results from 2020.

Do you agree or disagree that the following would be an obstacle if you were seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition?

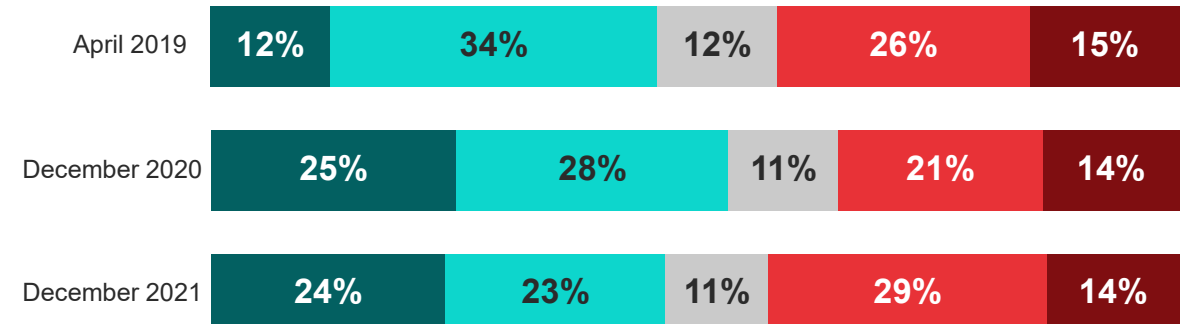
***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● Strongly agree
 ● Somewhat agree
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Somewhat disagree
 ● Strongly disagree

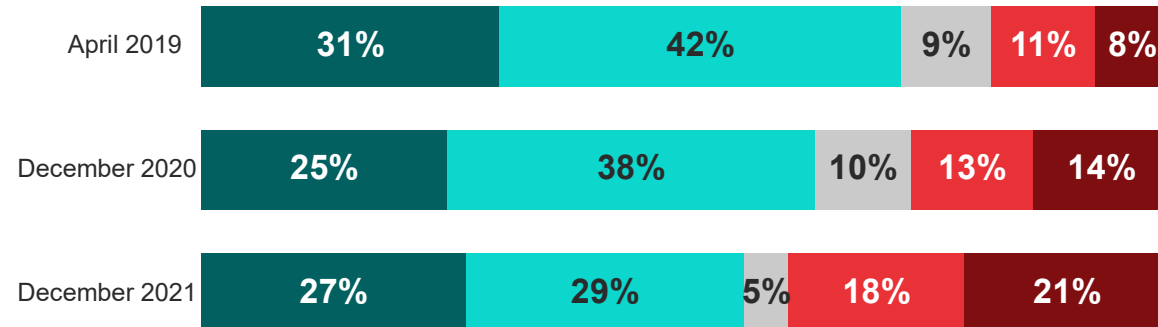
Awareness of mental health



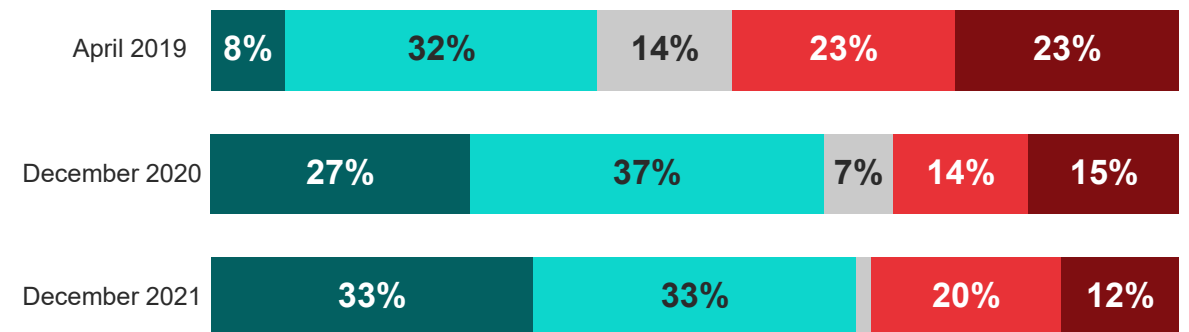
Your social circle



Embarrassment



Your family



*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%



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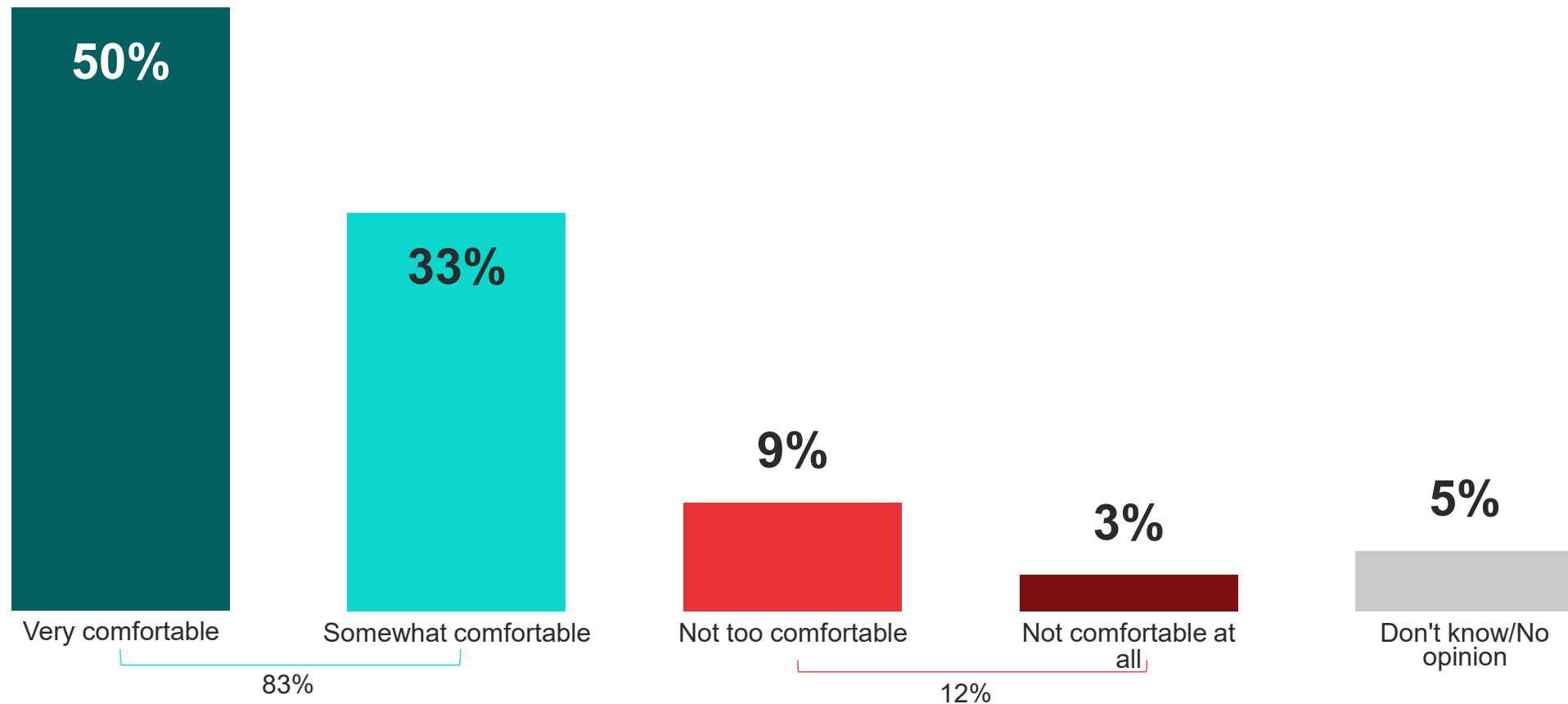


TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Four in five (83%) of rural adults say they would be comfortable talking about solutions with a friend or family member who is dealing with stress or a mental health condition, including 50% who would be *very comfortable*.

*If you have a friend or family member dealing with stress or a mental health condition, how comfortable would you be talking with them about solutions?

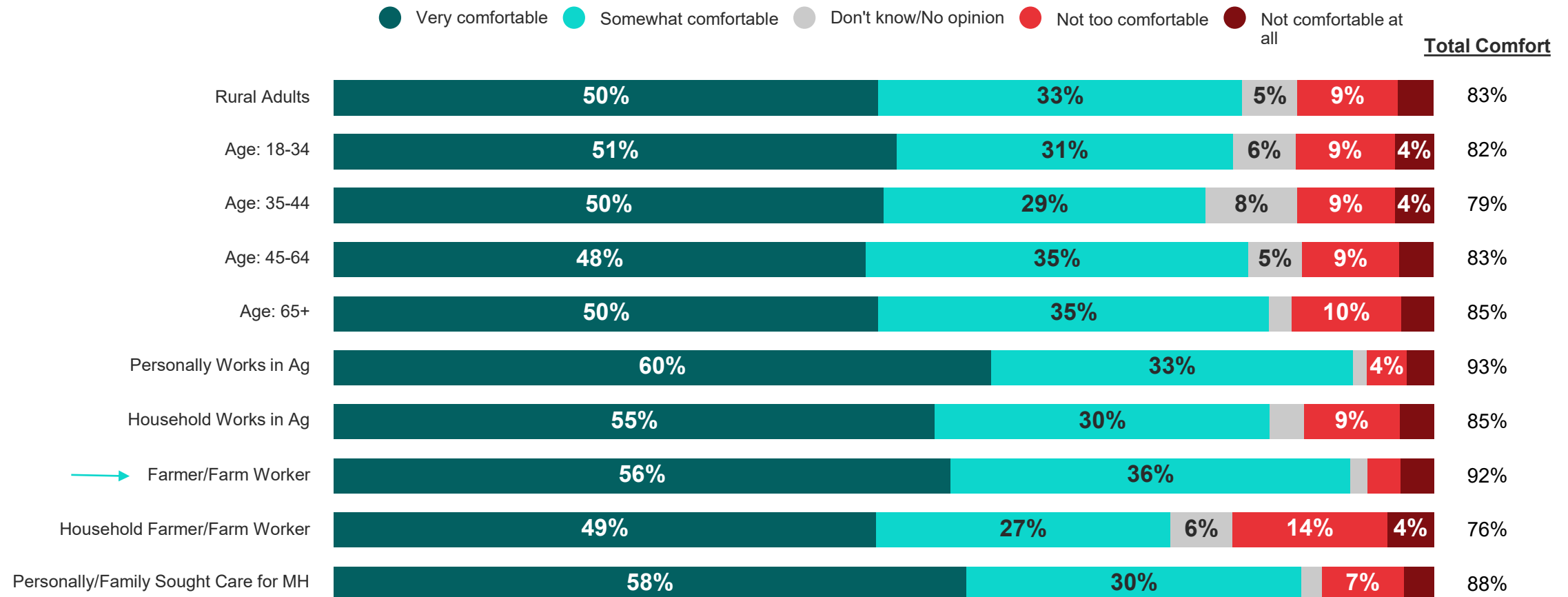
RURAL ADULTS



TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

More than 9 in 10 (92%) farmers/farm workers say they would be comfortable talking about solutions with a friend or family member who is dealing with stress or a mental health condition.

If you have a friend or family member dealing with stress or a mental health condition, how comfortable would you be talking with them about solutions?

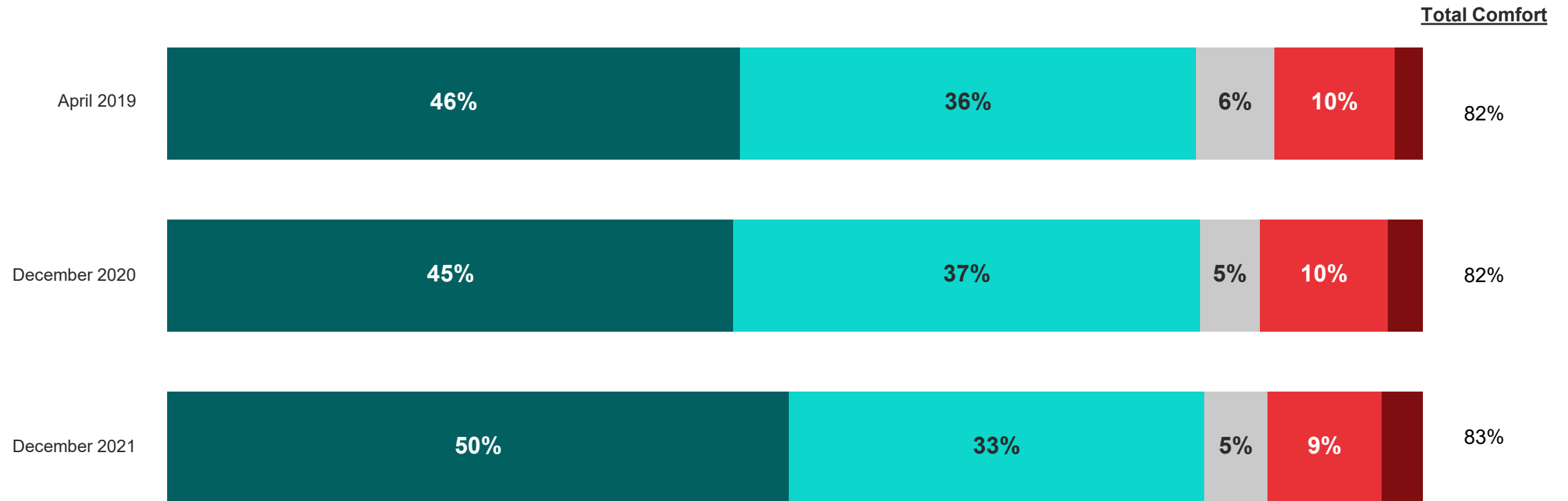
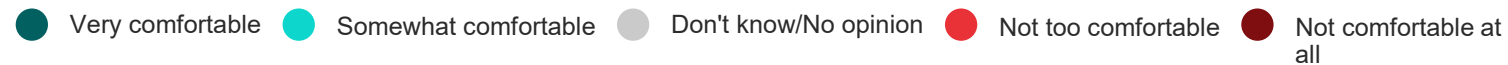


TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Comfort level in talking with friends and family members about mental health solutions has remained consistent among rural adults since April 2019.

If you have a friend or family member dealing with stress or a mental health condition, how comfortable would you be talking with them about solutions?

