

Thai Health 2025



Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR)
Mahidol University
ThaiHealth Promotion Foundation

Birth rate freefall,



how should we adjust and cope?

Thai Health 2025



สำหรับการอ้างอิงบทความ

โครงการสุขภาพคนไทย. 2568. ชี้อบบทความ. สุขภาพคนไทย 2568 (เลขหน้าของบทความ).

นครปฐม: สถาบันวิจัยประชากรและสังคม มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล.

ตัวอย่าง

โครงการสุขภาพคนไทย. 2568. สถานการณ์และผลกระทบสุขภาพจิตในประเทศไทย. สุขภาพคนไทย 2568 (หน้า 12-14).

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10 Indicators

“Thai Mental Health”



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“Thai Mental Health”

Thai Health Report 2025 presents health indicators on “**Mental Health of the Thai Population**,” to reflect the current situation, related factors, and policy development directions for Thailand on mental health issues. Mental health is a crucial component in fostering understanding and effectively addressing mental health problems.

Mental health is a key element in determining people’s quality of life and happiness. Today, the rapid changes in the economy, society, and technology are profoundly impacting the mental health of Thai people—from individuals to families and communities.

Mental health is not only about the absence of mental illness; it also involves the ability to cope with stress, experience life satisfaction, and maintain positive relationships with others. Good mental health strengthens emotional resilience, promotes healthy relationships within families and communities, and enhances people’s potential at all stages of life. Conversely, mental health issues lead to economic losses at both the individual and national levels, such as healthcare costs, loss of work productivity, and increased social burdens.

Thailand is facing mental health challenges due to rapid socio-economic changes, as well as the impacts of global crises. These factors have caused many Thais to experience stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation.

In addition, pressures from the digital world such as social media addiction and fear of missing out (FOMO) have had negative effects on the mental health of people from all age groups.

The health indicators “Mental Health of the Thai Population” presented in this report provide key information in three main sections:

- Overall mental health situation (Indicators 1-3)
- Factors influencing mental health (Indicators 4-9)
- Relevant policies and measures (Indicator 10)

Overall, the mental health situation in Thailand remains a serious concern. As many as 13.4 million Thais have experienced mental health problems or psychiatric disorders, and the suicide rate in Thailand has shown an upward trend over the past decade. The consequences of mental health issues significantly affect the population’s disability-adjusted life years, particularly among Thais aged 15-29, who are the most affected group.

The three most common mental health problems among Thais are anxiety disorders, depression, and psychiatric disorders. Among these, depression and dementia are of particular concern due to their clearly rising trends. For Thais aged 18-24, a group requiring special attention, there is an increased risk of both depression and stress.

In terms of the ability to cope with life’s challenges, which reflects the positive mental health, Thailand ranks 3rd in happiness among ASEAN member countries. However, people age 45-59 are found to be the least happy age group in the country.



Regarding the factors and causes affecting the mental health of Thais, violence within families and society is a fundamental issue. In Thailand, there is a rising trend in the number of families experiencing violence.

In 2023, there were 2,311 reported cases of domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This does not account for the many other media-reported cases each year. Additionally, violence in schools, such as bullying among students, remains a concern.

Digital technology has become an integral part of daily life and significantly influences mental health, particularly regarding the growing concern of social media addiction. In Asia, one in three people are addicted to social media and experience FOMO.

Substance use is another major factor closely linked to mental health. Half of psychiatric patients have conditions that stem from the use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and tobacco. Moreover, substance abuse leads to community-level problems such as noise disturbance, property crime, and violent conflict—all of which also negatively impact the mental health of community members.

Mega trend and rapid social change—from technological upheavals and structural shifts in society and the economy to climate change—also affect mental health. Technological advancements, for instance, increase the risk of job displacement, especially for more than three million people in the service sector. Additionally, natural disasters like major flooding in the Northern Region have caused stress levels in affected populations to triple.



Mental health literacy is a key to achieving good mental health. Although overall mental health literacy among Thais has improved—nearly one-third now have a high level of understanding—there are still widespread misconceptions. For example, nearly half of respondents do not recognize when they are overly stressed. Furthermore, issues in mental health services, particularly in screening systems, reveal that many people with mental health problems still lack access to appropriate care, and service centralization remains a persistent challenge in Thailand.

The final section, Indicator 10, addresses the current status of mental health policies and measures in Thailand. The country has made some progress, such as the enactment of a mental health law. However, gaps in service access and comprehensive data collection remain, requiring collaboration across all sectors.

Thai Health Report 2025 hopes that the health indicators on “Mental Health of the Thai Population” will help shed light on the mental health situation in Thai society and serve as a roadmap to improve the mental well-being of Thai people—enhancing their resilience and readiness to face future challenges and opportunities with confidence.

1

The Mental Health Situation and Its Impacts in Thailand

As many as **13.4 million**

Thais have experienced mental health problems or psychiatric disorders at least once in their lifetime.

Mental health issues are a significant concern affecting a large number of Thais—impacting health, daily life, and the economy, especially among youth who are at high risk for mental health problems.

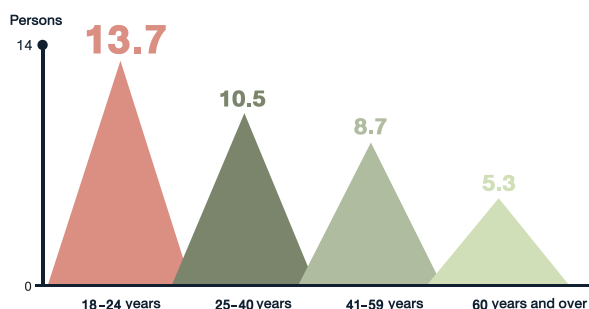
Mental health situation in Thailand

Mental health problems are closer to home than many might think. Recent data reveal that, in just the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, 4.4 million Thais experienced mental health issues. The most concerning age group is persons aged 18-24, with the highest proportion of psychiatric disorders and mental health problems at 13.7%, compared to 5.3% among Thais aged 60 and over.



Source: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health

Proportion of Thais with mental health problems in the past 12 months



Source: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health

Situation of suicide in Thailand

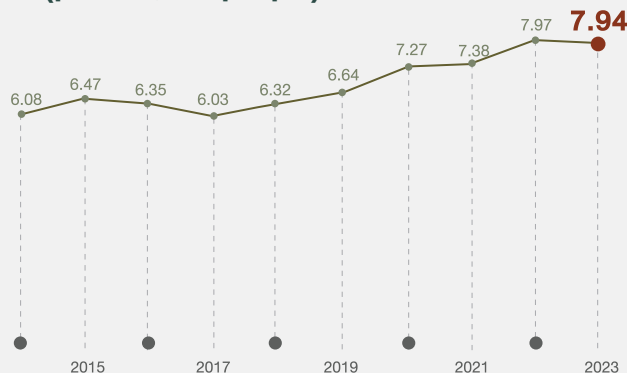
“Thai people” in Fiscal Year 2023



The Department of Mental Health has set a target of no more than 6.3 per 100,000 people

Source: Report of Suicide Situation in Thailand in 2023, Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health

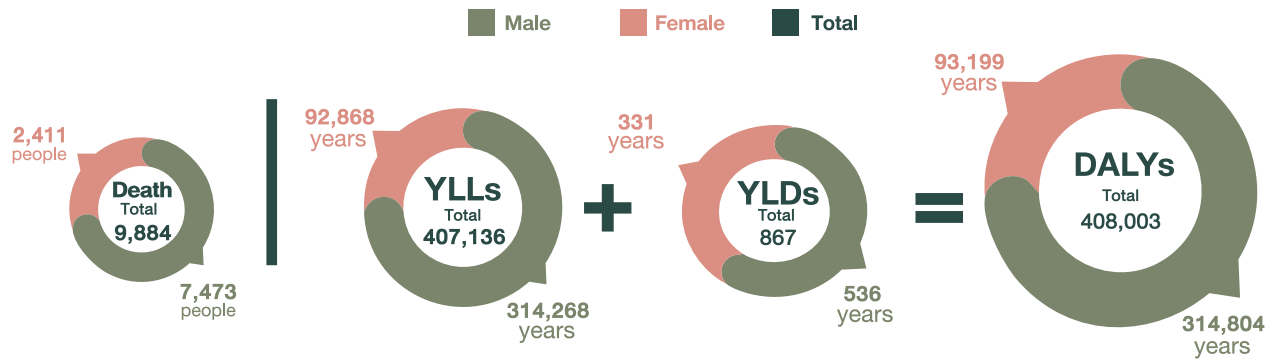
Suicide death rate, Fiscal Year 2014-2023 (per 100,000 people)



Source: Report of Suicide Situation in Thailand in 2023, Suicide Prevention Center, Khon Kaen Rajanagarindra Psychiatric Hospital, Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health

While suicide is the ultimate consequence of mental health issues, it also reflects the broader state of a population’s mental well-being. Alarming, Thailand’s suicide rate has been increasing over the past decade. In Fiscal Year 2023, there were 31,110 suicide attempts, equal to 47.7 per 100,000 people, or an average of 85 attempts per day. Meanwhile, 5,172 people died by suicide, at a rate of 7.9 per 100,000, or 14 deaths per day, which exceeds the Department of Mental Health’s target of no more than 6.3 deaths per 100,000.

DALYs due to suicide



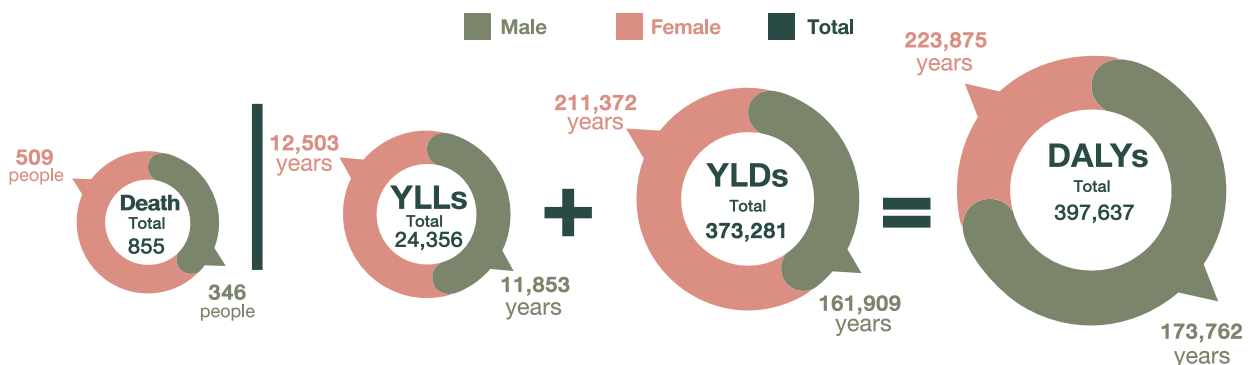
Source: Disability-adjusted Life Years: Report on Burden of Disease and Injury of Thai Population in 2019. International Health Policy Program

The impact of mental health issues goes beyond loss of life. It also exacerbates the disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) of the population. Self-harm alone accounted for 408,003 DALYs with males experiencing a higher loss rate than females. Additionally, psychiatric conditions-such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, conduct disorders, intellectual disability of unknown cause, and other mental disorders-resulted in a loss of 397,637 DALYs, with women bearing a larger share of this burden.

Disability-adjusted Life Years (DALY)

is a measure of the overall health status of a population, indicating the number of years lost due to "full health". It is composed of the Years of Life Lost (YLL) and the Years Lived with Disability (YLD).

