



Research Update

Attitudes to mental health and suicide in Northern Ireland

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Mental 2021-2031 Health Strategy



Theme 1 – Promoting mental wellbeing, resilience and good mental health across society

Promotion and prevention

ACTION 1. Increase public awareness of the distinction between mental wellbeing, mental ill health and mental illness, encouraging public understanding and acceptance of how life can impact upon mental wellbeing, and recognition of the signs of mental ill health and mental illness. Using public mental health education and effective awareness raising methods, increase public knowledge of the key measures that can be taken to look after mental wellbeing, increase understanding of mental ill health, and encourage public discourse and dialogue to reduce stigma.

Methods

Attitudes to mental health/ illness, and beliefs about suicide questions from PHA 2015 survey.

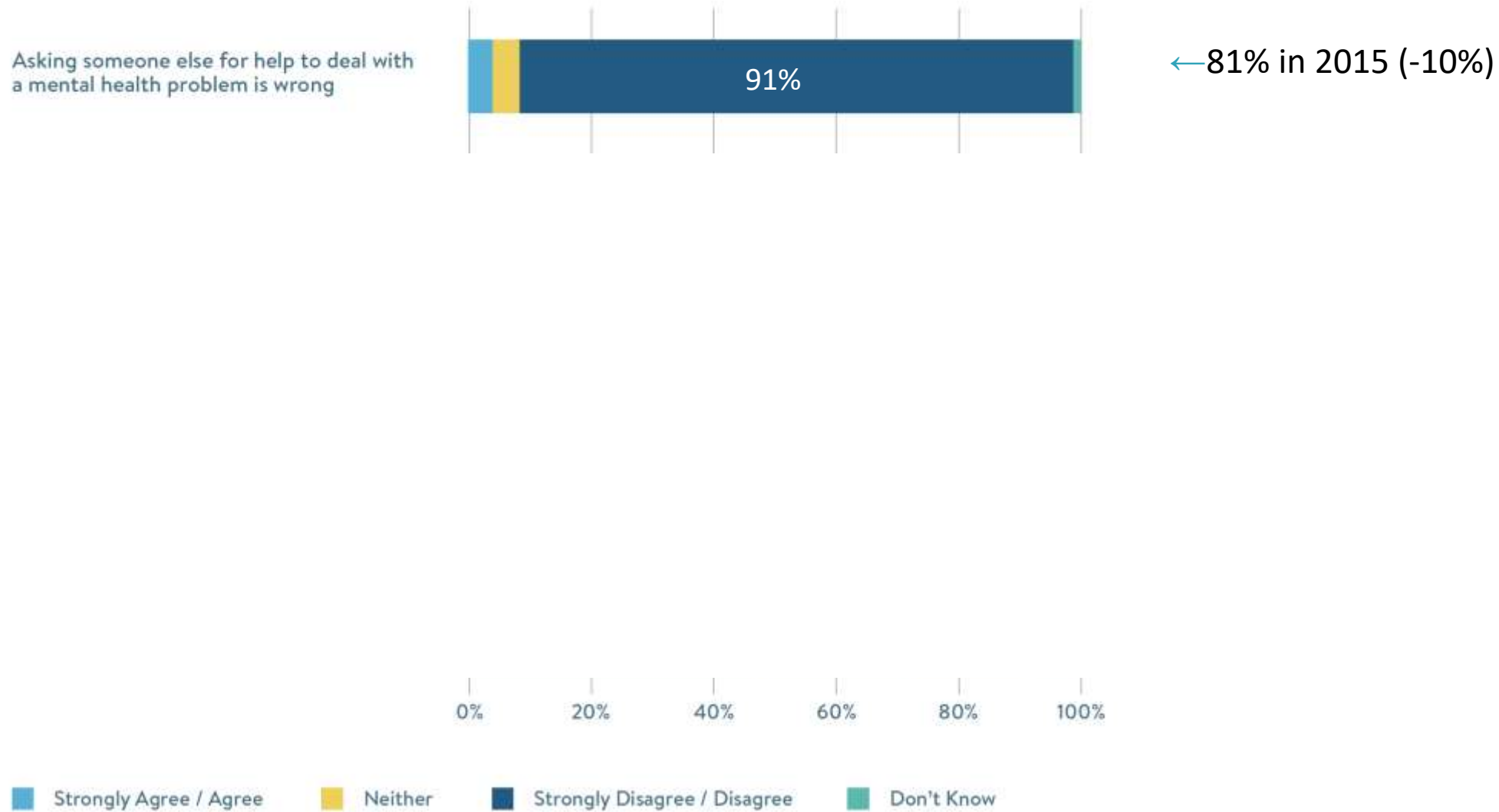
Govt Priorities questions developed with Mental Health Foundation.

NILT survey 2021 (see ARK website) N=1397.

