



# Evidence based report

on the status of supportive housing for  
individuals with autism, needs analysis

## Field Research

Prepared by  
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# Field Research

This section outlines the findings from a field study conducted in Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, Ireland and North Macedonia. The study focuses on adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and aims to identify the unique needs and barriers they encounter when transitioning to independent living. Using structured questionnaires, data was collected from the participants to capture their personal experiences. This research sheds light on critical factors affecting the housing autonomy of young adults with ASD, providing an essential foundation for developing inclusive housing strategies.

The field research was conducted through online questionnaires, which were shared with project stakeholders, resulting in a broader range of responses than initially anticipated. Consequently, additional age ranges beyond young adults were included. This should not be considered unreliable data, as it reflects the wider audience that engaged with the questionnaire. The percentage of responses outside the target group does not significantly affect the overall findings, and including or excluding these responses does not alter the conclusions. Furthermore, the question "Do you consider yourself high functioning?" was included to provide valuable insights, as some individuals with ASD may not identify as high functioning, even if they are.



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# 3. Field Research

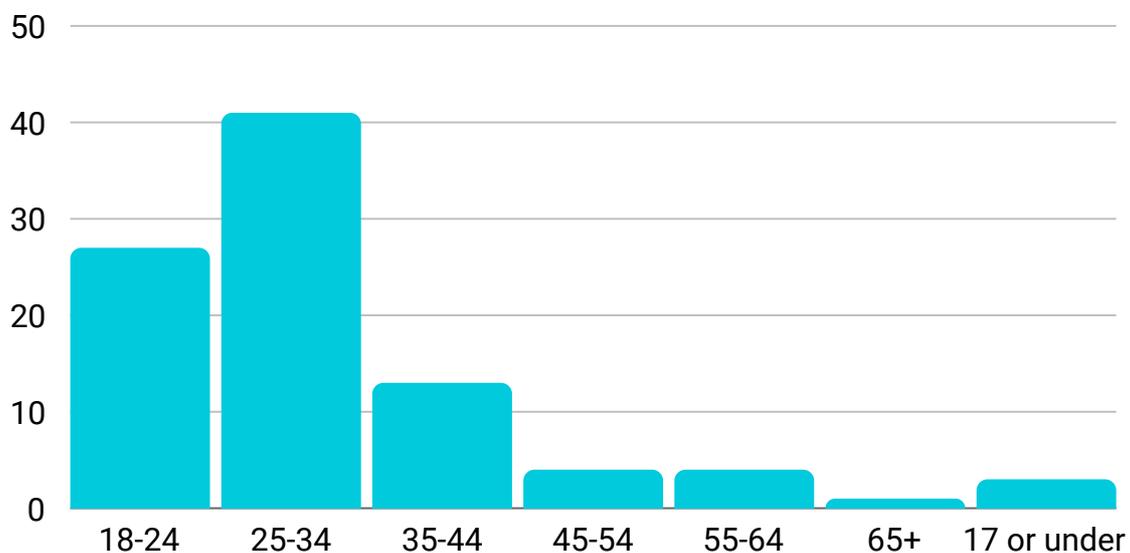
## 3.1. Field Research analysis of the National Reports

### 3.1.1. Overall Description of Participants

The dataset includes 72 responses collected from participants, primarily focusing on individuals with high-functioning autism. Of the respondents, 87.5% self-reported as having high-functioning autism, with 51.4% identifying as male.

#### Age range of the participants

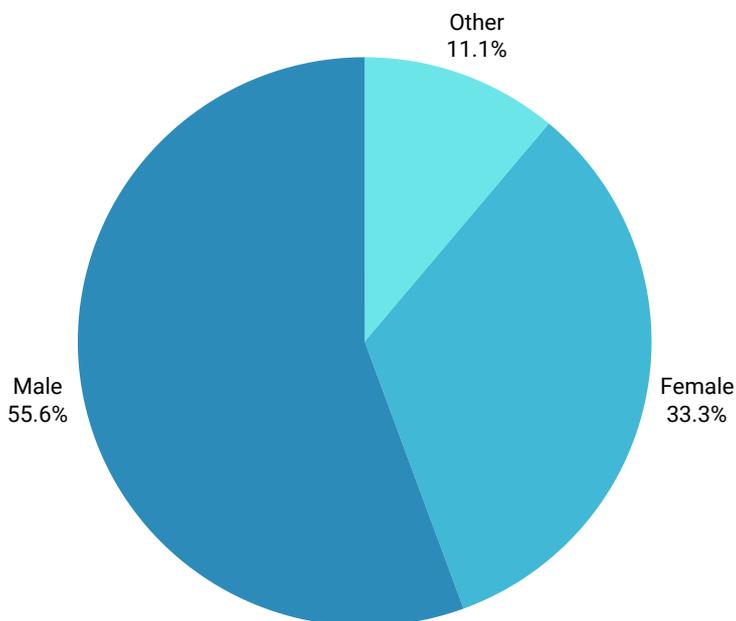
The participants in this study have a wide age range, with the majority falling between 25-34 years old, representing 41% of the sample. The second-largest group is between 18-24 years old, accounting for 27% of the participants. Smaller age groups include those aged 35-44 years, making up 13%, and those between 45-54 and 55-64 years, both constituting 4% each. Additionally, 3% of participants are under 17, while 1% are 65 or older.



Graph 1. Representation of participants' age range

### Gender representation among the participants

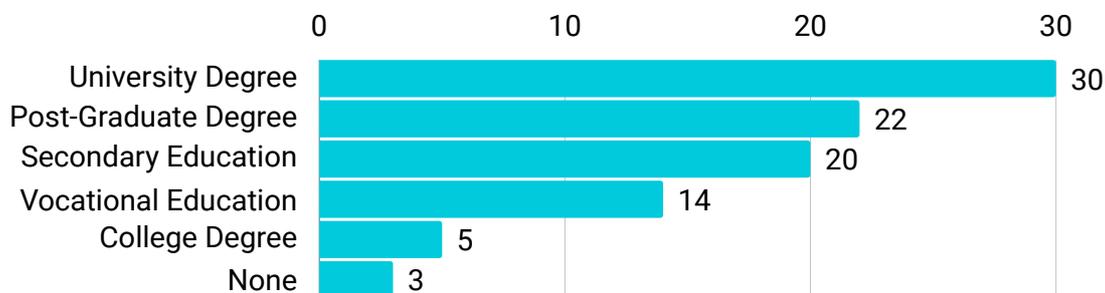
The gender distribution of the participants shows that 55.6% identify as male, making them the largest group in the study. Female participants account for 33.3%. Additionally, 11.1% of participants identified as "Other."