HLY Lost due to Mental Health Disorders

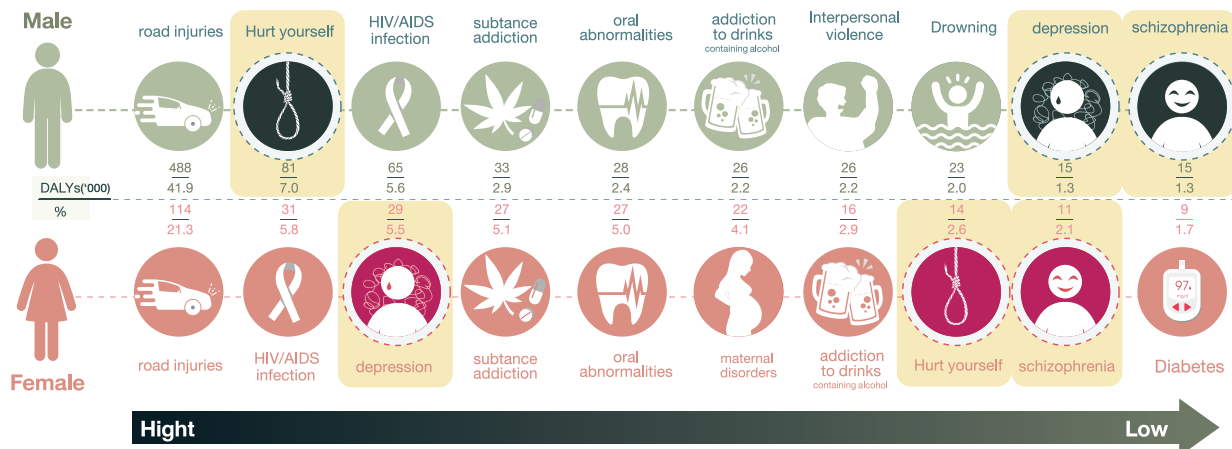


Source: Disability-adjusted Life Years: Report on Burden of Disease and Injury of Thai Population in 2019. International Health Policy Program

The age group 15-29 years is the most affected by the health impacts of mental health problems, with 3 out of the top 10 causes of DALYs in this group being related to mental health.

Note: Years of Life Lost due to Premature Mortality (YLL) refers to the years lost due to premature death.
 Years of Life Lost due to Disability (YLD) refers to the years living with health impairments.
 Disability-Adjusted Life-Years (DALY) refers to the total years lost due to disease and injury in a population, combining YLLs and YLDs.

Ranking of DALYs for Thais aged 15-29 in 2019, by gender and cause



Source: Disability-adjusted Life Years: Report on Burden of Disease and Injury of Thai Population in 2019. International Health Policy Program

To sustainably address mental health issues, collaboration from all sectors is essential. This includes raising awareness in society, supporting access to quality mental health services for those in need, and promoting environments that fosters good mental well-being—all aimed at reducing the impact of mental health problems and building a stronger, more resilient society in the long term.

Mental health issues are closely linked to economic and social impacts—including the cost of healthcare, loss of labor productivity, and the potential risk of violence by individuals—all of which affect society as a whole.

Mental Health Impact on the Economy

Mental health issues lead to both direct and indirect costs, such as medical expenses, fees for consultations with doctors and other related professionals, and hospital stay costs. There are also hidden costs, such as lost income from having to take leave or reduced work productivity.

For **Southeast Asian** countries, the economic loss due to mental health issues is around **4.8% of GDP**, with a trend of increasing in the future (Arias, Saxena, Verguet, 2022).



On a macroeconomic level, mental health can **affect the overall economy of a country**, as the labor force and productivity decrease, adversely impacting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Impact of Mental Health Issues on Society

- 18%** of individuals with mental health problems are unable to care for themselves and require a caregiver, leading to a loss of human resources.



- 22.8%** of psychiatric patients have a history of violent crimes, such as murder, attempted murder, rape, and arson.



- 23.3%** of patients at high risk of committing violence are being monitored.

Source: 2023 Household Socio-Economic Survey, National Statistical Office, and Report of Patients Receiving Psychological Services in 2023 Fiscal Year, Health Data Center, Information and Communication Technology Center, Ministry of Public Health.

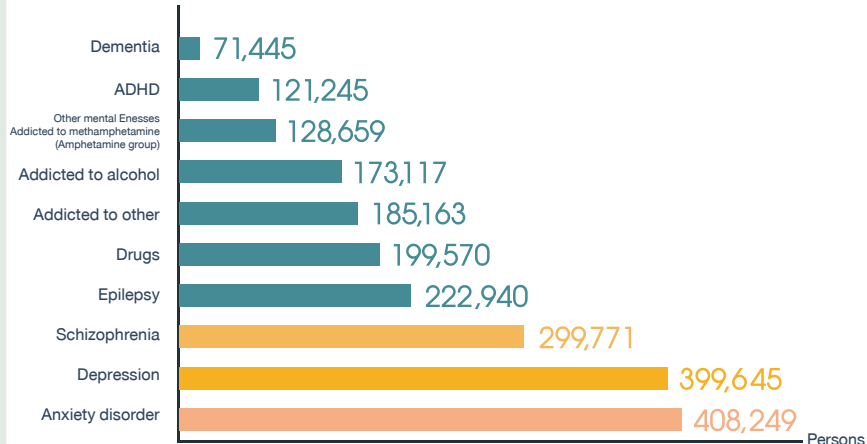


Mental Health Issues of Thais

In 2023, 400,000 Thais were diagnosed with depression and sought treatment, **an increase of more than 1.7** times in less than a decade.

The number of individuals seeking psychiatric services in Thailand has continued to rise, reflecting mental health issues across various dimensions, such as high stress, depression risk, and suicide, especially among the 18-24 years age group, which is at high risk. It is essential for all parties to collaborate in monitoring, promoting (mental health), preventing (mental health problems), and providing appropriate care (for those with mental health issues).

Top 10 psychiatric disorders with the highest number of patients receiving services in 2023

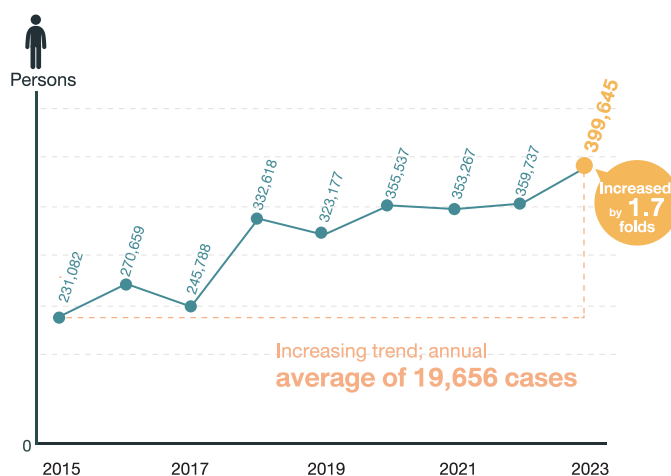


Note: A total of 2.9 million psychiatric patients received services in Fiscal Year 2023
Source: Statistics of significant psychological services, Department of Mental Health

Thais are facing increasingly prevalent mental health issues. Data from the Department of Mental Health between 2015 and 2023 shows a steady rise in individuals seeking mental health services. In 2023 alone, 2.9 million people received such services. The three most common conditions were **anxiety disorders, depression, and schizophrenia**.

Although the number of anxiety disorder patients has decreased, “depression” has continued to rise, increasing 1.7 times—from 231,082 people in 2015 to 399,645 in 2023. The highest-risk group is Thais aged 18-24 years, with a lifetime prevalence of depression at 6%, and women are twice as likely as men to be affected.

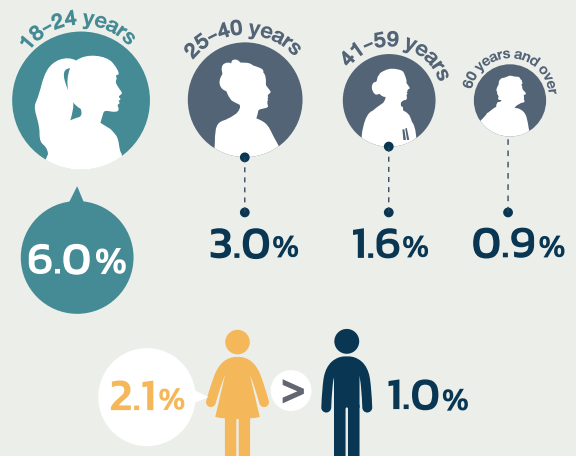
Patients with depression receiving services in 2015–2023



Source: Statistics of significant psychological services, Department of Mental Health

Prevalence of depression among Thais

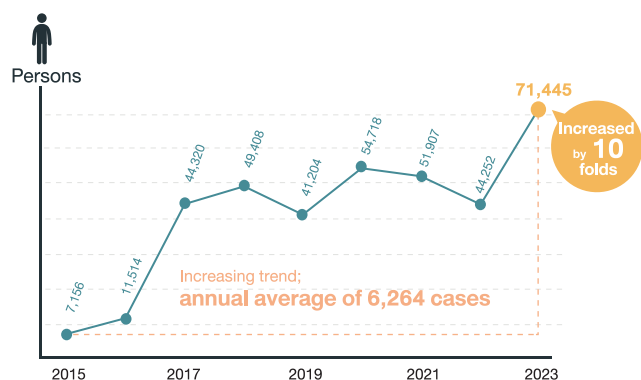
(960,000 Thais have experienced depression at some point in their lives)



Note: Lifetime prevalence means having experienced a disease at least once in a lifetime.

Source: Prevalence of Mood Disorders: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Mental Health Data Center, Department of Mental Health

Patients with dementia receiving services in 2015–2023

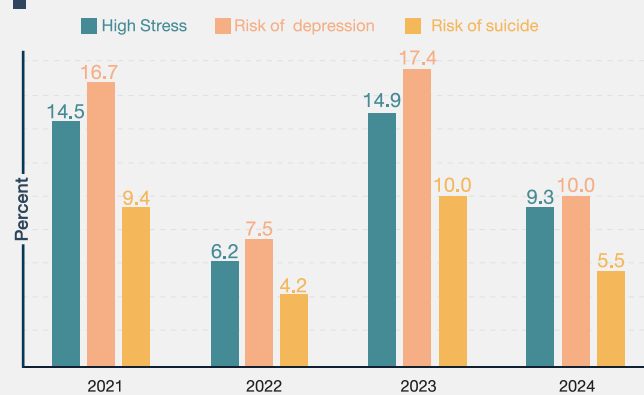


Source: Statistics of significant psychological services, Department of Mental Health

“Dementia” has also shown a sharp upward trend, with the number of patients increasing nearly tenfold—from 7,156 cases in 2015 to 71,445 in 2023. A key factor is Thailand’s transition into a complete aged society, with more than 20% of the population being 60 and over—making this group particularly vulnerable to the disease.

The Department of Mental Health has developed an online tool, “Mental Health Check In,” to assess and screen for mental health risks. Data from 2021 to 2024 indicate that Thais are at high risk for stress, depression, and suicide, with variations depending on the context and circumstances of each year. In 2024, 9.3% of users were at high risk for stress, 10.0% at risk for depression, and 5.5% at risk for suicide. While these figures have decreased compared to 2023, continuous attention to the mental health of the population remains essential.