Attitudes to Mental Health & Mental Illness

- 1. Asking someone else for help to deal with a mental health problem is wrong**

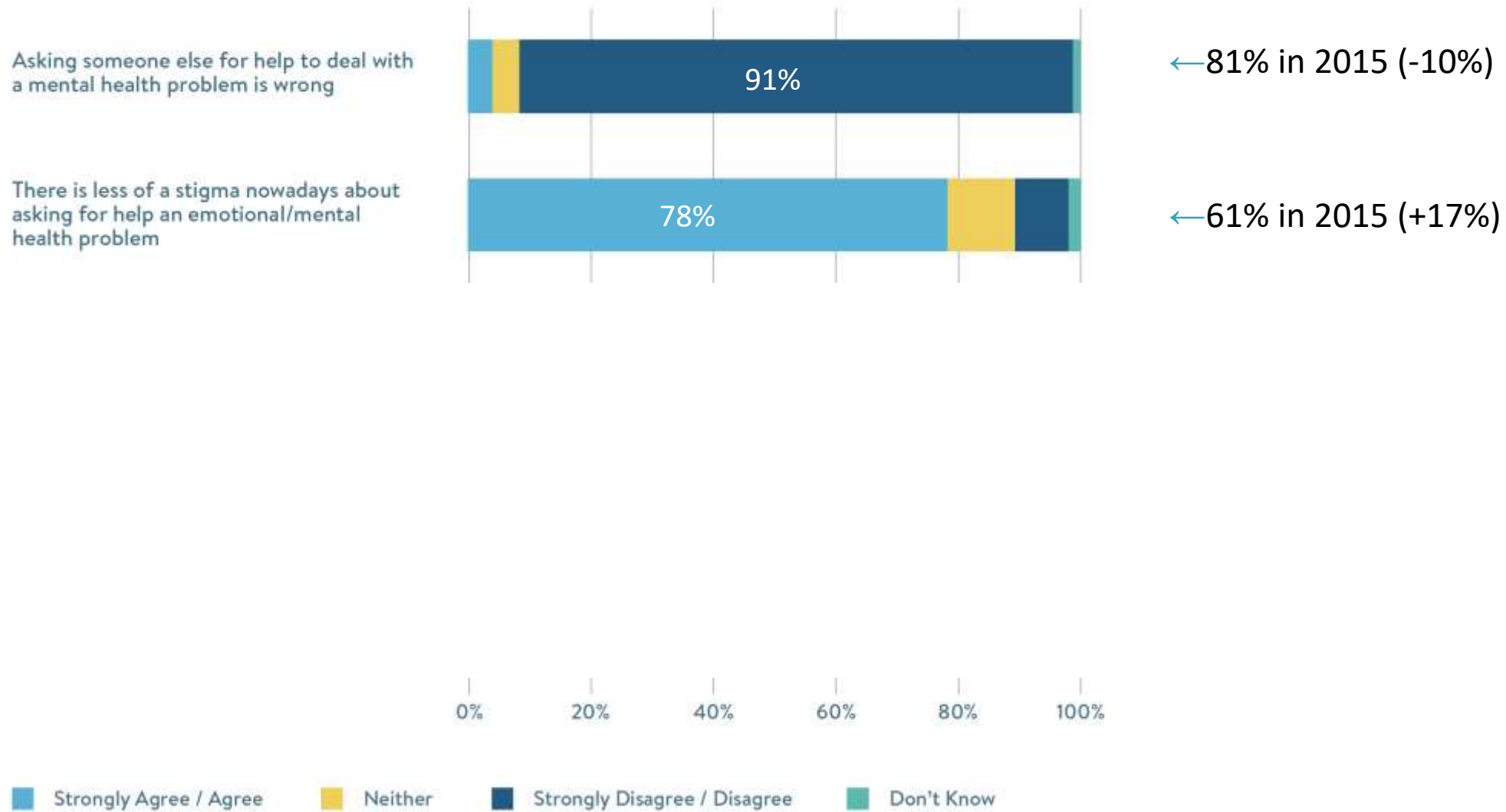
Figure 1: Attitudes to mental health and mental illness



