

# Human Givens & Wellbeing in Ireland

An Amárach Research Report

March 2019

# Introduction

Like many other developed countries, Ireland is experiencing a mental health crisis according to various social and medical indicators.

Solving that crisis requires a comprehensive understanding of both the causes of mental illness and the sources of mental wellbeing.

One of the most powerful explanatory models for mental health (both wellbeing and illness) is that known as 'Human Givens'.

In this special Amárach report, we have used the Human Givens framework to measure the state of mental health in Ireland in the hope that it might help those tackling the current crisis.

# Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the Human Givens Institute\* for permission to use their methodology for evaluating psychological needs in the course of our study.

We also wish to thank Sue Saunders in the Dublin Human Givens Centre\*\* for sharing her methodology for evaluating psychological resources as well.

This is the first study of its kind (applying the Human Givens framework to a survey of a national population), and any errors or omissions that may have been made in the course of this study are entirely ours.

Further information on the methodology and questionnaire are in the appendix.

\* <https://www.hgi.org.uk>

\*\* <http://dublinhumangivens.ie>

# Executive Summary

Amárach surveyed 1,000 adults in February 2019 about their mental health and wellbeing, using a quota-controlled, online sample, weighted to the total Irish population.

The survey methodology uses the Human Givens framework for understanding people's innate psychological needs and psychological resources (called 'givens').

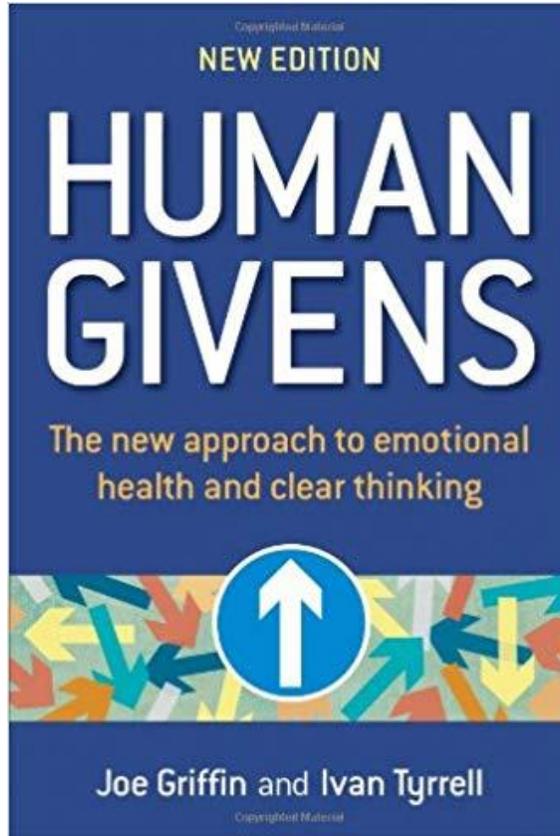
The survey finds that:

- We are a happy nation, scoring an average of 5 on a scale of 1 to 7 for happiness
- However, 39% of adults feel anxious, sad or tired for no reason often or frequently
- We are equally divided between those who sleep well and those who sleep badly
- One in three admits to some degree of addiction to social media
- There is a very large generation gap when it comes to mental health & emotional wellbeing: older people, especially over 55s score much more positively on almost every indicator than under 35s
- Women do not score as well as men on most measures relating to meeting their psychological needs, though there is less of a gap when it comes to the availability of psychological resources
- Among *the key sources of happiness* are a sense of autonomy, sleeping well, being able to use our imagination creatively to solve problems and a healthy level of attention from others
- Among *the key sources of anxiety, sadness etc* are an absence of autonomy, poor sleep, a lack of perceived meaning or purpose, and habits of thought that prevent appropriate responses to experiences

Overall, the Human Givens framework is a powerful tool for understanding wider social trends in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

# About Human Givens

# Human Givens



The Human Givens framework was developed during the 1990s by Joe Griffin from Ireland and Ivan Tyrrell from England, in collaboration with other colleagues.

Human Givens\* refers to the innate psychological needs and mental resources that are programmed into our biology from conception, and that are separate from our physical needs (for food etc).

Just as we suffer when our physical needs go unmet, so also do we suffer when our psychological needs go unmet.

People whose emotional needs are met in a balanced way do not suffer mental health problems; while those who experience problems have one or more psychological needs that are yet unmet.

\* <https://www.hgi.org.uk/human-givens/introduction/what-are-human-givens>

# Psychological Needs



There is widespread agreement as to the nature of our emotional needs – the essential ones for our mental health are:

- **Security:** a safe environment which allows us to develop fully
- **Attention:** both receiving and giving
- **Autonomy and control:** having freedom to make our own choices
- **Intimacy:** to be accepted totally by others, “warts 'n' all”
- **Community:** a sense of belonging
- **Privacy:** giving time and space to reflect and consolidate experience
- **Status:** recognition within social groupings
- **Competence:** creating a sense of achievement
- **Meaning and purpose:** stretching us beyond our concerns with self, including religion, creativity, politics and so on

# Psychological Resources



The physical and emotional needs that we have are not the only human givens – nature also gave us innate 'guidance systems' to help us meet our needs, these are called 'resources' and include:

- **Memory:** to add to our innate knowledge and learn
- **Empathy:** to build rapport and connect with others
- **Imagination:** to focus our attention and solve problems creatively
- **Emotions:** the full array of our feelings and instincts
- **Reason:** a conscious, rational mind that can analyse and plan
- **Pattern matching:** to understand through metaphorical pattern matching
- **Awareness:** that part of us that can step back, be more objective
- **Dreams:** through sleep to refresh our emotional resilience.

# Measuring Human Givens



In order to measure the state of ‘human givens’ in the Irish population, Amárach surveyed a representative sample of 1,000 adults in February 2019.

We used a modified version of the *Emotional Needs Audit* (ENA)\* developed by the Human Givens Institute, to measure the degree to which key psychological needs are being met in the Irish population. We also created a questionnaire to measure the strength of key psychological resources in the Irish population, drawing on work by Sue Saunders.

Note that the ENA etc is designed for one-to-one collaboration between therapists and patients, so we have had to modify the language used in our survey as the context is entirely different, while retaining the purpose of the HGI questionnaires to measure emotional wellbeing.

You can see a copy of our questionnaire in the appendix.

\* <https://www.hgi.org.uk/resources/emotional-needs-audit-ena>

# Emotional Wellbeing

# State of the Emotional Nation

Mental health and wellbeing is an outcome from the effective use of our psychological resources applied to meeting our psychological needs.

While most of this report is focused on current measures of needs and resources, we begin in this section by sharing data on the emotional wellbeing of the Irish general public.

We have used a number of indicators, including:

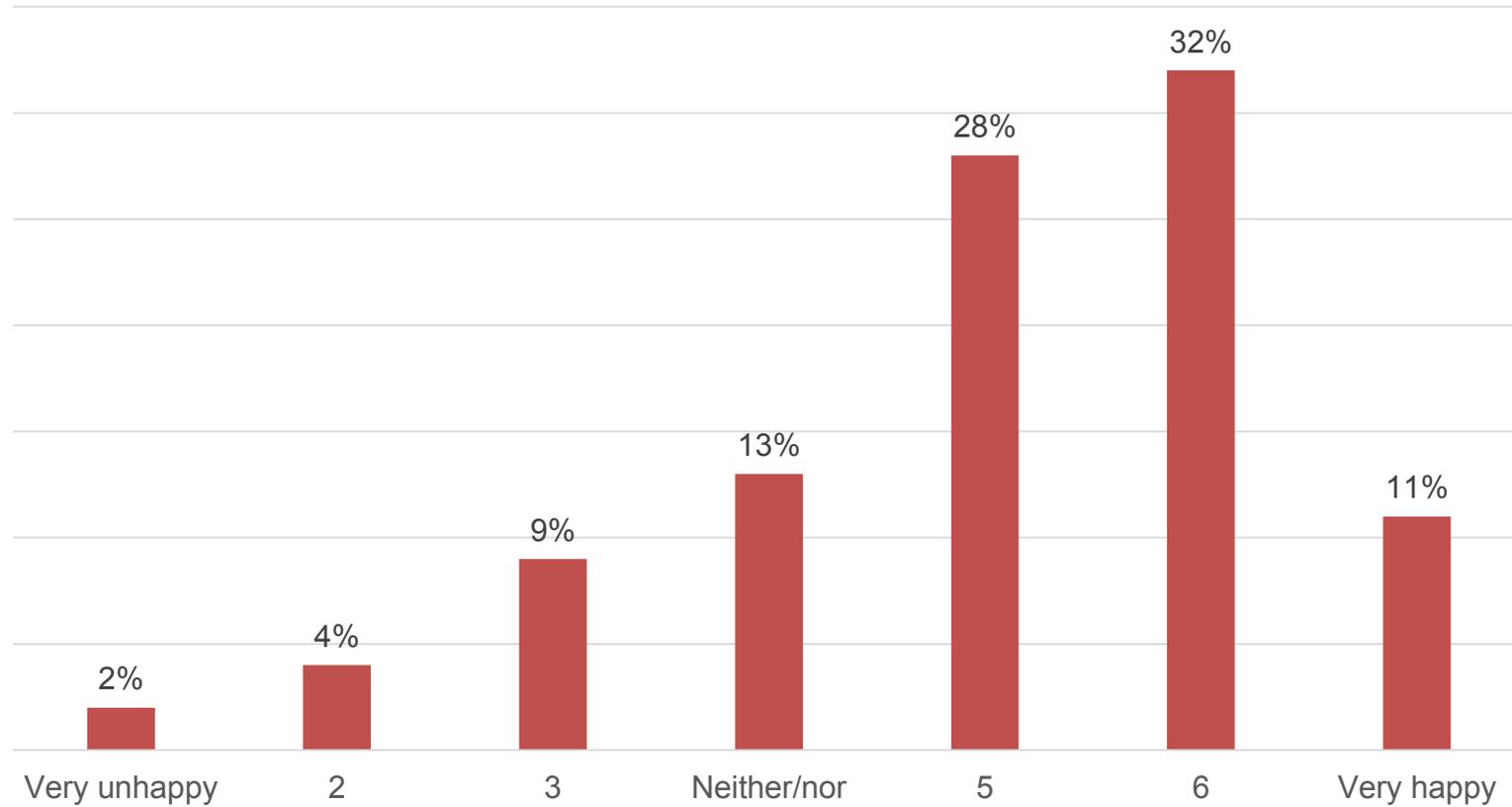
- Self-reported happiness
- Level of anxiety or sadness
- Quality of sleep

In addition, we have captured measures related to wellbeing, namely:

- Level of digital/social media addiction
- Religiosity

# A Happy Nation?

On balance, we are a happy nation, and most of us feel 'grand' according to our measure. Though there is a large 'age gap':

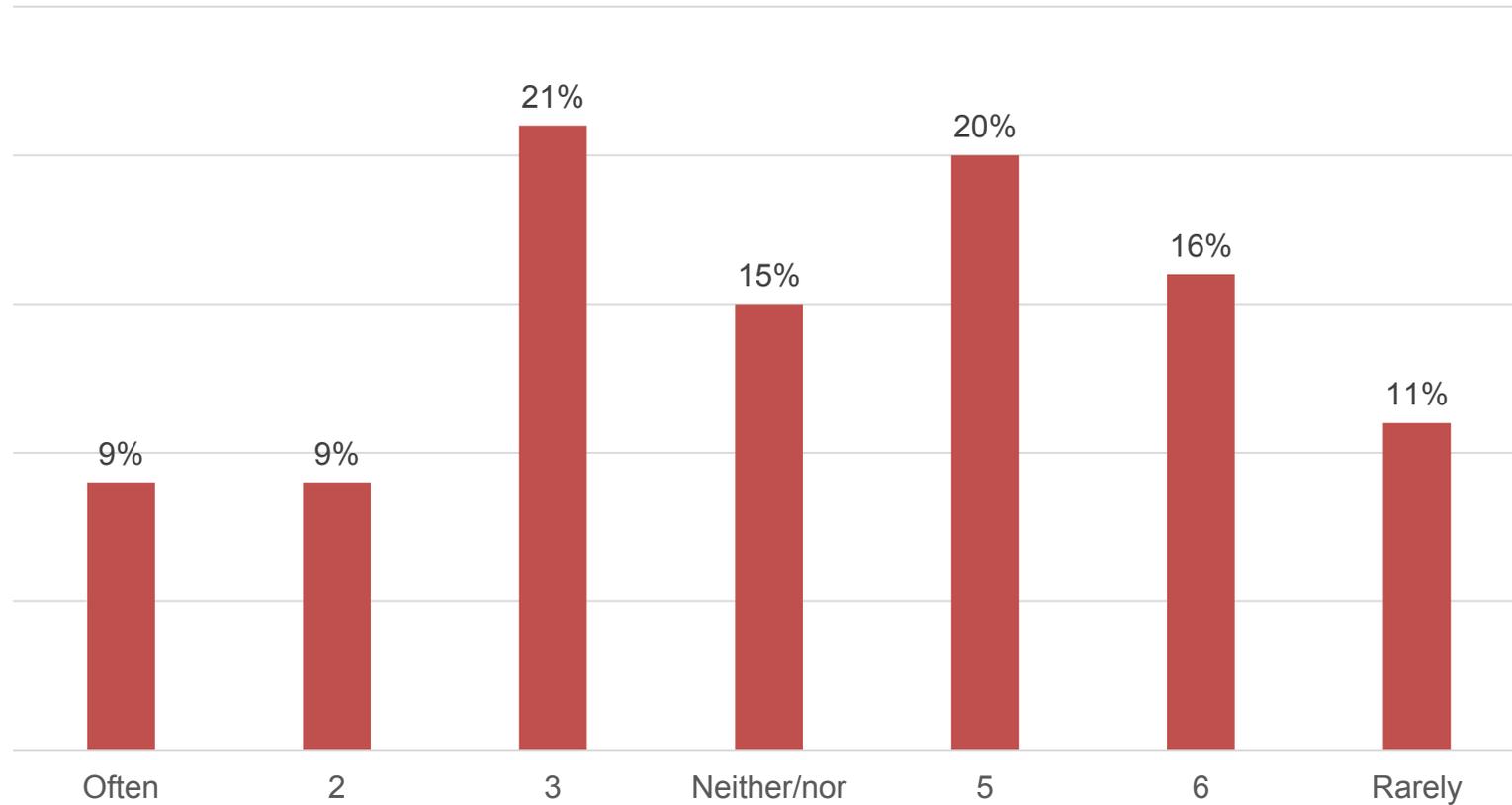


	% Lower (1-3)	% Higher (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	15%	72%	5.0
Male	15%	74%	5.1
Female	16%	70%	5.0
18-24	24%	52%	4.5
25-34	20%	69%	4.8
35-44	16%	73%	5.0
45-54	15%	68%	4.9
55+	10%	82%	5.4

Q. To what extent do you consider yourself a happy person, on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is 'very unhappy' & 7 is 'very happy')

# Negative Moods

While more people are generally free of anxiety or sadness, many are not. There is both a large gender & age gap when it comes to negative moods:

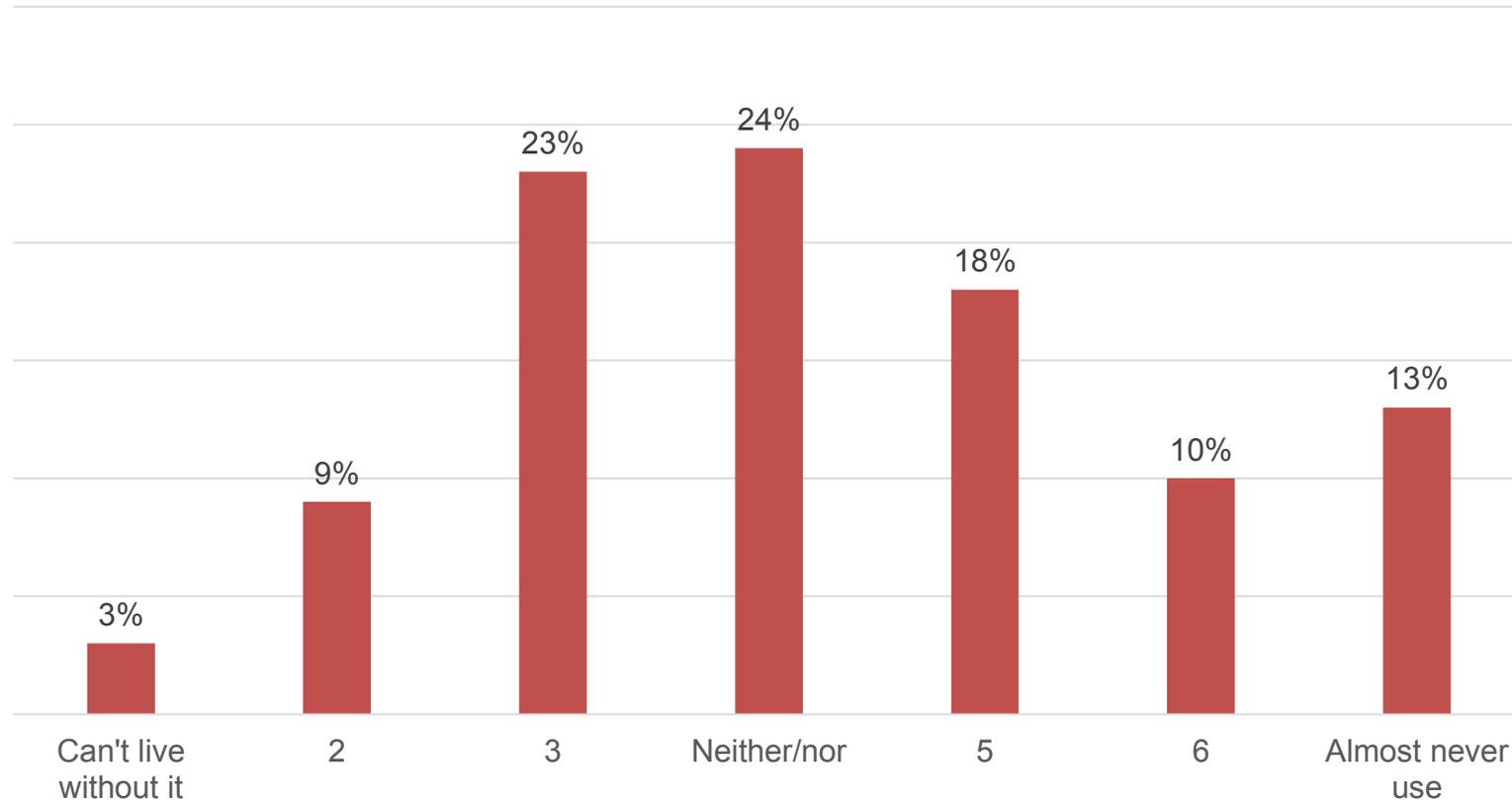


	% Lower (1-3)	% Higher (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	39%	46%	4.2
Male	32%	51%	4.5
Female	45%	42%	3.9
18-24	61%	25%	3.3
25-34	48%	39%	3.8
35-44	41%	44%	4.0
45-54	37%	43%	4.2
55+	25%	61%	4.8

Q. How often do you feel anxious, sad or tired for no reason, on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is a lot or most of the time, and 7 is rarely or almost never)

# Digital Addictions

A third of us admit to some degree of addiction to social media. Women and young people are the most 'addicted' cohorts:

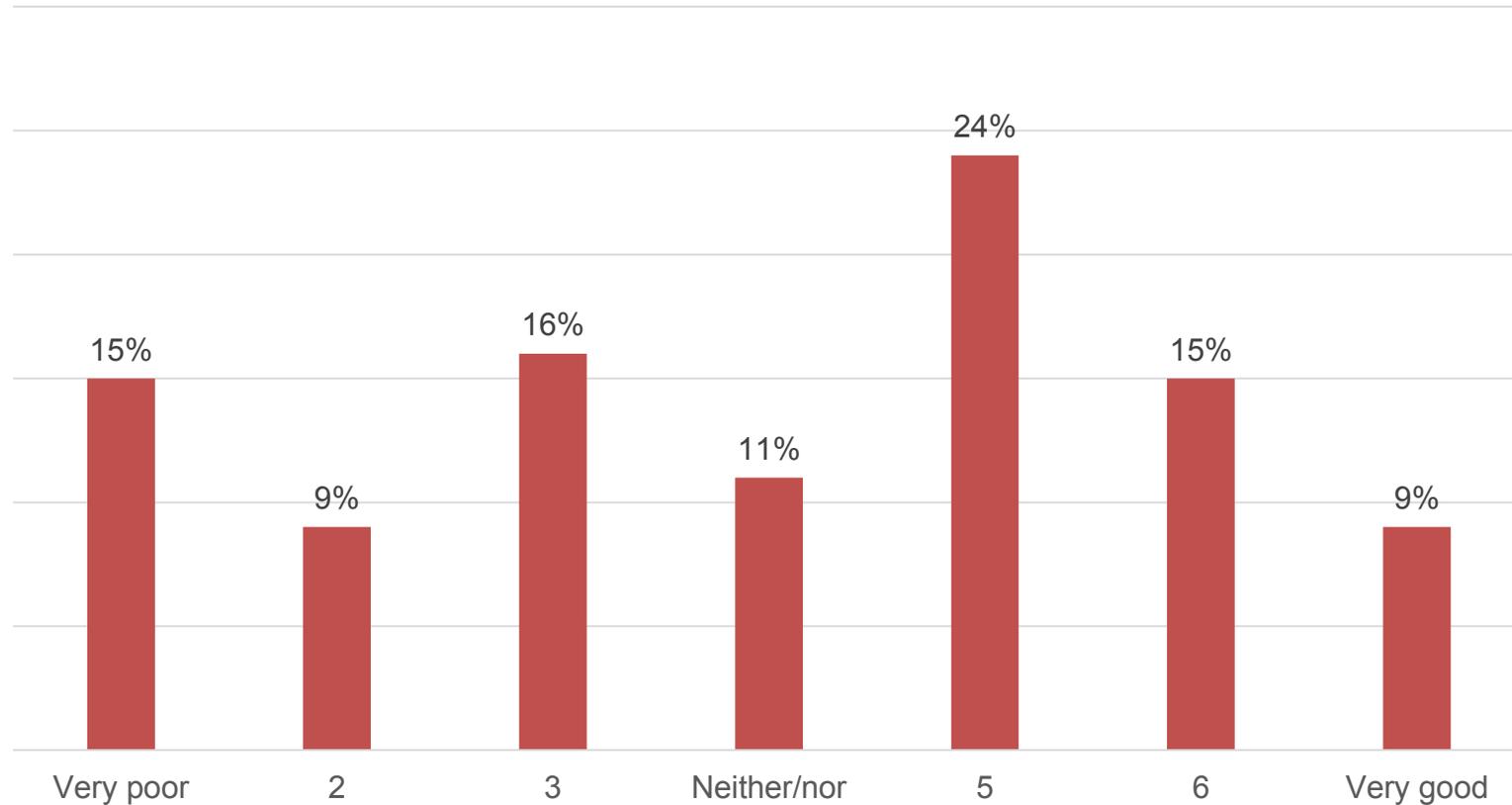


	% Lower (1-3)	% Higher (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	35%	42%	4.3
Male	28%	48%	4.6
Female	42%	36%	4.0
18-24	67%	19%	3.2
25-34	45%	34%	3.9
35-44	28%	44%	4.5
45-54	29%	45%	4.4
55+	25%	51%	4.7

Q. How would you describe your use of social media (e.g.: apps on your phone like Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp etc), on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is you couldn't live without them and the thought of not having access to social media is stressful, and 7 is you never or almost never use social media and wouldn't care if you didn't have access).

# A Good Night's Sleep

Four in ten of us are bad sleepers, and only 1 in 10 sleeps very well. There is also a very large gender gap when it comes to bedtime:

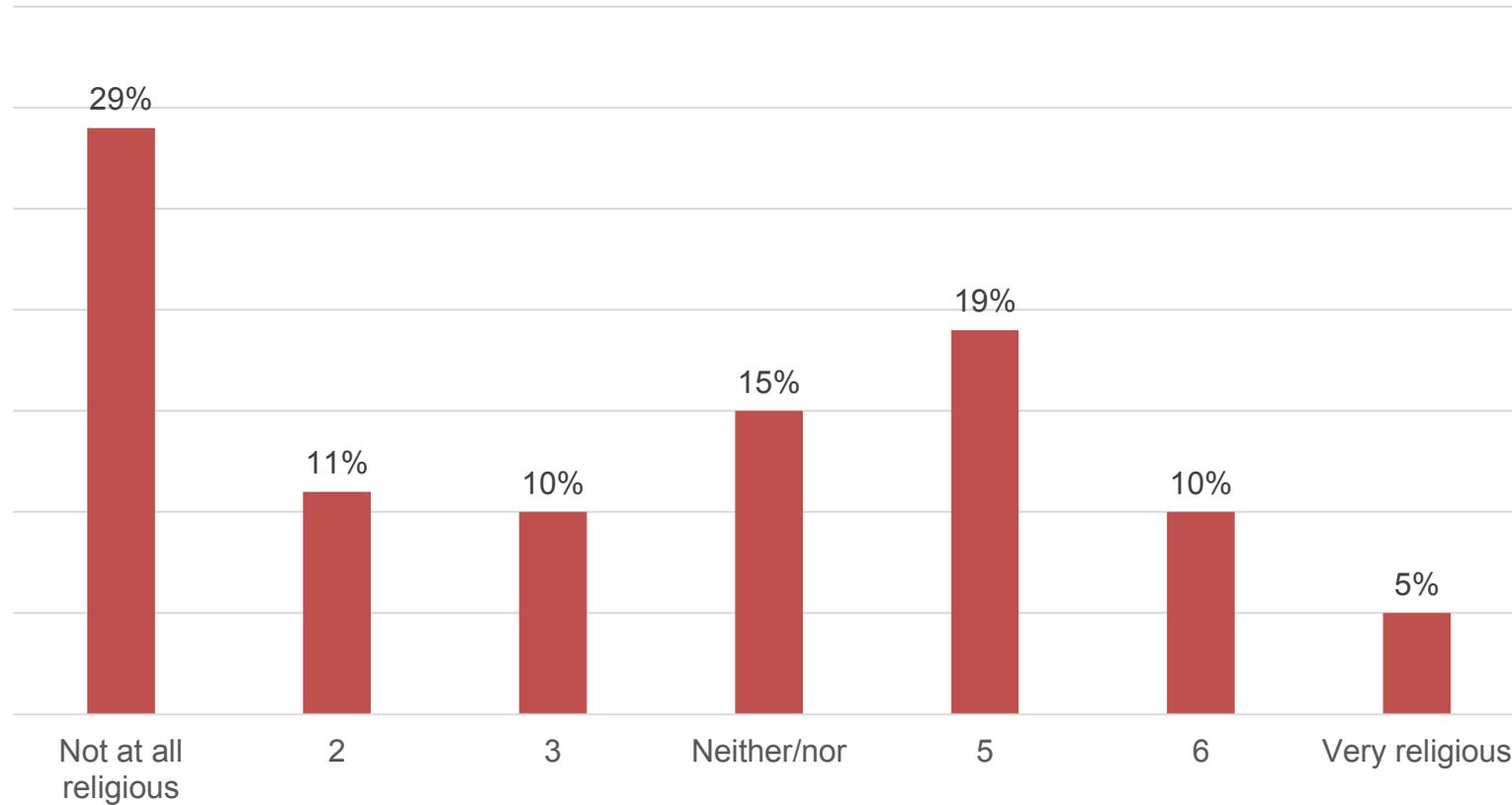


	% Lower (1-3)	% Higher (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	40%	49%	4.0
Male	35%	53%	4.3
Female	45%	45%	3.8
18-24	40%	48%	4.0
25-34	44%	43%	3.8
35-44	46%	44%	3.7
45-54	46%	45%	3.8
55+	31%	58%	4.5

Q. How would you rate the typical quality of your sleep, on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 means very poor and you often wake up tired, and 7 means very good and you usually wake up refreshed)

# Religious People

One in three would consider themselves to be religious. There is a large age gap in terms of religiosity:



	% Lower (1-3)	% Higher (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	50%	35%	3.4
Male	47%	37%	3.5
Female	53%	32%	3.2
18-24	64%	26%	2.9
25-34	66%	21%	2.7
35-44	55%	30%	3.1
45-54	45%	38%	3.6
55+	35%	47%	4.0

Q. To what extent do you consider yourself to be a religious person, on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is not at all religious, and 7 is very religious)

## Emotional Benchmarks

The data in this section of the report has highlighted a number of positive and negative aspects to Irish psychological wellbeing at the end of the second decade of the 21st century.

While we enjoy a ‘bias to happiness’ there are nevertheless significantly large minorities experiencing more negative emotions on a regular basis.

In addition, a worryingly large percentage admit to a degree of social media addiction which may potentially exacerbate some negative emotions in certain people. Add to that a high incidence of poor quality sleep or even sleep deprivation and it would appear that some cohorts are more vulnerable than others potentially.

Religion has traditionally been a source of meaning – and even resilience – in the past, though as we can see from our measure of religiosity, its contribution is limited to a minority at present.

We turn now to look in detail at the degree to which psychological needs are being met across the Irish nation.

# Psychological Needs

# Meeting Our Psychological Needs

We noted the main psychological needs earlier, namely:

Security – Autonomy – Attention  
Intimacy – Community – Privacy  
Status – Competence – Meaning

In this section we look at the degree to which each need is being met across the Irish population and in the next section we will look at psychological resources.

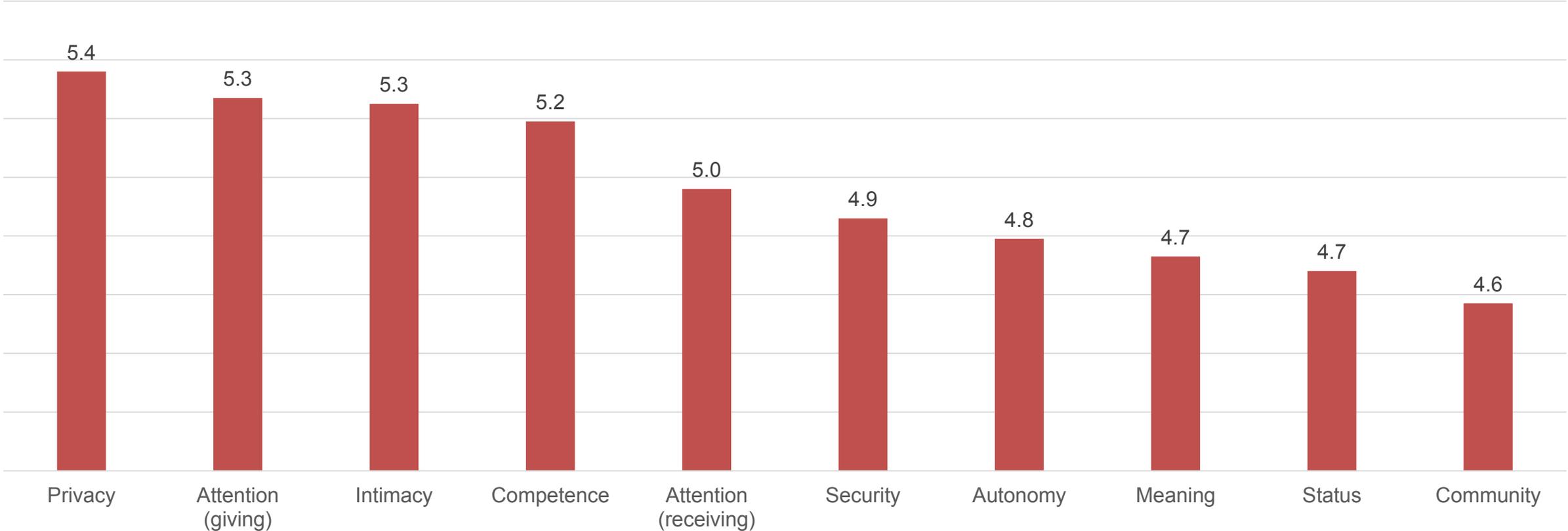
In defining each of the psychological needs, we have drawn on the free ebook: *'Human Givens – The Essentials'* by Julia Welstead\* as our guide.