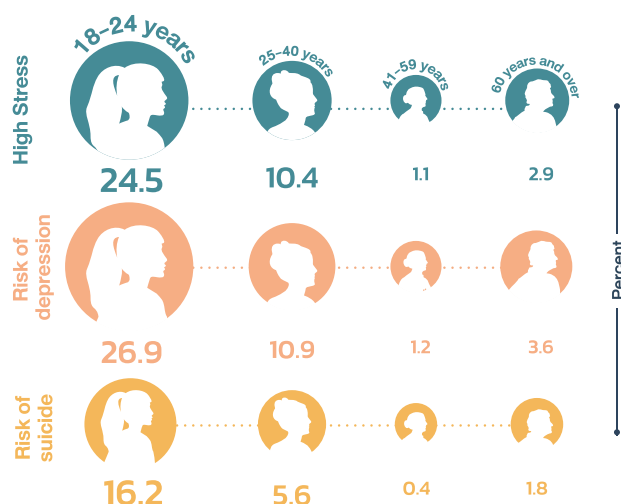
Mental health risks of Thais in 2021–2024



Source: Data of mental health assessment in Thai population in 2024, Department of Mental Health

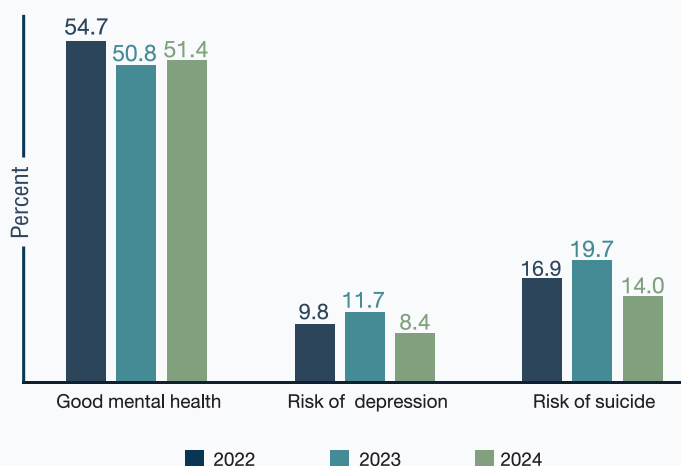
In 2024, the 18–24 years age group remains at high risk, with 24.5% at risk of high stress, 26.9% at risk of depression, and 16.2% at risk of suicide. Meanwhile, among children and adolescents under 18, only 51.4% have good mental health, while 8.4% are at risk of depression and 14.0% at risk of suicide.

Mental health risks by age group in 2024



Source: Data of mental health assessment in Thai population in 2024, Department of Mental Health

Mental health of children and adolescents aged 18 and under in 2022–2024



Source: Data of mental health assessment in Thai population in 2024, Department of Mental Health

“ This data highlights the urgent need for **proactive mental health promotion** across all age groups, **especially among vulnerable populations such as children, youth, and the elderly**, who require appropriate and equitable mental health care. ”

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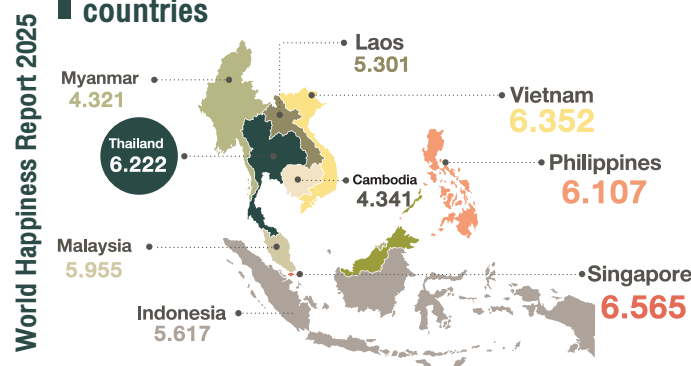
Positive Mental Health Status of Thais

Thais in the **near-elderly age group (45–59 years)** have a **lower level of life satisfaction compared to other age groups.**

The 2025 World Happiness Report shows that Thailand ranks 49th among 147 countries worldwide and 3rd in happiness among ASEAN countries (excluding Brunei), following Singapore and Vietnam. Compared with data in the 2024 Report, when analyzed by age group, Thai young people (under 30) are the happiest, while those in the late middle-age group (45–59 years) are the least happy. This trend differs from other countries in the region. One possible explanation is concerns and lack of preparedness for transitioning into old age, especially as Thailand becomes a complete aged society.

“Good mental health” does not mean merely the absence of mental illness, symptoms, or disorders, but also includes **happiness, life satisfaction, and strong resilience**. It means having the ability to cope with and effectively manage the various mental challenges that life presents.

“Level of happiness” among ASEAN member countries



Note: Happiness level assessed from the life satisfaction scores in 3 years average
Source: Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.). (2024).

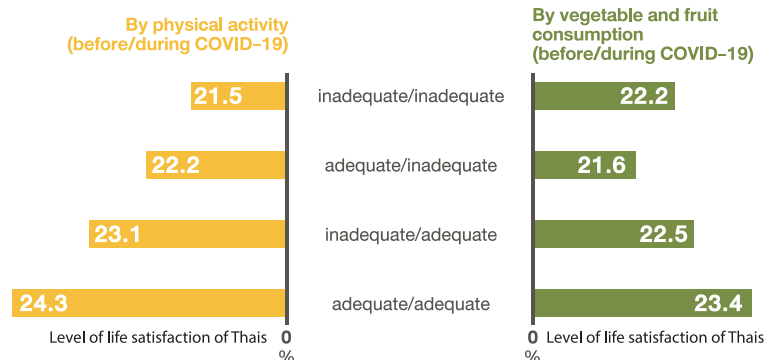
World Happiness Report 2024

	Singapore	Philippines	Vietnam	Thailand	Malaysia	Indonesia	Laos	Myanmar	Cambodia
Under 30 years (the young)		😊	😊	😊	😊	😊			😊
31–44 years (lower-middle)		😞					😞	😞	😞
45–59 years (upper-middle)	😞			😞			😞		
60+ years (the old)	😞		😞		😞	😞		😞	

Note: Age group with the “highest” (green) and “lowest” (red) levels of happiness in each country

Source: Summarized from the World Happiness Report 2024 in Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.). 2024.

Level of life satisfaction of Thais in 2021 (during the COVID-19 epidemic)



Source: Phulkard, S., Thapsuwan, S., Soottipong Gray, R., Chamratirithong, A., Pattaravanich, U., Ungchusak, C., & Saonuan, P. 2023.

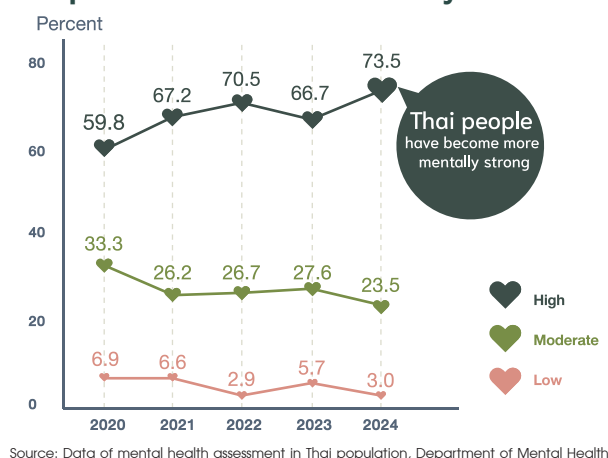
Life satisfaction is another indicator of positive mental health, reflecting how individuals assess their overall life compared to their expectations. Surveys conducted in 2019 and 2021 revealed a significant decline in life satisfaction among Thais due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with scores dropping from 25.5 to 22.4 points. Statistical analysis found that healthy behaviors, such as consuming fruits and vegetables and engaging in regular physical activity, are key factors promoting life satisfaction among Thais.

The 2024 survey found that Thais were most satisfied with their lives in three key areas: relationships with others, sense of safety, and work or education. The three lowest-ranked areas of satisfaction were physical health, quality of daily life, and mental health, respectively. Individuals who were divorced or widowed had the lowest life satisfaction, while those who were single, married, or living together reported the highest satisfaction compared to other statuses, such as being in a relationship or cohabiting without marriage.

Source: Results of the Mental Health Survey in Thai Society. Thailand Institute for Mental Health Sustainability (TIMS) 2025



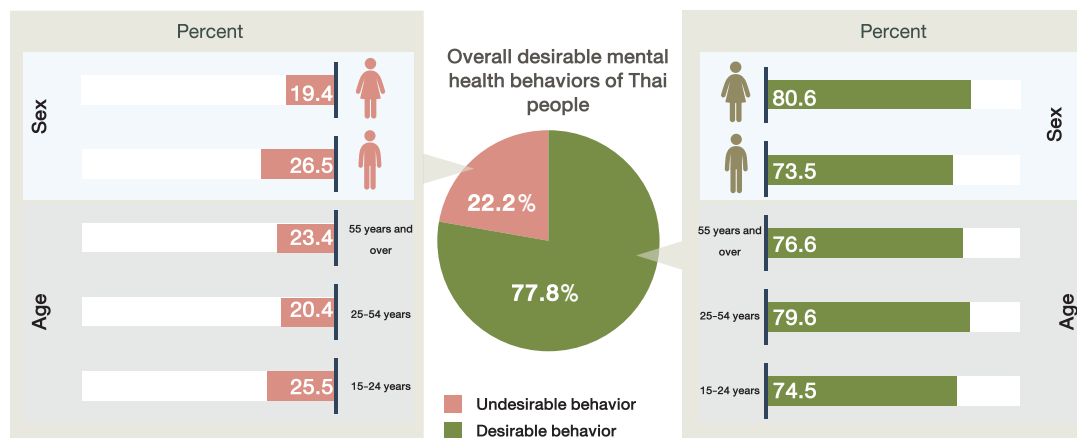
Proportion of Thais classified by level of Resilience Quotient



The Resilience Quotient (RQ) is a mental health indicator developed by the Department of Mental Health of the Ministry of Public Health. It focuses on an individual's ability to recover and adapt after life crises, considering emotional endurance, emotional support from others, and problem-solving skills. Surveys conducted between 2020 and 2024 show an improving trend in resilience levels among Thais, with those having high resilience increasing from 59.8% in 2020 to 73.5% in 2024, while those with low resilience decreased from 6.9% to 3.0%.

Strengthening the mental health capacity of Thais through improved mental health literacy and positive behavioral development—such as physical and emotional self-care, effective problem-solving, and building social relationships—will help foster mental resilience and adaptability in the face of future changes. However, when it comes to desirable mental health behaviors, about one in five Thais (22.2%) still engage in undesirable behaviors. Women tend to have better mental health behaviors than men, while children and youth (aged 15-24 years) exhibit more undesirable behaviors than other age groups.

Desirable mental health behaviors of Thai people



Note: "Desirable mental health behaviors" are assessed based on 27 behavioral indicators across three dimensions: self-management of mental health, relationship-building, and emotional support for oneself and others. Scores are categorized into two groups: Desirable behaviors (average scores in the high range: 3.67-5.00), and Undesirable behaviors (average scores in the low to moderate range: 1.00-3.66).

Source: Research Report of the Project on Thai Mental Health and Quality of Life Survey in 2022, Division of Mental Health Promotion and Development, Department of Mental Health

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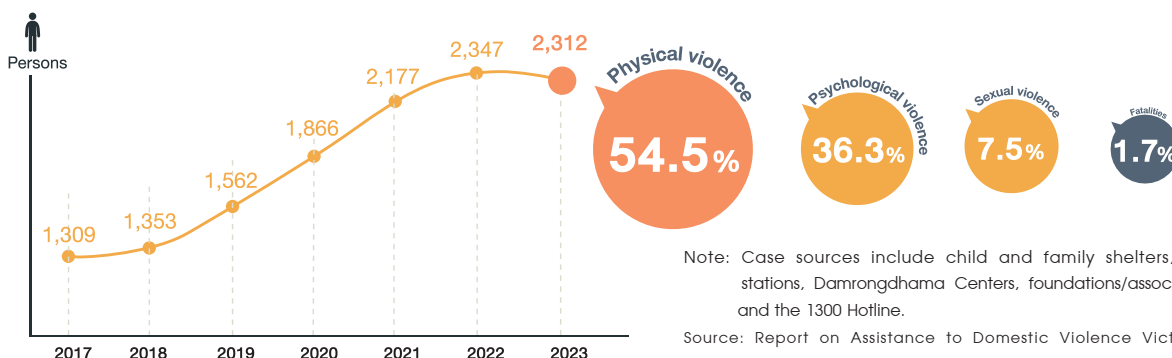
Violence in the Family and Society

More than **1 in 5** female students
have seriously considered suicide.