Attitudes to Mental Health & Mental Illness

2. There is less of a stigma nowadays about asking for help for an emotional/ mental health problem

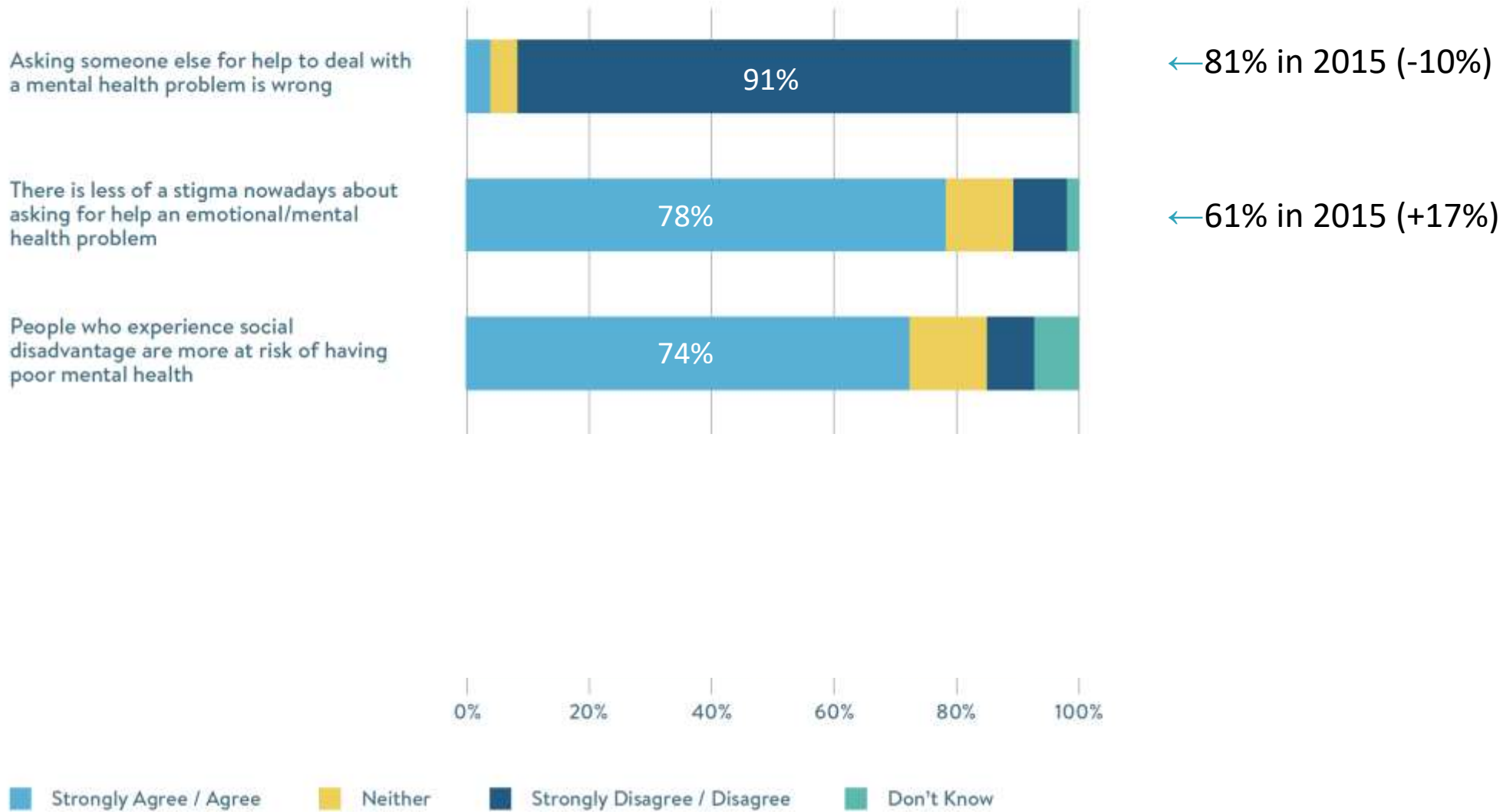
Figure 1: Attitudes to mental health and mental illness



Attitudes to Mental Health & Mental Illness

3. People who experience social disadvantage are more at risk of having poor mental health

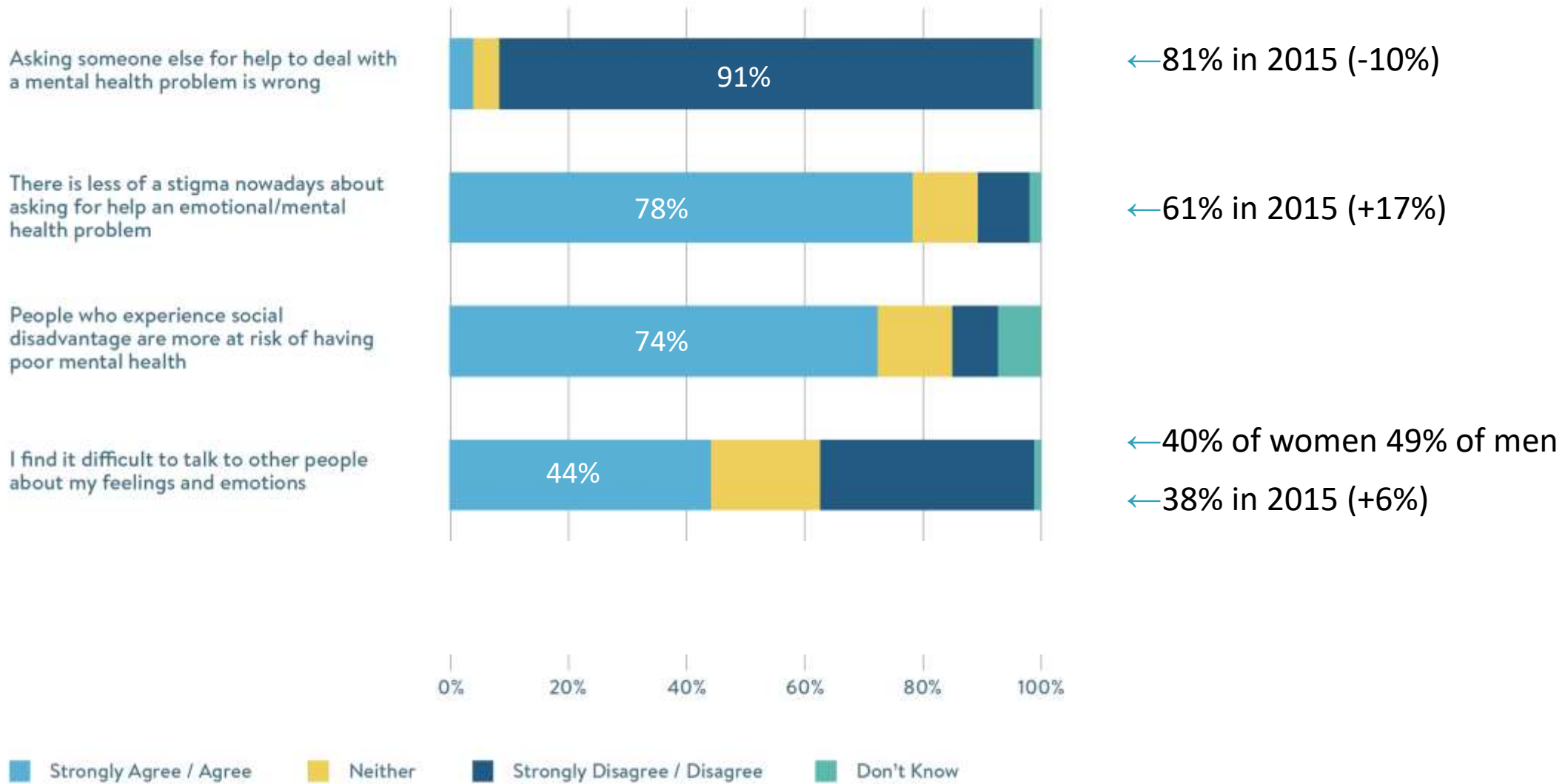
Figure 1: Attitudes to mental health and mental illness