RURAL ADULTS

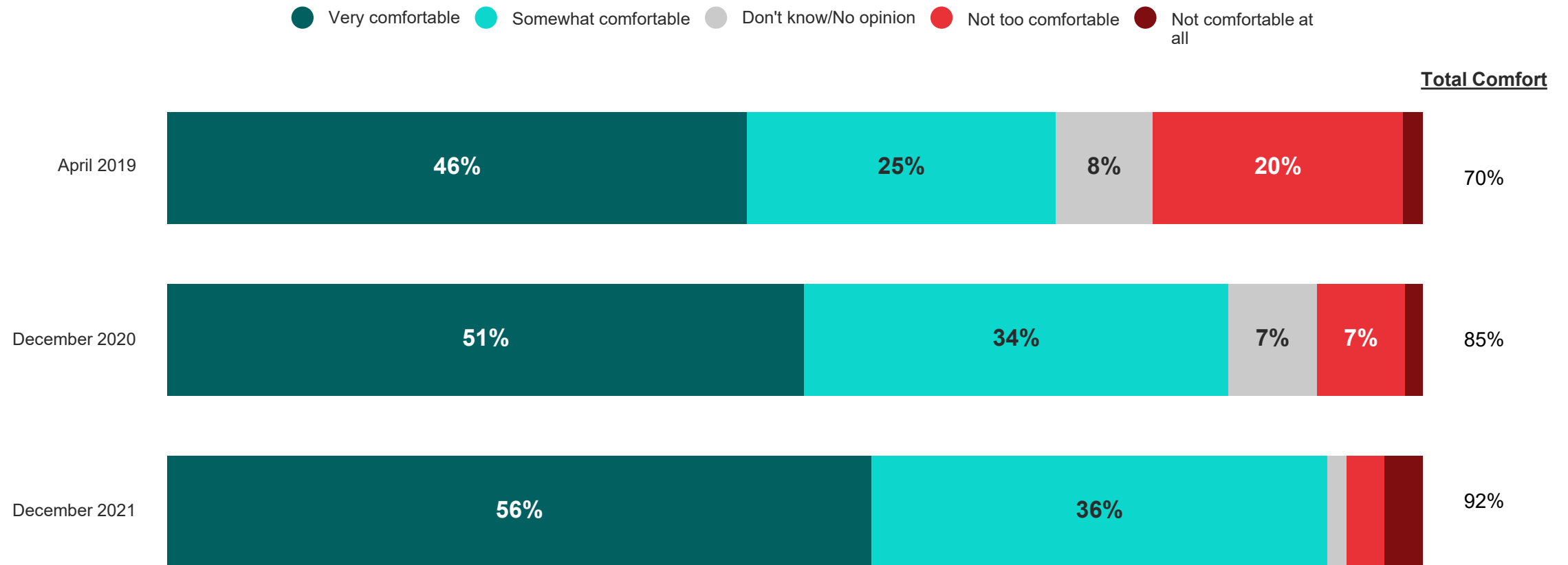


TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

The percentage of farmers/farm workers who say they would be comfortable talking to friends and family members has increased 22% since April 2019.

If you have a friend or family member dealing with stress or a mental health condition, how comfortable would you be talking with them about solutions?

***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**



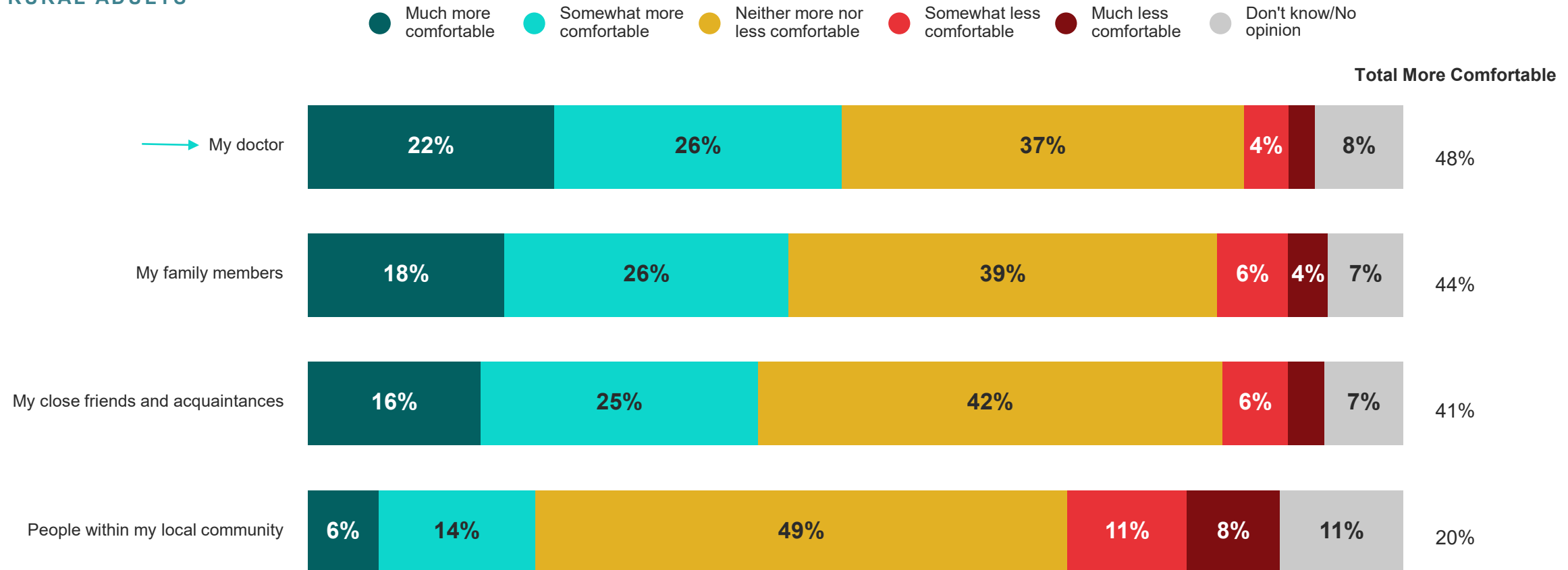
*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Nearly half of rural adults (48%) say they are more comfortable talking to their doctor about personal experiences with stress and mental health than they were a year ago.

*Compared to a year ago, are you more or less comfortable today talking with each of the following about your personal experiences with stress and mental health, or is your level of comfort about the same?

RURAL ADULTS



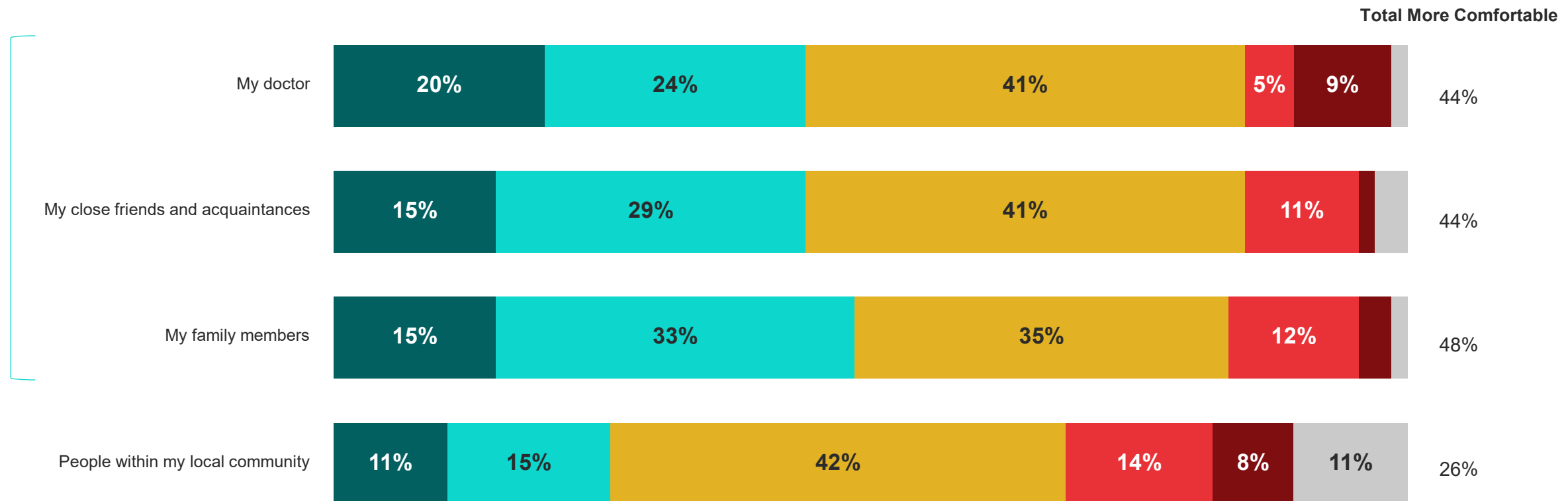
TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Among farmers/farm workers, about 2 in 5 are more comfortable talking to their doctor (44%), close friends (44%) and family members (48%) about their mental health than they were a year ago.

*Compared to a year ago, are you more or less comfortable today talking with each of the following about your personal experiences with stress and mental health, or is your level of comfort about the same?

****FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● Much more comfortable
 ● Somewhat more comfortable
 ● Neither more nor less comfortable
 ● Somewhat less comfortable
 ● Much less comfortable
 ● Don't know/No opinion



* New question in 2021

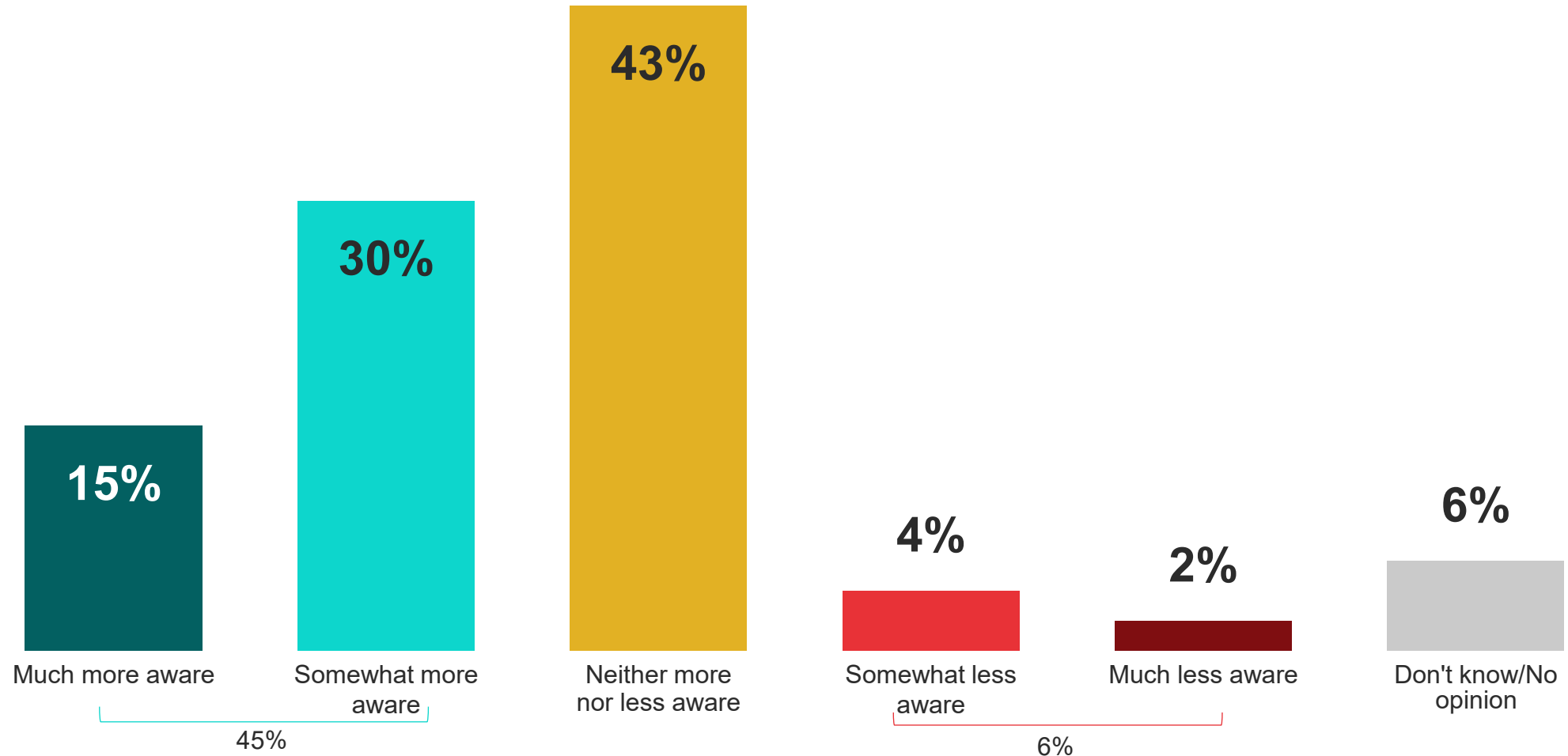
**n=66, MOE +/- 12%

TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

While 45% of rural adults are more aware of resources to help manage stress and mental health today compared to a year ago, 43% say their level of awareness has not changed.

*Are you more or less aware of resources to help manage stress and mental health today than you were a year ago?

