

SURVEY REPORT

# The Performance of *Being Fine*

How Indian men navigate stress, silence & support.

**96%**

feel responsible for solving their problems alone

**82%**

say uncertainty about the future weighs on them

**1 in 3**

would turn to nobody at all

**WHY THIS REPORT**

# We made this because the conversation needed somewhere to start.

We weren't trying to prove men are struggling — most people already sense that. We wanted a clear, shared basis for a conversation that usually happens in pieces, if at all: what urban Indian men actually carry, and what it would take for them to say so. Men's Mental Health Month felt like the right time to put numbers to something we were witnessing anecdotally. Not to pathologise men. Not to suggest they're more fragile than they appear. But to shine a light on the gap — between what men feel and what they say; between the support they need and the support they seek.

**ABOUT THE SURVEY**

Respondents **200**

Geography **Urban India**

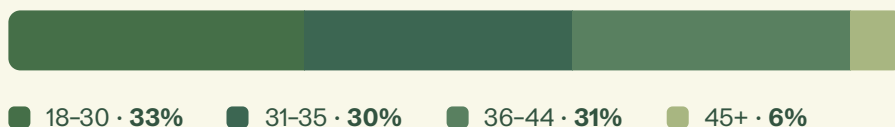
Method **Online**

Fieldwork **June 2026**

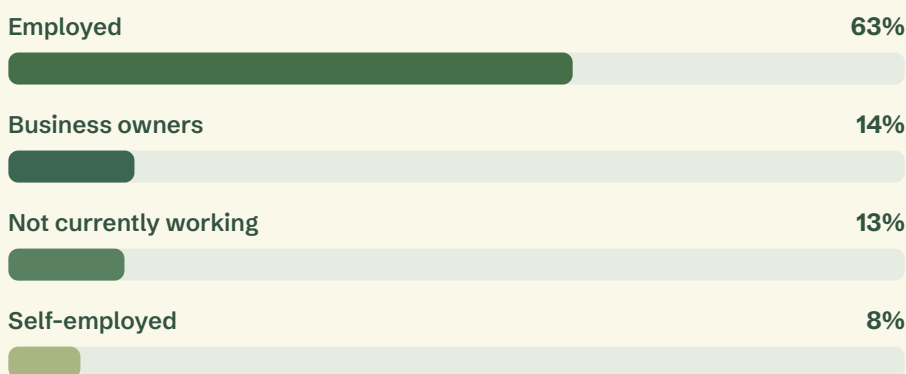
Ages **18-54**

Questions **13**

**AGE**



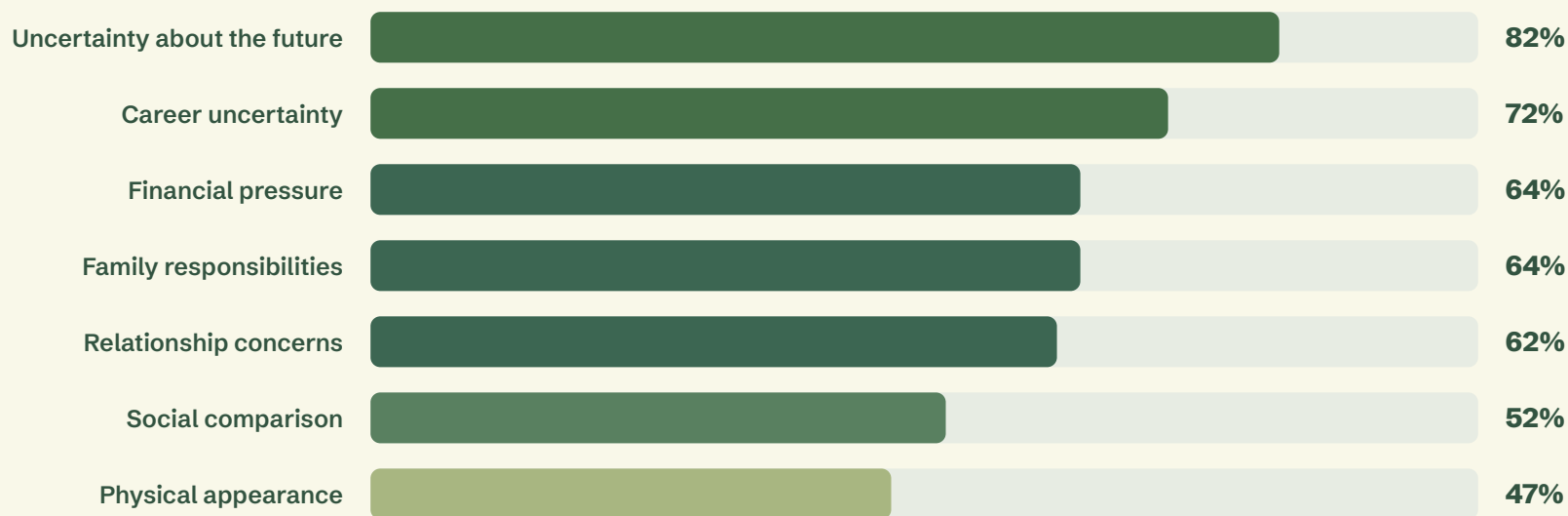
**OCCUPATION**



1.0 • THE STRESSOR LANDSCAPE

# What weighs on Indian men — uncertainty about the future weighs heaviest.

More than four in five urban Indian men say uncertainty about the future weighs on them — it outranks money, career, and family. Around half or more feel each of the top stressors a great deal.



% rating each stressor 3-4 on a 1-4 scale (moderate-to-high).

**BY AGE**

*Younger and older men worry about different things.*

Younger men are more stressed by comparison, appearance, and career — how they measure up and where they're headed. Those ease with age, while family responsibility rises: it weighs on 56% of the youngest men and climbs to 74% of men in their late thirties and forties. The worry shifts from themselves to the people who depend on them.