Attitudes to Mental Health & Mental Illness

4. I find it difficult to talk to other people about my feelings and emotions

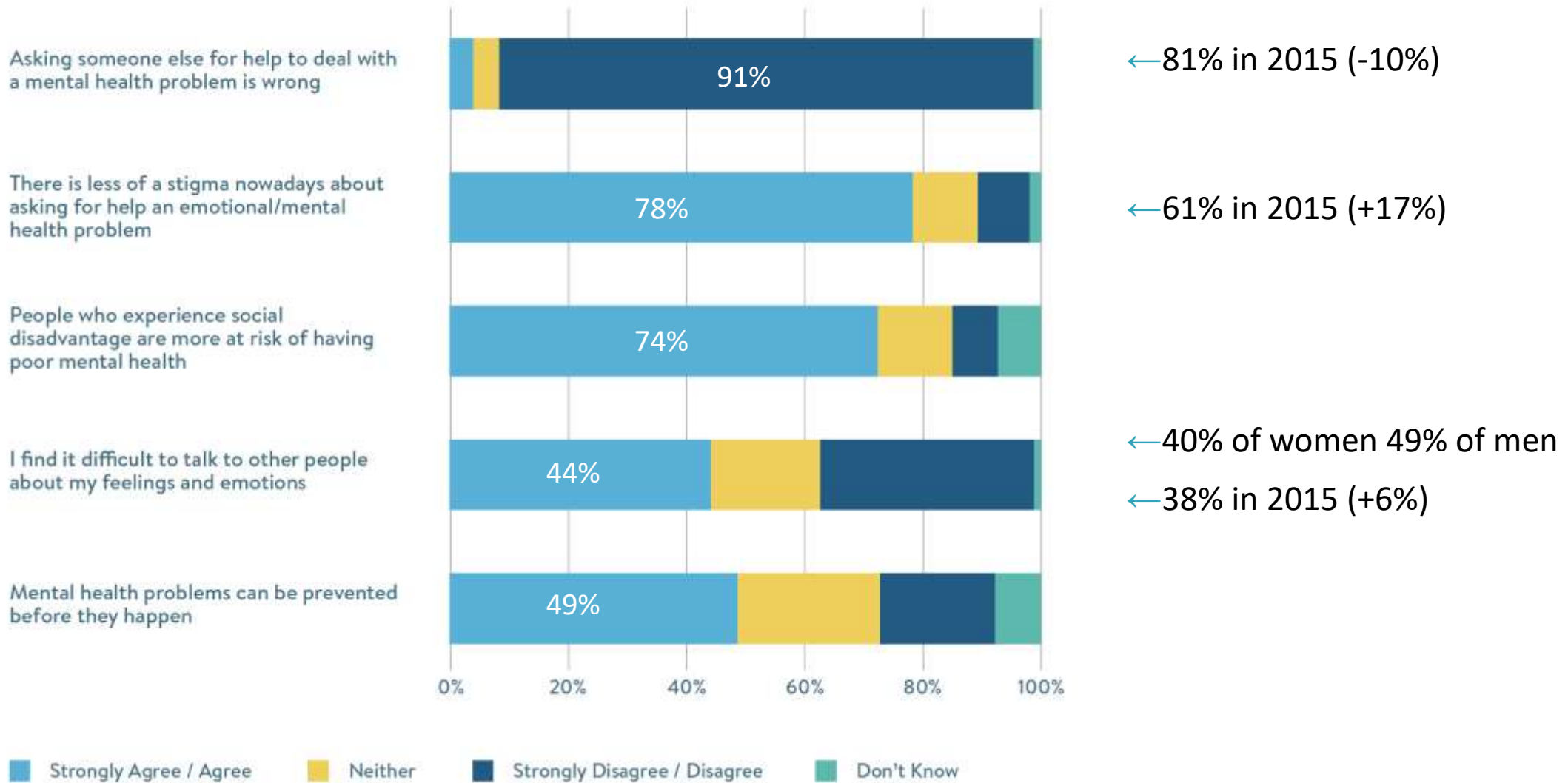
Figure 1: Attitudes to mental health and mental illness