Graph 2. Representation of participants' gender

### Educational levels of the participants

The participants in this study have a diverse range of educational backgrounds. The largest group, 30%, hold a university degree, while 22% have completed post-graduate studies. 20% of the participants have attained secondary education, and 14% have completed vocational education. Additionally, 5% of the participants hold a college degree, and 3% reported having no formal education.

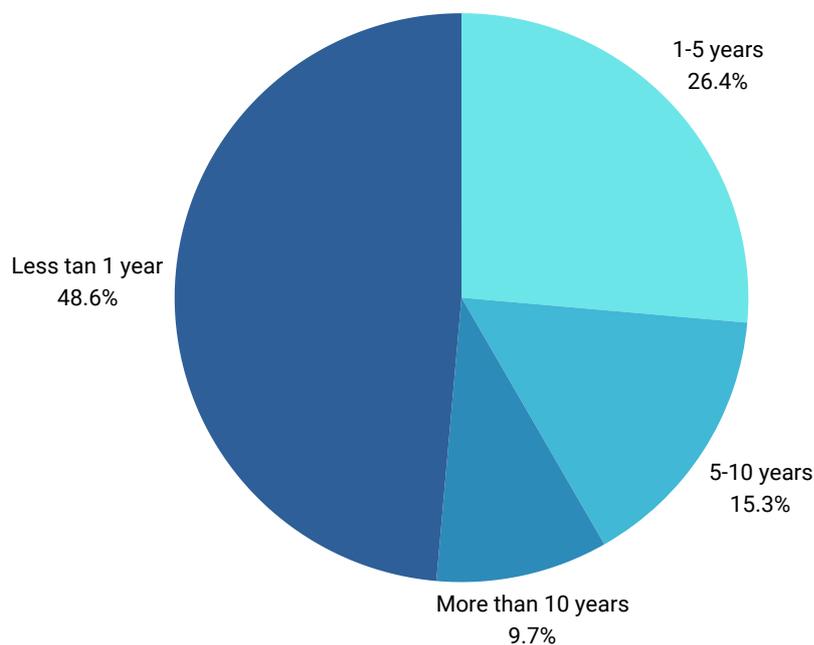


Graph 3. Representation of participants' educational level

## Living arrangements of the participants and duration of living independently among the participants



In terms of living arrangements, 36% of participants live with family members, making this the most common arrangement. 25% live alone, while 21% live with a spouse. A smaller proportion, 4%, live with support, and another 4% live with friends. Additionally, 3% live at supportive home, and 1% of participants rent out a spare room. Regarding the number of years participants have lived alone, the largest group, 48.6%, have lived alone for 0-1 years, indicating a relatively recent shift to independent living. 26.4% have lived alone for 1-5 years, while 15.3% have done so for 5-10 years. A smaller group, 10%, have lived alone for more than 10 years.



Graph 4. Representation of participants' years of living alone

### 3.1.2 Analysis of Stress and Anxiety

Participants experience varying levels of stress in their daily lives, with 26% reporting feeling anxious or stressed once or twice a week, and 15% experiencing stress multiple times a day. When it comes to living independently without support, 34% feel a little stressed, while 18% feel much stressed, and 29% do not feel stressed about it at all.

In terms of what would help them manage stress, 24% believe that help from family, friends, or support groups would be beneficial, and 20% consider physical activity as a key stress reliever. Additionally, 12% feel that greater support from professionals, such as educators or therapists, would be helpful.

This findings highlights the importance of social support and physical activity in managing stress, while professionals' assistance is also seen as valuable by a portion of the participants.



### 3.1.3 Analysis of Social Isolation and Loneliness

Participants' responses show that feelings of isolation or loneliness when living alone without support are a significant concern for many. To address this, 28% of participants believe that developing greater self-confidence would help reduce feelings of isolation. Additionally, 20% suggested that training on social skills and interactions, as well as fostering greater social awareness and empathy, would be beneficial. 16% highlighted that increased motivation to socialize could further help alleviate loneliness. These responses suggest that participants see building self-confidence, improving social skills, and enhancing social awareness as key strategies for tackling social isolation and loneliness.

### 3.1.4 Analysis of Sensory Overload

Participants' responses show that many experience sensory overload at home or during daily activities. The most commonly reported issue is loud noises, mentioned by 24% of participants. 16% indicated that brightness, bad smells, and the texture of objects around them contribute to their sensory overload. Additionally, 12% reported that being away from other people and loud noises together exacerbate their sensory discomfort.

#### *Needs Assessment*

The needs assessment focused on identifying the specific types of support requested by individuals with high-functioning autism to help them manage independent living. Based on the survey data, the most frequently requested areas of support were identified, highlighting the primary challenges faced in independent living.



# Key Areas of Support

1

## **Managing Stress and Anxiety:**

47.2% of respondents indicated that they need training and support in managing stress and anxiety. This was the most frequently requested area, underscoring the importance of emotional and psychological support for individuals transitioning to or managing independent living. Participants expressed a need for tools and strategies to cope with daily stressors, which are strongly linked to their overall confidence in living independently.

2

## **Support with Daily Home Activities:**

20.8% of respondents requested help with practical tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, and grocery shopping. This suggests that many individuals face challenges in managing routine household responsibilities, which can contribute to their overall stress and anxiety. Providing hands-on support or training in these areas would improve their ability to maintain an independent lifestyle.

3

## **Financial Management:**

A notable proportion of participants expressed difficulty in managing finances, identifying this as a significant barrier to independent living. Although specific data on this was not quantified in the survey, managing budgets, paying bills, and financial planning are commonly reported areas where autistic individuals require support.

4

## **Mental Health Support:**

Related to the need for stress and anxiety management, several participants also highlighted the importance of ongoing mental health support, such as access to therapists, counsellors, or support groups. Continuous support in maintaining mental well-being is seen as crucial for those living independently.

5

## **Social and Communication Skills:**

While not as frequently mentioned as other areas, some participants noted difficulties in managing social interactions and building relationships, both within and outside the home. Support in this area could help individuals better navigate social challenges in daily life, contributing to a more fulfilling independent living experience.

# Conclusion

The research reveals significant challenges and needs that individuals with high-functioning autism face as they transition to independent living. The analysis identified three key factors—years living alone, sensory overload frequency, and daily stress/anxiety levels—which have a measurable impact on stress related to independent living. The regression analysis further shows that while years of living alone tend to slightly reduce stress about living independently, this effect was not statistically significant. In contrast, the findings underscore a strong association between daily stress/anxiety levels and increased stress about living independently, highlighting the need for comprehensive stress management interventions. These findings align with other research that demonstrates how heightened stress levels are prevalent among autistic individuals, particularly in relation to changes in routine or environment (Gotham et al., 2015). Such results emphasise the crucial role of supporting individuals in managing their daily emotional challenges to foster confidence and facilitate successful autonomous living.