**BUSINESS OWNERS**

*Business owners feel the most financial pressure — more than salaried men.*

Owning a business looks like freedom from the outside. But **75%** of business owners report significant financial pressure, against **60%** of employed men — who at least know what arrives each month.

*“The sheer pressure of everything — work, side hustle, EMIs, kids, uncertainty. When's the last time I felt alive?”*

— Survey respondent, aged 36-44

Stressors rated 1-4 (1 = not at all, 4 = a great deal); bars show % rating 3-4. Crosscuts directional (subgroup sizes vary). Self-employed report the least financial pressure (56%).

2.0 • SELF-PERCEPTION

## Almost every man we asked believes he should handle it alone.

96% of men agree they're responsible for solving their own problems — and it reads less like a choice than like something they've been taught and rarely question. 73% find it hard to ask for help, and fewer than half feel comfortable discussing personal struggles. The results reveal a culture of internalisation — deeply conditioned, rarely questioned.



## The hardest thing for a man to say is “I feel lonely.”

Of everything we asked men to admit, loneliness was the hardest — 76% find it difficult, more than any other state, including needing help or feeling overwhelmed. Saying it breaks the expectation that men are self-sufficient, even though loneliness is one of the things men report most. In India, admitting loneliness means breaking the expectation of male self-sufficiency.



% who find each difficult or very difficult to admit (rated 3–4).

**92–97%** *What stresses men changes as they get older. The urge to stay quiet doesn't.*

The things that weigh on men change as they get older. The belief that you deal with it alone barely moves — it holds between 92% and 97% across every age group. Whatever teaches men to stay quiet starts early and stays.