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\* <https://www.hgi.org.uk/free-ebook>

# Ranking Needs

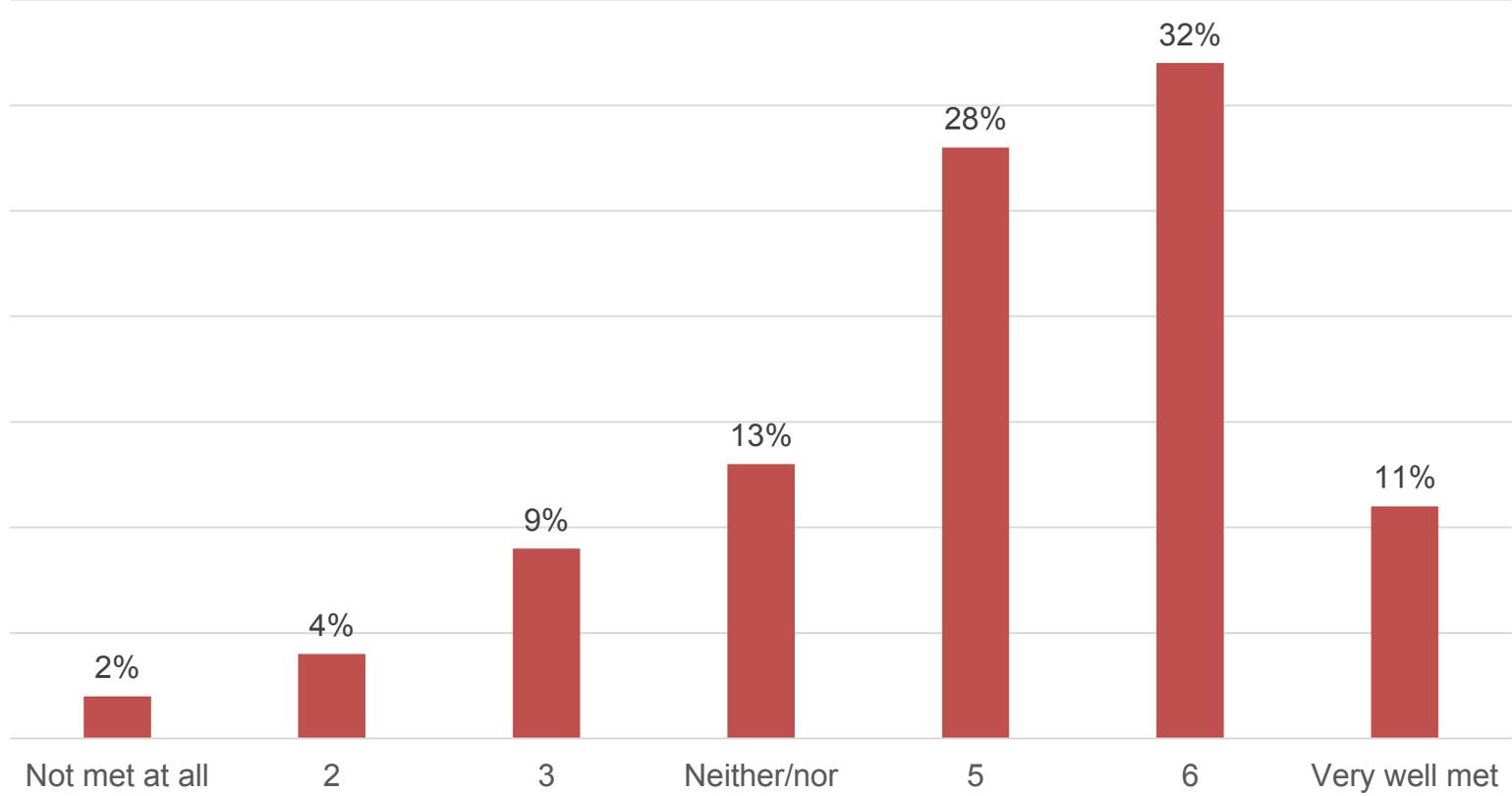
Using the average mean scores for the total population (on a scale of 1-7), our needs for 'privacy', 'giving attention' and 'intimacy' appear to be well met, while our needs for 'meaning', 'status' and 'community' are less well met. We explore each of the psychological needs in the following slides



Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Security

‘A safe environment that allows us to live without undue fear, develop fully and have space to grow’:

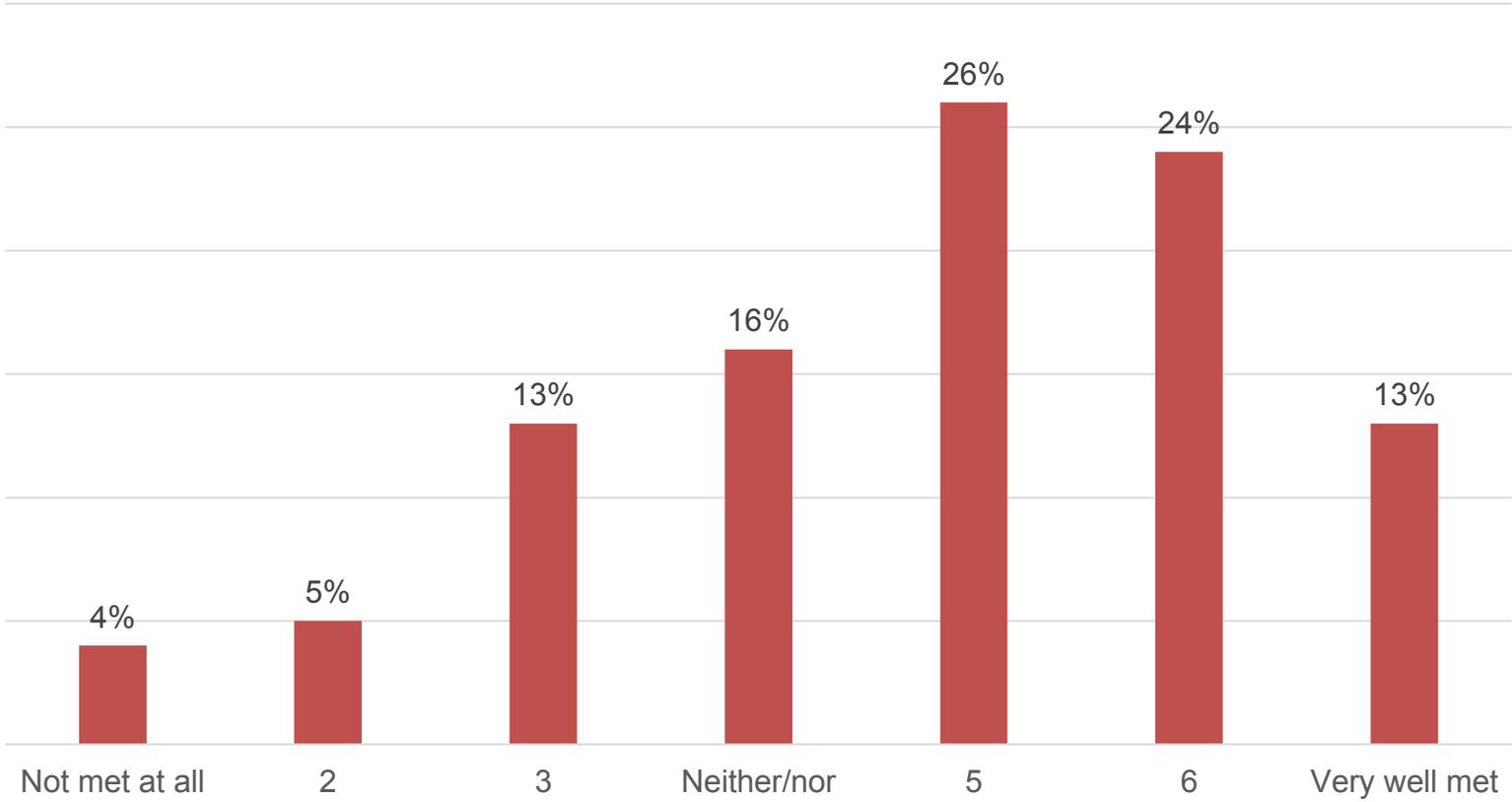


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	21%	66%	4.9
Male	16%	70%	5.1
Female	25%	62%	4.7
18-24	26%	49%	4.4
25-34	26%	65%	4.6
35-44	25%	62%	4.6
45-54	23%	57%	4.6
55+	11%	79%	5.5

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling secure in all major areas of your life (such as your home, work, environment)** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Autonomy

‘A sense of control over what happens to you, the freedom to make your own decisions and choices, feeling in charge of yourself’:

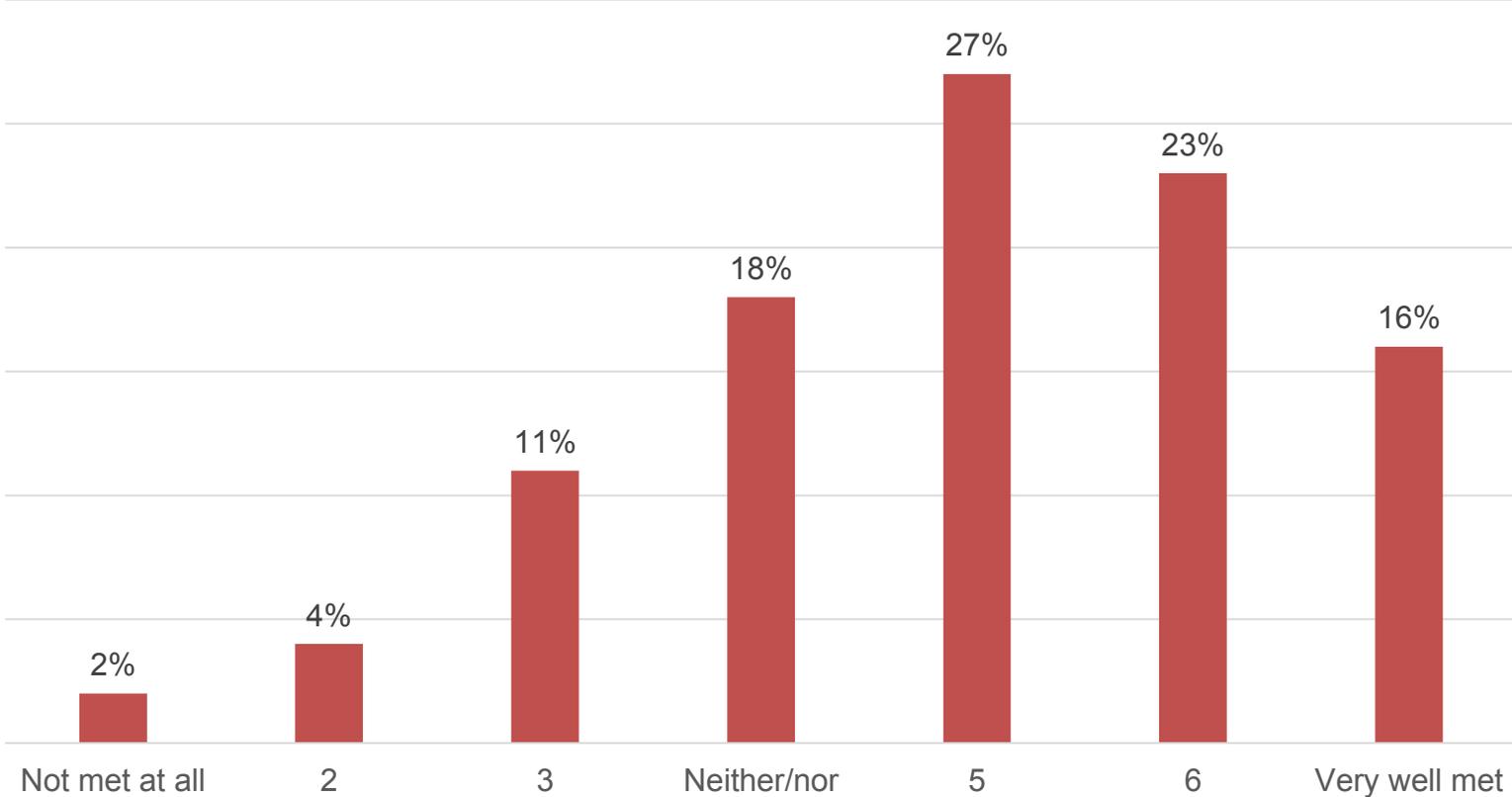


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	21%	63%	4.8
Male	16%	70%	5.1
Female	26%	56%	4.5
18-24	34%	41%	4.1
25-34	34%	48%	4.2
35-44	24%	63%	4.7
45-54	18%	62%	4.8
55+	10%	81%	5.5

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling in control of your life most of the time** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Attention – Receiving

‘The giving and receiving of attention are both vital forms of nutrition that fuel our development. Paying attention to each other forms part of our group bond as a gregarious species and helps us maintain a shared sense of reality’:

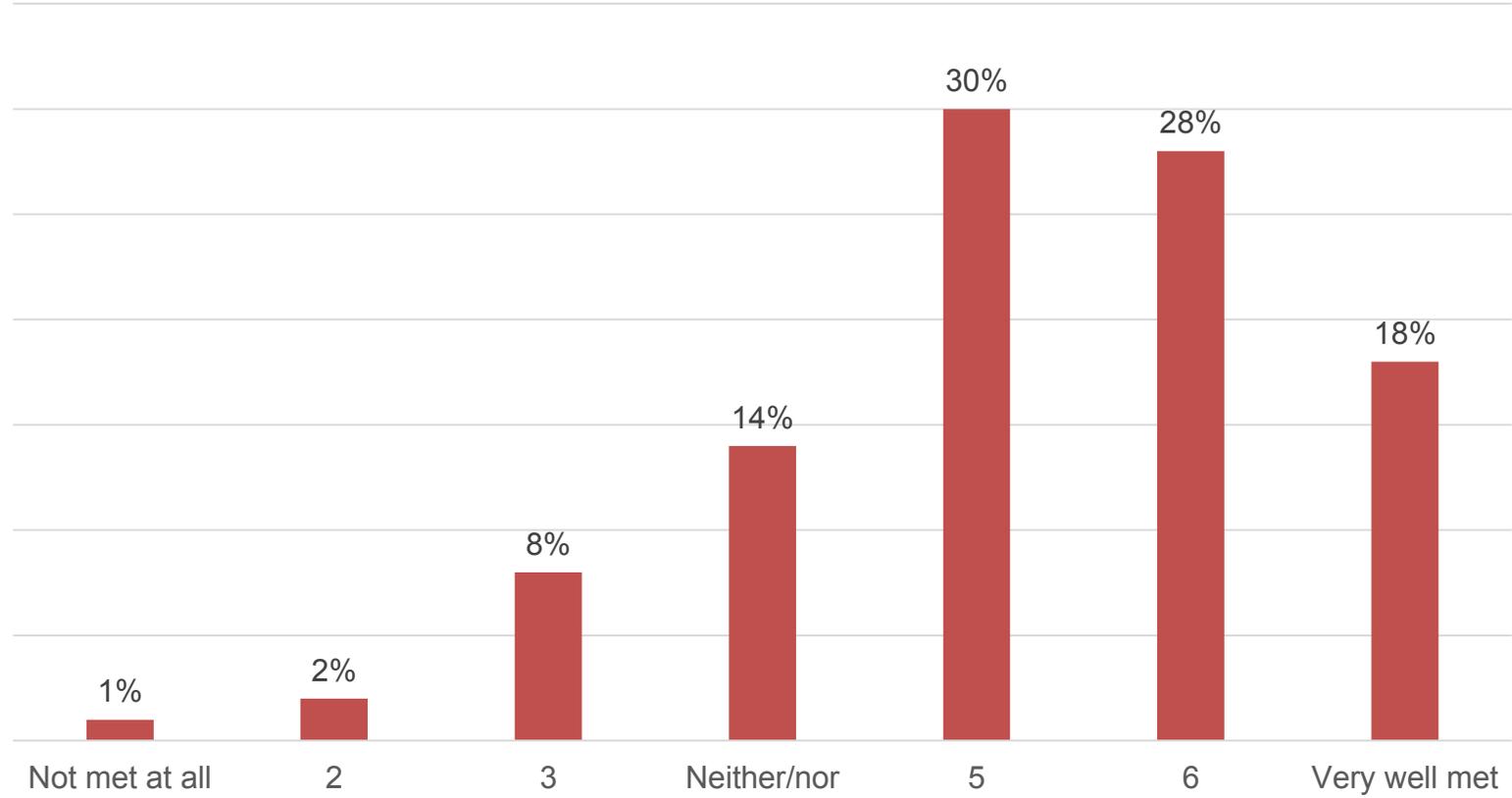


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	17%	66%	5.0
Male	13%	68%	5.1
Female	21%	63%	4.9
18-24	23%	61%	4.7
25-34	19%	64%	4.8
35-44	20%	59%	4.8
45-54	18%	64%	4.9
55+	10%	74%	5.3

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling you receive enough attention from others** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Attention – Giving

‘The giving and receiving of attention are both vital forms of nutrition that fuel our development. Paying attention to each other forms part of our group bond as a gregarious species and helps us maintain a shared sense of reality’:

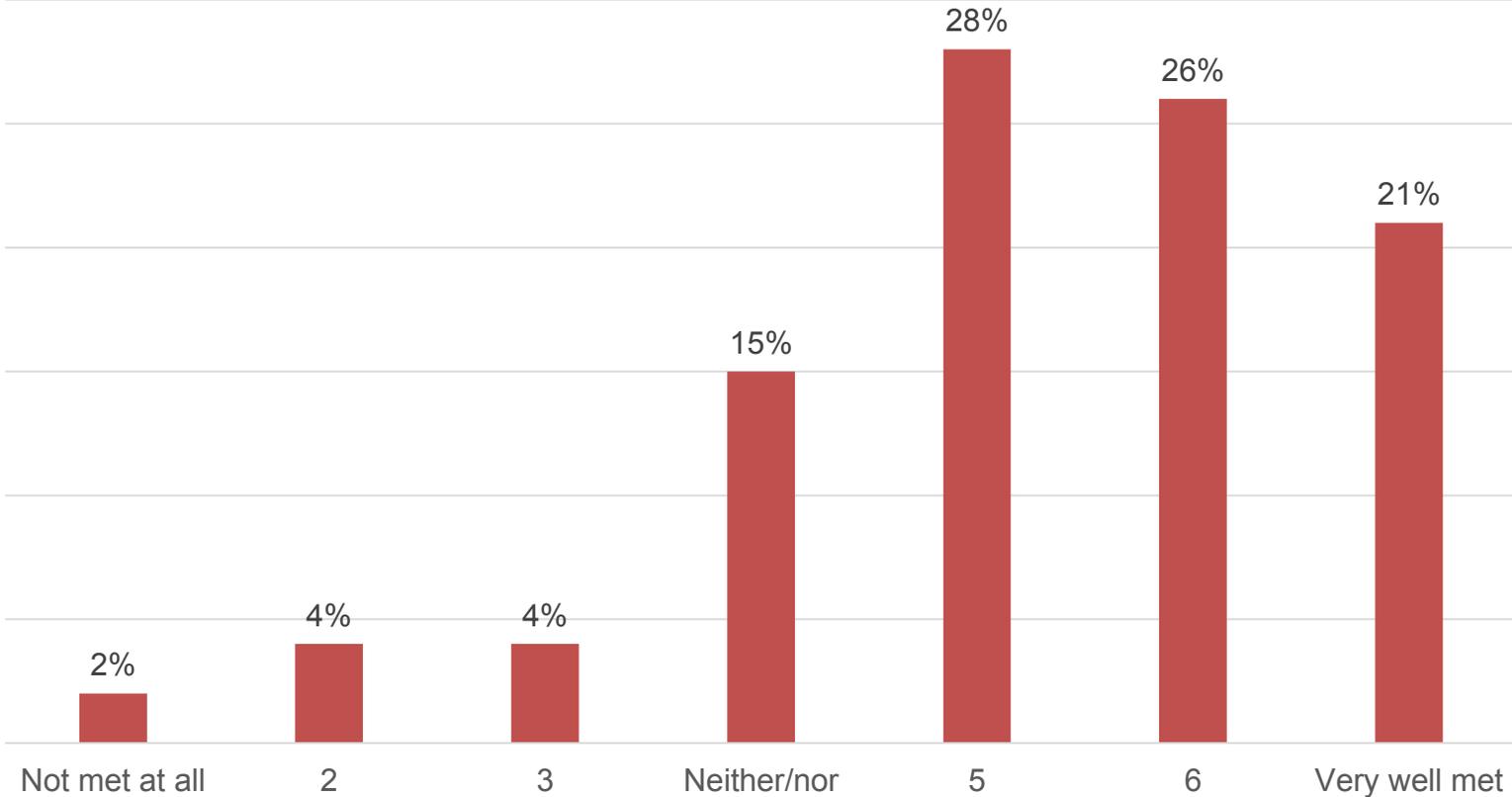


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	10%	76%	5.3
Male	10%	74%	5.2
Female	10%	77%	5.3
18-24	12%	73%	5.2
25-34	10%	70%	5.1
35-44	17%	68%	5.1
45-54	11%	79%	5.3
55+	5%	84%	5.5

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling you give enough attention from others** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Intimacy

‘An emotional connection to others through friendships and loving relationships. We all need at least one person who accepts us for who we are, ‘warts and all’, who is biased in our favour and will support and defend us’:

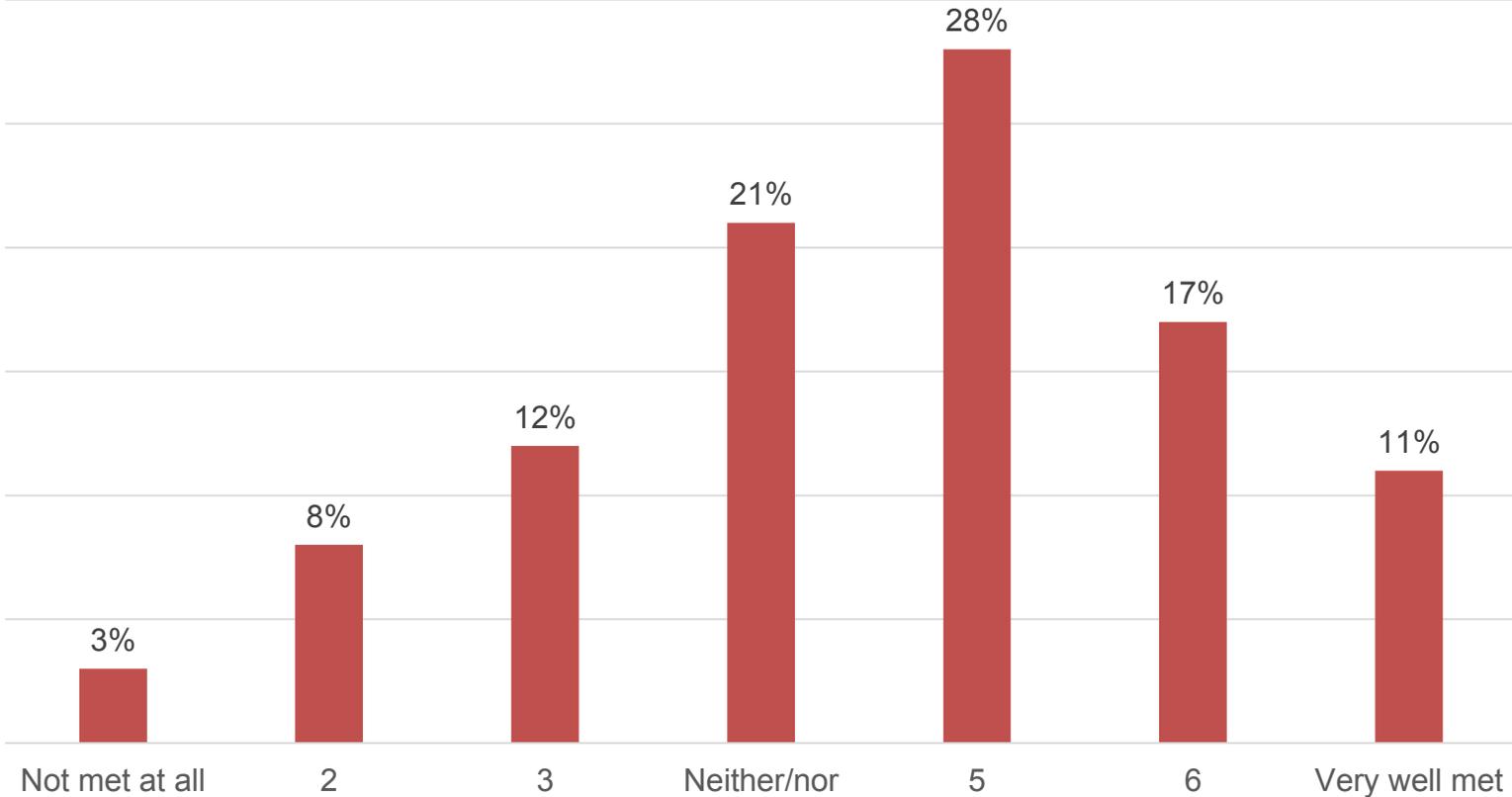


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	10%	75%	5.3
Male	9%	74%	5.2
Female	11%	76%	5.3
18-24	17%	66%	4.9
25-34	9%	71%	5.2
35-44	15%	71%	5.0
45-54	10%	75%	5.2
55+	5%	83%	5.6

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling an emotional connection to others** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Community

‘A connection to people outside your immediate family, through work, hobbies, sport, geographical and cultural communities’:

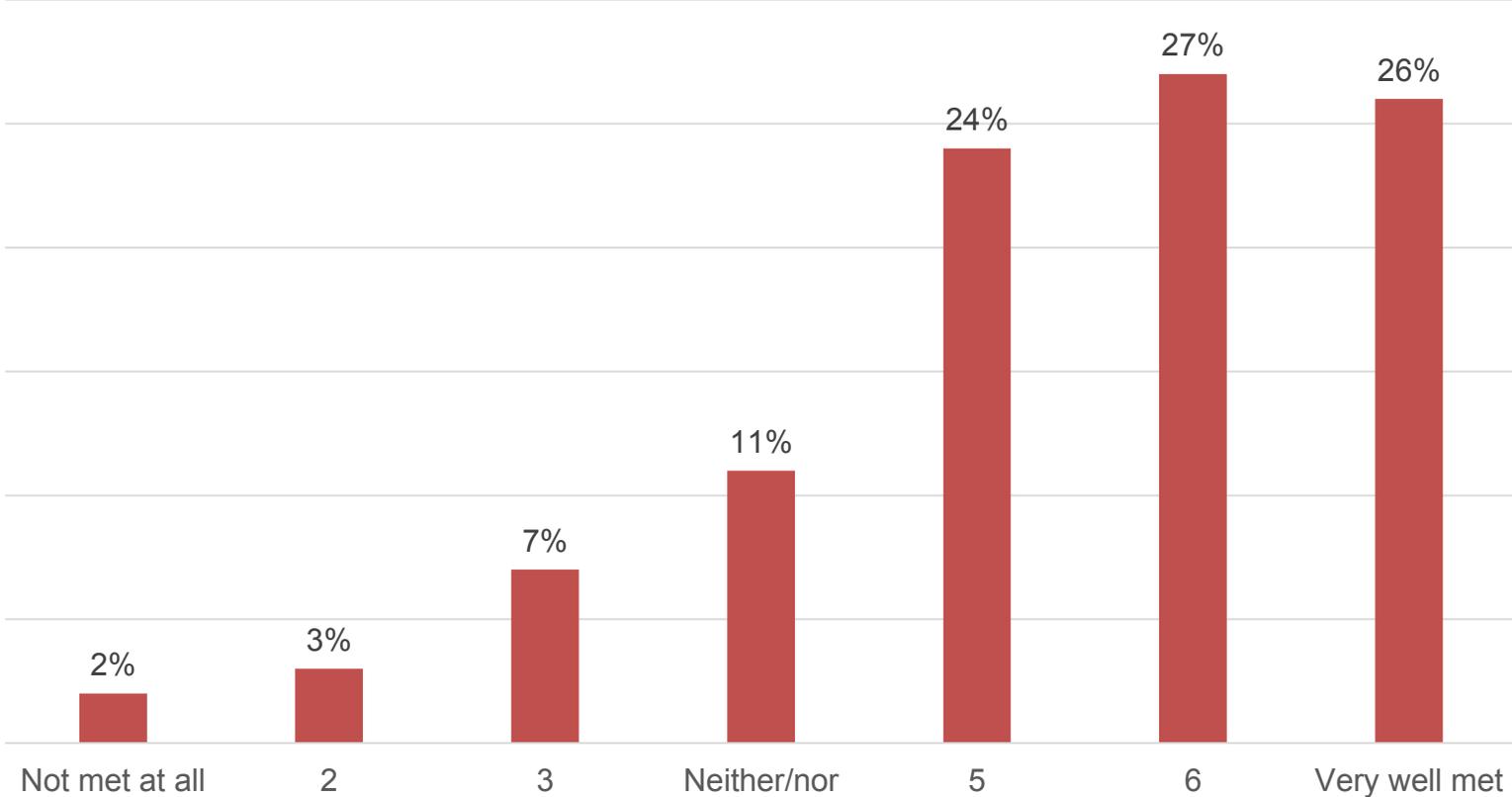


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	23%	56%	4.6
Male	19%	57%	4.7
Female	27%	54%	4.5
18-24	31%	44%	4.3
25-34	33%	41%	4.0
35-44	25%	54%	4.4
45-54	25%	52%	4.5
55+	11%	72%	5.2

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling you are connected to some part of a wider community** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Privacy

‘A feeling you have enough time and space to reflect on, learn from, and consolidate your experiences’:

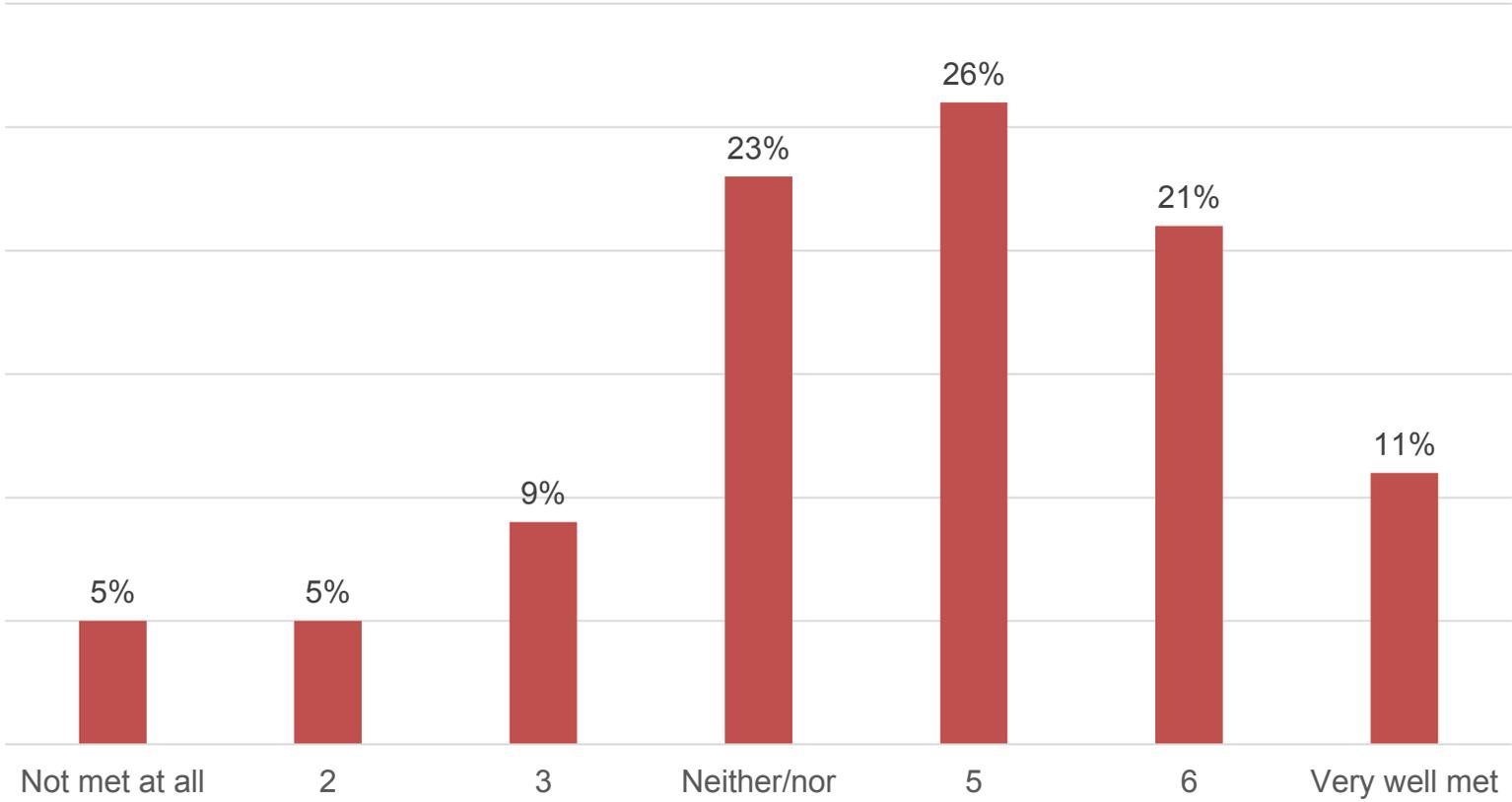


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	12%	77%	5.4
Male	10%	81%	5.5
Female	15%	74%	5.3
18-24	14%	67%	5.1
25-34	18%	70%	5.0
35-44	15%	74%	5.2
45-54	11%	76%	5.3
55+	7%	88%	5.8

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling you can obtain privacy when you need to** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Status

‘A sense that you are accepted, valued and have status within the groups to which you belong (work, family, town, sporting etc); being respected for who you are and what you can do’:

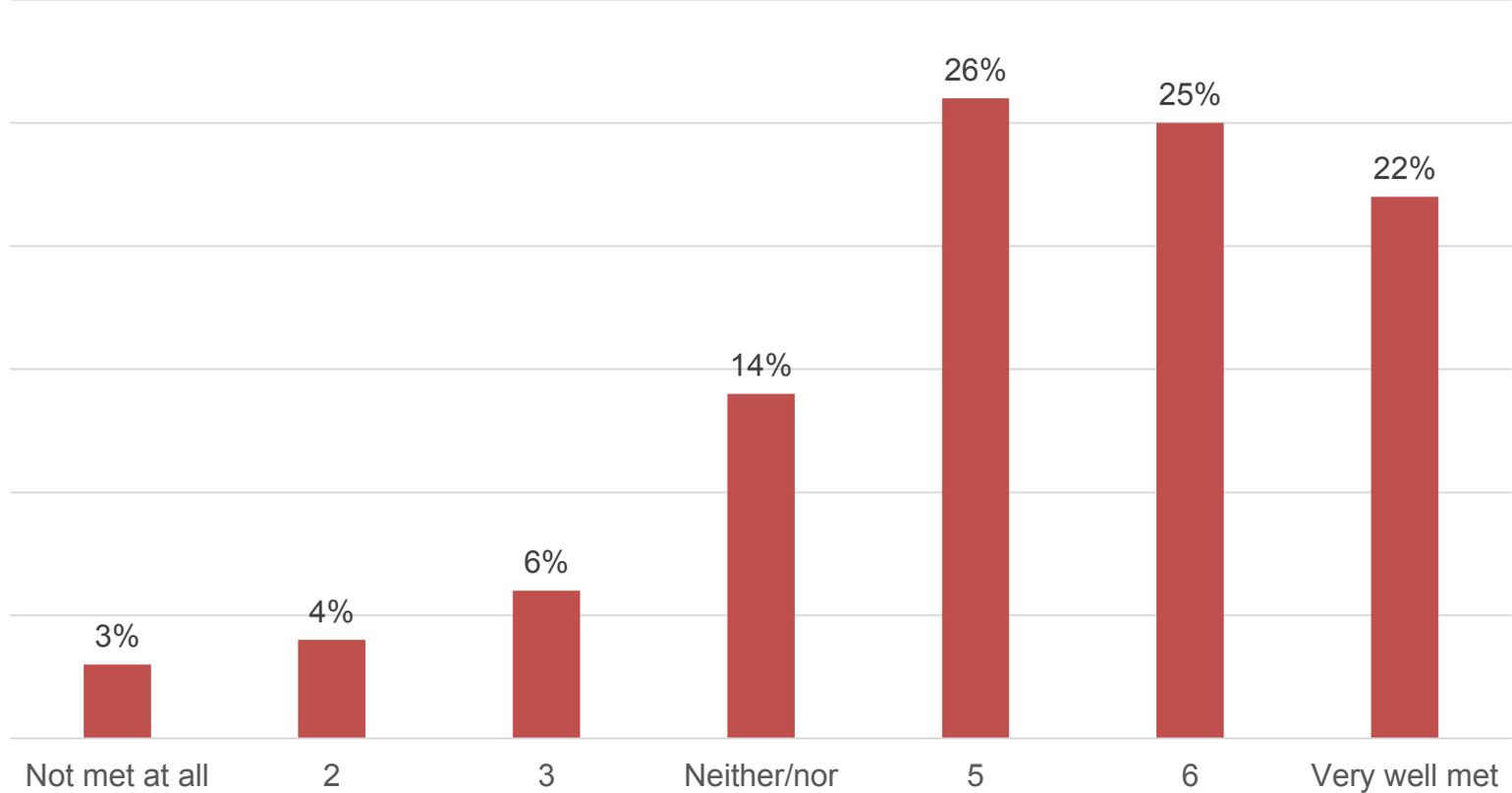


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	19%	58%	4.7
Male	14%	63%	4.9
Female	24%	53%	4.5
18-24	32%	47%	4.3
25-34	23%	49%	4.4
35-44	19%	59%	4.5
45-54	23%	52%	4.6
55+	10%	70%	5.2

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling you have status that is acknowledged by others** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Competence

‘A sense of your own competence and abilities, knowledge and skills’:

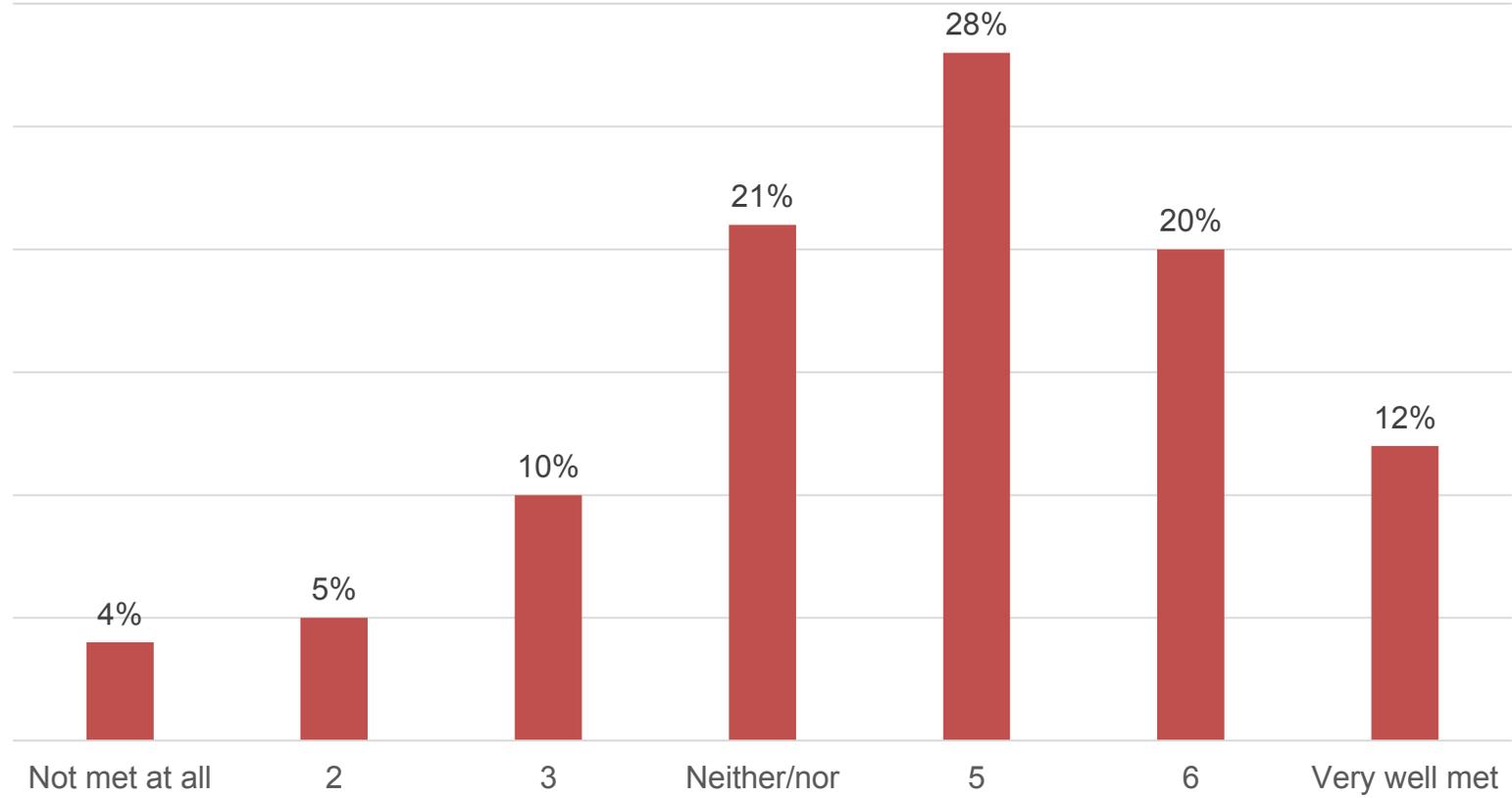


	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	13%	73%	5.2
Male	10%	78%	5.3
Female	15%	69%	5.1
18-24	15%	66%	4.9
25-34	20%	66%	4.8
35-44	15%	71%	5.0
45-54	15%	69%	5.2
55+	5%	85%	5.7

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Need: Meaning

‘A feeling which comes from being stretched, mentally or physically, and having purpose in what we do, being helpful within our communities, or being connected to ideas or beliefs greater than ourselves’:



	% Not Met (1-3)	% Met (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	19%	60%	4.7
Male	17%	61%	4.8
Female	21%	58%	4.6
18-24	28%	48%	4.4
25-34	23%	51%	4.4
35-44	22%	60%	4.6
45-54	17%	57%	4.7
55+	11%	71%	5.2

Q. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now: **feeling mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense that life is meaningful** - on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met.

# Psychological Needs in Ireland

Our research provides a snapshot of the degree to which various psychological needs are currently being met in the Irish adult population.

A number of patterns emerge: men tend to score higher than women in terms of having their psychological needs met (though not always: women score higher on 'giving attention').

Furthermore, older people tend to score higher than younger people, reflecting perhaps lifestage differences, but maybe also generational differences (due to different values, use of social media etc).

In the next section we look at the availability of psychological resources in the population.

# Psychological Resources

# Using Our Psychological Resources

We noted the main psychological resources earlier, namely:

Memory – Empathy – Imagination

Emotions – Reason – Pattern Matching

Awareness – Dreams

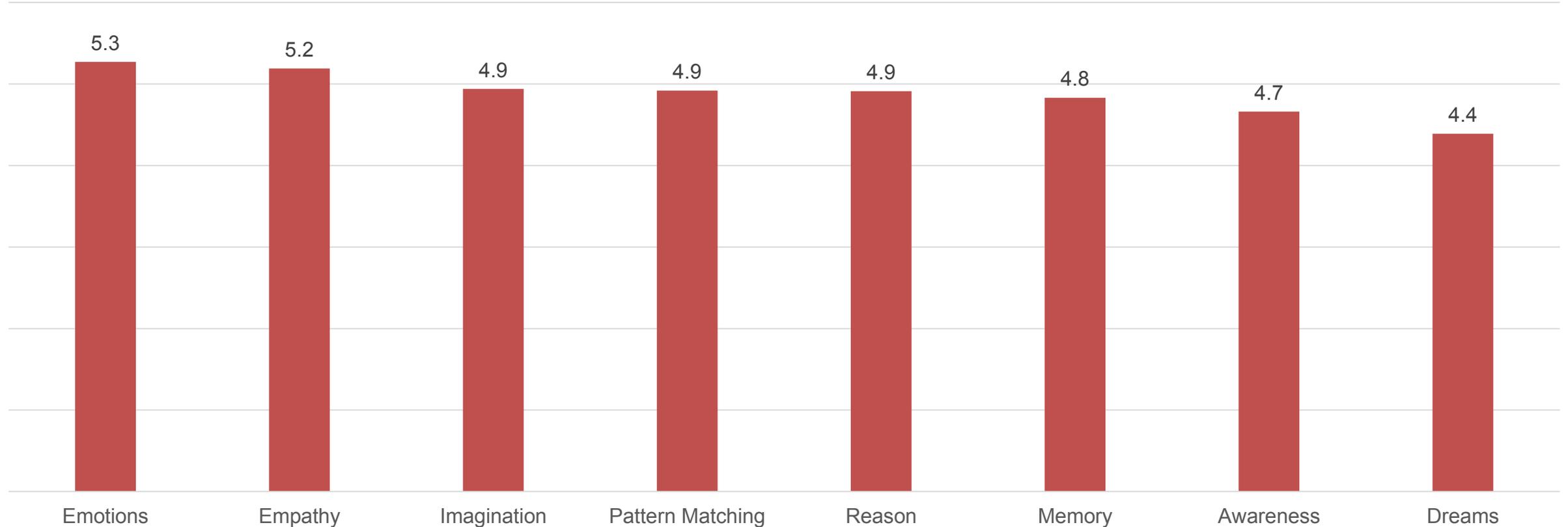
In this section we look at the degree to which each resource is available across the Irish population and the main differences by key demographic groups.