Family is the foundation of mental health, and domestic violence is a major cause of mental health problems. Data from the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development show that physical violence is the most common form of domestic abuse at 54.5%, followed by psychological violence at 36.3%, and sexual violence at 7.5%. This issue of violence is also reflected in the increasing number of media reports, which may have long-term impacts on mental health.

Data from the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development indicates **a rise in domestic violence**, both from service users and reports in various media outlets. This reflects an urgent issue that requires immediate attention and intervention.

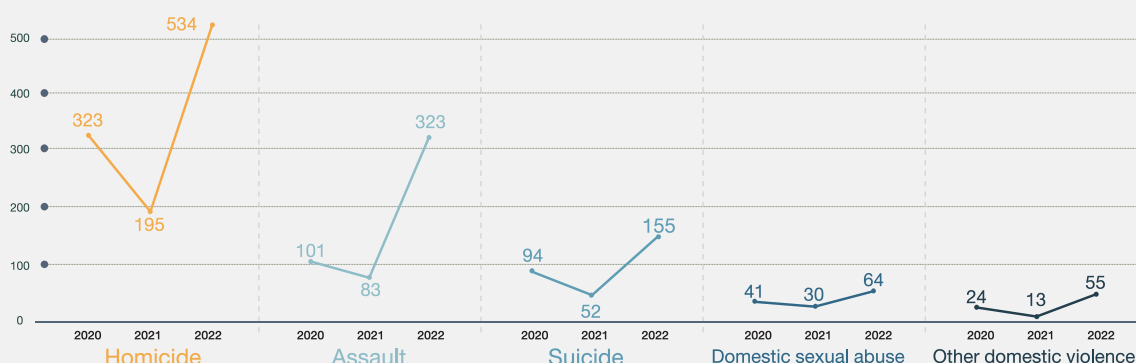
Number of domestic violence victims



Note: Case sources include child and family shelters, courts, police stations, Damrongdhama Centers, foundations/associations, hospitals, and the 1300 Hotline.

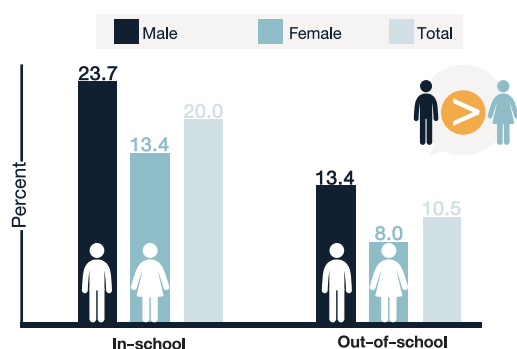
Source: Report on Assistance to Domestic Violence Victims, Fiscal Year 2017-2023, Operation Center of Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

Number of news reports on domestic violence



Source: Situation of domestic violence in 2020-2021, Women and Men Progressive Movement Foundation

Proportion of students who have experienced bullying inside and outside school



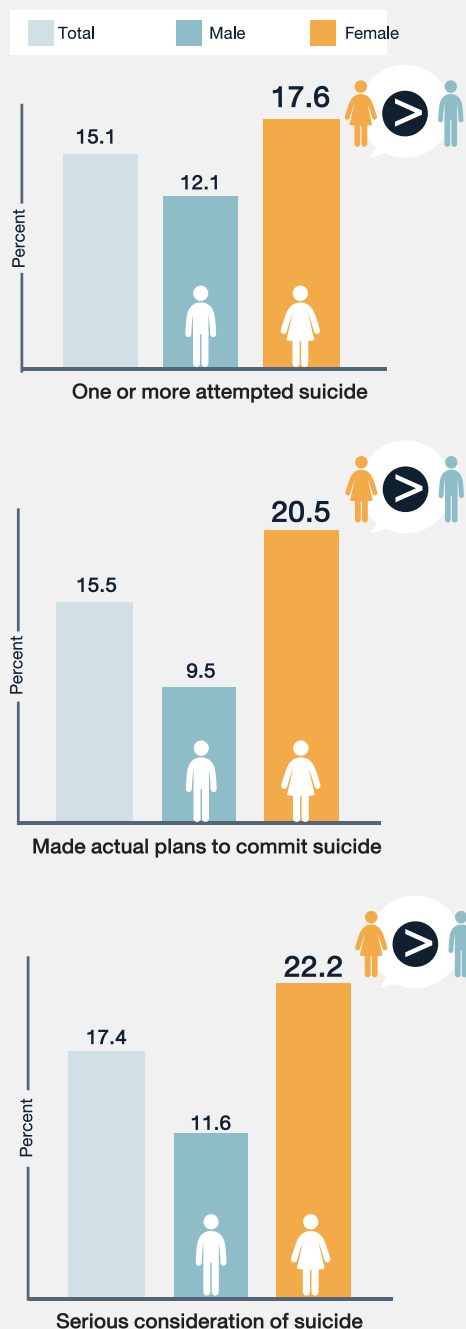
Source: Report of the Thailand Global School-based Student Health Survey, 2021, School Aged and Adolescent Health Subdivision, Bureau of Health Promotion, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health

Children and adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group in terms of mental health. Although schools are spaces where children spend a large portion of their time, violence still occurs—such as bullying. A 2021 survey found that one in five Thai students had been bullied at school, and 10.5% had experienced bullying outside school. Male students were more likely to be affected than female students.

Note: The sample population included 5,661 students from grades 7 to 12 consisting of 2,504 male students and 3,621 female students from 59 schools, both public and private, nationwide.

When focusing specifically on mental health, female students were found to have significantly more issues than males. As many as 22.2% of female students had seriously contemplated suicide, 20.5% had planned suicide, and 17.6% had made at least one suicide attempt. These are serious issues that require urgent prevention and care.

Proportion of students who have thought about, planned, and attempted suicide



Note: The sample population included 5,661 students from grades 7 to 12 consisting of 2,504 male students and 3,621 female students from 59 schools, both public and private, nationwide.

Source: Report of the Thailand Global School-based Student Health Survey, 2021, School Aged and Adolescent Health Subdivision, Bureau of Health Promotion, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health



Positive parenting helps build strong relationships between parents and children by emphasizing warm communication, encouragement, and empathy. This approach supports emotional and cognitive development, strengthens problem-solving skills, and fosters long-term mental well-being, self-confidence, and social competence. Positive parenting can reduce the likelihood of violence and help create a healthier society in the future.

A study titled "The Relationship of Factors Related to Positive Parenting Behaviors and Executive Function in Preschool-age Children, Chiang Rai Province" found that key factors—such as marital status, parental education, social support, and perceived benefits of positive parenting—significantly influenced parenting behaviors. These behaviors directly affected the development of children's executive function, with the perception of the benefits of positive parenting being particularly influential in enhancing children's thinking skills.

Source: Nathamon Seethikaew et al. (2022). The Relationship of Factors Related to Positive Parenting Behaviors and Executive Function in Pre school-age Children, Chiang Rai Province

“Addressing the problem of substance abuse and mental health should go hand in hand, focusing on prevention, treatment, and creating safety within communities to reduce both individual and societal impacts in the long term.”

5 Digital Technology

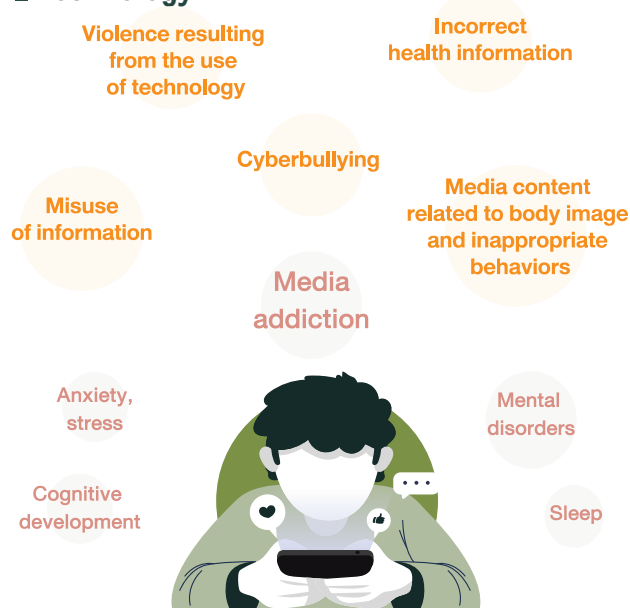
1 in 3 Asians

is addicted to online social media.

In an era where digital technology has become a part of daily life, the ease of accessing information and communication has both positive and negative effects on our mental health.

Digital technology affects mental health both directly—through the use of digital tools for health purposes—and in daily life through everyday digital usage. Most Thais use websites and applications related to social media and messaging in their daily lives. Beyond staying connected with friends and family (57.6%), a concerning reason for social media use is the fear of missing out (FOMO), which motivates 31.2% of users to stay constantly updated on trends and important events.

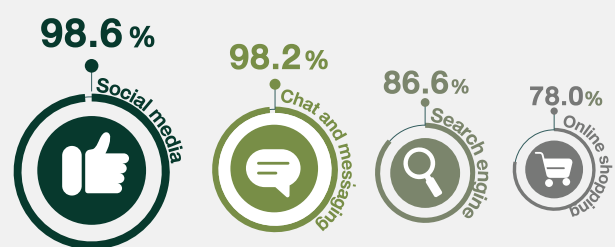
Potential threats to mental health by use of technology



Source: Adapted from: Kickbusch, 2024

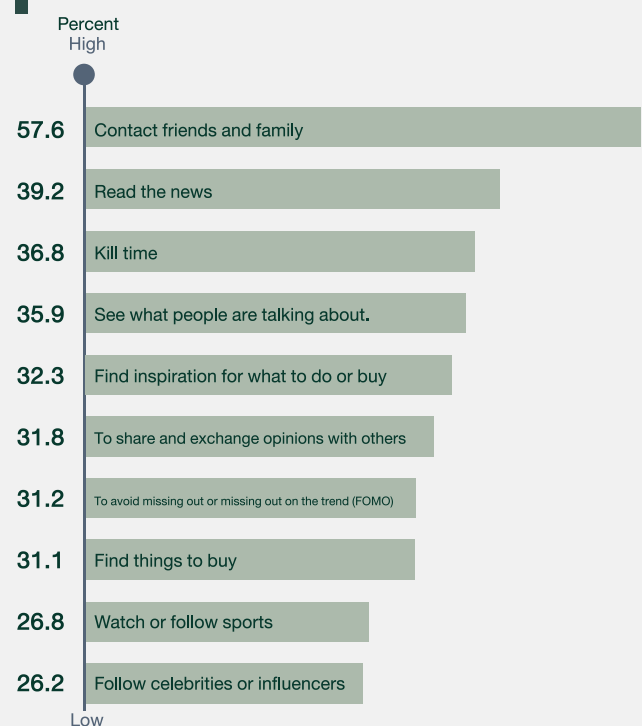
Excessive mobile phone use can lead to addiction, and negatively impact users. In Asia, the mobile phone addiction rate is as high as 31%, ranking second globally after Africa among continents. Adolescents and youth are particularly at risk of developing such addiction. The consequences include deteriorating family relationships, reduced academic and work performance, and declining overall health.