Attitudes to Mental Health & Mental Illness

**5. Mental health problems can be prevented
before they happen**

Figure 1: Attitudes to mental health and mental illness



Beliefs About Suicide

- 1. If a person has made previous suicide attempts it means they won't do it for real**

Figure 2: Beliefs about suicide

If a person has made previous suicide attempts it means they won't do it for real



← 16% in 2015 (-14%)

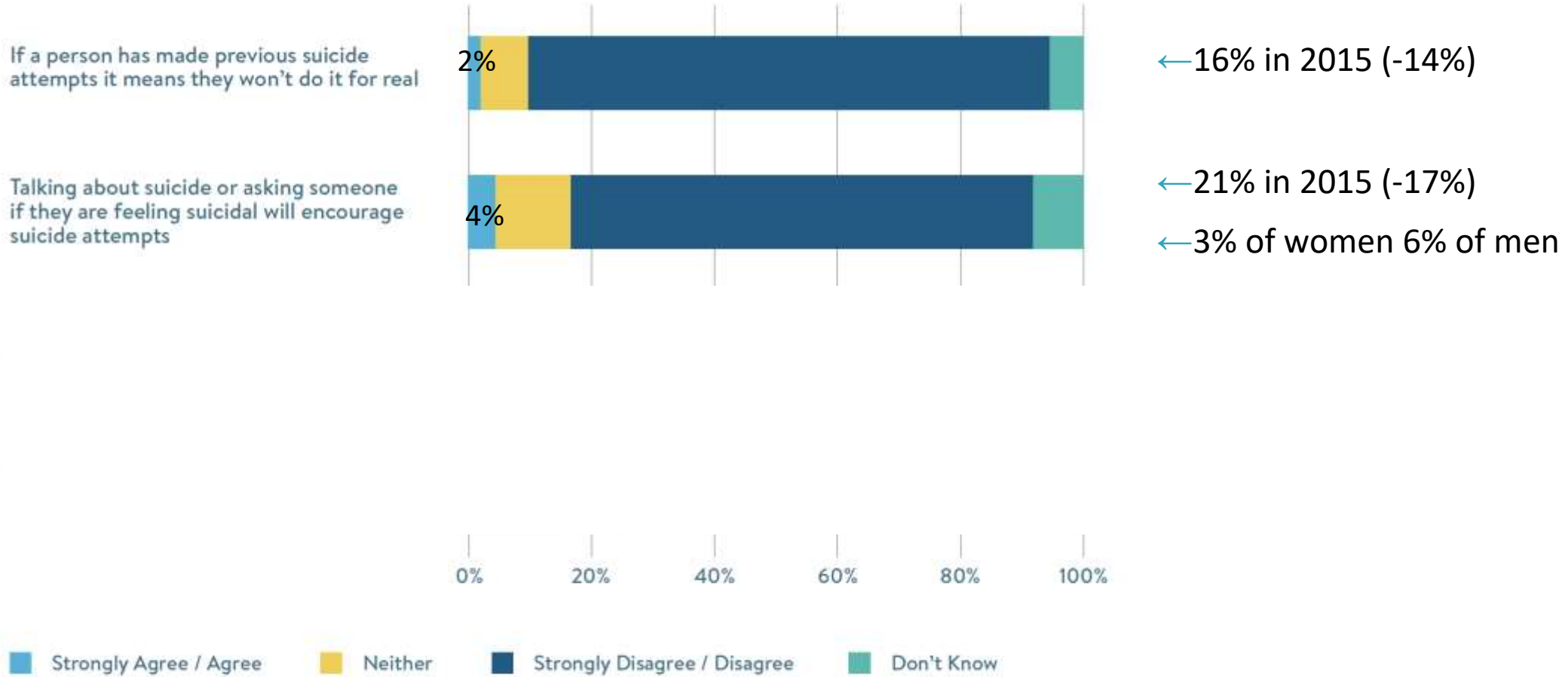
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Strongly Agree / Agree Neither Strongly Disagree / Disagree Don't Know

Beliefs About Suicide

- 2. Talking about suicide, or asking someone if they feel suicidal will encourage suicide attempts**