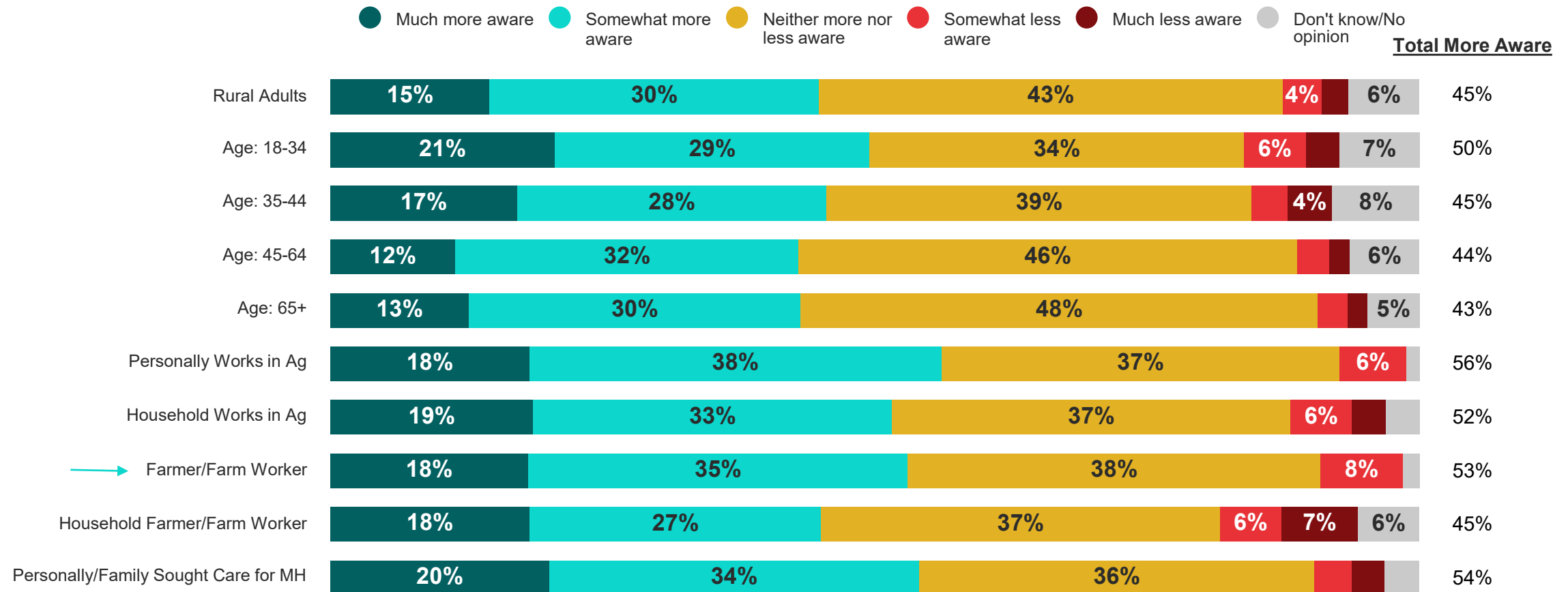
RURAL ADULTS



TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Half (53%) of farmers/farm workers say they are more aware of resources to help manage stress and mental health than they were a year ago.

Are you more or less aware of resources to help manage stress and mental health today than you were a year ago?





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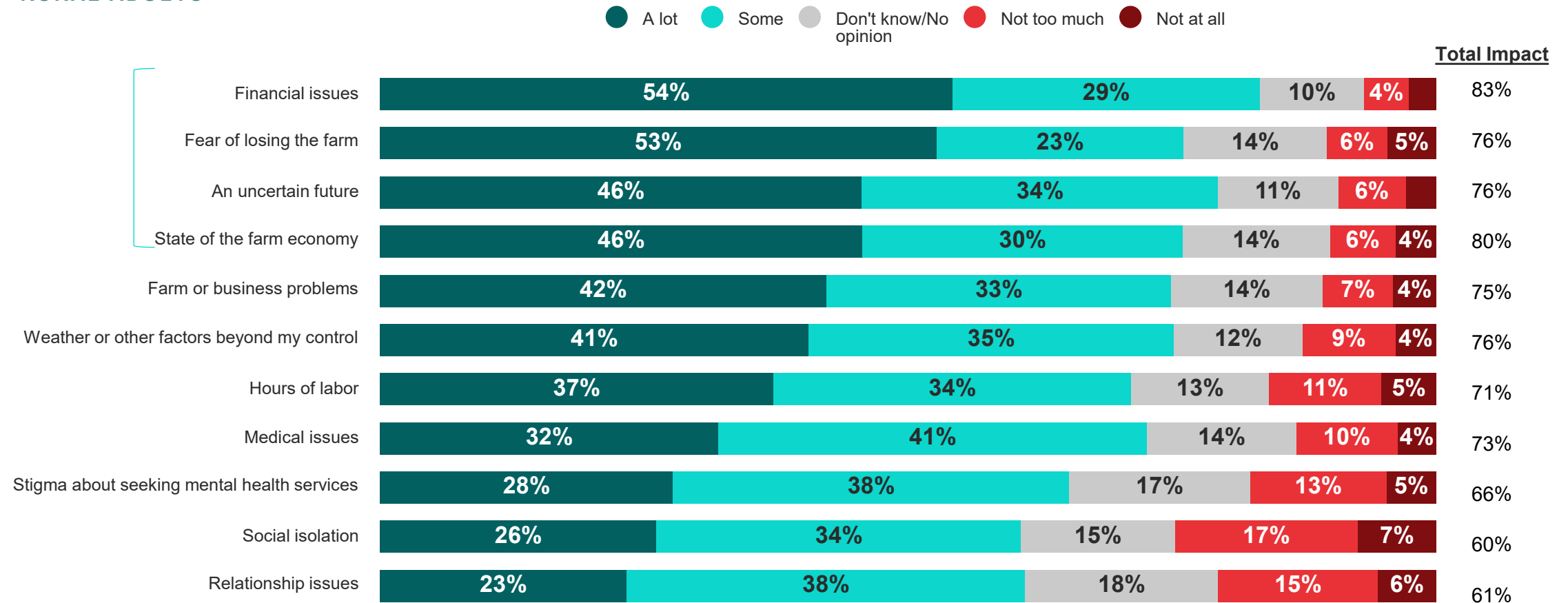


CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

About half of rural adults think financial issues (54%), fear of losing the farm (53%), an uncertain future (46%) and the state of the farm economy (46%) impact the mental health of farmers *a lot*.

*Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

RURAL ADULTS



CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

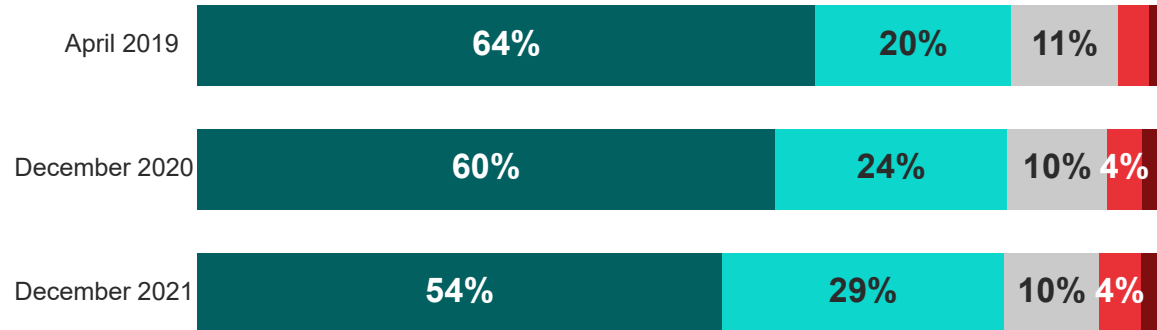
The percentage of rural adults who say financial issues, fear of losing the farm, an uncertain future and the state of the farm economy impact the mental health of farmers remained consistent with results from December 2020.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

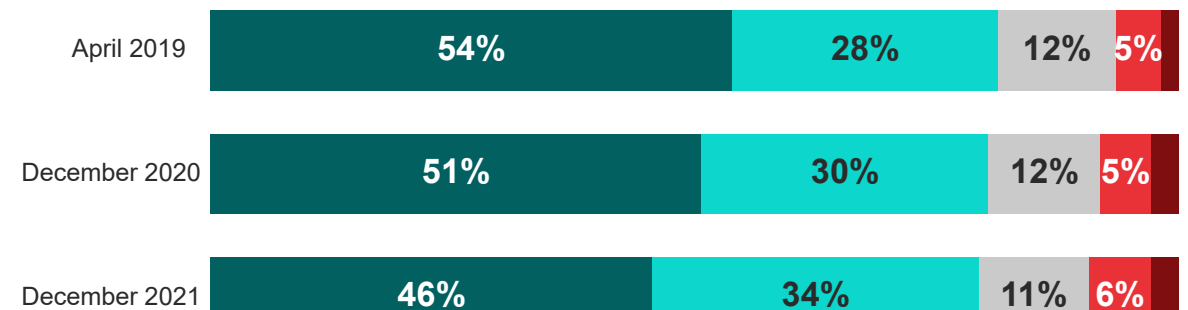
RURAL ADULTS

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

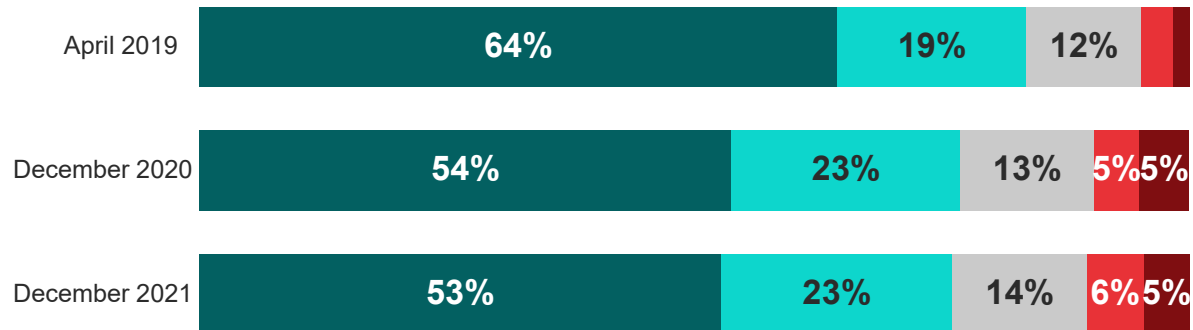
Financial issues



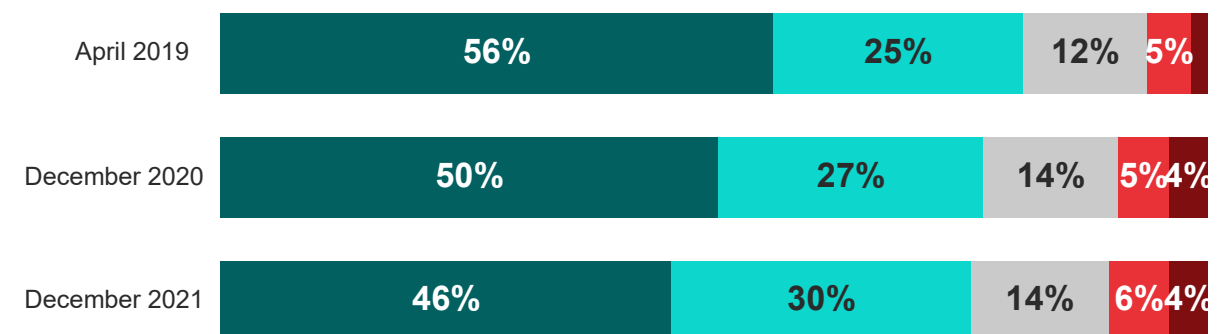
An uncertain future



Fear of losing the farm



State of the farm economy



CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

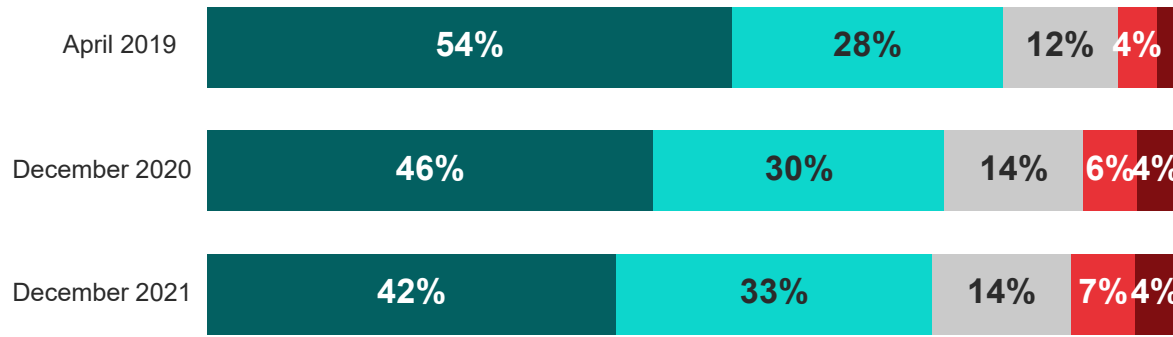
The percentage of rural adults who say hours of labor impact the mental health of farmers increased 8% over the past year.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

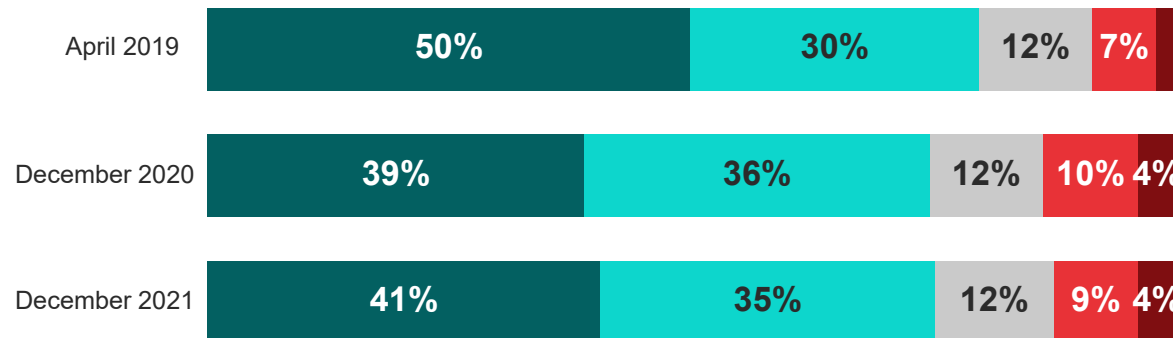
RURAL ADULTS

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

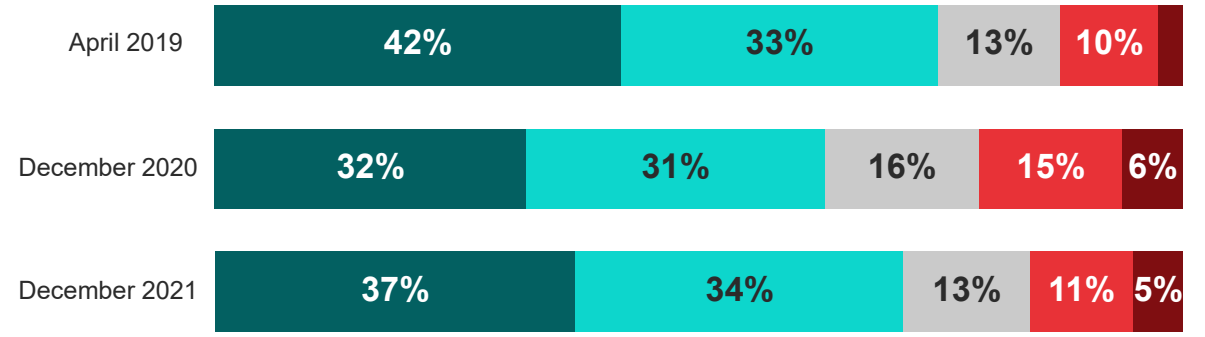
Farm or business problems



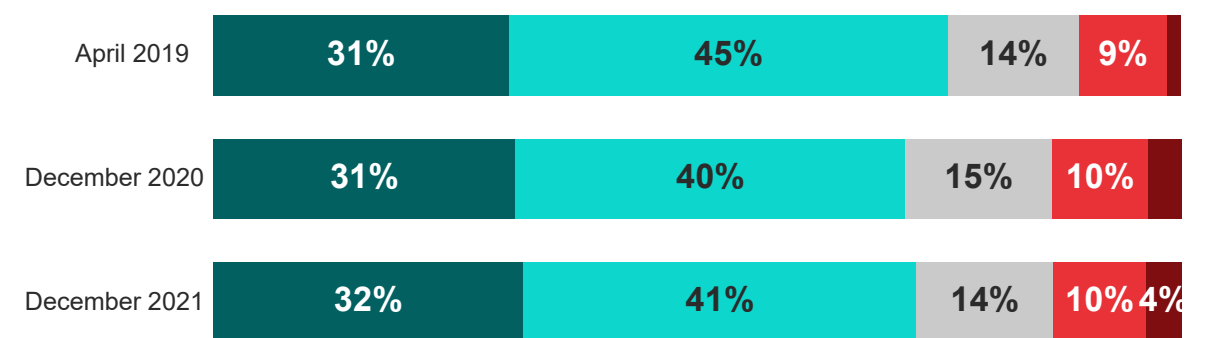
Weather or other factors beyond my control