In addition to psychological and sensory difficulties, the needs assessment reveals that practical support is a critical necessity for individuals with high-functioning autism. Nearly 47.2% of respondents indicated they need training in managing stress and anxiety, while 20.8% expressed a need for assistance with daily home activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and grocery shopping. Research by Smith et al. (2019) also highlights the importance of practical support in independent living, noting that difficulties with home management tasks can significantly impact overall well-being. Moreover, the research highlights financial management as a significant barrier, although specific data on this issue was not quantified. Other studies, such as Howlin et al. (2004), have also shown that autistic individuals often struggle with financial planning and literacy, which further impedes their ability to live independently. These findings suggest that developing comprehensive support systems—encompassing emotional and psychological support, training in home management, and financial literacy programmes—will be crucial in reducing stress and empowering individuals with autism to live independently with greater confidence.

By addressing these key areas—stress management, daily living support, and financial skills—the research reveals that targeted interventions can significantly alleviate the challenges associated with independent living. As highlighted by Wei et al. (2014), interventions that combine both emotional and practical skill-building lead to improved autonomy and quality of life for autistic individuals. This approach would not only improve day-to-day functioning but also enhance the overall well-being and autonomy of individuals with high-functioning autism, facilitating a smoother transition to independent living.



## 3.2 Cyprus

### Participants' Disclaimer

The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

#### 3.2.1 Overall Description of Participants

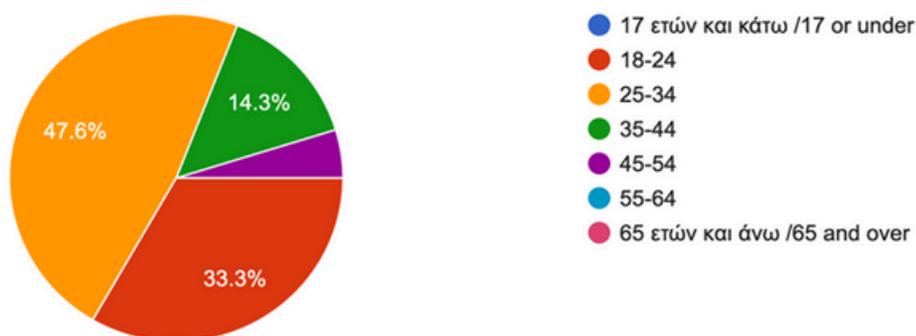
21 adults voluntarily participated in this study. All of them identify as having high-functioning autism; this was the main criterion of participation. The participants were found from various settings, including day programmes, special education centres and associated partners. Generally,, in Cyprus, in the registry of the "Committee of the Protection of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities", 307 individuals reported a diagnosis of Autism, representing 32% of all persons with a diagnosis of intellectual disability (ΕΠΑΝΑ, 2022). This number does not include people diagnosed with "intellectual disability with autistic characteristics", or people not on the registry.

#### Age range of the participants

Participants' age ranged from 18 to 54 years. Almost half of them (47.6%) ranged between 25-34 years old, one third (33.3%) ranged between 18-24 years old, 14.3% between 35-44 years old and

#### Ηλικία/ Age

21 responses



Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

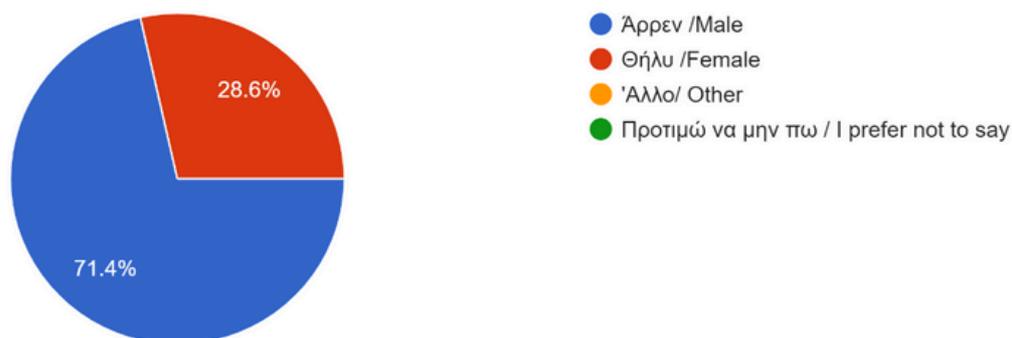
## 3.2 Cyprus

### *Gender representation among the participants*

15 out of 21 participants identify as male and 6 as female. None of them answered the options “other” or “I prefer not to say”. This result is similar to the general population of people with autism spectrum disorder, a ratio of 4:1, males being the most prominent (Saure, Castrén, Mikkola, & Salmi, 2023).

#### Φύλο / Gender

21 responses



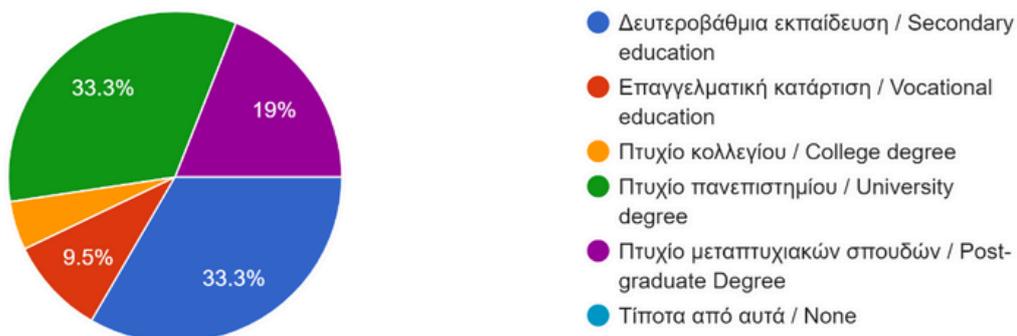
Graph 2: Visual Representation of the Sex Range of Participants

### *Educational levels of the participants*

Out of the 21 participants, 7 (33.3%) hold a university degree, 7 (33.3%) have completed secondary education, 4 (19%) have a postgraduate degree, 2 (9.5%) have undergone vocational training and 1 (4.8%) hold a college degree. Indistinct results exist about the educational levels of adults on the spectrum, in Cyprus. However, the education in Cyprus has transitioned in the past couple of years, from a segregated to an inclusive system in accordance with international guidelines. Namely, more children diagnosed with autism can get incorporated in the traditional class and are given more opportunities to develop educationally (Van Kessel, et al., 2020).