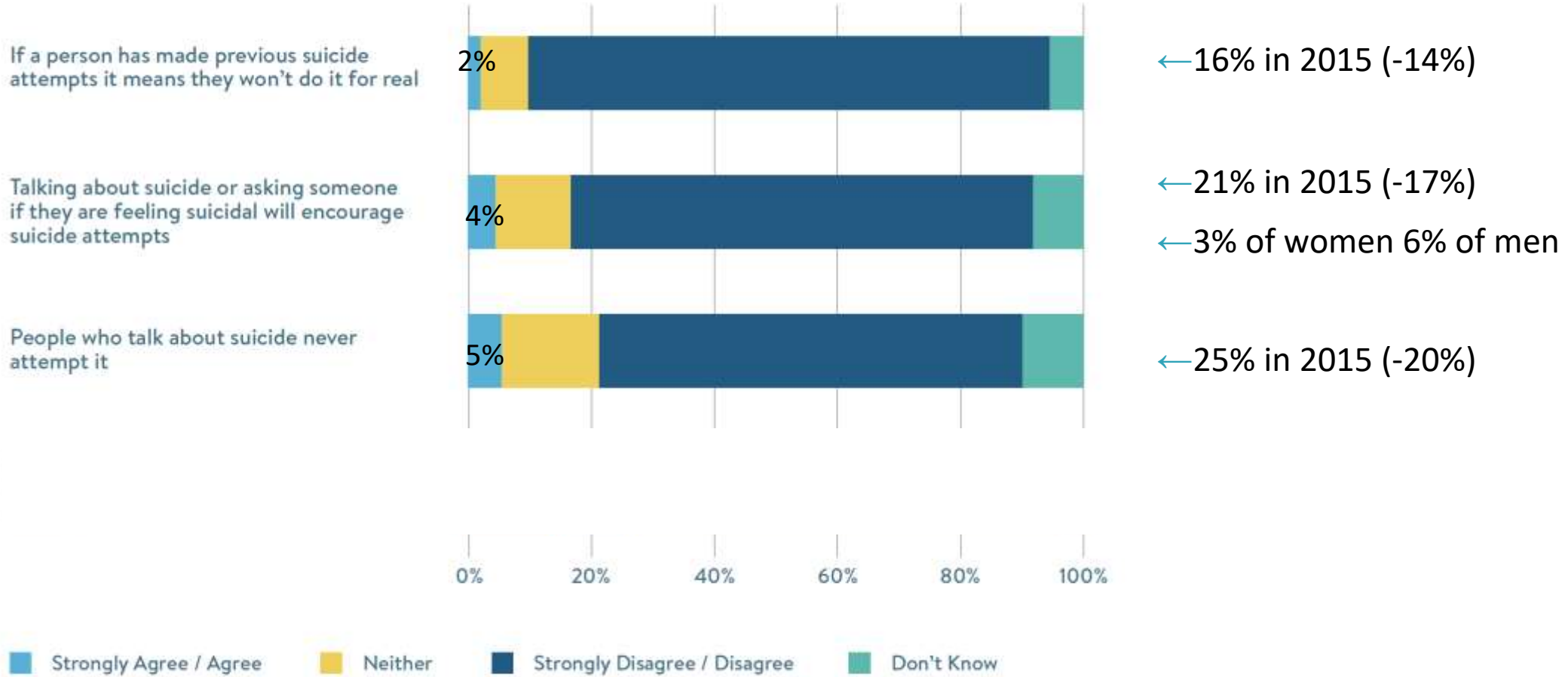
Figure 2: Beliefs about suicide



Beliefs About Suicide

**3. People who talk about suicide
never attempt it**

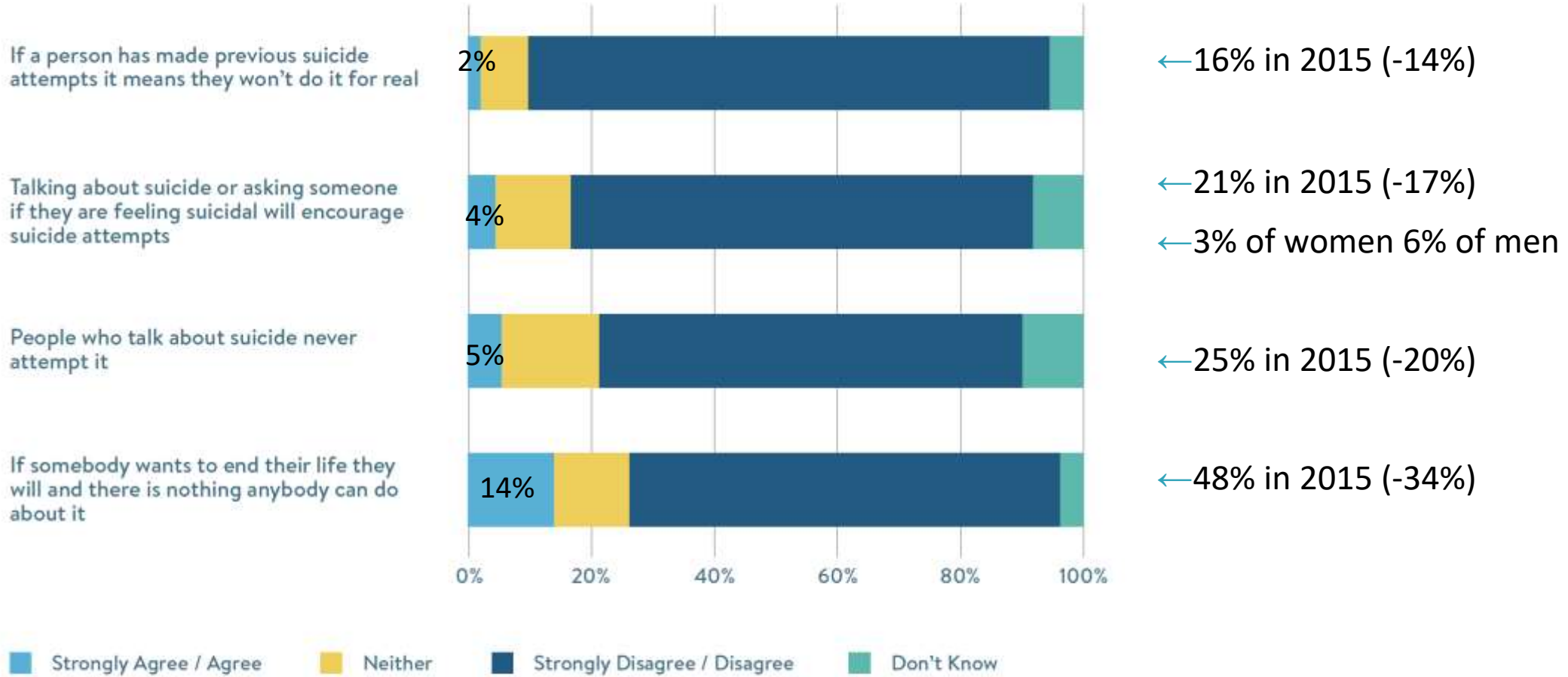
Figure 2: Beliefs about suicide



Beliefs About Suicide

**4. If somebody wants to end their life they will
and there's nothing anybody can do about it**