Hours of labor



Medical issues



CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

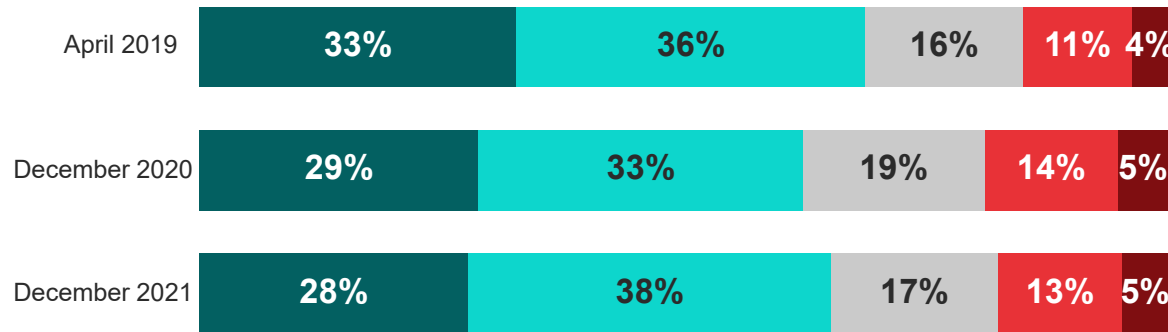
The percentage of rural adults who say stigma, social isolation and relationship issues impact the mental health of farmers remained consistent with results from December 2020.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

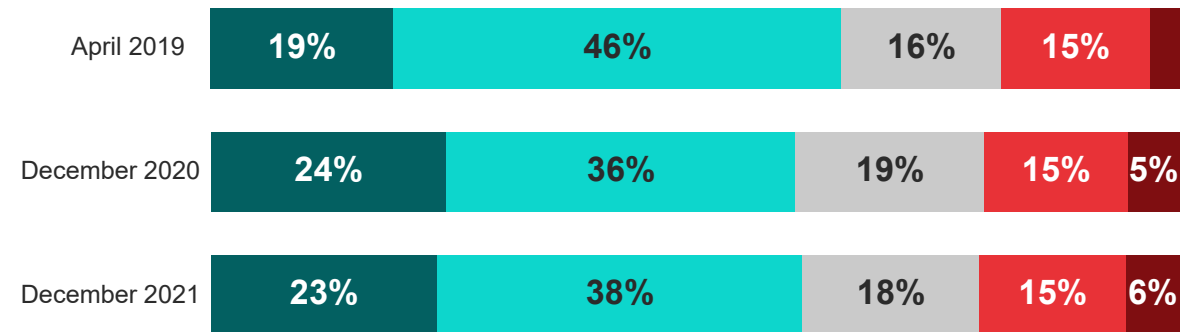
RURAL ADULTS

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

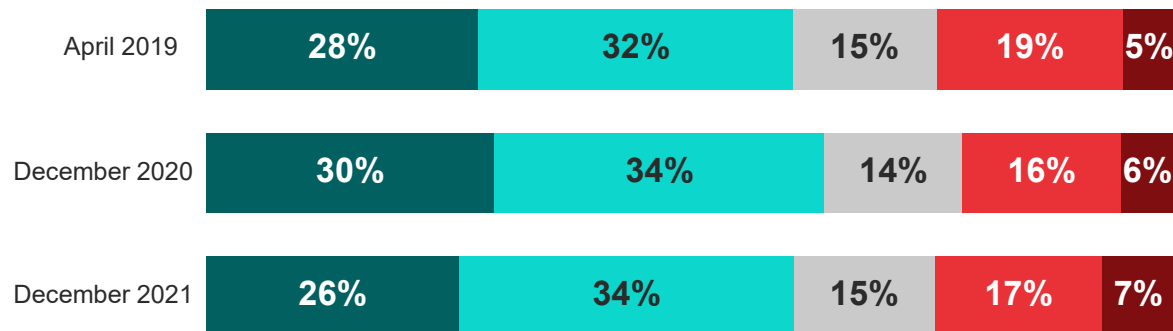
Stigma about seeking mental health services



Relationship issues



Social isolation



CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

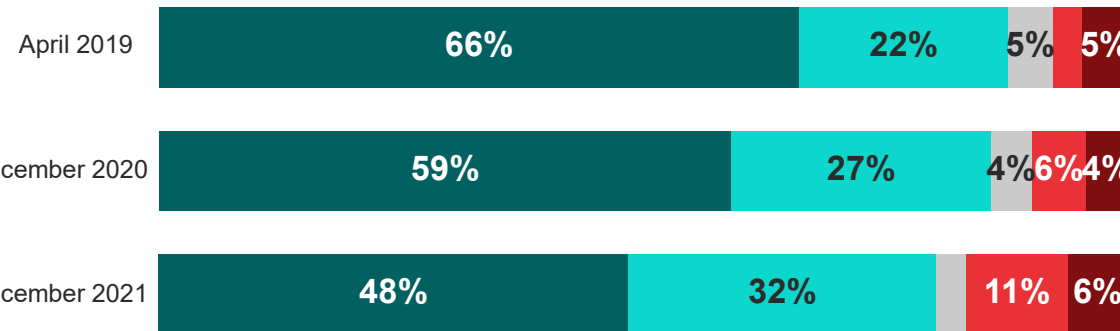
Consistent with results from 2020, farmers/farm workers are most likely to say financial issues (80%), weather or other factors beyond their control (82%) and the state of the farm economy (80%) impact farmers' mental health.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

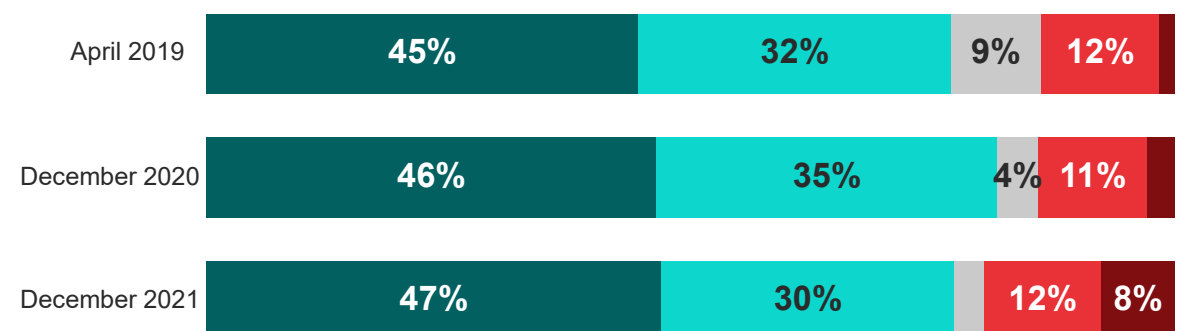
***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

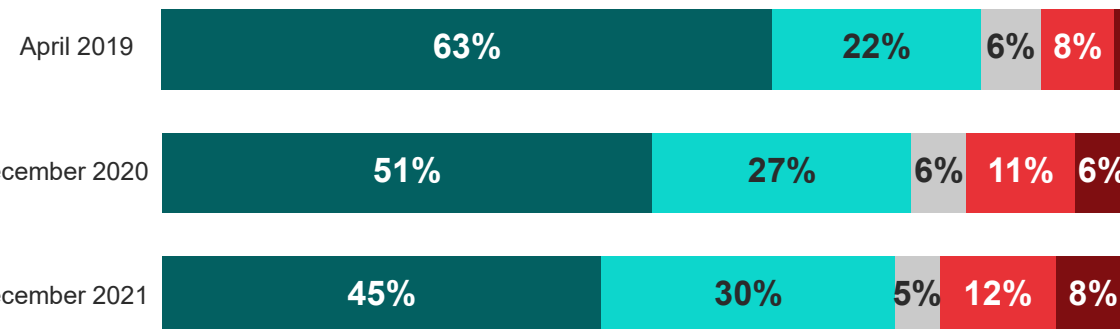
Financial issues



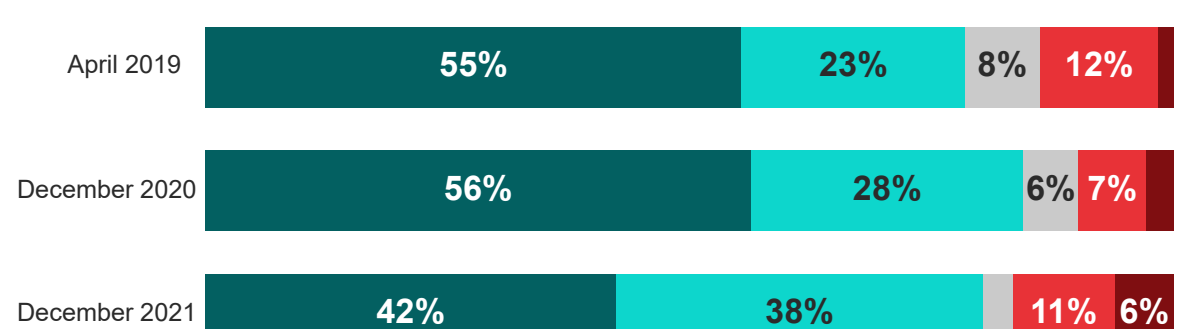
An uncertain future



Fear of losing the farm



State of the farm economy



*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

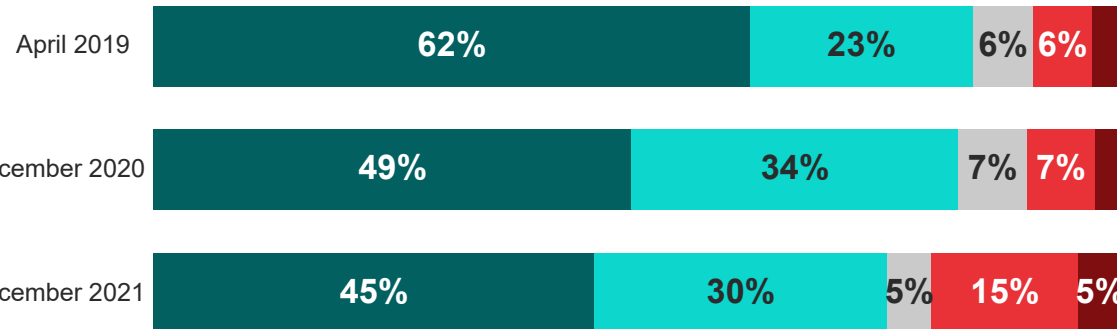
The percentage of farmers/farm workers who say the following factors impact the mental health of farmers remained consistent with results from December 2020.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

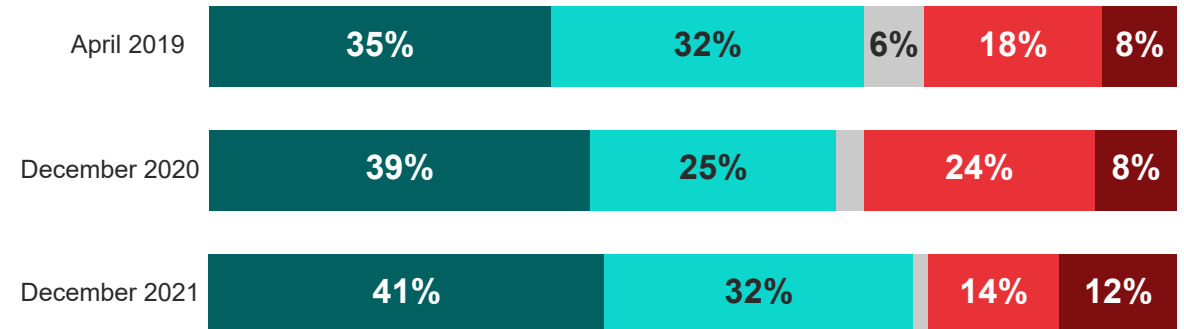
***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