#### Εκπαίδευση / Education

21 responses



Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education level of Participants

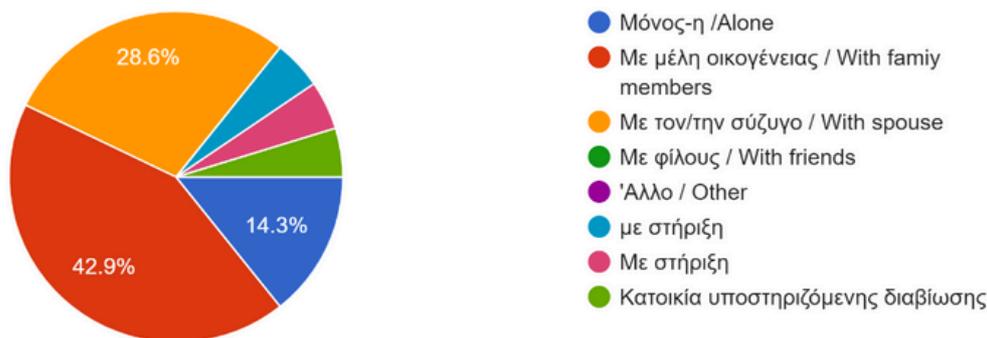
## 3.2 Cyprus

### *Living arrangements of the participants*

Under half the participants (42.9%) currently live with family members, 28.6% live with their spouse, 14.3% live alone, and 14.3% currently live with support. In Cyprus, adults on the spectrum

#### Καθεστώς διαβίωσης / Living Status

21 responses



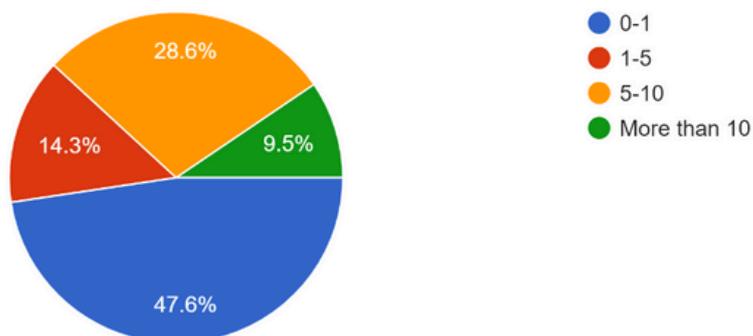
Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

### *Duration of living independently among the participants*

28.6% have been living alone 5-10 years, 14.3% 1-5 years and 9.5% have been living independently for over 10 years.

#### Χρόνια Ανεξάρτητης Διαβίωσης / Years of Living Alone

21 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

## 3.2 Cyprus

### 3.2.2 Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

For the current study, stress was defined as the feeling that someone's mind is constantly racing with too many thoughts and worries, making it hard to focus on anything else. Similarly, anxiety was defined as the constant worry about something bad happening, even if there's no real danger.

#### Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

In the question 'Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life', participants had five options to choose from. 4.8% (1/21) mentioned 'I never feel anxious and/or stressed', 33.3% (7/21), the majority of them, choose the option 'I only feel anxious and/or stressed once or twice a week', 28.6% (6/21), choose the option 'I feel anxious and/or stressed three or four times a week', 14.3% (3/21), selected the option 'I mostly feel anxious and/or stressed once every day', and finally 19% (4/21) reported 'I mostly feel anxious and/or stressed multiple times a day'.

Several studies have indicated that adults with ASD have a high prevalence of anxiety disorders, with estimates ranging from 27% to 46% for any anxiety disorder (Hollocks, Lerh, Magiati, Meiser-Stedman, & Brugha, 2018; Nah, Brewer, Young, & Flower, 2018), a fact which is also apparent from the results of the present investigation.

Δηλώστε το επίπεδο του στρες/άγχους που βιώνετε στην καθημερινή σας ζωή. / Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

21 responses



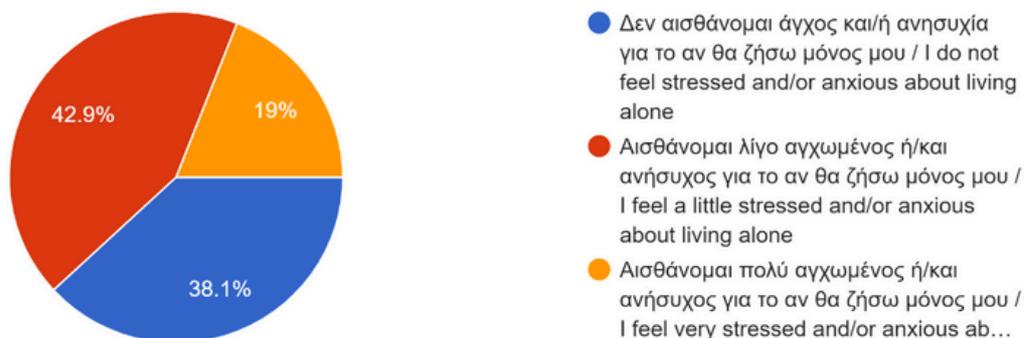
Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

In the question 'How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?', the participants reported as follows: 38.1% (8/21) chose the option 'I do not feel stressed and/or anxious about living alone', the majority of them, 42.9% (9/21), mentioned 'I feel a little stressed and/or anxious about living alone', and finally, only 19% (4/21) reported 'I feel very stressed and/or anxious about living alone'. The literature in Cyprus, suggests an emphasis on the levels of anxiety of parents and carers of people on the spectrum, rather than the anxiety experienced by the individual with ASD (Πουρνάρα, 2018).

## 3.2 Cyprus

Πόσο στρεσαρισμένος/αγχωμένος αισθάνεστε στη σκέψη να ζήσετε μόνοι σας χωρίς υποστήριξη; How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

21 responses



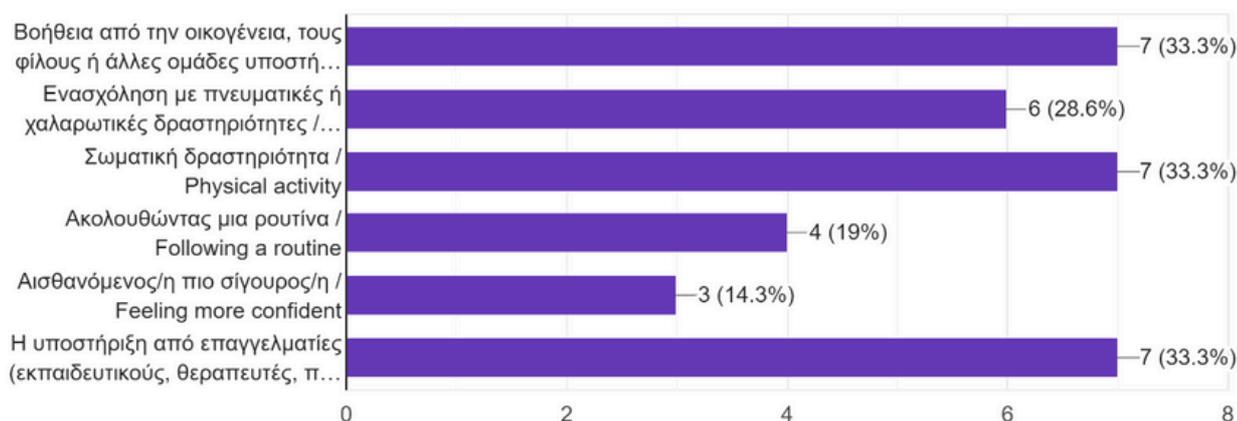
Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

### Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants were given 7 options to choose from in regards to coping strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety. Participants were allowed to choose multiple answers, as well as having the option of adding their own answer in 'other'. The most popular answers, each with 33.3% electability (7/21) were: "Help from family, friends or other support groups", "Physical activity" and "Greater support from professionals (educators, therapists, trainers, etc.)". The next popular answer, with 28.6% electability (6/21) was "Engaging in mindful or relaxing activities". 19% of participants (4/21) elected "Following a routine" and lastly, 14.3% (3/21) chose "Feeling more confident" as a strategy for helping to best deal with stress and anxiety. None of the participants chose to write an answer of their own in the "Other" option provided.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω πιστεύετε ότι θα σας βοηθούσε να αντιμετωπίσετε το στρες/άγχος; Which of the following do you feel would help you to deal with stress/anxiety?

21 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

## 3.2 Cyprus

### 3.2.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

This part of the survey, focused on social isolation or loneliness, which were defined as the feeling of being surrounded by people, but still feeling isolated and disconnected, as if there is an invisible barrier preventing you from truly connecting with others.

#### Frequency of social interactions among the participants

The following question focused on the frequency of in-person social interactions of participants, ranging from “once per week” to “every day”. The results showed that almost half (47.6%) answered that they interact “every day”, 19% “four - five times per week”, 28.6% “two – three times per week”, and only 1 participant (4.8%) reported “once a week”. Literature shows significant challenges with social isolation in adults with ASD (Orsmond, Shattuck, Cooper, Sterzing, & Anderson, 2013), however, interventions seem to improve the social skills and the community participation of individuals with autism (McConkey, Cassin & McNaughton, 2020).

Πόσο συχνά αλληλεπιδράτε με άλλους (αυτοπροσώπως); How often do you interact with others (in person)?

21 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

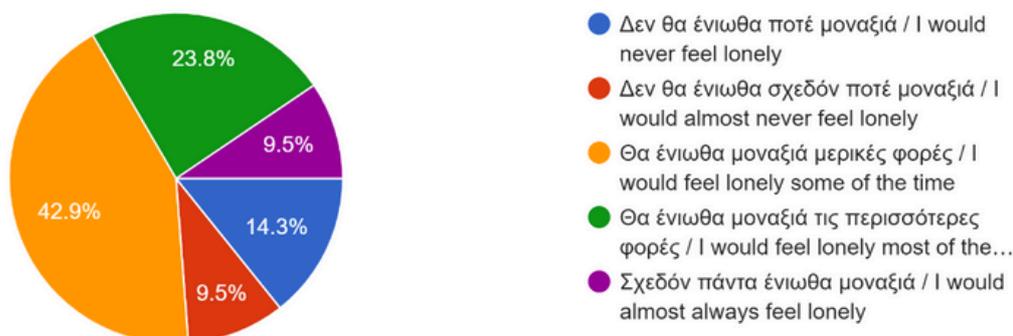
#### Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

To the question “Do you or would you feel isolated/ lonely when living alone without support?”, 5 options were provided; ranging from “never” to “almost always”. 13.3% (3/21) participants reported “I would never feel lonely”, 9.5% (2/21) reported “I would almost never feel lonely”, the majority of them 42.9% (9/21) reported “I would feel lonely some of the time”, 23.8% (5/21) reported “I would feel lonely most of the time” and 9.5% (2/21) reported “I would almost never feel lonely” when living alone without support.

## 3.2 Cyprus

Αισθάνεστε ή θα μπορούσατε να αισθανθείτε απομονωμένοι/μοναχικοί εάν ζούσατε μόνοι σας χωρίς υποστήριξη; Do you or would you feel isolated/lonely when living alone without support?

21 responses



Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

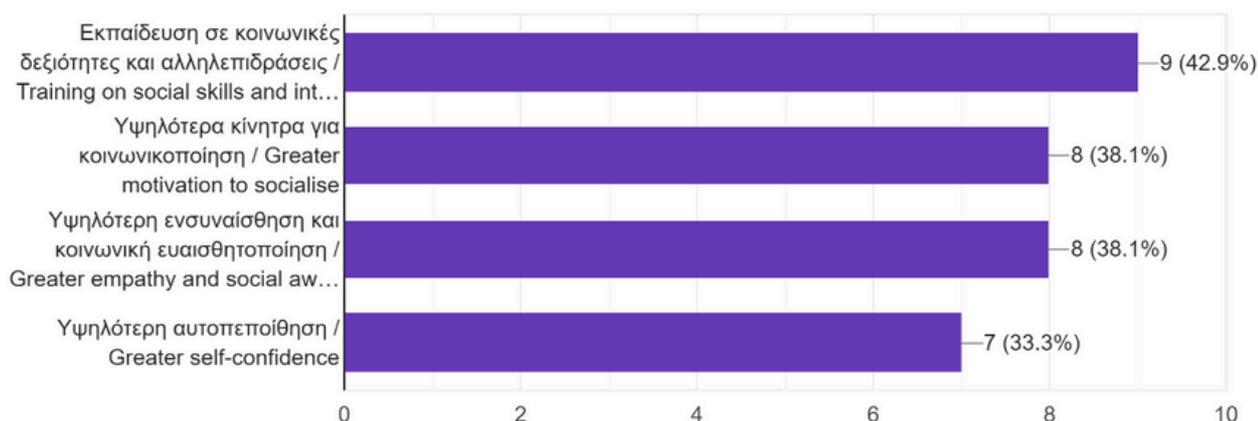
### Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

To the question “Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?”, 42.9% (9/21 participants) answered “Training on social skills and interactions”, 38.1% (8/21) answered “Greater motivation to socialise”, 38.1% (8/21) answered “Greater empathy and social awareness” and 33.3% (7/21) “Greater self-confidence”. Participants could choose more than one answer and had the option to give their own answer under “other”, however no one chose to complete that option.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω θα σας βοηθούσε να αισθάνεστε λιγότερο

απομονωμένοι/μοναχικοί; Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?

21 responses



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

## 3.2 Cyprus

### 3.2.4 Measurement of Sensory Overload

Experiencing sensory overload was described as feeling like being in a room where everyone is watching you, the light is too bright, every sound is too loud and every touch is too intense, all at the same time. This feeling can make it difficult to concentrate, interact with others, or even perform simple tasks until the overload subsides.