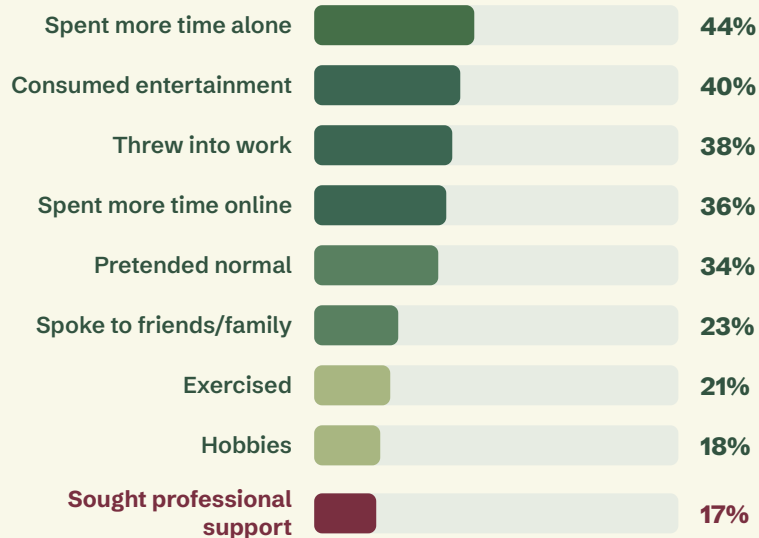
“Agree” combines agree and strongly agree; on solving problems alone, 76% chose *strongly* agree — the most emphatic single response.

3.0 • COPING & SYMPTOMS

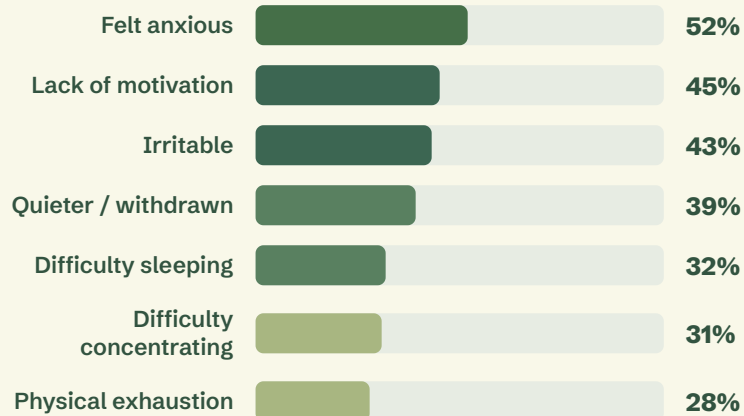
# Coping without connecting.

Asked what they did in a hard time, men turned inward — to solitude, screens, and work. Only **17%** sought professional support.

### WHAT THEY DID



### HOW STRESS SHOWED UP



#### MASKING

*When stress affects their focus, men hide it rather than name it.*

When stress starts to affect concentration, the most common reaction isn't to talk about it — it's to cover it. Half the men who struggled to focus also said they pretended everything was normal, well above the survey average. The harder it became to function, the more effort went into appearing fine.

#### NUMBING

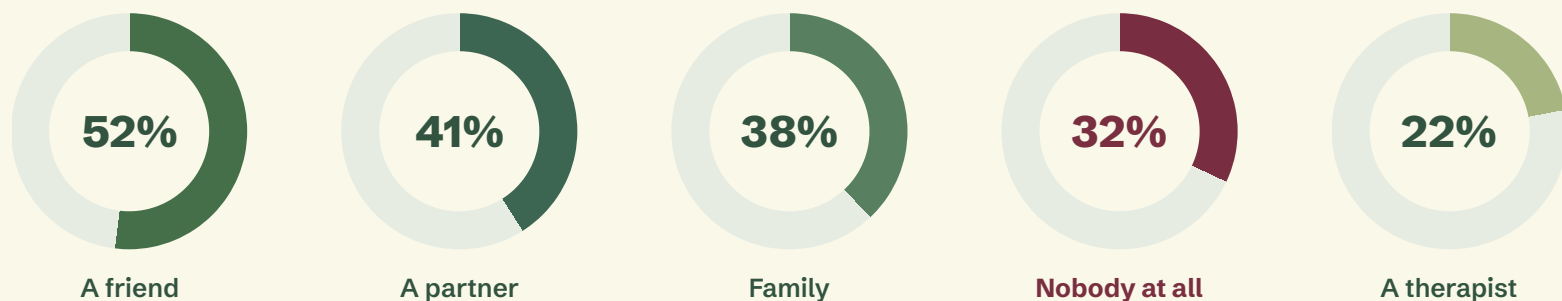
*Drained men reach for distraction, not recovery.*

Men who were low on motivation or physically exhausted leaned toward screens and entertainment — 51-52% of them, against 40% overall — and away from exercise or professional help. When energy runs low, the easiest option wins, even when it does the least good.