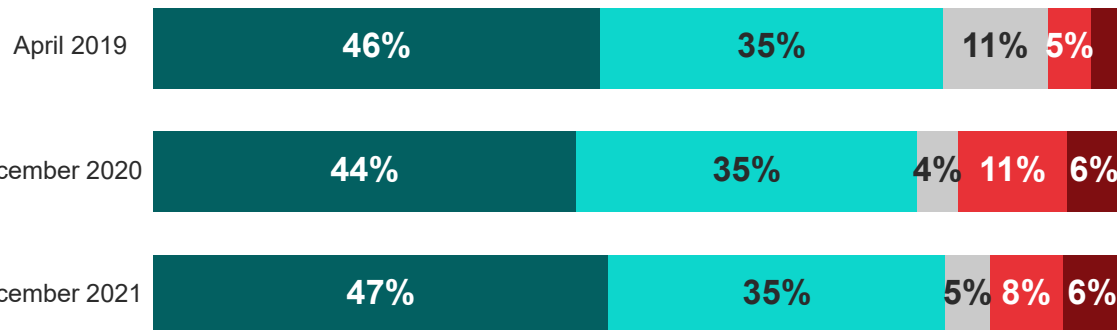
Farm or business problems



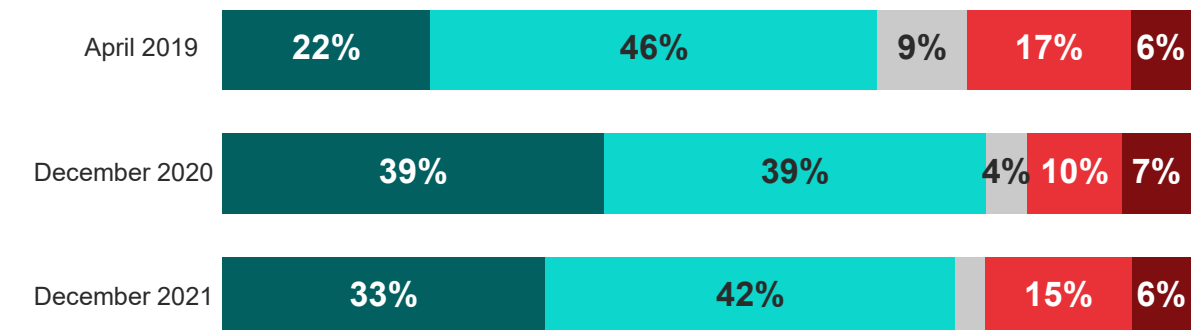
Hours of labor



Weather or other factors beyond my control



Medical issues



*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FARMERS

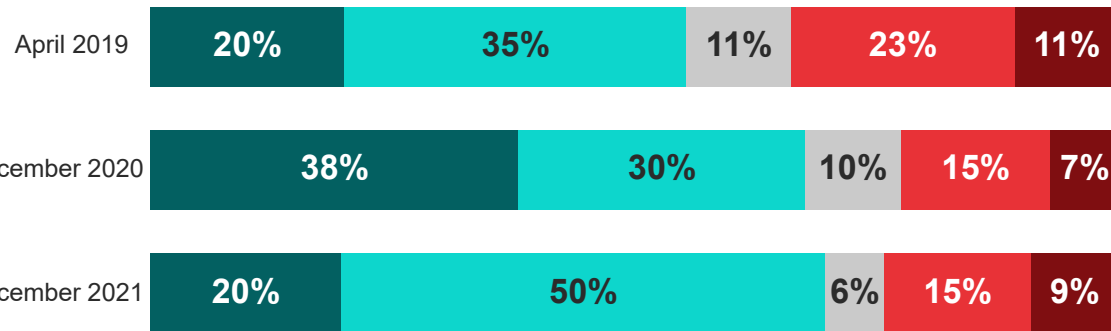
There was a significant decrease in the percentage of farmers/farm workers who say social isolation impacts the mental health of farmers since December 2020 (-15%), although a majority (53%) still say it impacts their mental health.

Based on what you know, how much do you think each of the following impacts the mental health of farmers?

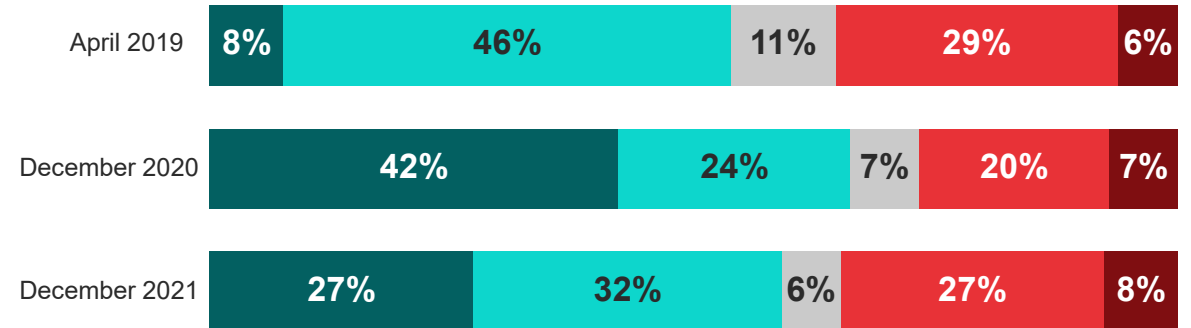
*FARMERS/FARM WORKERS

● A lot
 ● Some
 ● Don't know/No opinion
 ● Not too much
 ● Not at all

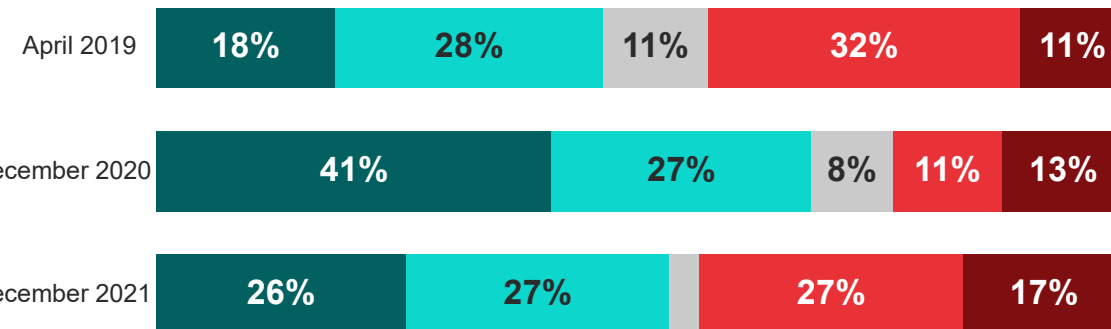
Stigma about seeking mental health services



Relationship issues



Social isolation



*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%



AGENDA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF
MENTAL HEALTH

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH
MENTAL HEALTH

TRUSTED RESOURCES FOR
MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION
OVER THE PAST YEAR

CONTRIBUTORS TO MENTAL
HEALTH OF FARMERS

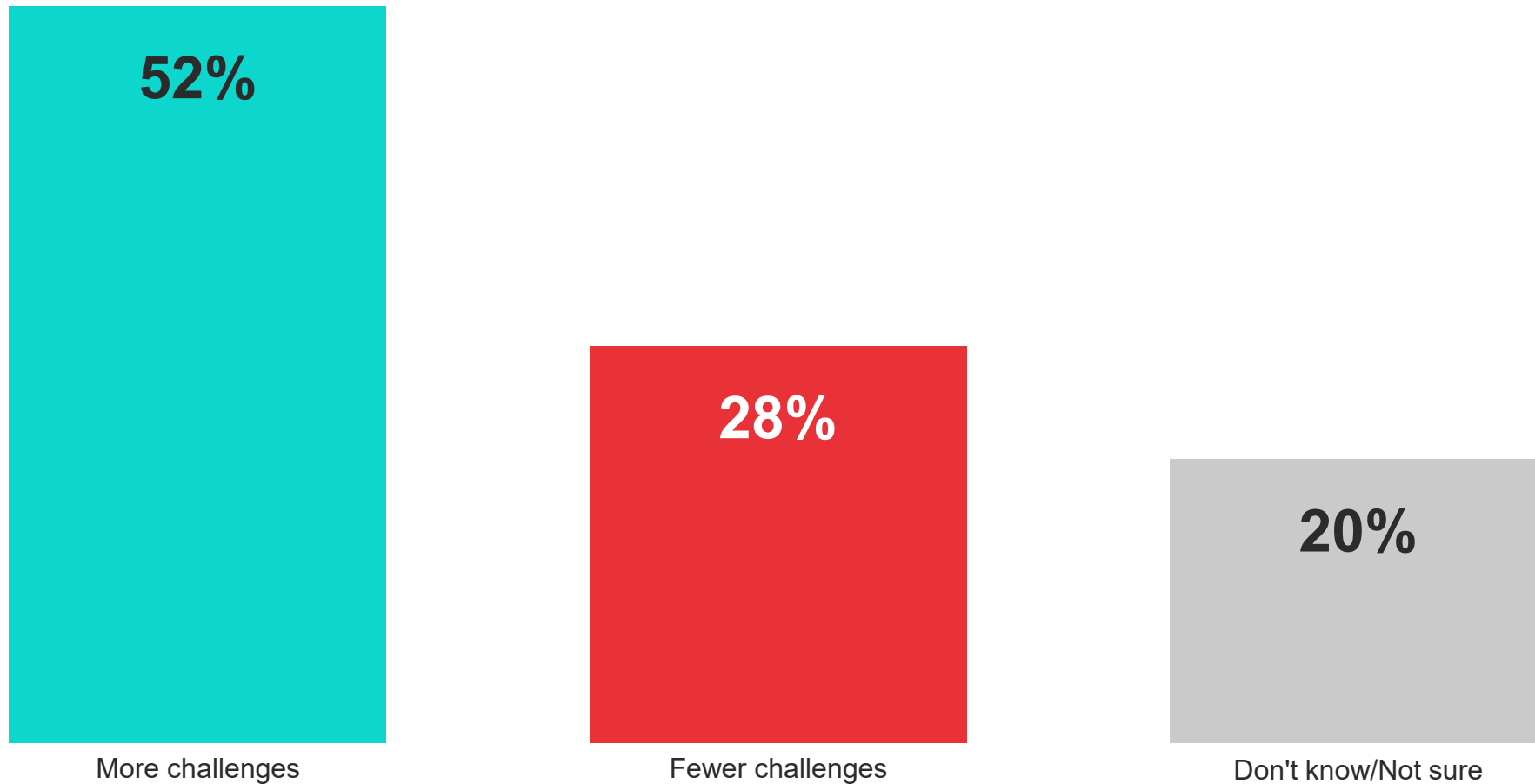


PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Half of rural adults (52%) are personally experiencing more stress and mental health challenges than they were a year ago, while 28% say they are experiencing fewer challenges.

*Compared to a year ago, are you personally experiencing more or fewer stress and mental health challenges?

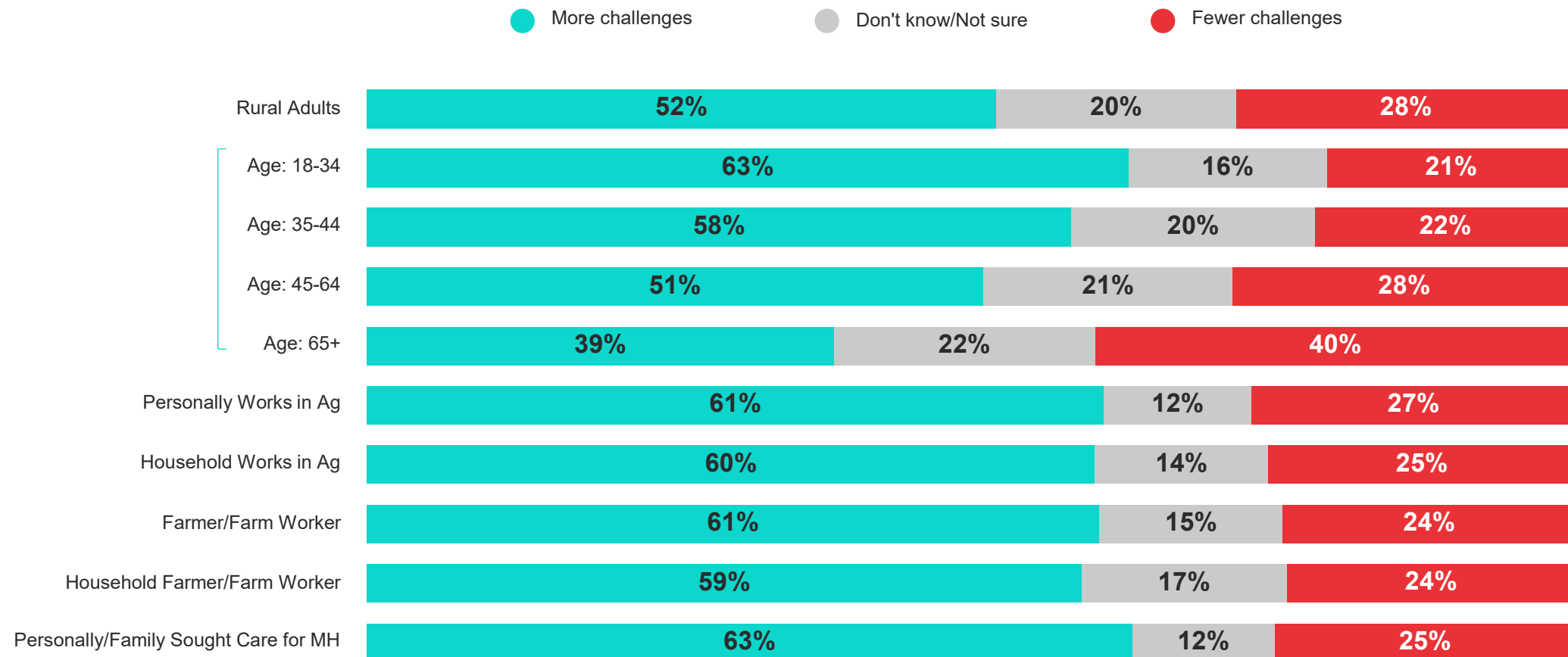
RURAL ADULTS



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Younger rural adults are more likely than older rural adults to say they are experiencing more stress and mental health challenges compared to a year ago.

Compared to a year ago, are you personally experiencing more or fewer stress and mental health challenges?