#### *Incidents of sensory overload in daily life*

The participants were asked the following question: “Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?”. Nearly half of the participants (47.6%) reported “experiencing sensory overload once or twice a week”, a quarter (28.6%) reported “experiencing sensory overload three or four times a week”, 9.5% (2/21) reported experiencing “once every day”, 9.5% (2/21) reported experiencing sensory overload “multiple times every day” and 4.8 % (1/21) answered “I never experience sensory overload”. MacLennan, O’Brien and Tavassoli (2022), examined the sensory experience of adults in the spectrum, identifying the extremely high 96% of their sample, experience sensory reactivity experience, and highlighting the importance of in-depth research of the specific autistic characteristic.

Βιώνετε ποτέ αισθητηριακή υπερφόρτωση στο σπίτι ή κατά τη διάρκεια άλλων δραστηριοτήτων στην καθημερινή σας ζωή; Do you ever experience s...ome or during other activities in your daily life?  
21 responses



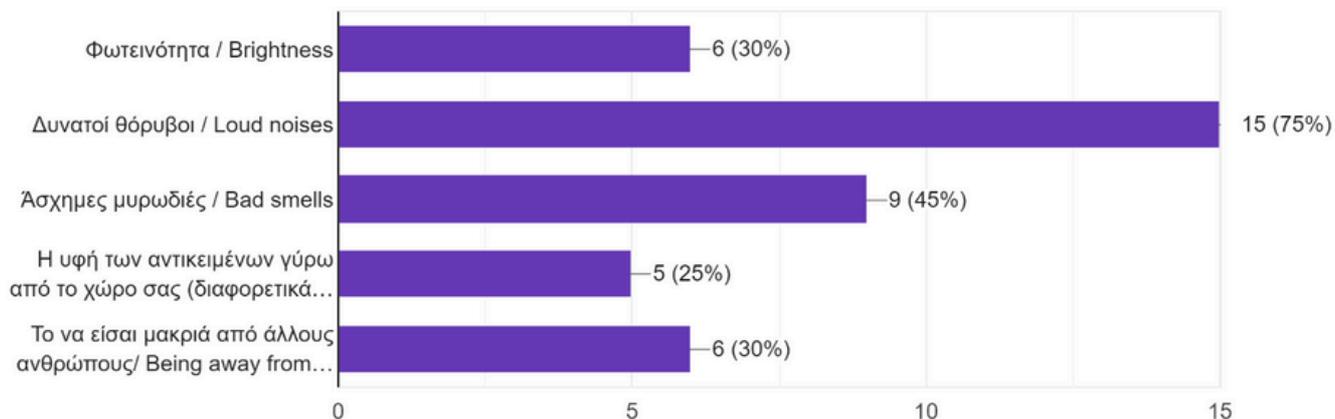
Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

#### *Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload*

20 out of the 21 participants that reported some amount of sensory overload in the previous question, were then asked whether their sensory overload could be improved by being able to control any of the following options. Participants were able to select as many answers as they liked. The majority of participants (75%) chose “Loud noises”, 45% “Bad smells”, 30% “Brightness”, 30% “Being away from other people” and 25% “Texture of objects around your living space (different clothing materials, bed sheets, etc.”. “Other” option was not filled out by any participant.

## 3.2 Cyprus

Αν απαντήσατε ότι βιώνετε αισθητική υπερφόρτωση στην τελευταία ερώτηση, θα βελτιωνόταν η δυσάρεστη αυτή κατάσταση αν μπορούσατε να ελέγχ... to control the following? (Tick all that apply)  
20 responses



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

### Difficulties in accessing public services

In the following question, participants were asked whether they find it challenging to navigate essential public services such as healthcare, bank and financial, insurance etc. Out of the 3 options, the majority (47.6%) responded with "I sometimes find it difficult to use these services and they make me feel a little stressed", 33.3% responded with "I find it very difficult to use these services and they make me feel very stressed" and 19% responded "I find it easy to access these services and they don't make me feel stressed".

Σας δυσκολεύει η περιήγηση σε βασικές δημόσιες υπηρεσίες (υγειονομική περίθαλψη, τραπεζικές και χρηματοπιστωτικές υπηρεσίες, ασφάλ..., bank and financial services, insurance, etc.)?  
21 responses



Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

## 3.2 Cyprus

### Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. Participants were able to choose all answers that applied to them. The results yielded that the majority of participants (38.1%) find difficultly “visiting medical practices/hospitals, and all other answers yielded 28.6% (“coping with the health issue”, “interacting with a health professional”, and “none of the above”. No one reported another option.

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω σενάρια σας είναι δύσκολο να αντιμετωπίσετε όταν έχετε κάποιο πρόβλημα υγείας; (Σημειώστε όλα όσα ισχύουν) W... experience a health issue? (tick all that apply)

21 responses



Graph 15: Visual Representation of the common issues encountered during health crisis.

### Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Participants were asked how they felt about managing everyday home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.), and whether it would be difficult or stressful. Participants had 3 options to choose from, ranging from “I do not find this difficult or stressful at all” to “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”. 57.1% (12/21) or participants reported the middle option: “I find this a little difficult and/or stressful”, 28.6% (6/21) “I do not find this difficult or stressful”, and 14.3% (3/21) “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”.

Αισθάνεστε ότι η διαχείριση των καθημερινών οικιακών δραστηριοτήτων που πρέπει να κάνετε μόνοι σας (όπως η καθαριότητα, η υγιεινή διατροφή, ...market, etc.) is/would be difficult or stressful?

21 responses



Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

## 3.2 Cyprus

### *Impact of support from professionals on well-being*

This question investigated how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals were to participants overall well-being. 33.3% (7/21) reported this having “A minor effect on their wellbeing”, 33.3% (7/21) reported “This is essential for their well-being”, 28.6% (6/21) having “A great effect on my well-being” and 4.8% (1 participant) reported that “This support has no effect” on their well-being.

Παρακαλώ δηλώστε πόσο χρήσιμη είναι η υποστήριξη από εκπαιδευτικούς, θεραπευτές και άλλους επαγγελματίες υποστήριξης για τη συνολική ...ort professionals is to your overall well-being?

21 responses



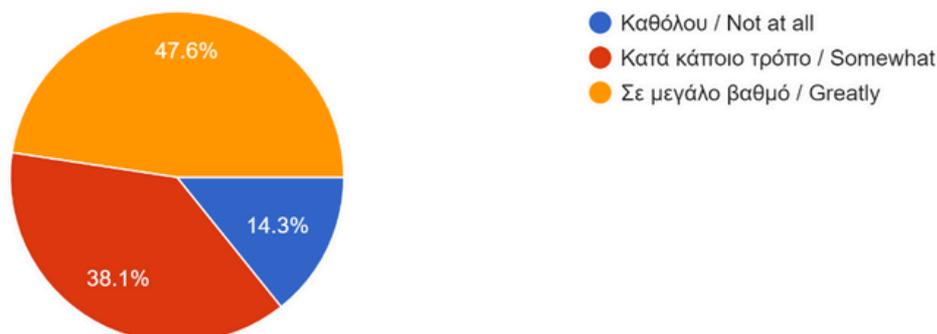
Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

### *Need for enhanced professional support for independent living*

Participants were asked whether they felt they would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently. Out of the three given options, almost half of them, 47.6% (10/21) responded “Yes”, 38.1% (8/21) responded “Somewhat” and 14.3% (3/21) responded “No” to benefittina from areater support from

Πιστεύετε ότι θα ωφεληθείτε περισσότερο αν λάβετε υποστήριξη από εκπαιδευτικούς, θεραπευτές ή άλλους ειδικούς για να ζήσετε ανεξάρτ...ther specialists in order to live independently?