Figure 2: Beliefs about suicide



Who do we ask for help from?

39% no emotional/ mental health probs in past 3yrs (47% males, 33% females).

34%* had not sought support (46% males, 25% females).

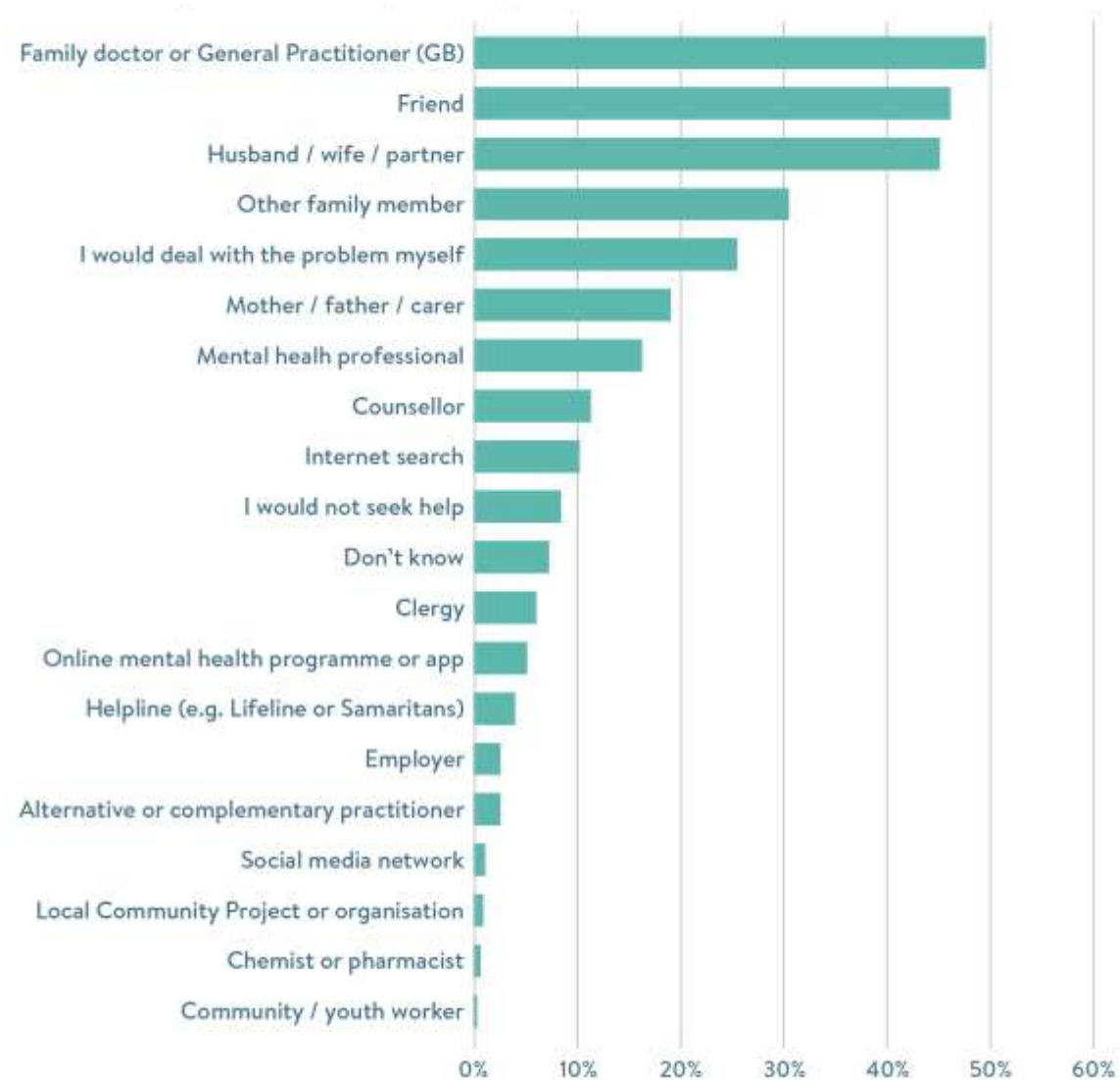
47% accessed help from professional source (53% females, 40% males).