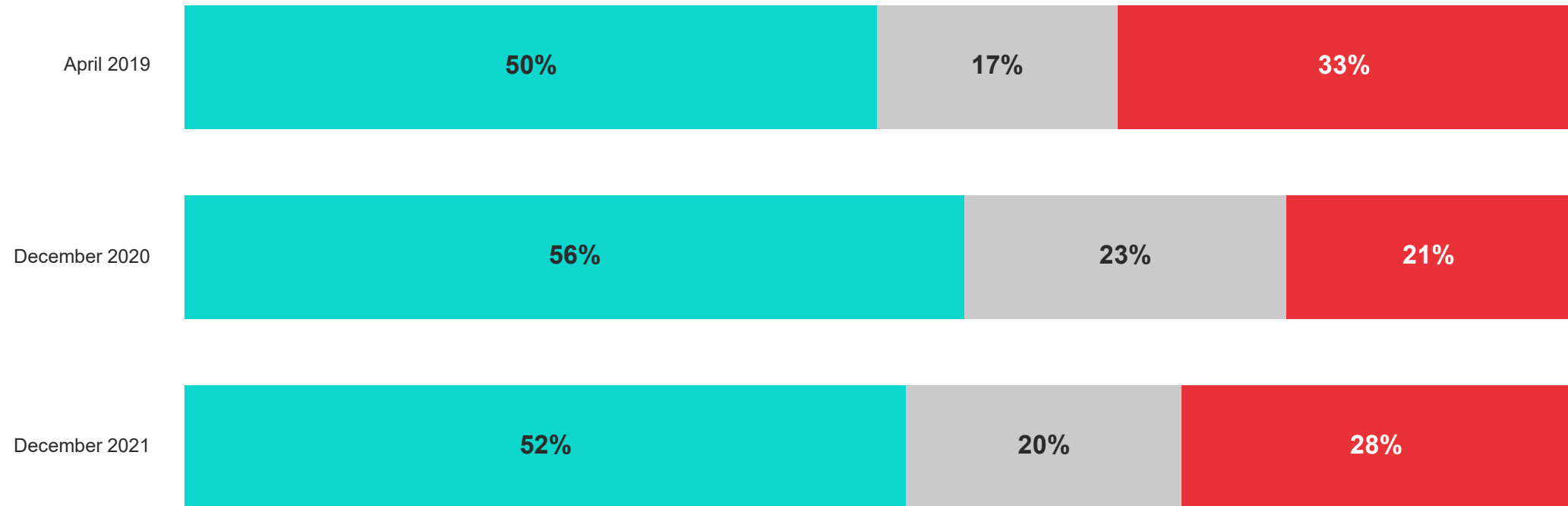
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Over the past year, there was a slight decrease (-4%) among rural adults who say they are experiencing more stress and mental health challenges compared than they were a year ago.

Compared to a year ago, are you personally experiencing more or fewer stress and mental health challenges?

RURAL ADULTS

More challenges Don't know/Not sure Fewer challenges



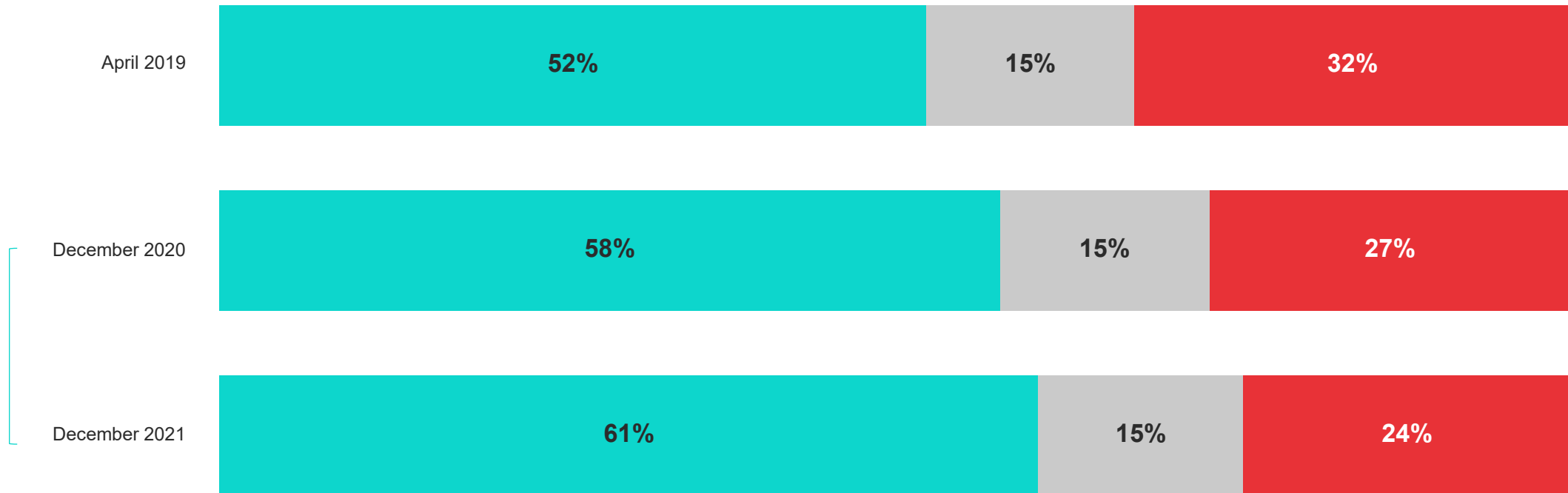
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Consistent with results from 2020, 3 in 5 farmers/farm workers (61%) are experiencing more mental health challenges than they were a year ago.

Compared to a year ago, are you personally experiencing more or fewer stress and mental health challenges?

***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**

● More challenges
 ● Don't know/Not sure
 ● Fewer challenges



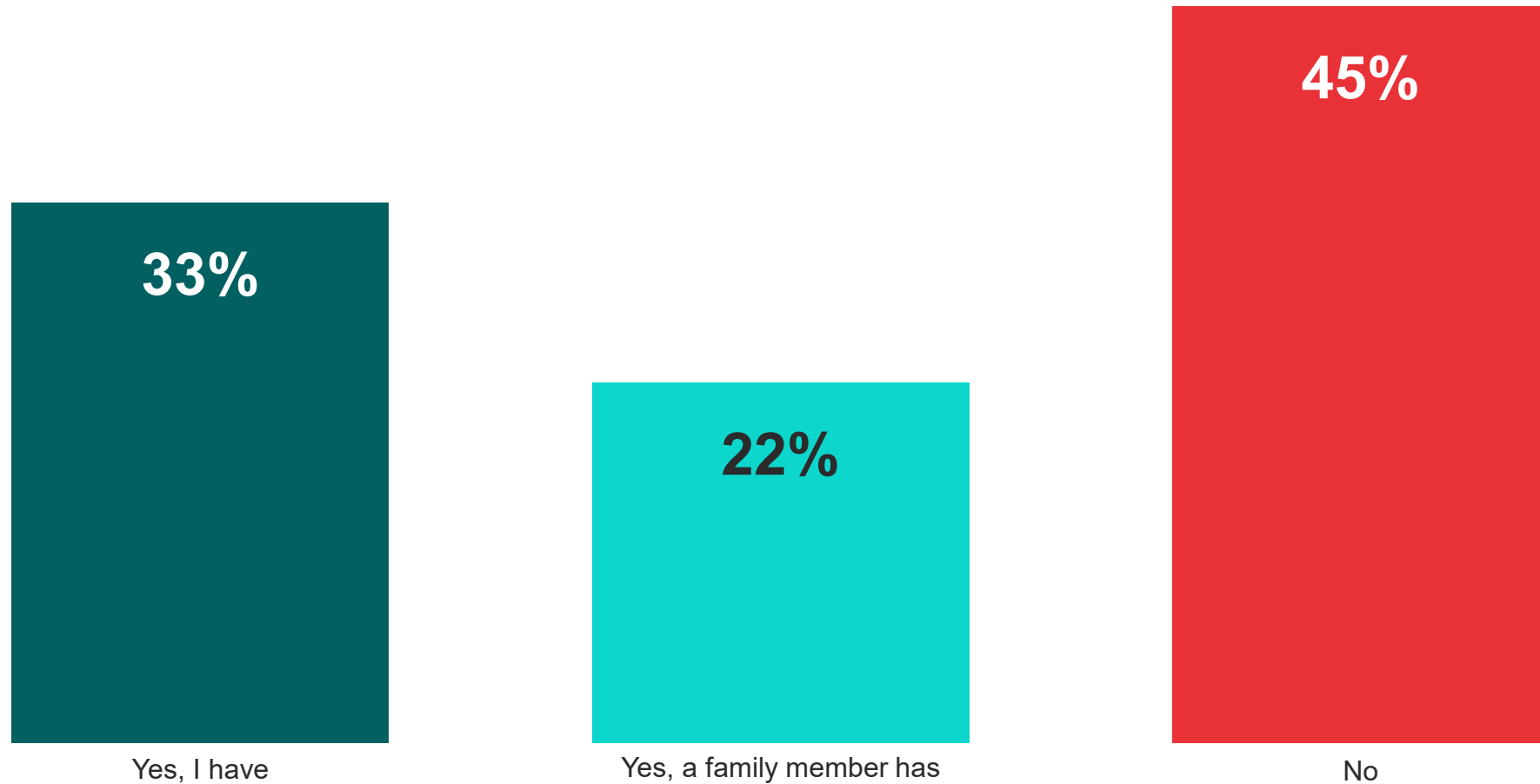
*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

A third of rural adults have personally sought care for a mental health condition.

*Have you or a family member ever sought care from a mental health professional of any kind?

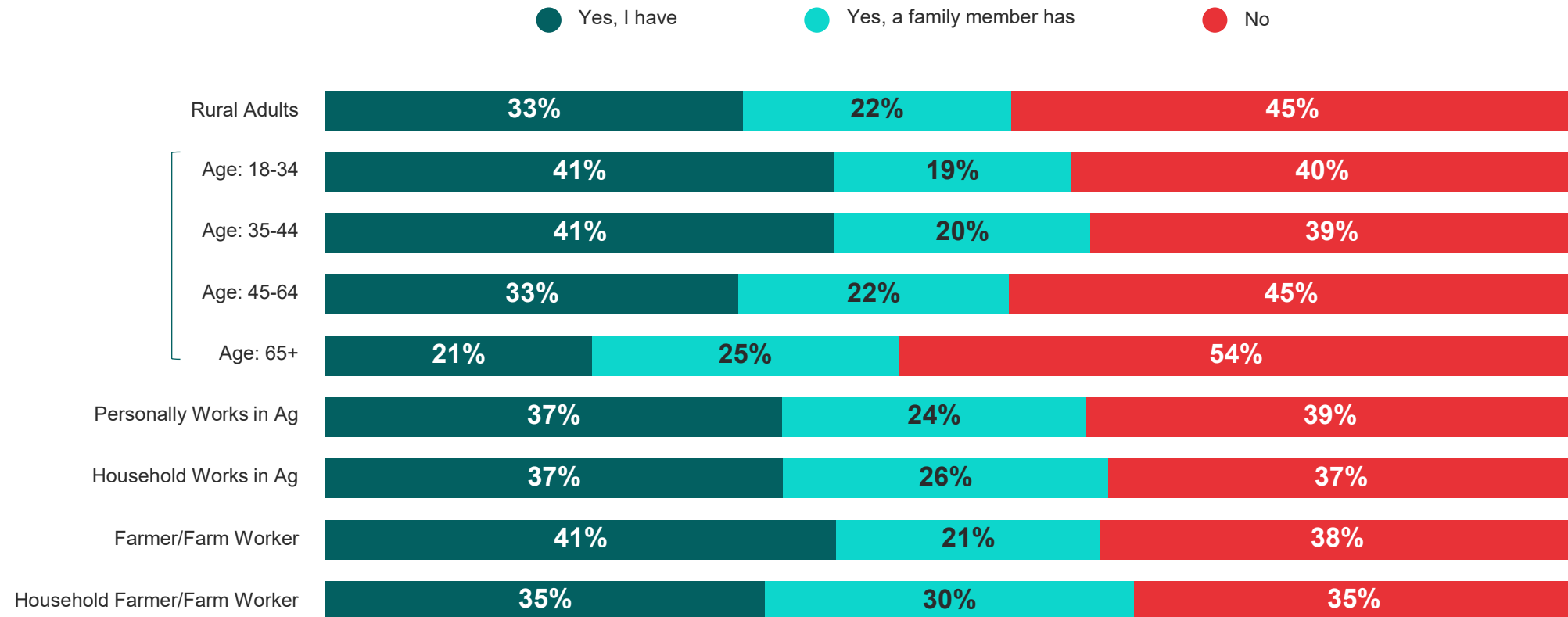
RURAL ADULTS



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Younger rural adults are more likely than older rural adults to say they have personally sought care from a mental health professional.

Have you or a family member ever sought care from a mental health professional of any kind?

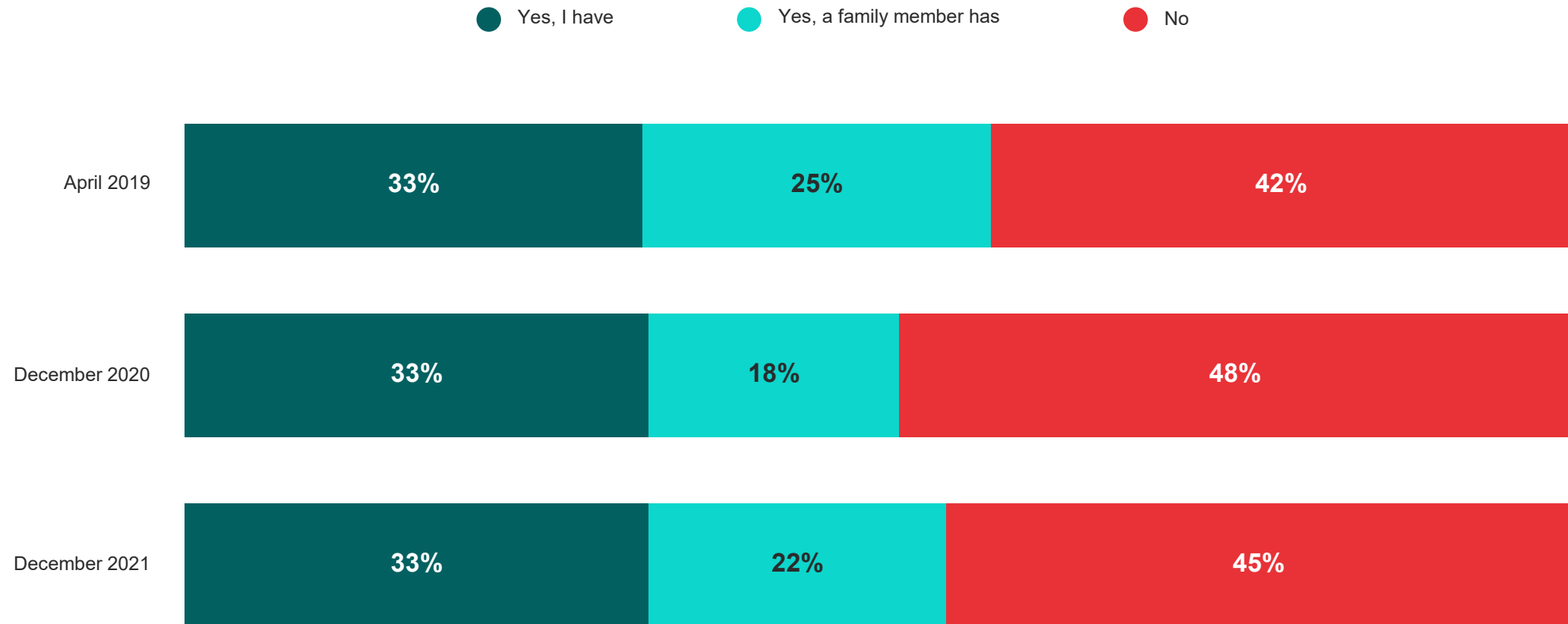


PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Consistent with tracking over the past three years, about a third of rural adults say they have personally sought care from a mental health professional.