21 responses



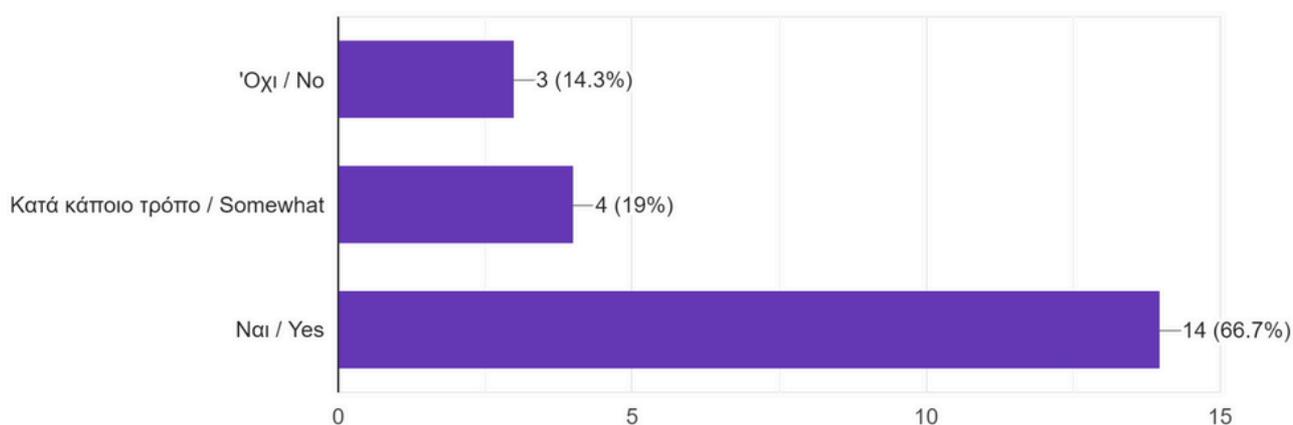
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

## 3.2 Cyprus

### Role of autism awareness in effective support

Further to the previous question, participants were asked to what extent a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support. Most of them 66.7% (14/21) responded 'Yes', followed by 19% (4/21) who answered 'Somewhat', and lastly 14.3% (3) responded 'No'.

Πιστεύετε ότι μια μεγαλύτερη ευαισθητοποίηση και κατανόηση του αυτισμού θα βοηθούσε αυτούς τους επαγγελματίες να παρέχουν πιο ουσιασ...rofessionals to provide more effective support?  
21 responses

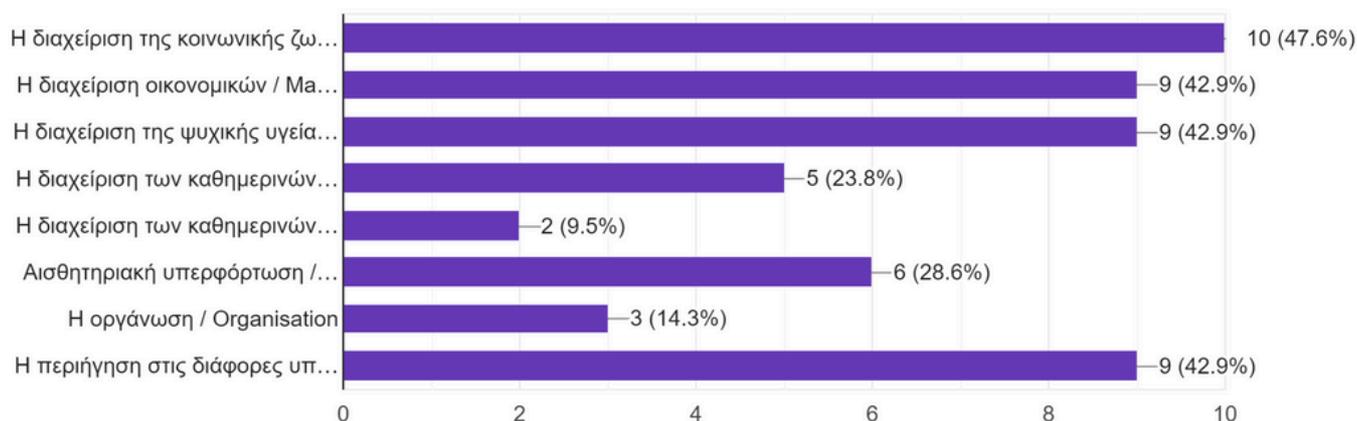


Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.

### Challenges in various aspects of independent living

This question focused on various areas of independent living that participants felt they struggle/would struggle with. They were able to choose as many of the options as they wanted. The most popular response (47.6%) was "managing social life and interactions". The second most popular responses (each yielding 42.9% responses) were: "Managing finances", "managing mental health (stress, anxiety, etc.)", and "Navigating Services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)". 33.3% reported struggling with "Managing daily life activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)", 28.6% reported with "Sensory Overload", and 14.3% with "Organisation".

Σε ποιους από τους ακόλουθους τομείς της ανεξάρτητης διαβίωσης αισθάνεστε ότι δυσκολεύεστε/θα δυσκολευόσασταν; Which of the...ng do you feel you struggle/would struggle with?  
21 responses