## 4.0 • SUPPORT-SEEKING

## Men turn to a professional last — if they turn to anyone.

Asked who they'd reach out to in a hard time, men named friends first (52%), then partners (41%), then family (38%). A therapist came after all of them — and after the 32% who would turn to no one at all. The kind of help built for exactly this moment is the one men consider last.



## WHO CHOOSES THERAPY

*The men who choose therapy aren't the most stressed — they're the most open.*

Choosing therapy has less to do with how much a man is carrying than with how open he already is. Men who'd consider therapy carry almost the same stress load as men who'd turn to no one — but they're far more comfortable asking for help (**64% vs 33%**) and far more likely to already be talking to someone. Openness to therapy is also highest among men in their twenties and falls with age. That last pattern should shift over time: as today's younger men grow older and become the fathers, mentors, and colleagues others look to, the example they set is likely to pull the older end up.

## 4.1 • WHAT OPENS MEN UP

*Most men don't start the conversation. They wait for someone else to.*

The things that help men open up aren't things they seek out — they're things that happen to them. Men open up when someone else shares first, asks directly, or a crisis forces it; **54%** need a trigger like that. A third say they rarely open up at all — the same men who, in hard times, turn to no one. If men won't start the conversation, someone has to start it for them.

## 4.2 • WORK &amp; IDENTITY

*For men who own their work, it's both where they find meaning and where they hide.*

Work gives the most purpose to men who run their own — **64%** of business owners and **62%** of the self-employed, against 40% of employed men. It's also where those same men hide most. The hours that give them identity also give them cover. For men out of work, it flips: not the meaning, just the pressure of not having it.

## THE WAY FORWARD

# Listening is the *first step*.

This report isn't about proving men are struggling. It's about understanding how — and what they're asking for, often without saying it directly.

**96%**

solve alone

**73%**

find asking hard

**76%**

loneliness hard to admit

**17%**

sought support

**1 in 3**

turn to nobody

**01**

## Build Awareness

Awareness in India still centers on depression and anxiety; loneliness, PTSD, and OCD remain poorly understood. Men can't seek help for what they can't name.

**02**

## Reduce the Stigma

73% find it hard to ask for help; 96% feel they should solve things alone. These aren't individual failings — they're cultural conditioning.

**03**

## Make Access Real

The men who most need help are the least likely to seek it — older, quieter, more alone. A model that waits for them to walk in keeps reaching the men who'd have found help anyway. Reaching the rest takes a system that does the reaching: matching men to the right person, and staying in the room.

*What would change if we stopped expecting men to carry everything alone?*



## About *Elfina Health*.

Elfina Health is an online therapy platform, started in 2024, working at the intersection of therapy and technology to widen access to mental health care. We work with both men and women, and the core problem we solve is a simple one: helping people find the right therapist the first time. The right match is the foundation everything else in therapy is built on.

That first-match problem matters more for men than the numbers alone suggest. When it's this hard to ask for help to begin with, a wrong fit isn't a minor setback — it's often the end of the attempt. A man who finds the courage once and doesn't meet the right person may not try again. Getting it right in one go is what keeps him in the room.

We're not a mirror of India — who finds us is shaped by all kinds of things, and we don't claim to represent the whole picture. But for what it's worth, nearly half our clients are men. If you're a man reading this and wondering whether people like you actually come: they do. You'd be in good company.

---

*Nearly half the people who come to us are men. If you're wondering whether people like you actually come — they do.*

---

If something in this report resonated with you, challenged your perspective, or reminded you of your own experience, we'd genuinely love to know. Your thoughts, stories, questions, and feedback help us learn, improve, and continue these conversations.

### TALK TO US

[talk@elfinahealth.com](mailto:talk@elfinahealth.com)

[elfinahealth.com](https://elfinahealth.com)

[Visit our website →](#)