Proportion of Thais who used websites and various applications in the past month



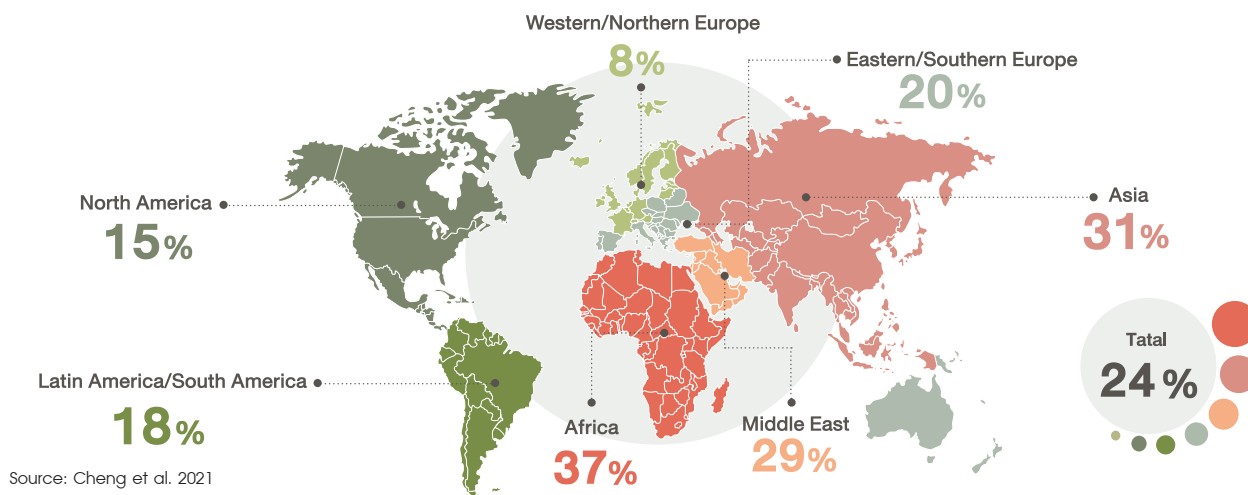
Source: Digital Insights Thailand 2024, We Are Social

Reasons for using online social media

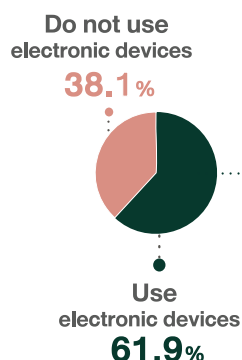


Source: Digital Insights Thailand 2024, We Are Social

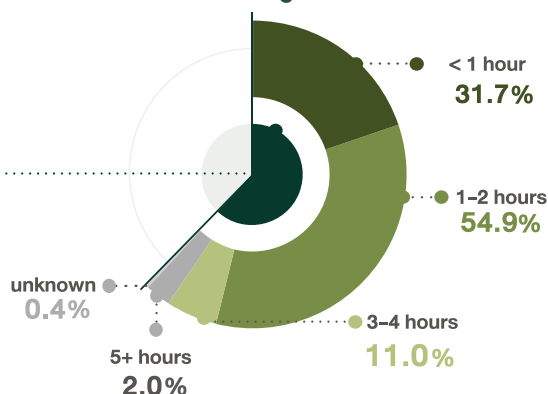
Proportion of social media addiction



Proportion of children under 5 who use electronic devices



Number of hours spent using electronic devices



Source: Report of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, 2022, National Statistical Office.

For young children under the age of five, strict screen time limits are still recommended. However, it is found that 61.9% of children in this age group use phones or a tablet, with more than half of which spending 1-2 hours a day on screens. Research indicates that extended screen time in young children is associated with increased aggressive behavior, emotional regulation issues, poorer peer relationships, and symptoms of attention deficit.

Social media serves as a platform for younger generations to express their identity and creativity.

In the Gen Y and Gen Z groups, 6.4% and 5.4%, respectively, create content in various formats such as videos, clips, or podcasts, providing an opportunity to express themselves. However, they must be cautious, as it can sometimes create pressure to present a perfect life, which may affect users' self-esteem.

Source: Survey on Behaviors of Internet Users in Thailand 2022, Electronic Transactions Development Agency

Social media as a tool for mental health surveillance

Data from social media posts can be used as a tool for monitoring mental health at the population level. Research indicates that posts on platforms like X (Twitter) or searches on Google are linked to the number of people seeking mental health treatment.

X (Twitter): Posts may reflect mental health issues through the language used, such as expressions of suicidal thoughts, fear, sadness, or disgust. These posts can potentially signal problems before the individual becomes fully aware of them.

Google: Searches are often made by individuals who have already begun to recognize their mental health issues. However, Google data may be misleading, as it can be influenced by news trends, current events, or searches conducted for other purposes.

Source: Tuarob, Noraset, and Tawichsri, 2022

“ Advocacy of appropriate digital media use is extremely important, along with creating a balance between the online world and real life, and strengthening individual and collective mental resilience. ”

6

Use of Addictive Drugs

Half of inpatient psychiatric admissions are caused by the use of psychoactive substances, alcohol, and/or tobacco.

Substance abuse and mental health are closely related. Many psychiatric patients have conditions caused by the use of substances, particularly psychoactive drugs, stimulants, and alcohol. The use of these substances not only affects mental health but also increases the risk of violent behavior in certain groups.

A survey found that over six million Thais have used at least one type of addictive substance in the past 12 months, and 1.3 million people are classified as alcohol dependent. This is a significant issue affecting physical health, mental health, and society.

The most commonly used substances in Thailand include kratom and cannabis, both for recreational and medical purposes.

Among all substances, cannabis poses the highest risk for violent behavior, with psychiatric patients who use cannabis having a 5% risk of engaging in violent actions, which is considered high compared to other substances.

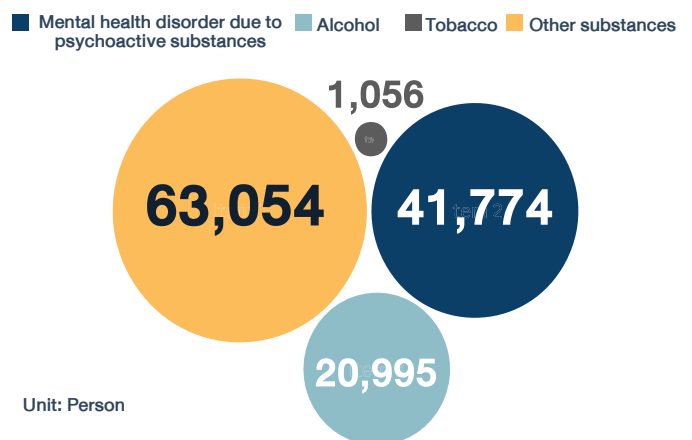
Did you know? Among Thai people...



Note: Prevalence over the past 12 months
Source: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Department of Mental Health

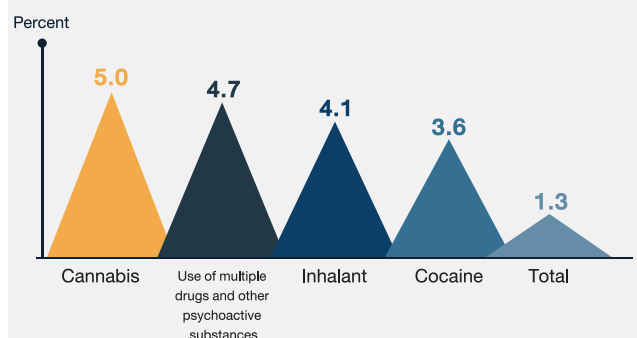
Psychiatric patients, whose condition was caused by substance abuse, particularly those with severe mental health symptoms and a risk of violent behavior, are more likely to harm themselves or others, become delusional, or have thoughts of harming others, which may lead to serious criminal cases within communities. These patients require close monitoring and care to reduce the chance of relapse

Number of inpatient psychiatric admissions classified by disease group, Fiscal Year 2024 (cases)



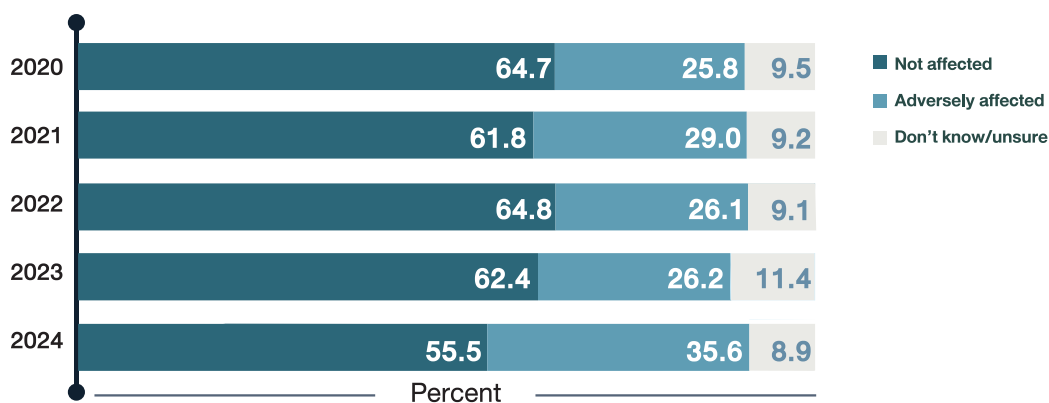
Source: Mental and Behavioral Disorders due to Psychoactive Substance Use, Fiscal Year 2024, Health Data Center, Information and Communication Technology Center, Ministry of Public Health

Proportion of patients with mental and behavioral disorders due to psychoactive substance use found to be at risk of committing violence, Fiscal Year 2023



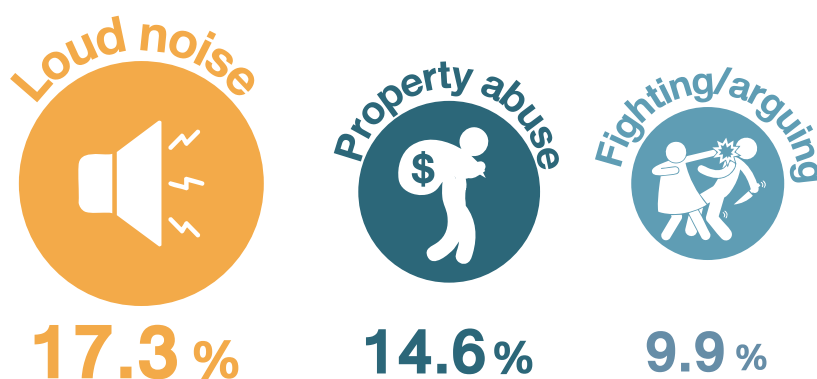
Source: Mental Disorders and Behaviors due to Substance Use in Thai Population, Fiscal Year 2023, Health Data Center, Information and Communication Technology Center, Ministry of Public Health

Proportion of the population reporting being affected by drug use issues, 2020–2024



Source: Survey on Public Opinions on Implementation of the Drug Prevention and Suppression Action Plan, 2020–2024, National Statistical Office.

Top 3 issues related to drug use causing distress in the community/village



Remarks: Multiple response allowed

Source: Survey on Public Opinions on Implementation of the Drug Prevention and Suppression Action Plan, 2024, National Statistical Office

Substance abuse not only affects individuals but also creates problems in communities. In 2024, reports of community distress due to substance abuse increased to 35.6%. The most common issues include noise disturbance, property crime, and fighting.

Teenagers who use e-cigarettes are at risk of depression

Data from the 6th National Health Examination Survey (2019–2020) found that 53% of Thais age 10–19 years who used e-cigarettes were at risk of developing depression.

Nicotine found in e-cigarettes is toxic to the brain, especially in children and adolescents whose brains are still developing. Nicotine can cause inflammation in brain cells in areas related to mood regulation and depression.

Source: The 6th National Health Examination Survey (2019–2020), Health Systems Research Institute

“ Addressing the problem of substance abuse and mental health should go hand in hand, focusing on prevention, treatment, and creating safety within communities to reduce both individual and societal impacts in the long term. ”

7

Megatrends and Mental Health

Megatrends have long-term impacts on the economy, society, environment, and mental health.

Megatrends, such as advanced technology, changes in social and demographic structure, economic transformation, urban growth, and climate change have long-term impacts across economic, social, environmental, and mental health dimensions.