Again in defining each of the psychological resources, we have drawn on the free ebook: *'Human Givens – The Essentials'* by Julia Welstead\* as our guide.

\* <https://www.hgi.org.uk/free-ebook>

# Ranking Resources

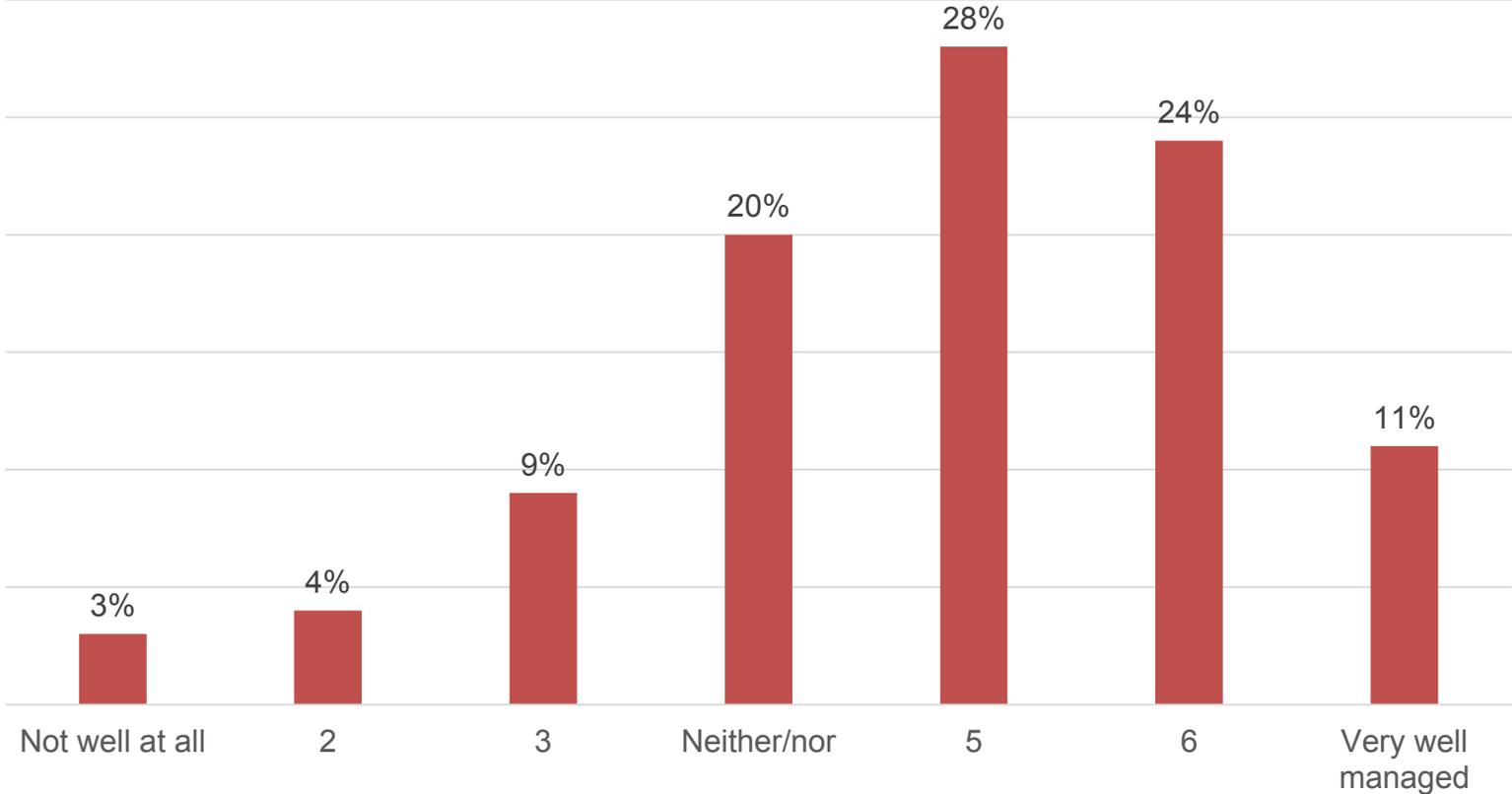
Using the average mean scores for the total population (on a scale of 1-7), we appear to have strong psychological resources in terms of being 'emotionally aware' and 'empathetic'. We score lower, however, in terms of resources such as 'awareness' and 'dreams' (i.e.: sleeping on our problems). We explore each of the psychological resources in the following slides.



Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed.

# Psychological Resource: Memory

‘The ability to develop complex, long-term memory, which enables you to add to your innate knowledge, remember experiences & learn’:

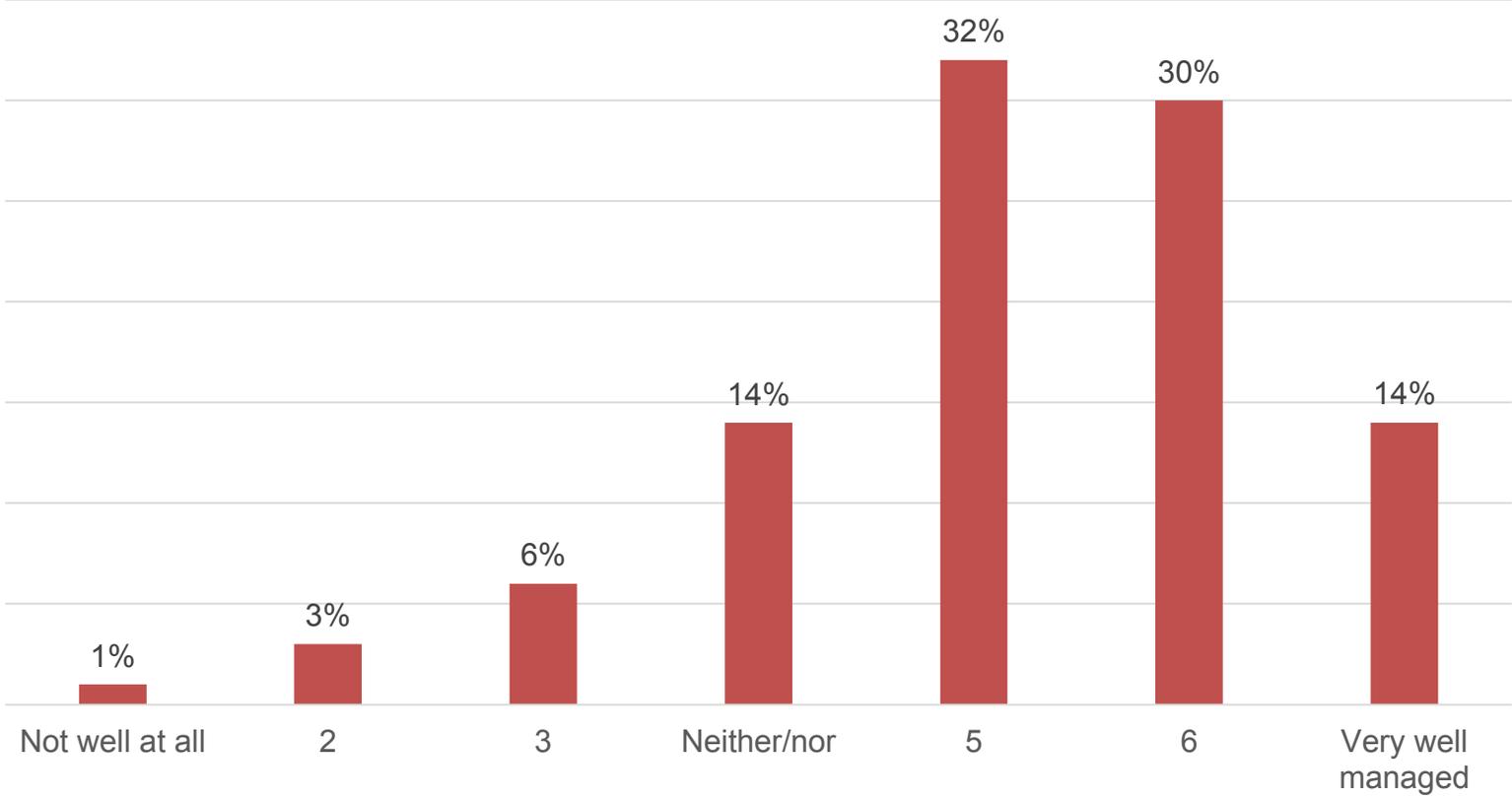


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	17%	63%	4.8
Male	14%	67%	5.0
Female	19%	60%	4.7
18-24	29%	42%	4.2
25-34	21%	52%	4.5
35-44	21%	64%	4.8
45-54	17%	64%	4.8
55+	6%	78%	5.3

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **using your memory to find new solutions rather than going over past regrets or injustices**

# Psychological Resource: Empathy

‘The ability to build rapport, empathize and connect with others, so you can care for each other and share as a group’:

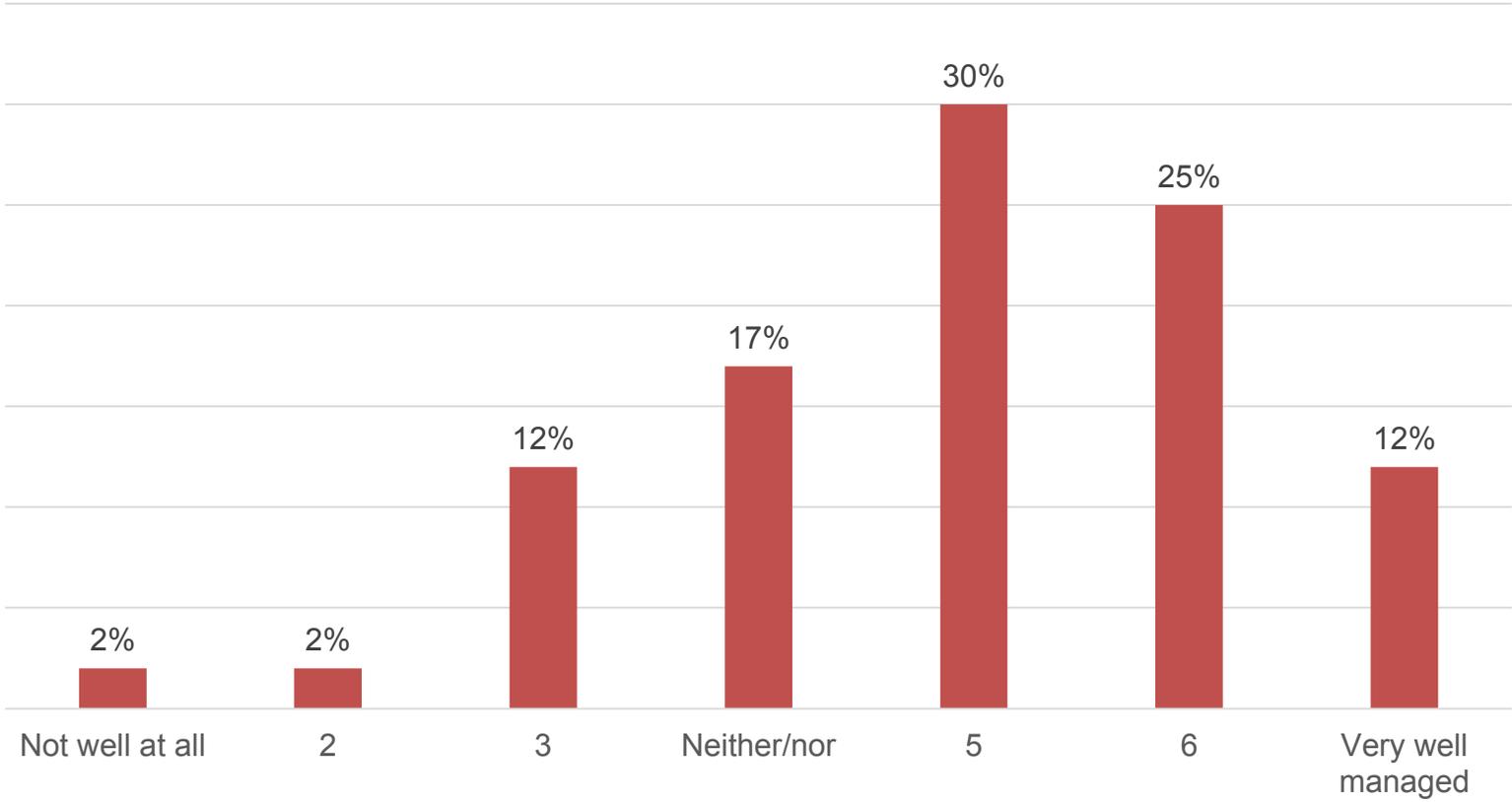


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	10%	76%	5.2
Male	11%	72%	5.1
Female	9%	80%	5.3
18-24	19%	64%	4.7
25-34	10%	78%	5.2
35-44	12%	74%	5.1
45-54	7%	76%	5.3
55+	6%	80%	5.4

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **building rapport and empathising with others, at home, at work etc**

# Psychological Resource: Imagination

‘Using your imagination to focus away from emotions and problem solve creatively by trying out ideas in your mind’:

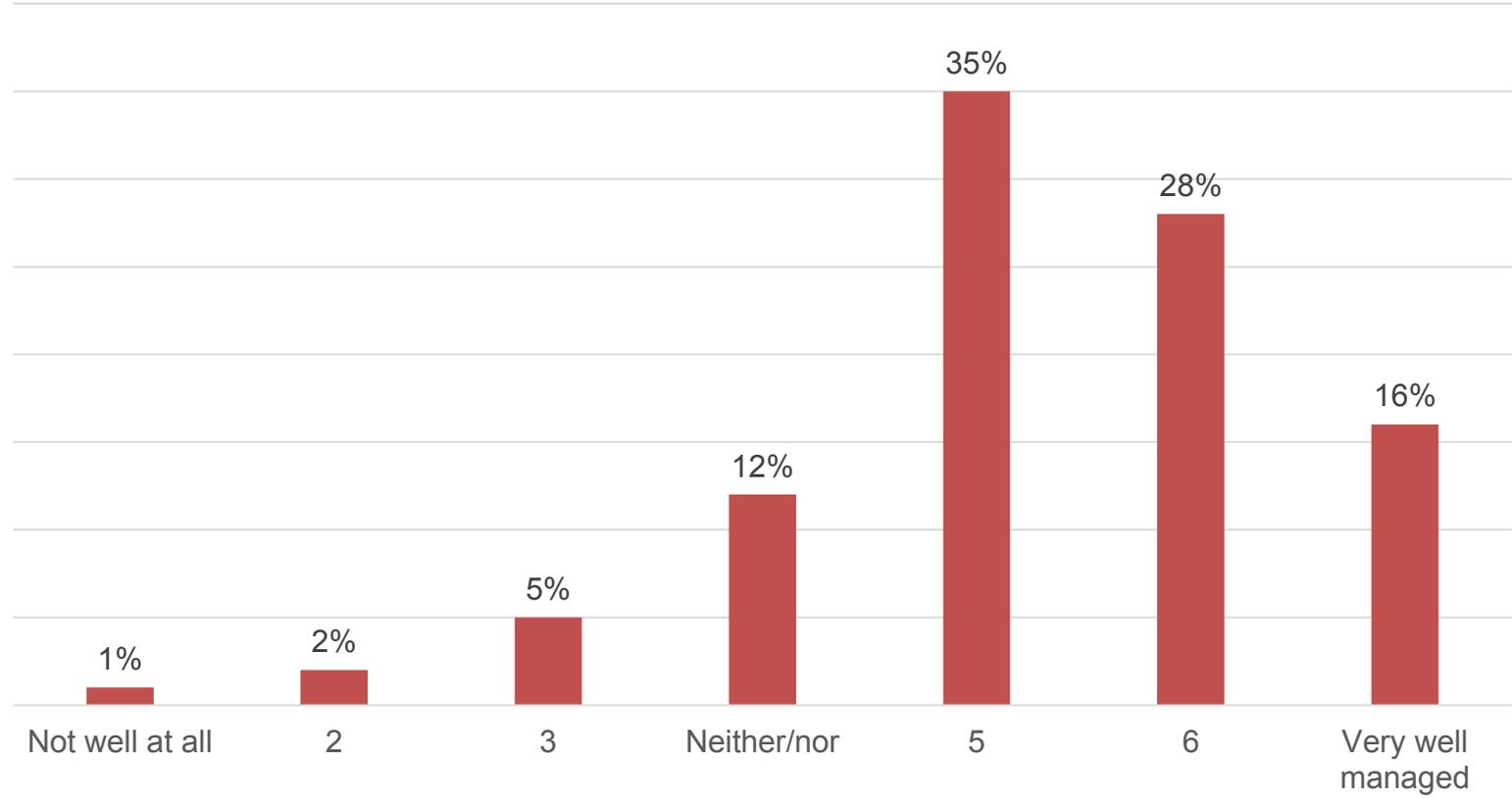


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	16%	67%	4.9
Male	14%	68%	5.0
Female	17%	66%	4.9
18-24	27%	58%	4.6
25-34	17%	63%	4.8
35-44	17%	70%	4.9
45-54	15%	61%	4.8
55+	11%	73%	5.2

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **directing your imagination towards a positive view of the future**

# Psychological Resources: Emotions

‘Using our emotions to help us understand what’s happening around us and respond accordingly; our emotions drive us to act, quite literally to move (hence the word ‘motion’):

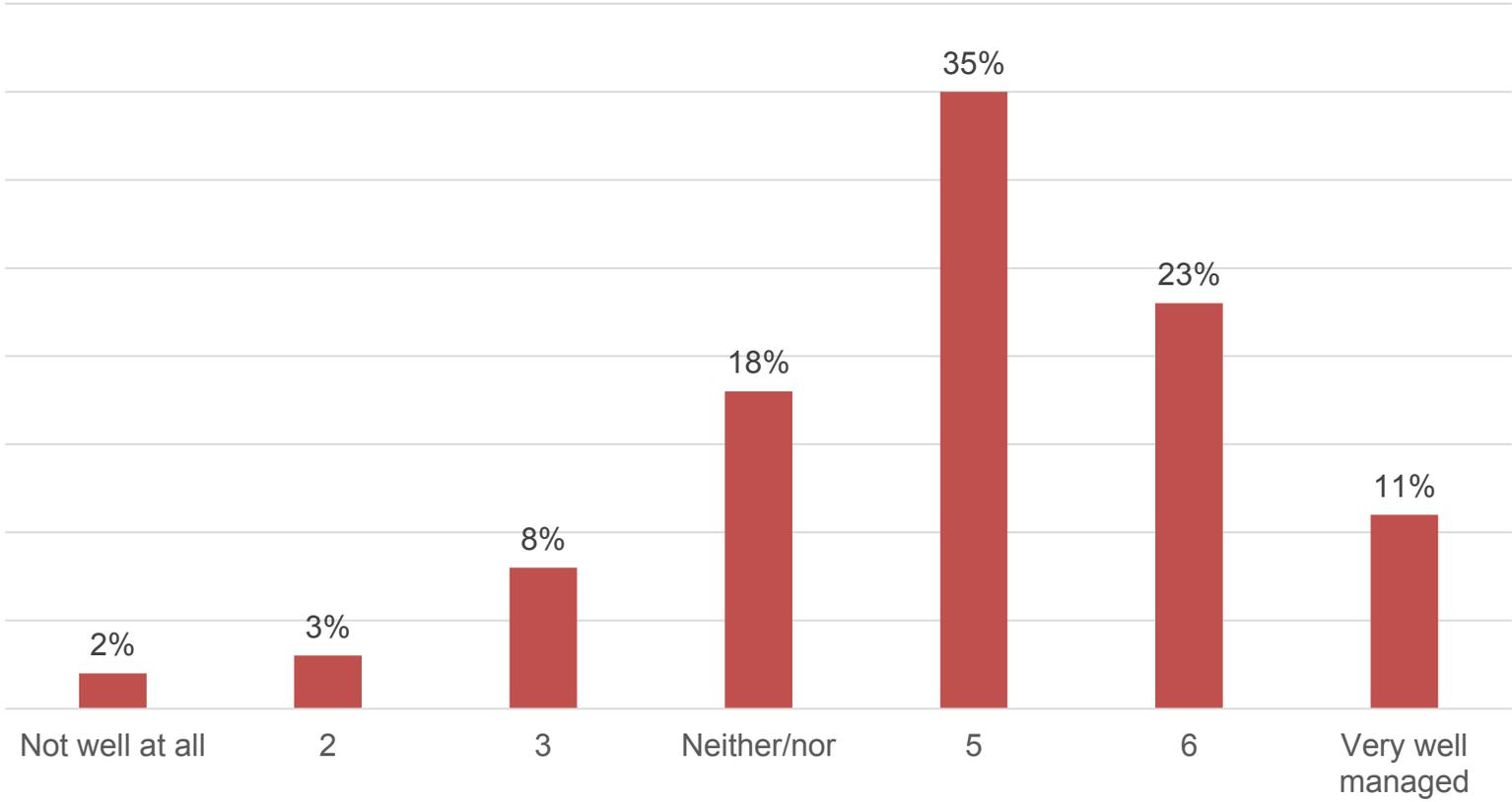


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	8%	79%	5.3
Male	8%	78%	5.2
Female	9%	80%	5.3
18-24	11%	71%	5.0
25-34	12%	74%	5.1
35-44	12%	77%	5.2
45-54	6%	82%	5.4
55+	4%	85%	5.5

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **being aware of your feelings and emotions and how they affect you**

# Psychological Resources: Pattern Matching

‘The ability to ‘know’, to perceive and understand the world unconsciously through a subtle metaphorical pattern-matching process’:

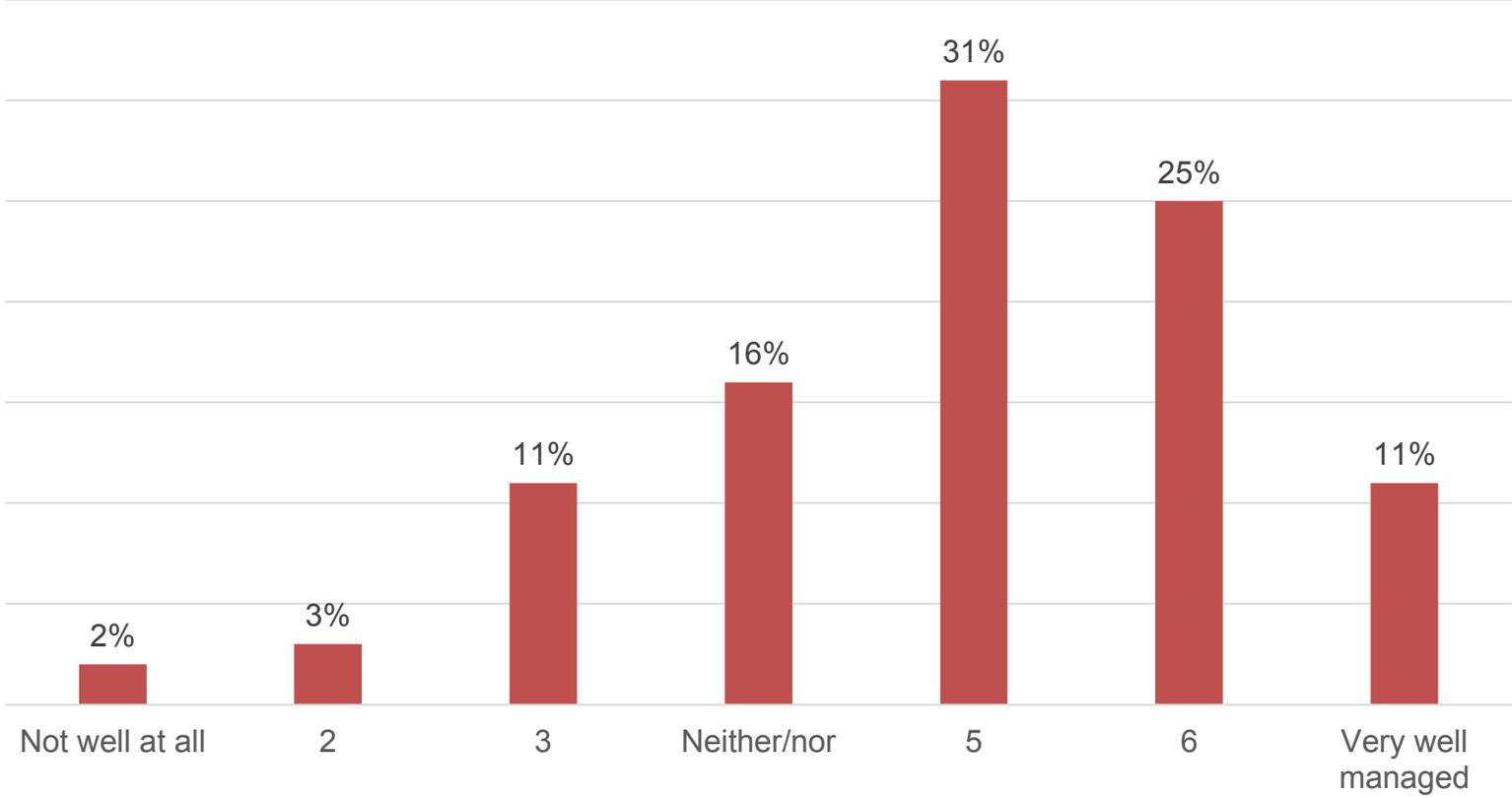


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	14%	68%	4.9
Male	13%	68%	4.9
Female	15%	68%	4.9
18-24	17%	60%	4.7
25-34	18%	65%	4.7
35-44	18%	63%	4.7
45-54	14%	65%	4.9
55+	7%	78%	5.2

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **awareness of your 'habits of thought' so you can see when your response to experiences is appropriate or inappropriate**

# Psychological Resources: Reason

‘A conscious, rational mind that can check out emotions, analyse, plan, fine tune, question’:

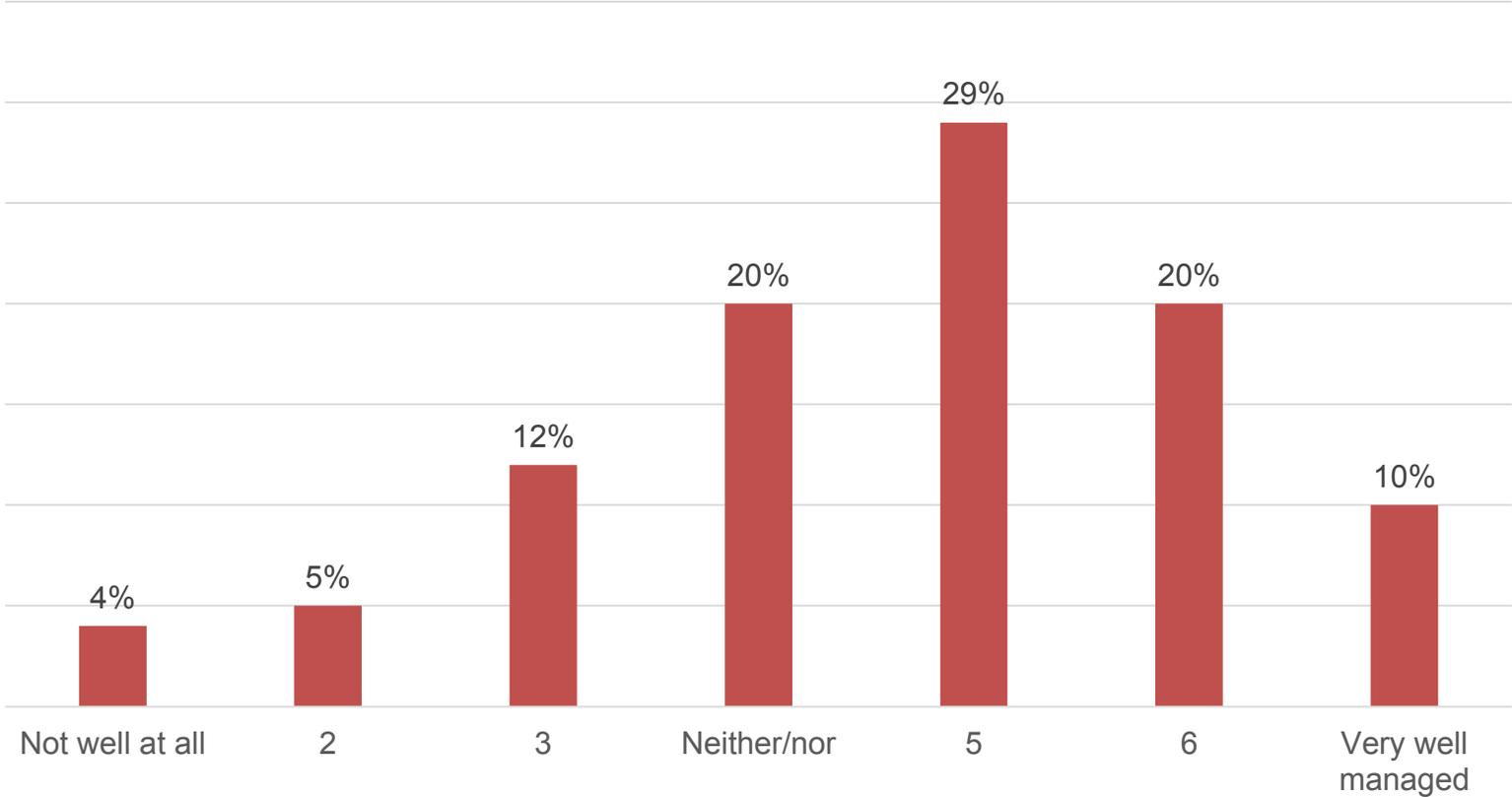


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	16%	68%	4.9
Male	11%	73%	5.1
Female	21%	62%	4.7
18-24	33%	42%	4.2
25-34	22%	62%	4.6
35-44	14%	67%	4.9
45-54	17%	68%	4.9
55+	6%	81%	5.4

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **using your mind to stand back from your emotions in order to solve problems effectively**

# Psychological Resources: Awareness

‘The potential to develop an ‘Observing Self’, that part of us which can step back, be more objective and recognize itself as a unique centre of awareness separate from intellect, emotion and conditioning’:

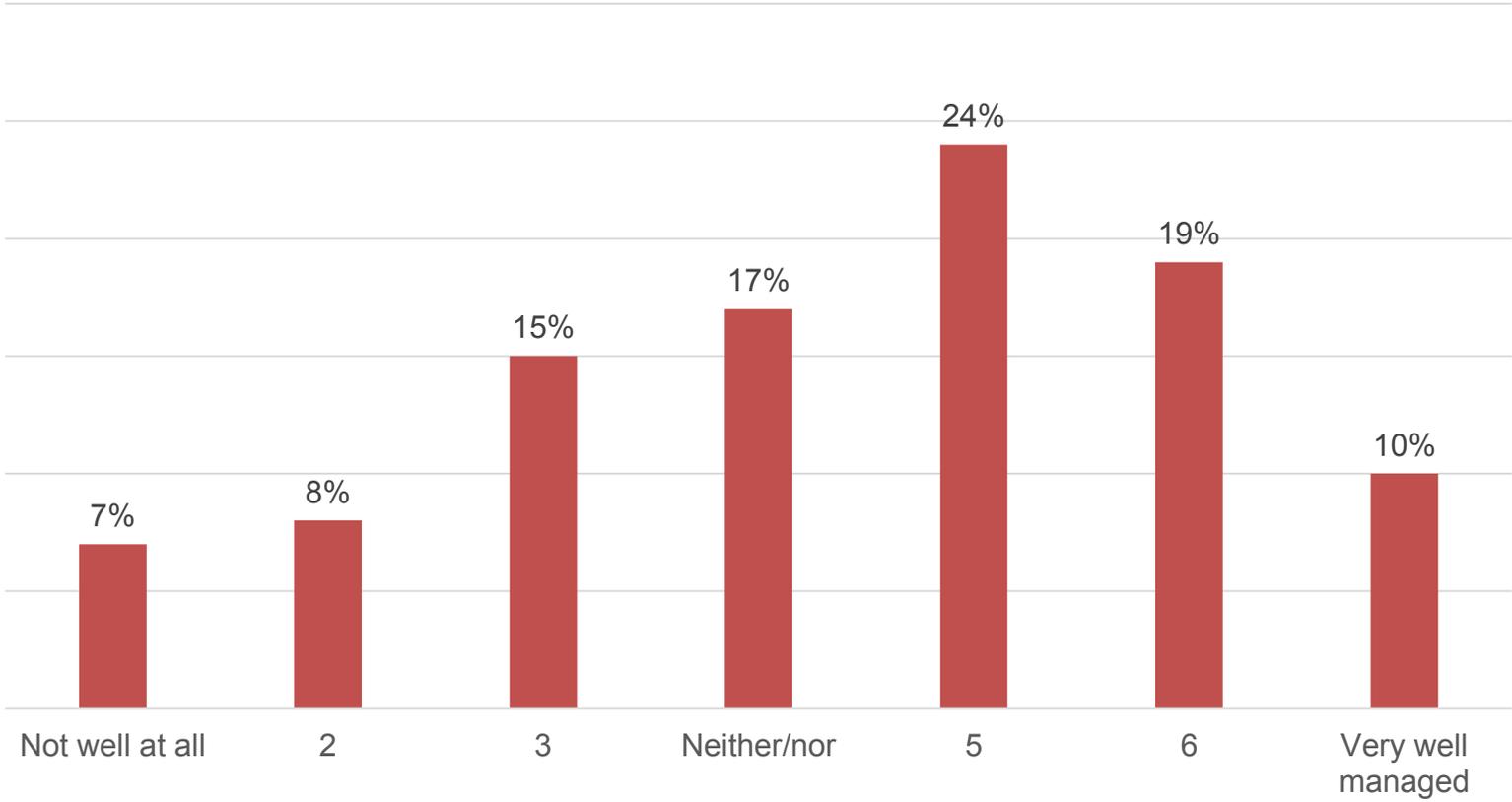


	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	21%	59%	4.7
Male	16%	60%	4.8
Female	25%	58%	4.5
18-24	40%	42%	4.1
25-34	22%	54%	4.5
35-44	21%	59%	4.6
45-54	22%	58%	4.6
55+	12%	69%	5.0

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **the ability to step back and 'see yourself' having your feelings and thinking your thoughts**

# Psychological Resources: Dreams

‘Our brain’s way of both preserving our instincts and defusing uncompleted, unresolved or unfulfilled emotional arousals (including worries and ruminations) to create spare mental capacity for the next day’:



	% Not Well (1-3)	% Well (5-7)	Mean Score
Total	30%	52%	4.4
Male	24%	55%	4.6
Female	36%	50%	4.2
18-24	45%	41%	4.0
25-34	36%	44%	4.0
35-44	32%	53%	4.4
45-54	29%	50%	4.4
55+	20%	63%	4.8

Q. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means very well managed: **being able to 'sleep on your problems' and wake up the next day feeling less stressed and ready for the day ahead**

# Psychological Resources in Ireland

Our research provides a snapshot of the degree to which various psychological resources are currently available in the Irish adult population.

A number of patterns emerge: there is less of a gender gap between men and women in terms of the availability of psychological resources compared to their psychological needs, though women score higher on 'empathy' and men on 'reason'.

However, the age gap is – if anything – even larger in terms of the distribution of psychological resources compared to needs, which again may reflect lifestage differences, but maybe also generational differences.

In the next section we look at the statistical relationships between needs, resources and mental wellbeing.

# The Influence of Psychological Resources & Needs on Mental Wellbeing & Other Indicators

# What makes us happy or anxious?

Using the data from the responses to our survey of 1,000 adults, we are able to get some insights into the interplay of psychological resources and needs and their impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The follow tables set out:

- i. Correlation analyses showing the statistical relationship between a) happiness and b) anxiety and the Human Givens data captured in our survey (the correlations between psychological needs and resources are in the appendix), and
- ii. Regression analyses to determine the most significant influences on our measures of happiness and anxiety, building on the correlation analyses.

Of course, these are not the last word on the topic! Rather, these are preliminary findings that go some way towards showing the importance of the Human Givens framework as a guide to understanding the sources of mental wellbeing in Ireland.

# Correlations: Happiness

The tables opposite show the Pearson correlations between our measure of happiness in the survey (see slide 10). The prefix 'N' refers to a psychological need, and the prefix 'R' to a psychological resource.

Almost all the variables in our study are significantly correlated\* with happiness, with the exception of 'social media' (see slide 12), and 'religion' (see slide 14).

Note that there is also a strong, positive correlation between our measures of happiness and of anxiety (+0.57: not included in the table), which isn't surprising as our 'anxiety' measure scores 1 if a respondent often feels 'anxious, sad or tired for no reason'; and 7 if a respondent rarely feels this way.

Psychological needs such as 'autonomy', 'receiving attention', and 'competence' are among the highest correlated with our measure of happiness; while psychological resources such as 'imagination', 'memory' and 'dreams' also score high.

Correlations:	Happiness
N Autonomy	0.61
R Imagination	0.58
N Attention R	0.56
N Competence	0.55
N Security	0.54
R Memory	0.54
N Status	0.53
N Meaning	0.52
N Intimacy	0.52
R Dreams	0.51
R Awareness	0.50
N Community	0.50
R Pattern Matching	0.47
R Empathy	0.47
Sleep	0.45
R Emotions	0.43
R Reason	0.41
N Privacy	0.36
N Attention G	0.29
Religion	0.15
Social Media	0.02

\* <https://www.socscistatistics.com/pvalues/pearsondistribution.aspx>

## Correlations: Anxiety

The tables below show the correlations between our measure of anxiety in the survey (see slide 11). Again, the prefix 'N' refers to a psychological need, and the prefix 'R' to a psychological resource.

Almost all the variables in our study are significantly correlated with anxiety, marginally so in the case of 'social media', and 'religion'.

The correlations are all 'positive' because our measure of anxiety is graded 'positively': i.e.: it equates a high level of anxiety with a low score, and a low level of anxiety with a high score (consistent with the 7 point scoring approach used in the Human Givens ENA).

Psychological resources such as 'dreams', 'memory', and 'awareness' are among the highest correlated; while psychological needs such as 'autonomy', 'security' and 'meaning' also score high.

Note also the high correlation with our measure of sleep quality (slide 13), which supports a key finding from Human Givens research which emphasises the importance of dreams and sleep to emotional wellbeing.

Correlations	Anxiety
N Autonomy	0.52
R Dreams	0.52
R Memory	0.49
Sleep	0.48
R Awareness	0.47
R Pattern Matching	0.47
N Security	0.46
N Meaning	0.46
N Attention R	0.44
N Status	0.43
N Competence	0.43
N Community	0.41
R Imagination	0.39
R Reason	0.37
N Intimacy	0.35
R Empathy	0.34
N Privacy	0.33
R Emotions	0.30
N Attention G	0.20
Religion	0.17
Social Media	0.16

# Regression Analyses

With all the Human Givens variables – needs and resources – significantly correlated with our two measures (what we call happiness and anxiety), we need to use regression analysis to identify the most important influences on both our measures. Using stepwise regression analysis, we have identified the following variables as the most powerful influences on a) happiness and b) anxiety in our study – we have ranked the variables in order of influence using t-stats:

Influences on Happiness:	Coefficient	T-Stat
N Autonomy	0.20	7.63
Sleep	0.12	7.00
R Imagination	0.18	6.17
N Attention R	0.13	4.63
R Memory	0.11	4.34
N Intimacy	0.10	3.61
R Empathy	0.09	3.22
<i>R-Squared</i>	<i>0.55</i>	

Influences on Anxiety:	Coefficient	T-Stat
Sleep	0.21	8.14
N Autonomy	0.22	6.16
N Meaning	0.15	4.35
R Pattern Matching	0.17	3.81
R Dreams	0.12	3.45
R Memory	0.09	2.10
<i>R-Squared</i>	<i>0.43</i>	

It would appear that both higher levels of happiness – and lower levels of anxiety – are driven by quality of sleep and by the psychological need for autonomy: however, there are clearly other factors at play, given the R-Squared measures.

## No magic formula

There is no one, all-encompassing influence on either happiness or anxiety.

All the Human Givens – both needs and resources – are significantly correlated with our measures of happiness and anxiety: and at an individual level, people will undoubtedly have different unmet needs and access to different levels of resources to meet their needs compared to others.

But our study has been designed to evaluate Human Givens at a population level, and it is clear from our findings that some of the same factors contribute to both happiness and the avoidance of anxiety/sadness – such as autonomy and good sleep – but the relative importance of other factors varies when the task is explaining the incidence of happiness versus the incidence of anxiety/sadness/depression.

# Conclusions

# The Givens of Being Human

Our study has given us valuable insights into the role of psychological needs and psychological resources – as explored in the Human Givens framework – in driving mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It is important to stress that this is a ‘toe in the water’ when it comes to measuring and analysing psychological needs, resources and mental health: there is a growing debate about a) what is happiness; b) how to measure it; c) what is depression; and d) how to measure it – and we have only skimmed the surface of a growing literature on the issues.

Nevertheless, our analysis shows that the Human Givens framework has considerable explanatory power as a tool for explaining wider societal trends, not just individual client needs in a therapeutic context.

We hope that the Human Givens framework will be used by others seeking insight and solutions to the mental health problems facing Ireland today.

## Additional Resources

Human Givens Institute: <https://www.hgi.org.uk/>

Human Givens College: <https://www.humangivenscollege.com/>

Dublin Human Givens Centre: <http://dublinhumangivens.ie/>

More on Human Givens: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_givens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_givens)

Mental health support services:

- Aware: <https://www.aware.ie/>

- Jigsaw: <https://www.jigsaw.ie/>

Amárach report on the Big 5 Personality Traits in Ireland:

<https://www.slideshare.net/amarach/the-big-5-personality-traits-in-ireland-2017>

e. [info@amarach.com](mailto:info@amarach.com)

t. 01 410 5200

w. [www.amarach.com](http://www.amarach.com)

b. [www.amarach.com/blog](http://www.amarach.com/blog)

Tw. [twitter.com/AmarachResearch](https://twitter.com/AmarachResearch)

s. [slideshare.net/amarach/](https://slideshare.net/amarach/)



# Appendix: Questionnaire

# Survey Questionnaire

## Human Givens

Q1. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met):

Statements	1 Not met at all	2	3	4 Neither /Nor	5	6	7 Very well met
Feeling secure in all major areas of your life (such as your home, work, environment)							
Feeling you receive enough attention from others							
Feeling you give enough attention to others							
Feeling in control of your life most of the time							
Feeling you are connected to some part of a wider community							
Feeling you can obtain privacy when you need to							
Feeling an emotional connection to others							
Feeling you have status that is acknowledged by others							
Achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life							
Feeling mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense that life is meaningful							

Q2. How would you rate the typical quality of your sleep, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 means very poor and you often wake up tired, and 7 means very good and you usually wake up refreshed): 1...7

Very poor, I often wake up tired	1
	2
	3
Neither / Nor	4
	5
	6
Very good, I usually wake up refreshed	7

Q3. To what extent do you consider yourself a happy person, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 is very unhappy, and 7 is very happy): 1...7

Very unhappy	1
	2
	3
Neither / Nor	4
	5
	6
Very happy	7

Q5. How often do you feel anxious, sad or tired for no reason, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 is a lot or most of the time, and 7 is rarely or almost never): 1...7

A lot / most of the time	1
	2
	3
Neither / Nor	4
	5
	6
Rarely / almost never	7

Q4. Rate, in your judgment, how well you manage the following aspects of your life on a scale of one to seven (where 1 means not well at all, and 7 means being very well managed):

Statements	1 Not well at all	2	3	4 Neither /Nor	5	6	7 Very well managed
Building rapport and empathising with others, at home, at work etc							
Directing your imagination towards a positive view of the future							
Being aware of your feelings and emotions and how they affect you							
Using your memory to find new solutions rather than going over past regrets or injustices							
Using your mind to stand back from your emotions in order to solve problems effectively							
Awareness of your 'habits of thought' so you can see when your response to experiences is appropriate or inappropriate							
Being able to 'sleep on your problems' and wake up the next day feeling less stressed and ready for the day ahead							
The ability to step back and 'see yourself' having your feelings and thinking your thoughts							

Q6. To what extent do you consider yourself to be a religious person, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 is not at all religious, and 7 is very religious): 1...7

Not at all religious	1
	2
	3
Neither / Nor	4
	5
	6
Very religious	7

Q7. How would you describe your use of social media (e.g.: apps on your phone like Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp etc), on a scale of one to seven (where 1 is you couldn't live without them and the thought of not having access to social media is stressful, and 7 is you never or almost never use social media and wouldn't care if you didn't have access).

Can't live without them and thought of not having them is stressful	1
	2
	3
Neither / Nor	4
	5
	6
Never/Almost never use social media and wouldn't care if you didn't have access	7

# Appendix: Additional Correlations

# Correlations between Psychological Needs & Resources

Needs (N) x Resources (R)	N Security	N Attention Received	N Attention Given	N Autonomy	N Community	N Privacy	N Intimacy	N Status	N Compe- tence	N Meaning
R Empathy	-0.04	0.37	0.42	0.42	0.38	0.39	0.26	0.52	0.45	0.46
R Imagination	-0.04	0.48	0.48	0.33	0.53	0.47	0.31	0.47	0.49	0.54
R Emotions	0.00	0.36	0.43	0.33	0.39	0.37	0.32	0.46	0.37	0.44
R Memory	0.06	0.43	0.44	0.29	0.51	0.42	0.35	0.43	0.49	0.51
R Pattern Matching	0.08	0.42	0.41	0.22	0.47	0.39	0.34	0.35	0.45	0.47
R Reason	0.03	0.34	0.41	0.31	0.40	0.37	0.30	0.38	0.39	0.40
R Dreams	0.04	0.43	0.43	0.22	0.51	0.38	0.30	0.35	0.43	0.42
R Awareness	0.04	0.40	0.42	0.25	0.48	0.39	0.30	0.39	0.45	0.44