32% accessed support from informal social networks (37% females, 25% males).

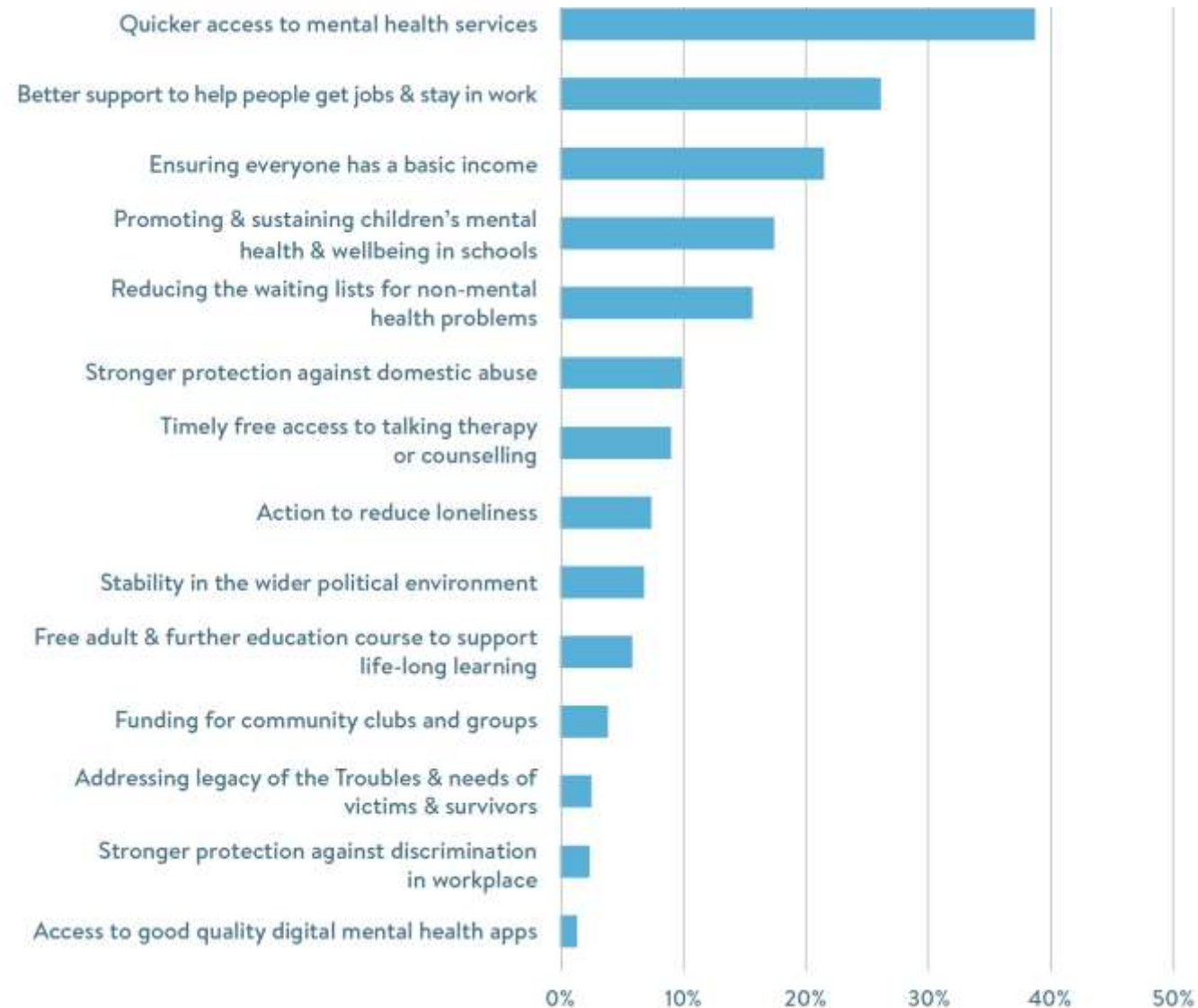
13% accessed help from both professional and informal sources.

*Of those who had a MH problem

Sources of help & support



Which Government policies should be prioritised?





Key Points

Stigma ↓. Asking for help now viewed as more acceptable.

A notable reduction in the %s holding negative/ inaccurate beliefs abt suicide.

Many find it difficult to talk about feelings & many have not accessed support from any source.

People want accessible professional mental health services. GP remains the most important source of help.

Spouses, partners, friends & family were key providers of mental health support.