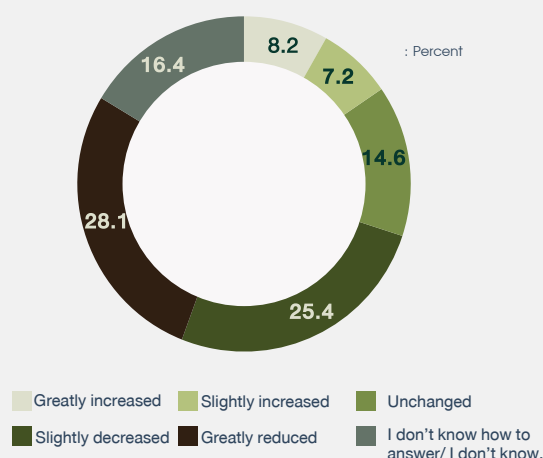
The rapid growth of digital technology has promoted the economy and alleviated work burdens, but has also increased the risk of unemployment, particularly in the service sector, where over 3 million workers face job insecurity, leading to career-related anxiety.

Risk of unemployment and the number of workers expected to be affected

Occupation	Risk (%)	Labor Force Expected to be Affected (Persons)
Lawmakers, civil servants, managers	38	486,162
Professionals	42	551,996
Technical workers	54	587,276
Service workers, salespeople in shops and markets	57	3,285,656
Agricultural and fisheries workers	57	2,755,300
Business workers	58	1,468,133
Basic occupations	62	1,581,264
Factory machinery operators	68	1,589,534
Clerical workers, officers	73	685,410
Total	54	12,990,731

Source: Nuarpear Lekfuangfu and Voraprapa Nakavachara, 2019

Changes in the acceptance of sexual diversity (LGBTIQ+) over the past 5 years

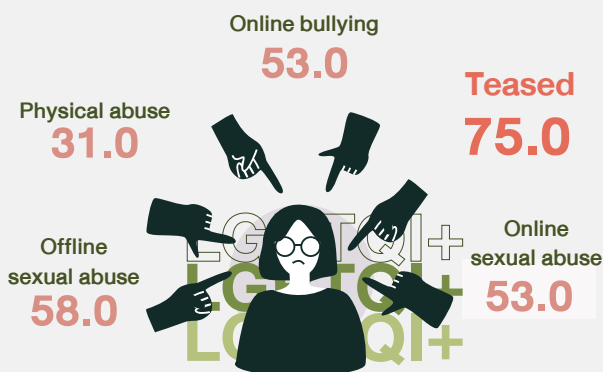


In terms of socio-cultural diversity, challenge remains an issue, with the LGBTIQ+ community continuing to face high levels of prejudice and harassment. Youth in this group are mocked at a rate of 75%, with 58% experiencing offline sexual harassment and 53% online harassment. This has a significant impact on mental health, with 71% experiencing depression, 78% feeling anxiety, 58% having suicidal thoughts, and 25% engaging in self-harm. While more than half of the LGBTIQ+ community feels that overall prejudice in society has decreased, 8.2% report a significant increase.

Note: Inquiries were made from the LGBTIQ+ group, whereby: L (Lesbian) referring to women who are attracted to other women; G (Gay) referring to men who are attracted to other men; B (Bisexual) referring to individuals attracted to both men and women; T (Transgender) referring to individuals whose gender identity does not align with their assigned sex at birth; I (Intersex) referring to individuals whose sex characteristics do not fit typical definitions of male or female; Q (Queer and Questioning) referring to individuals who do not define themselves within traditional gender or sexual categories. The + in LGBTIQ+ signifies other sexual orientations beyond those listed above.

Source: Mental Health of LGBTIQ+ Communities in the Thailand 2024, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University

Percentage of children and youth with diverse sexuality who experienced bullying in the past year



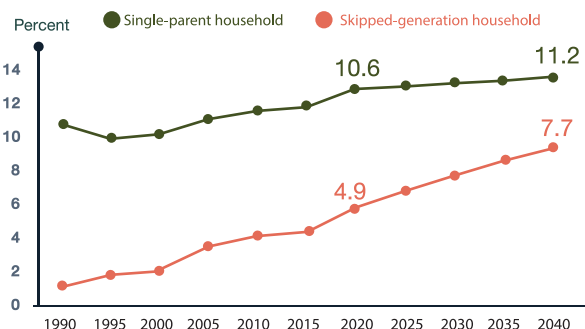
Percentage of children and youth with diverse sexuality who received mental health impacts in the past year



Source: Report on Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Youth with Diverse SOGIESC in Thailand, Save the Children (Thailand)

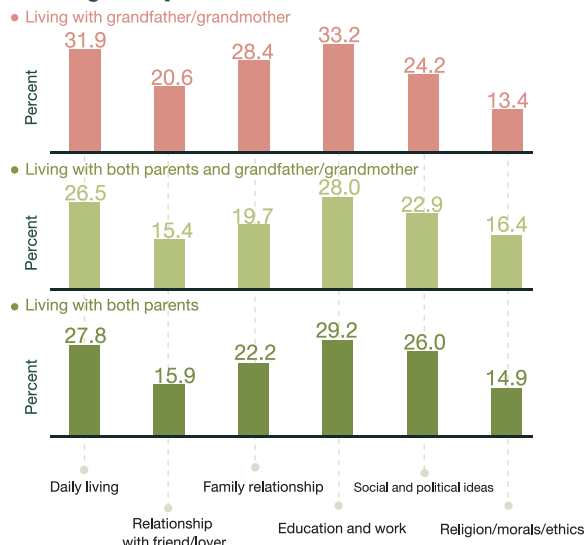
Demographic shifts are another megatrend that many countries around the world are facing. The aging society is affecting family structures and creating generational gaps, leading to conflicts, especially in education and employment.

Proportion of incomplete households in the working-age population



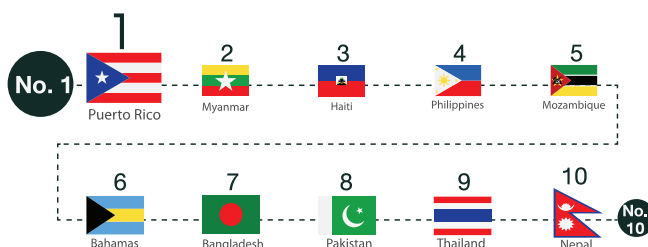
Source: Thai Families in the Future: B.E. 2040, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University

Proportion of youth with conflicting views with grandparents



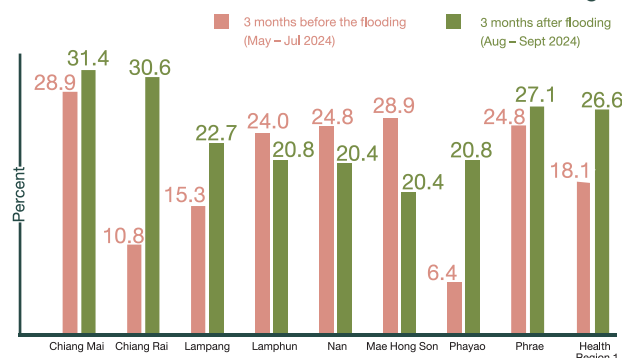
Note: This refers to responses indicating a significant to very high level of conflict
Source: Thai Youth Survey (2022), Kid for Kids

Top 10 countries most at risk from climate change



Source: Thai Health Report 2023, Feature Article, Thai Health Report 2023 (p. 103)
Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University

Proportion of population experiencing high stress in northern Thailand due to the 2024 flooding



Source: Mental Health Assessment in Thai Population, Department of Mental Health

Environmental crises and disasters not only impact physical health but also mental health. For example, the severe flooding in northern Thailand in September 2024 caused residents in areas such as Chiang Rai and Phayao to experience a threefold increase in stress levels.

To mitigate the impacts of megatrends and create long-term stability, it is necessary to develop digital skills for the workforce, promote gender equality, adapt work patterns to suit all age groups, and develop sustainable disaster preparedness plans.



Mental Health Literacy

Almost 1 in 3
Thais have the highest level of
mental health literacy.

Mental health literacy is the key to good mental health. Overall, Thai people have improved mental health literacy, but there are still misconceptions and stigma, as well as gaps in knowledge regarding access to services.

Mental health literacy refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and use information about mental health to care for oneself and others appropriately. It is a key component of good mental health, as it helps individuals manage stress, recognize abnormal symptoms, and seek timely care.

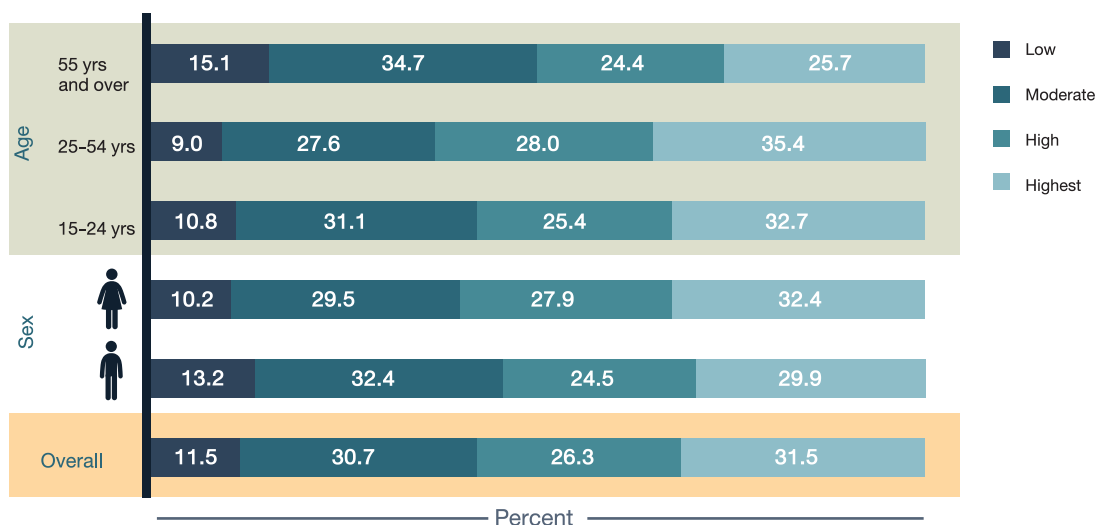
Characteristics of individuals with mental health literacy

- 1. Access** Ability to find mental health information
- 2. Understanding** Knowledge and understanding of mental health issues, factors, and causes
- 3. Interaction/Inquiry** Awareness and recognition of the importance of mental health
- 4. Decision-making** Choosing options that positively impact one's mental health
- 5. Behavioral adjustment** Understanding and implementing self-care practices to maintain mental health
- 6. Sharing** Ability to explain and help others understand how to adjust mental health behaviors

Source: Guidelines for Enhancing Mental Health Literacy, 2024, Department of Mental Health.

When analyzed by age group, older Thais tend to find it much more difficult to search for and understand mental health information compared to teenagers and youth. However, their ability to manage stress is not significantly different from other age groups.

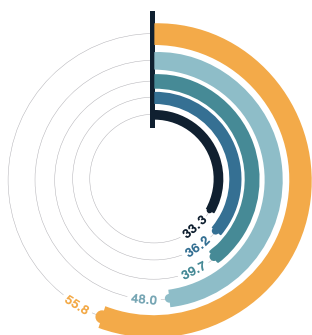
Proportion of the Thai population by level of mental health literacy



Source: Thai Mental Health and Quality of Life Survey 2022, Department of Mental Health

A 2022 survey found that 31.5% of Thais have the highest level of mental health literacy, but 11.5% have low mental health literacy, particularly among those aged 55 years or older, and among men. However, there are significant challenges, such as the fact that nearly half of Thais do not always realize when they are experiencing excessive stress, and about one-third do not know where to seek advice or treatment for mental health problems.