Have you or a family member ever sought care from a mental health professional of any kind?

RURAL ADULTS

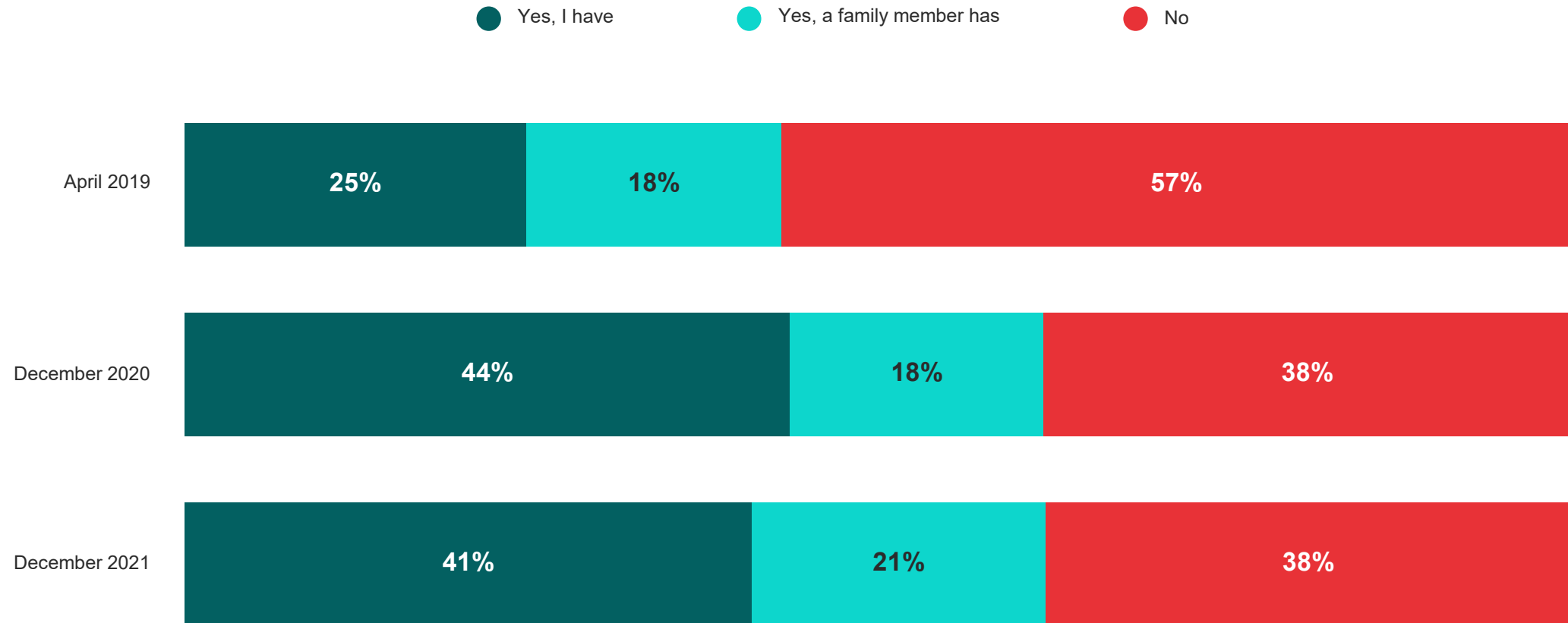


PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Consistent with results from 2020, 2 in 5 farmers/farm workers (41%) say they have personally sought care from a mental health professional.

Have you or a family member ever sought care from a mental health professional of any kind?

***FARMERS/FARM WORKERS**



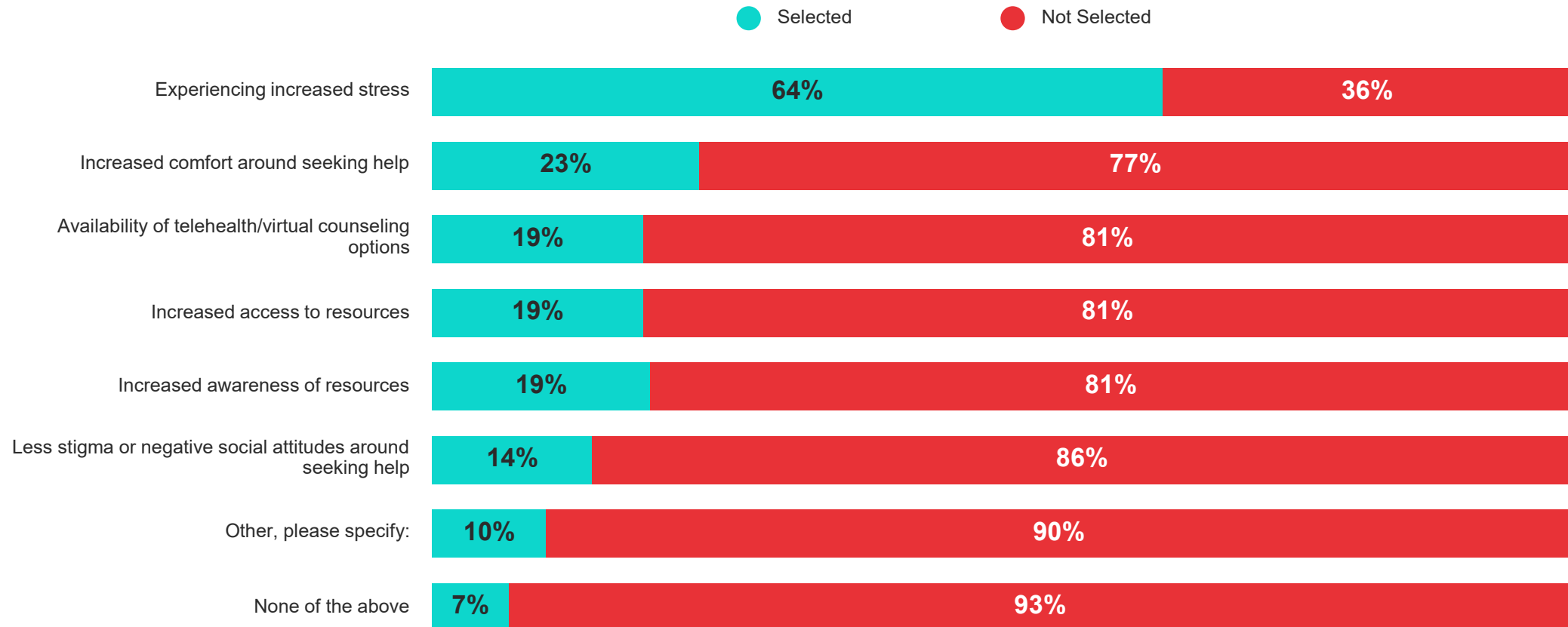
*April 2019, n=65
 December 2020, n=71
 December 2021, n=66, MOE +/- 12%

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH MENTAL HEALTH

Among those who have personally sought care for mental health, a majority (64%) say they decided to seek help or treatment because they were experiencing increased stress.

*You previously indicated you have sought care from a mental health professional. Why did you decide to seek mental health help or treatment? Please select all that apply:

****AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE PERSONALLY SOUGHT CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH**



*New question in 2021

**Among those who have personally sought care for mental health, n=669



AGENDA

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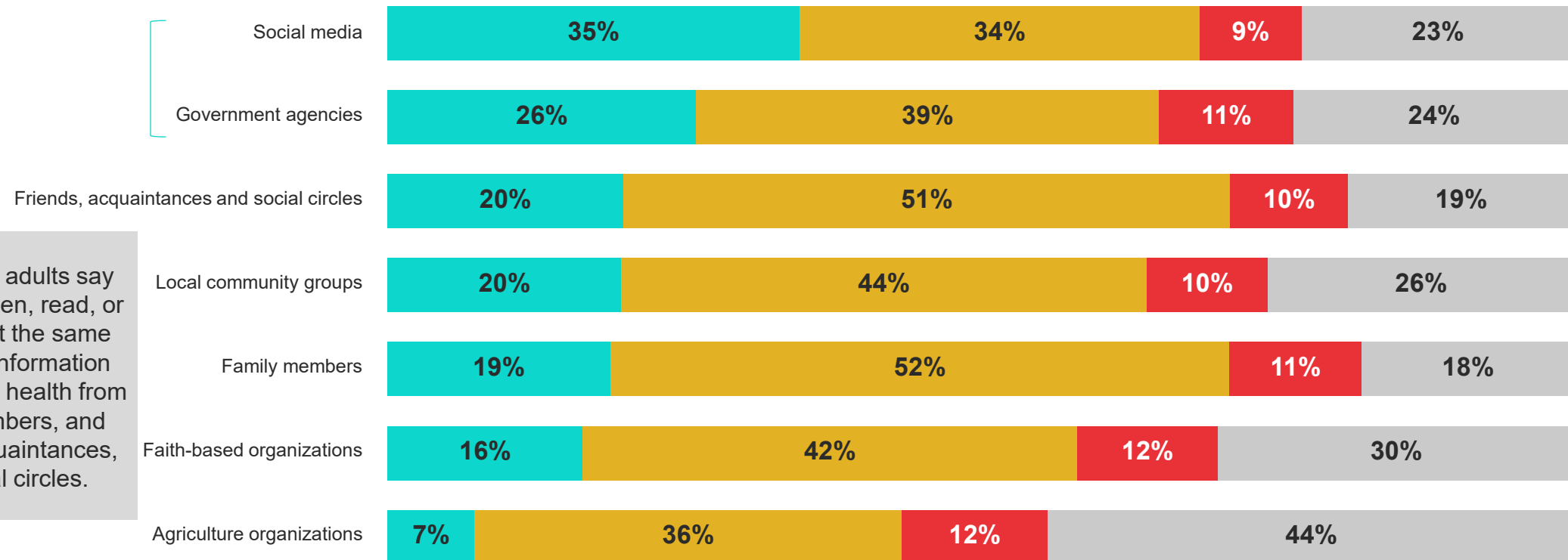
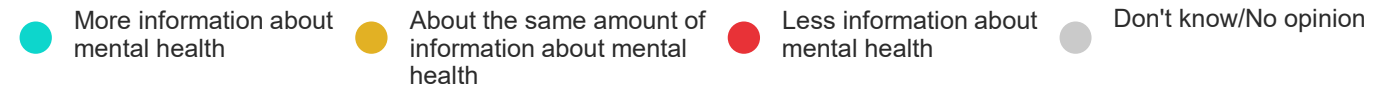


MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

Rural adults have seen, read or heard more information over the past year about stress and mental health from social media (35%) and government agencies (26%).

*Based on your experience, have you seen, read or heard more or less information about stress and mental health from each of the following over the past year, or has it not changed either way?

RURAL ADULTS



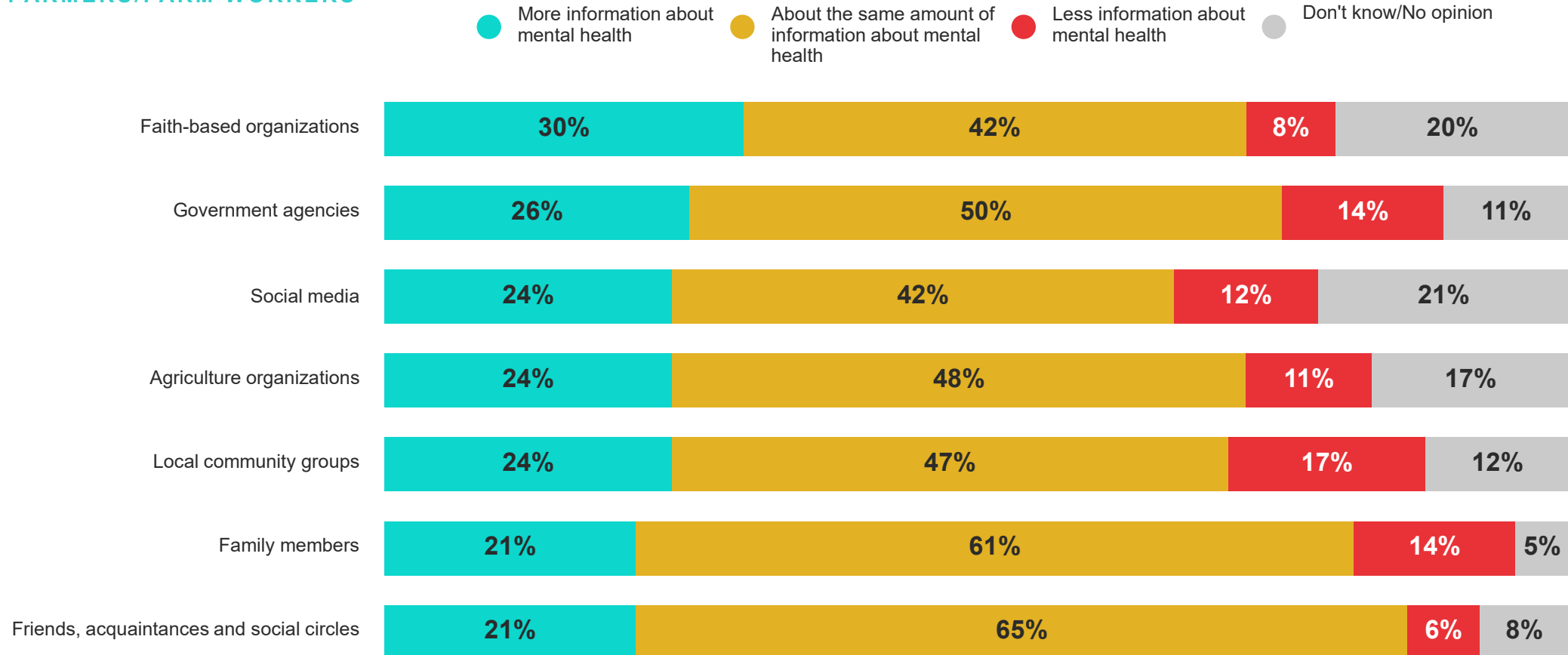
Half of rural adults say they have seen, read, or heard about the same amount of information about mental health from family members, and friends, acquaintances, and social circles.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

Farmers/farm workers are most likely to say they have seen about the same amount of information about mental health from all of the following sources over the past year.