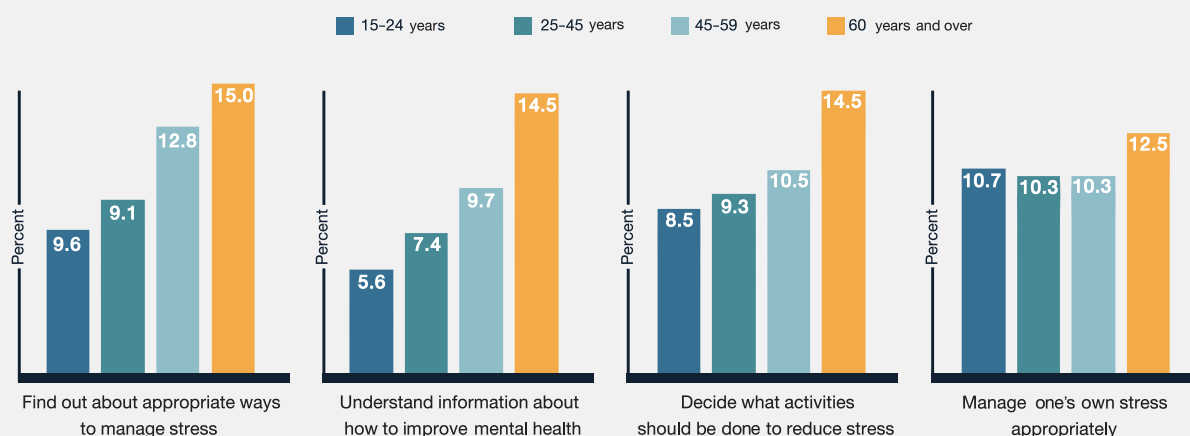
Proportion of the population exhibiting desirable mental health behaviors



- 55.8 %** | Can identify what causes them stress
- 48.0 %** | Aware when they are overly stressed
- 39.7 %** | Can recognize when a mental health problem is severe and know when to seek help
- 36.2 %** | Can identify when they or their close ones are beginning to experience mental health issues
- 33.3 %** | Know where to go for mental health support or counseling

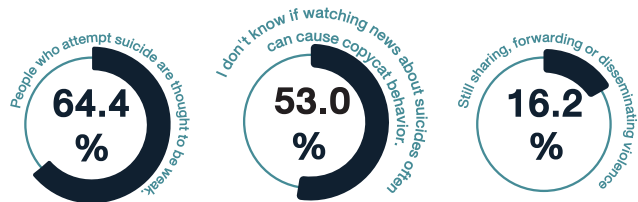
Source: Survey on Desirable Mental Health Behaviors 2018, Department of Mental Health

Proportion of the population who perceive mental health skills as “difficult” to “very difficult”



Source: Guidelines for Enhancing Mental Health Literacy, Department of Mental Health

Proportion of people who still hold misunderstandings or stigmatizing attitudes toward mental health issues



Source: Guidelines for Enhancing Mental Health Literacy, Department of Mental Health

Regarding misconceptions about mental health, about two-thirds of Thais still view those attempting suicide as weak, reflecting antiquated societal stigma. As for knowledge about depression, Thai people have a good understanding of symptoms such as feelings of guilt or lack of confidence without reason, but lack knowledge about appropriate and effective treatment methods.

Depression... Top 3 most accurately understood aspects by Thai people

- 94.0 %** | People with depression may feel guilty even though it is not their fault (True)
- 93.7 %** | Loss of confidence and self-esteem is a symptom of depression (True)
- 89.3 %** | Many famous people suffer from depression (True)

Source: Pruksarunguang and Rhein, 2022

Depression... Top 3 most common misunderstandings among Thai people

- 12.5 %** | Counseling is as effective as cognitive behavioral therapy for depression (False)
- 35.5 %** | Multiple personality disorder may be a sign of depression (False)
- 43.9 %** | Other treatments for depression are more effective than antidepressants (False)

“Promoting mental health literacy is essential, particularly in providing knowledge about how to access services and reduce stigma, so that everyone can sustainably care for their own and their community’s mental health.”

9

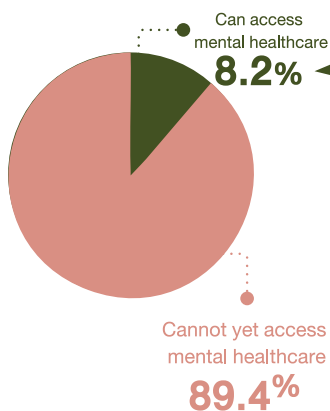
Mental Health Service and Screening

Nearly 40% of child and adolescent psychiatrists in Thailand are concentrated in Bangkok.

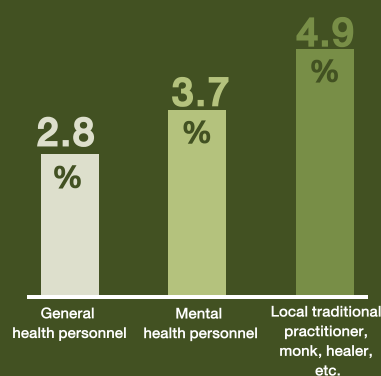
In 2024, there were **4.4 million** outpatient visits for psychiatric care. However, the actual number of Thais experiencing mental health issues may be significantly higher, as access to mental health services is still not widespread across the country. Additionally, the number of mental health professionals remains low compared to international standards and the global average.

Source: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Department of Mental Health

Percentage of mental healthcare access



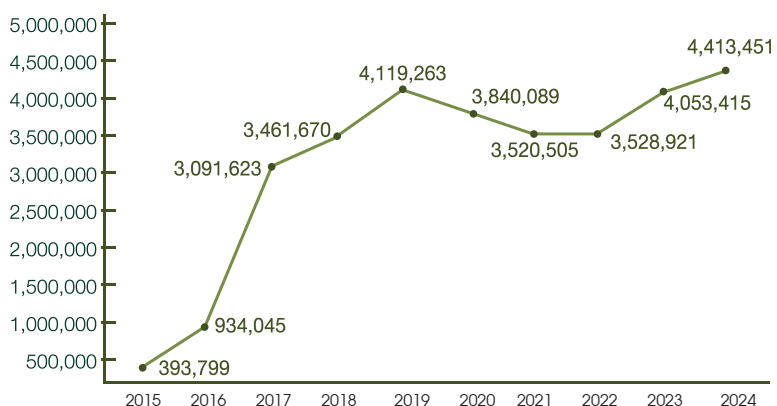
Channels for receiving mental healthcare in the past 12 months



Access to mental health services in Thailand remains limited. In 2023, only 10.6% of the population accessed any form of mental health service, with most seeking help from alternative therapists, followed by mental health professionals and general healthcare providers.

Source: The 2023 National Epidemiology Survey on Mental Health in Thailand, Department of Mental Health

Number of outpatient psychiatric patients receiving services, Fiscal Year 2015 - 2024



Source: Number of Outpatient Psychiatric Patients Receiving Services, Fiscal Year 2015-2024, Health Data Center, Information and Communication Technology Center, Ministry of Public Health

A major challenge facing Thailand is the shortage of mental health personnel. In 2022, the country had only 845 psychiatrists—an average of 1.3 per 100,000 people—below the World Health Organization's standard of 1.7 and far below the global average of 13 per 100,000. Although there are plans to increase the mental healthcare workforce, aiming to add 537 psychiatrists, 1,720 psychiatric nurses, and 320 clinical psychologists and psychiatric social workers each, the projected numbers are still unlikely to meet the demand.

Psychiatric personnel in Thailand, 2022

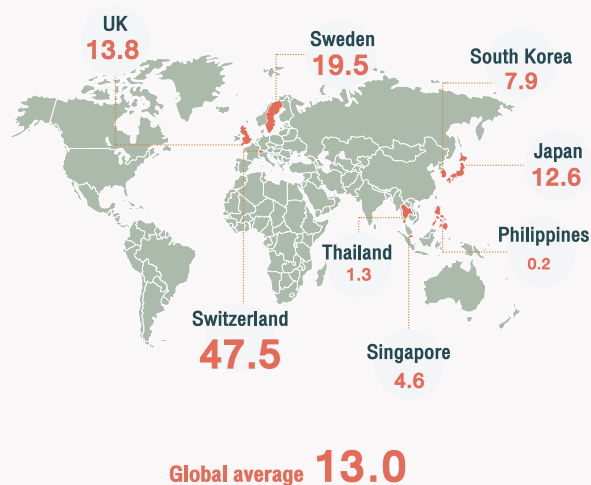


*World Health Organization standards

** Middle to high-income countries, from the Mental Health Atlas 2020

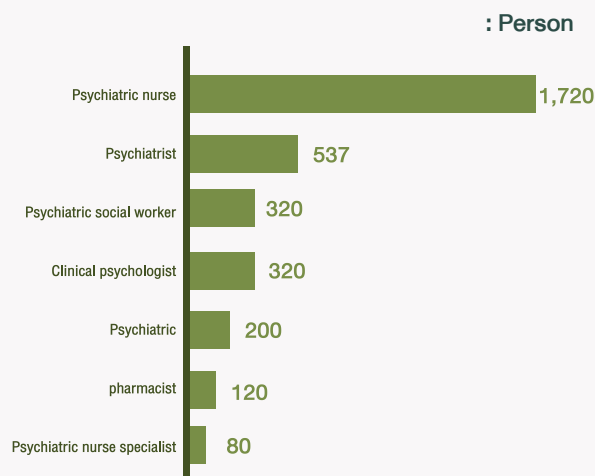
Source: Thailand's Social Outlook of Q1/2024, National Statistical Office and Thailand Fails to Produce Sufficient Supporting Personnel as Planned, 101Pub.

Number of psychiatrists per 100,000 population by country



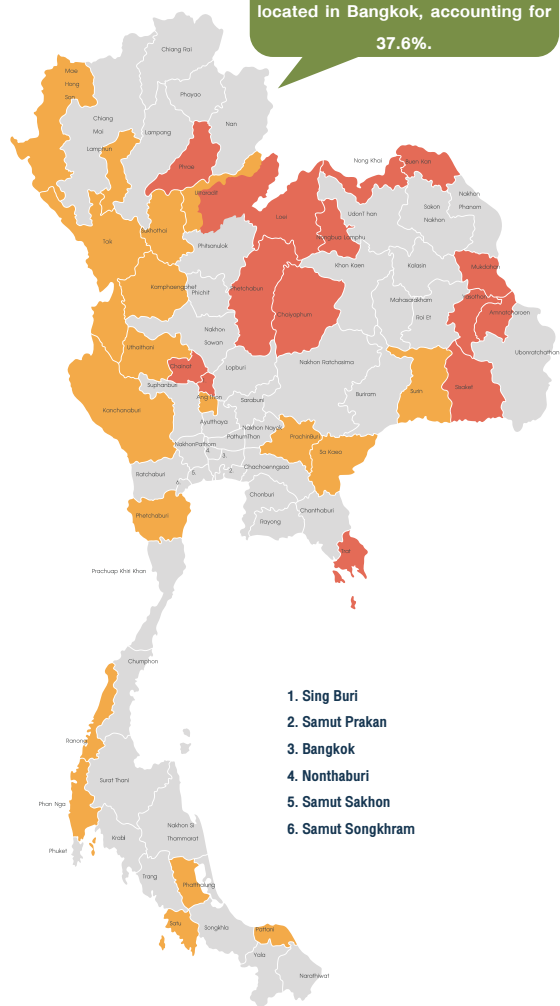
Source: Mental Health Atlas 2020, World Health Organization

Mental Health Workforce Production Plan for 2024–2027



Source: Mental Health Development Policy, Fiscal Year 2024, Department of Mental Health

There are 295 child/adolescent psychiatrists nationwide, with 111 located in Bangkok, accounting for 37.6%.



Children and youth are a particularly concerning group, as they experience higher rates of mental health issues compared to other age groups. Yet, there are only 295 child and adolescent psychiatrists in Thailand, 111 of whom are based in Bangkok. Indeed, 18 provinces have no child psychiatrists at all, and another 15 have only one, creating a major gap in access for those in remote areas. Increasing the number of school counselors, in-house psychologists, and online counseling services are approaches that align closely with the needs of young people.