Based on your experience, have you seen, read or heard more or less information about stress and mental health from each of the following over the past year, or has it not changed either way?

FARMERS/FARM WORKERS*



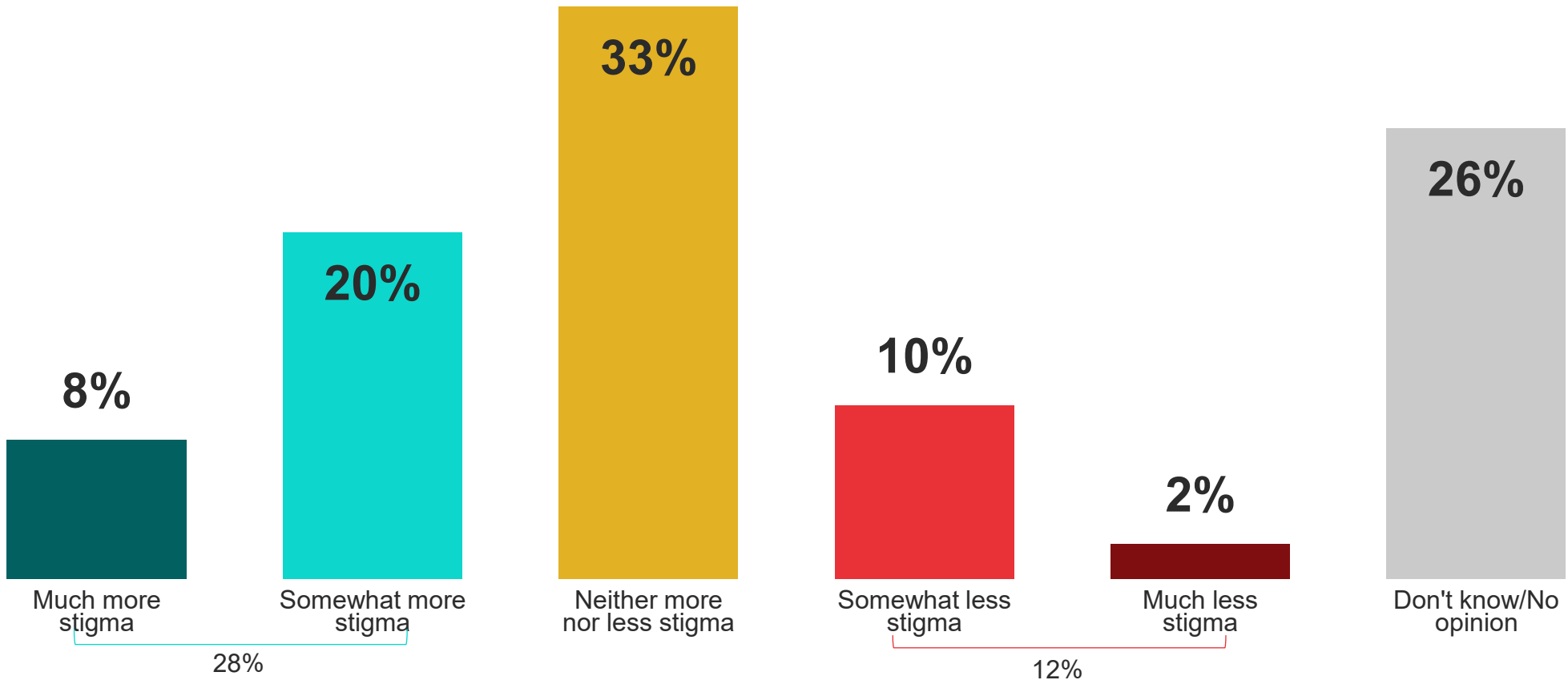
*n=66, MOE +/- 12%
 ** New question in 2021

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

A quarter of rural adults (28%) say there is more stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community today compared to a year ago, but a third (33%) say there is neither more nor less stigma, and 12% say there is less stigma.

*In your opinion, is there more or less stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community today compared to a year ago?

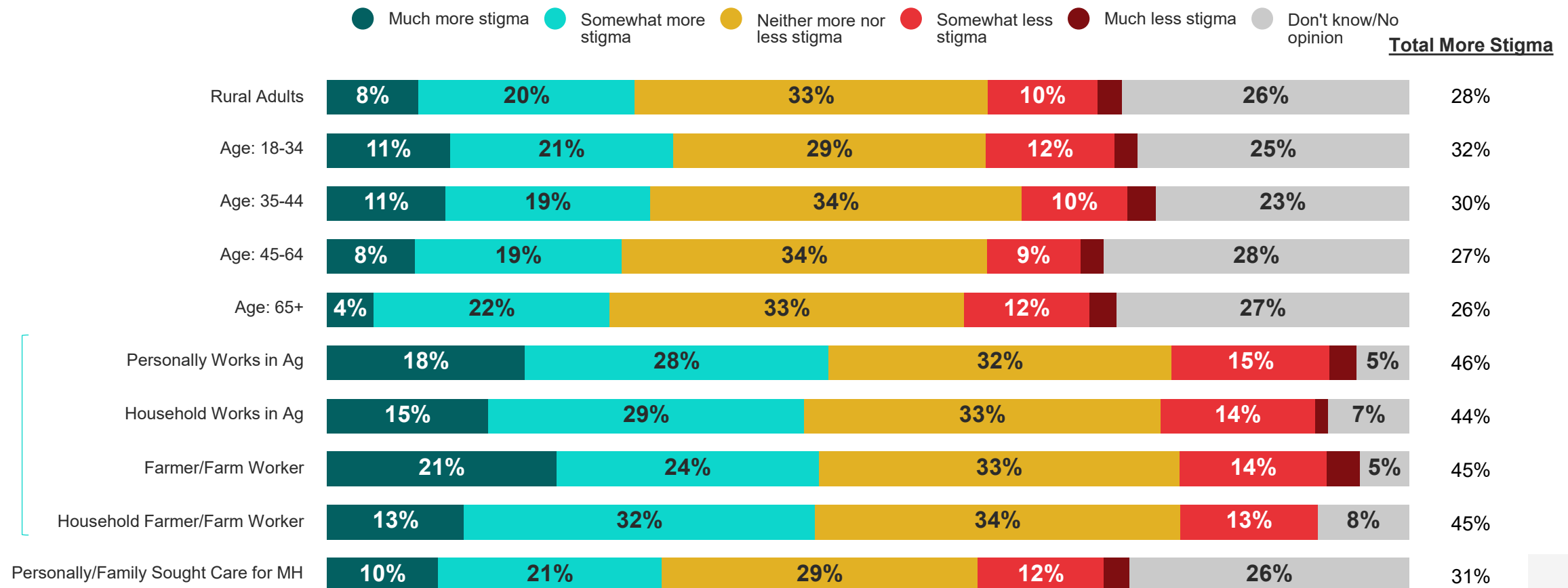
RURAL ADULTS



MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

Nearly half of those involved in agriculture say there is more stigma around stress and mental health in the agricultural community today compared to a year ago, including 45% of farmers/farm workers.

In your opinion, is there more or less stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community today compared to a year ago?

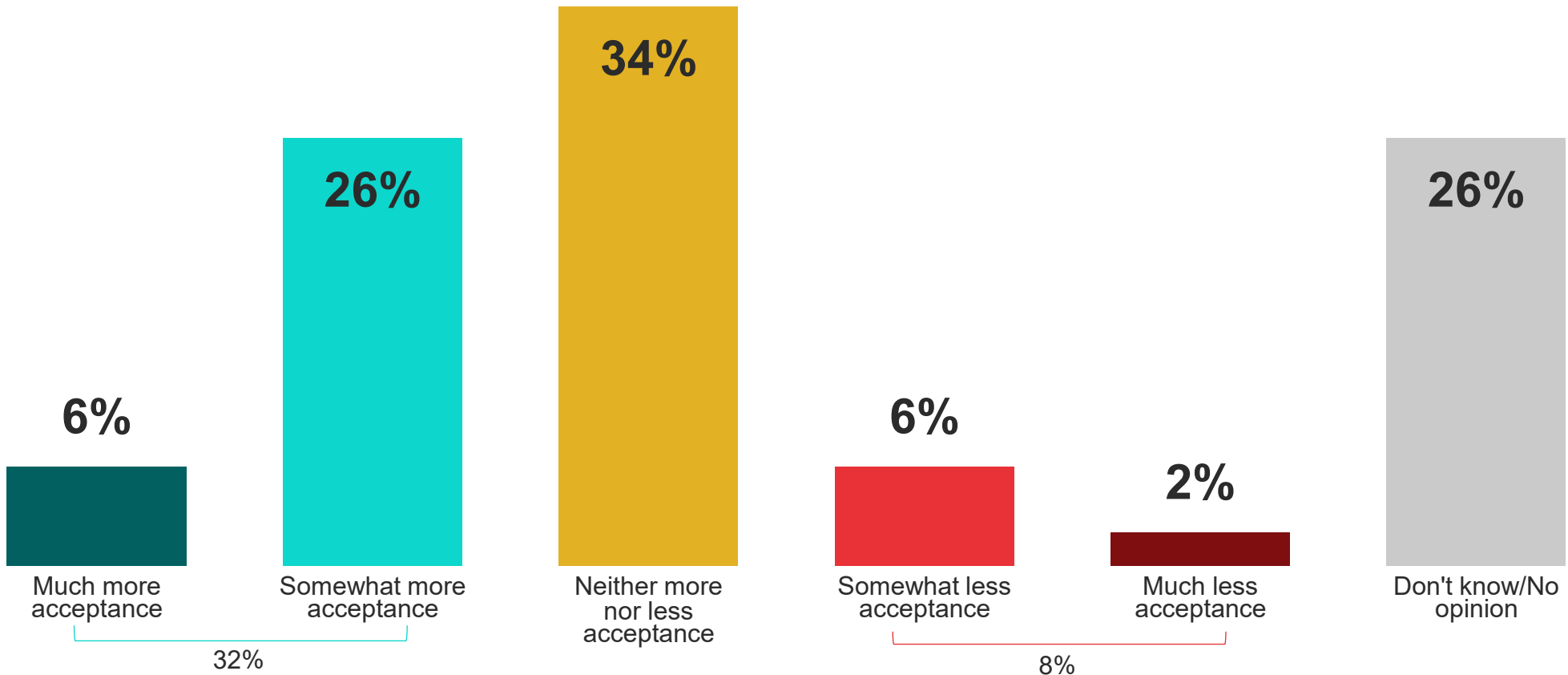


MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

A third of rural adults say there is more acceptance (32%) or the same level of acceptance (34%) in the agriculture community for seeking help for stress or mental health issues today compared to a year ago.

*In your opinion, is there more or less acceptance in the agriculture community of seeking help for stress or mental health issues today compared to a year ago?

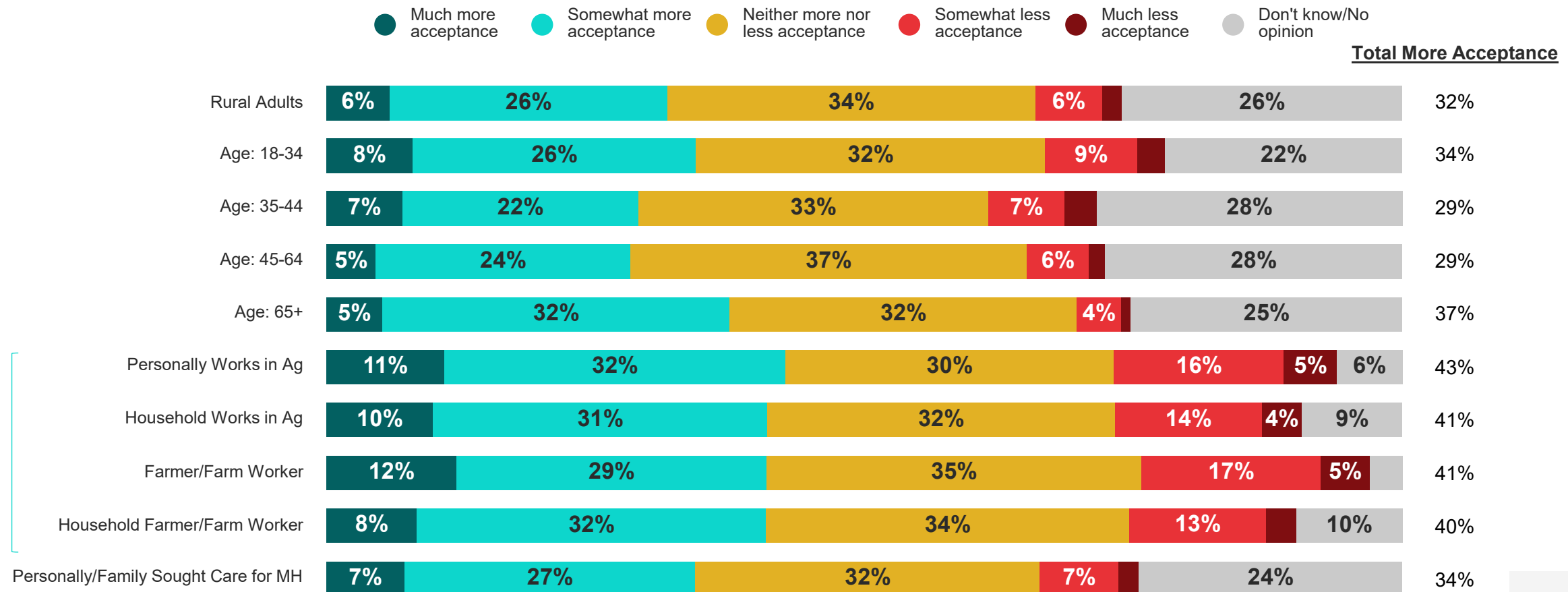
RURAL ADULTS



MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION OVER THE PAST YEAR

Two in five of those involved in agriculture say there is more acceptance in the agricultural community for seeking help for stress and mental health today compared to a year ago, including 41% of farmers/farm workers.

In your opinion, is there more or less acceptance in the agriculture community of seeking help for stress or mental health issues today compared to a year ago?





Farmer and Rural Perceptions of Mental Health



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

December 2021

 MORNING CONSULT