18 provinces with no child/adolescent psychiatrist

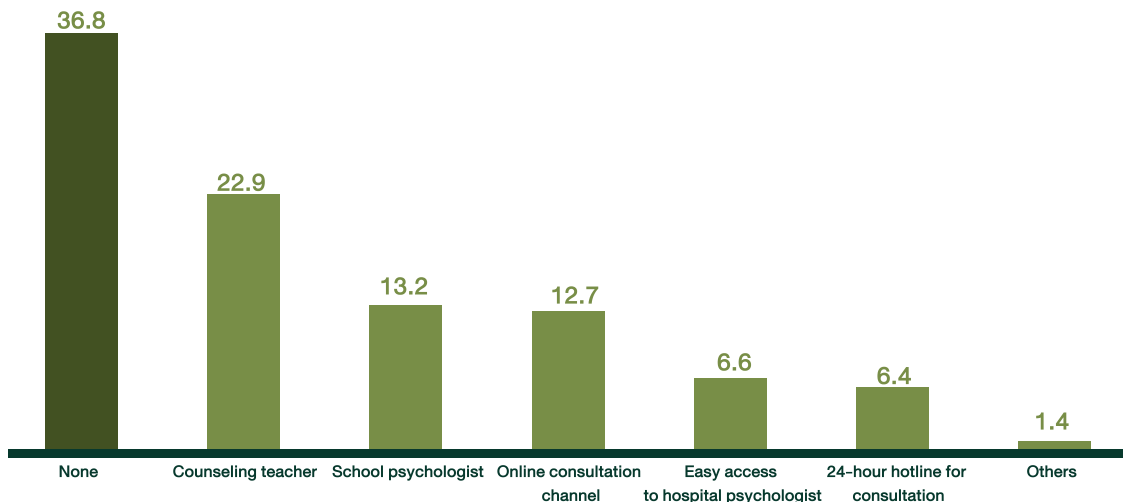
- Chainat
- Chaiyaphum
- Trat
- Bueng Kan
- Pattani
- Phang Nga
- Phetchabun
- Phrae
- Mukdahan
- Yasothon
- Ranong
- Loei
- Sisaket
- Satun
- Singburi
- Nong Khai
- Nong Bua Lamphu
- Amnat Charoen

15 provinces with only a single child/adolescent psychiatrist

- Krabi
- Kanchanaburi
- Kamphaeng Phet
- Tak
- Prachin Buri
- Phatthalung
- Phetchaburi
- Mae Hong Son
- Lopburi
- Lamphun
- Sa Kaeo
- Sukhothai
- Ang Thong
- Uttaradit

Source: List of healthcare facilities with psychiatric services in Thailand, Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society of Thailand, Psychiatric Association of Thailand and Department of Mental Health

The mental health support/assistance that Thai children need



Source: Thai Children's Mental Health Survey 2024, Rocket Media Lab

“Thais continue to rely on alternative means of managing mental health issues, such as traditional healers or monks, reflecting a culturally-rooted approach to mental well-being. Nevertheless, improving the formal mental health service system remains essential to ensure that all population groups can access appropriate care equitably and comprehensively.”

Spiritual Practices and Fortune Tellers: A Source of Emotional Support for Thai People



Visiting a psychologist or psychiatrist can sometimes seem like a big deal or even embarrassing for many people. This leads many to choose alternative methods to alleviate and manage their mental health issues, such as consulting a fortune teller, relying on superstition, or seeking out spiritual beings.

The trend of “**Mutelu**” or **spiritual practices** has become a popular way for younger generations to cope with stress and anxiety. While practicing “Mutelu” may not address the root causes of problems, it has emotional benefits by providing a sense of comfort that someone or something is there to support us. This can help alleviate stress and anxiety temporarily.

Similarly, consulting **a fortune teller provides emotional support**, but we can elevate the role of fortune tellers by equipping them with additional mental health counseling skills. Research from Thammasat University found that the quality of services provided by fortune tellers significantly improved when they underwent training, and clients reported feeling that their problems had lessened after receiving services.

These channels play an important role for Thai people in managing mental health issues, offering initial relief to the people.

Source: The Potential, 2022 and Pangsapa, 2022

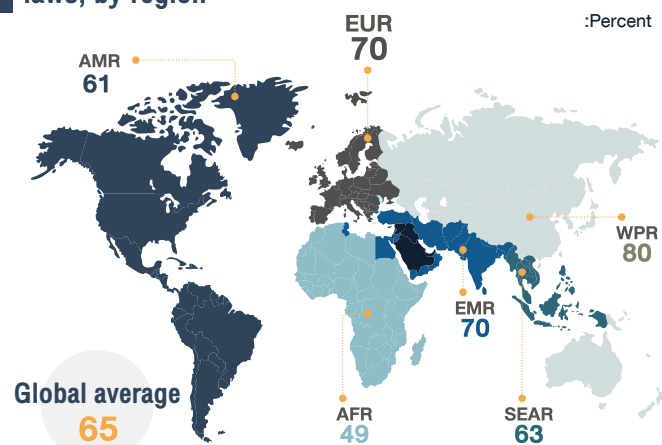
10

Mental Health Policies and Measures

Mental health issues are a significant challenge that Thailand is currently facing. Having policies and measures in place to address the growing demand for mental health services is therefore a key issue. While Thailand has made progress in some areas, there are still challenges that need to be addressed in order to provide more comprehensive and equitable mental health services.

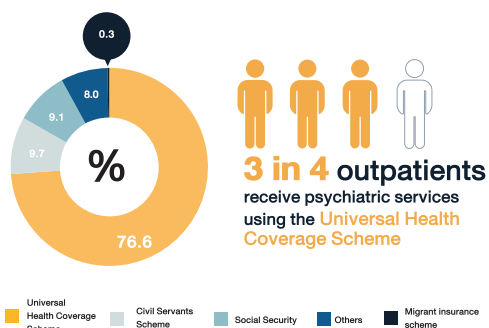
In terms of legislation, the existence of specific mental health laws reflects the importance of mental health issues in the country. In 2020, **65% of World Health Organization (WHO) member countries had separate mental health laws**, and Thailand is one of them. The Mental Health Act, B.E. 2551 (Amendment Version, B.E. 2562) emphasizes the protection of the rights of individuals with mental health issues and promotes their access to appropriate care. Additionally, Thailand has specific mental health development plans, such as the National Mental Health Development Plan No. 1 (2018–2037) and the National Health Statute No. 3, B.E. 2565, which include mental health as one of the key goals.

Proportion of countries with separate mental health laws, by region



Note: WHO members are divided into 6 regions: Africa (AFR), the Americas (AMR), Eastern Mediterranean (EMR), Europe (EUR), South-East Asia (SEAR), and Western Pacific (WPR)
Source: Mental Health Atlas 2020, World Health Organization

Number of psychiatric outpatients receiving services in Fiscal Year 2024, categorized by health insurance system



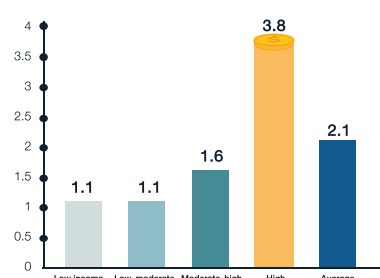
Source: Number of psychiatric outpatients receiving services in Fiscal Year 2024, Health Data Center, Information and Communication Technology Center, Ministry of Public Health

Regarding health insurance rights in Thailand, such as Social Security, the Universal Health Coverage Scheme, and Civil Servant Medical Benefit Scheme, these systems cover the treatment of mental health disorders, such as depression. Specifically, three out of four outpatients who receive psychiatric services use the Universal Health Coverage Scheme, while the Civil Servants Medical Benefit Scheme and Social Security cover the remaining cases. Although access to services is widespread, there is still a need to consider the allocation of budget for mental health services. Currently, the Department of Mental Health receives 1.8% of the Ministry of Public Health budget, while actual mental health expenditures are higher due to the budget allocated through the health security system covering psychiatric treatments.

Proportion of mental health expenditure to total health expenditure, categorized by country income level

In Thailand, the Department of Mental Health receives 1.8% of the Ministry of Public Health budget*

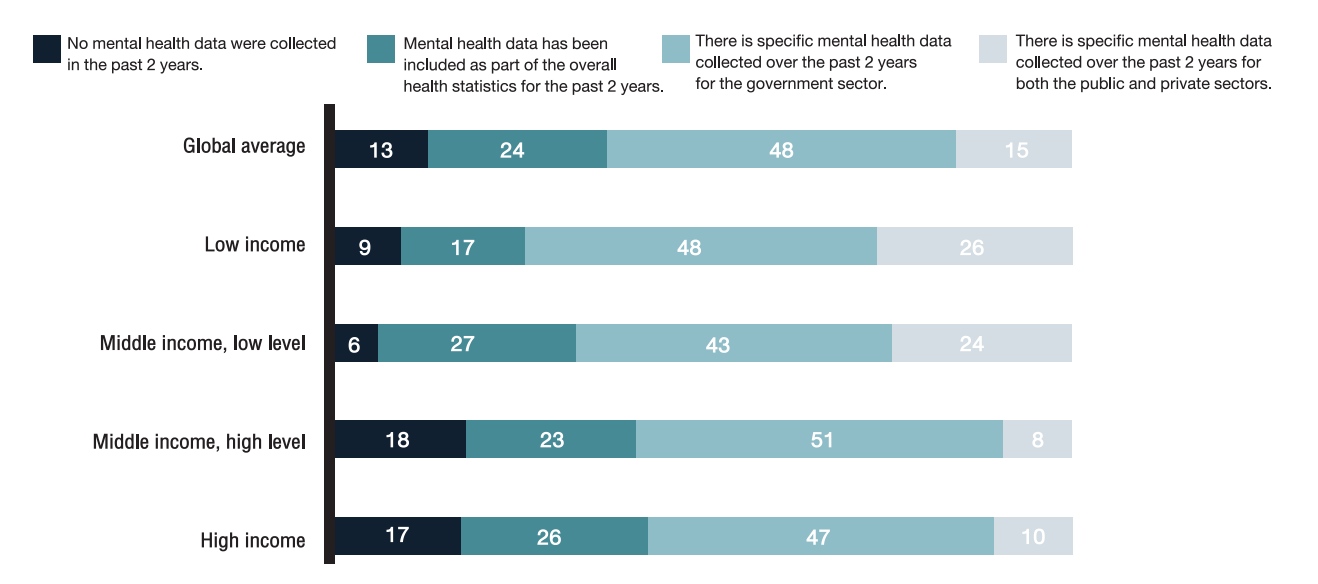
Source: Mental Health Atlas 2020, World Health Organization



*Actual spending on mental health in the country is higher because it does not include the budget from the health security system that covers psychiatric treatment.

Information and research are crucial for driving mental health policies and services. Although Thailand has reported mental health data at least in the past two years, it lacks data from the growing private sector and, importantly, it lacks statistics on the mental health of children under 15 years, such as depression and self-harm. Mental health issues can occur before the age of 15, and other countries, such as the UK and the US, have begun collecting mental health data from children as young as 5-6 years old. Thailand should consider adopting this approach to enhance coverage and build a more effective database.

Collection of mental health data in countries, categorized by country income level



Source: Mental Health Atlas 2020, World Health Organization.

Mental health statistics in Thailand still lack data on children and adolescents

Currently, the Health Data Center, Ministry of Public Health collects statistics on depression and self-harm among the population aged 15 years or older.

However, it has been found that **children can also suffer from depression and show symptoms as early as 11 years old.**

Collecting data on children could help identify issues early and provide timely assistance.

In the UK, mental health data is collected for children starting at the age of 5 years.

Source: Summary from "Seeing the Numbers, Not the Heart: Mental Health Statistics in Thailand that Need to Be Reviewed," Kid for Kids

“ The development of the mental health system in Thailand requires cooperation between the government, the private sector, and civil society to enhance access to services that cover all age groups, as well as to increase funding and improve data collection accuracy. Investment in this area will not only help reduce the mental health problems of the population but also promote the overall well-being of Thai society in the long term. ”



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