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

## 3.2 Cyprus

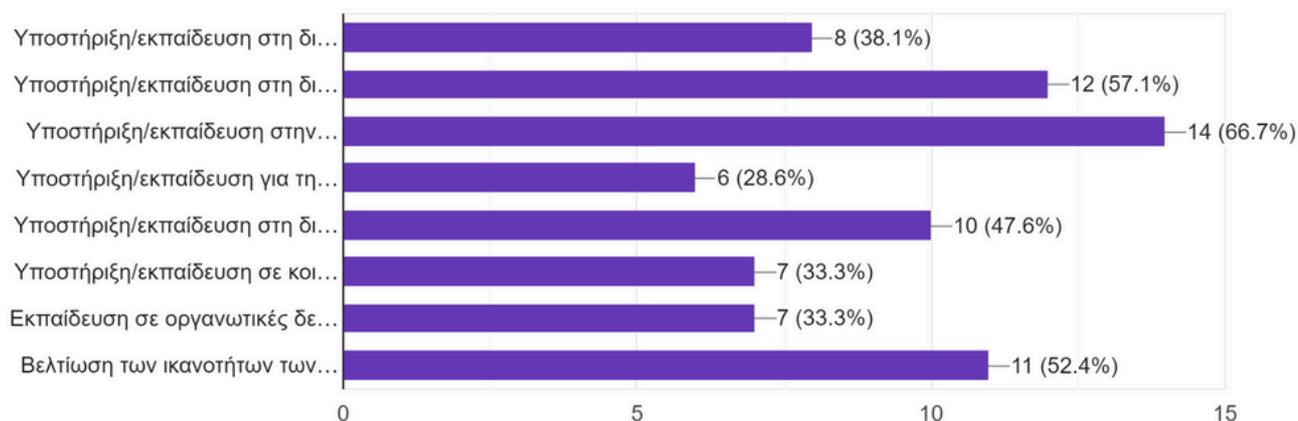
### *Additional barriers to independent living*

6 participants (28.6%) responded to the open-ended question of whether anyone felt there are any additional barriers that may affect their ability to live alone. 2 participants stated their “Parents” as an additional barrier (9.5%), 1 participant stated they “Would like to have a trial period to help with their anxiety levels”, another stated they would find it “Hard to commute as they could get lost and disorientated”, and another stated “Other people wanting to take advantage of me and harm me. Having the support from professionals help me”. The last participant stated that “I don’t feel there is an additional barrier to living alone”.

### *Support systems for independent living*

The following question investigated additional support systems which participants felt would help with their independent living. 8 options were provided, of which participants could choose as many as they wanted. The most popular answer, with 66.7% electability, was “Support/training in navigating complex services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. The second most popular answer, with 57.1%, was “Support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health”. The third most selected answer, with 52.4%, was “Improving the abilities of educators/trainers to train autistic people in the above fields”. Next, with 47.6%, was “Support/training in managing finances”. With 38.1% was “Support/training in managing everyday home activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”. The 2 answers with 33.3% electability were “Support/training in social interactions and social skills” and “Organisational skills training”. Lastly, with 28.6%, was “Support/training in understanding sensory issues/overload and how to manage them”. No one gave the “other” answer provided.

Ποια από τα παρακάτω θα σας βοηθούσε να νιώσετε μεγαλύτερη υποστήριξη κατά την ανεξάρτητη διαβίωσή σας; Which of the following...o feel more supported when living independently?  
21 responses



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the options participants think will help them feel more supported when living independently.



## 3.2 Cyprus

### *Further support required for independent living*

4 participants responded to this open-ended question of “Is there anything else you feel would support you to live independently?”. 2 of them responded with “no”, meaning that 90.5% of the total sample did not have anything further to add. The 2 responses were “To have a career/companion sometimes” and “I believe that people with autism should not have restrictions”.

### *3.2.5 Overall Conclusion*

In conclusion most of the participants of this study are male ranging between 18 to 54 years old, all of them have finished school education and a significant amount followed additional studies. Most of them still live with their families and the rest live either alone, with a spouse or with support. Most participants reported feeling overall stressed once or twice a week and a little stressed in the idea of living alone. The three most effective strategies for managing stress listed from participants are receiving help from support groups, physical activity and greater support from professionals.

The majority of the participants have daily interactions with others, and most of them believe they would feel lonely if they were to live alone without support. Based on the responses, receiving training on skills and interactions, greater motivation to socialise and greater empathy and social awareness from others, will help them mitigate isolation and loneliness. In general, participants experience sensory overload two to four times a week, and the major contributor is loud noises. Most participants find accessing public services challenging, and specifically visiting medical practices and hospitals. Most participants find it difficult to cope with everyday home activities alone. Mixed results are given regarding the impact of support from professionals, from essential to a minor effect in their well-being. However it seems like they will benefit from enhanced professional support for living independently.

Participants believe that greater awareness of autism and issues surrounding it is needed from professionals to effectively support them. The greatest challenges for living independently are managing social life and interactions, managing finances, managing mental health, and navigating services. It is important to note, that to an open-ended question about any additional barriers, two participants mentioned their parents. Finally, the most important support systems for successful independent living for these participants are: receiving support/training in navigating complex services, support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health, and improving the abilities of educators/educators to train autistic people in the previously mentioned fields, such as managing finances, and everyday home activities.



### 3.3. Denmark

#### Participants' Disclaimer

The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

#### *Introduction to the report*

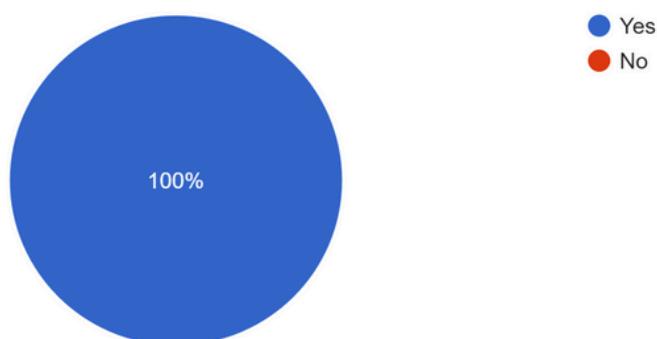
The purpose of this report is to shed light on the living conditions, challenges and support options for people with high-functioning autism. The data is collected from a survey covering areas such as housing, perceived stress and anxiety, sensory overload, social interactions and perceptions of public services.

#### *3.3.1 Demographic profile of respondents*

The survey respondents include people with high-functioning autism in the 18-64 age range. Most are aged 18-34, fairly evenly split between genders, and with varying levels of education: from no education to a master's degree. Respondents live in a variety of situations, including living alone, with family or partner, and some have lived alone for over 10 years.

Anser du dig selv for at have højt-fungerende autisme?

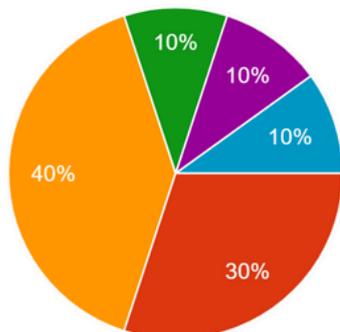
10 responses



### 3.3. Danmark

#### Alder

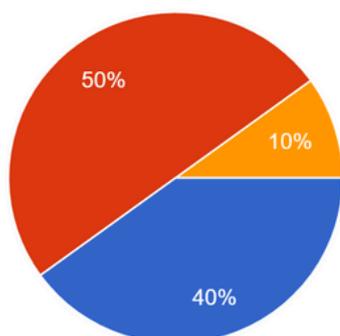
10 responses



- 17 eller under
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 eller over

#### Køn

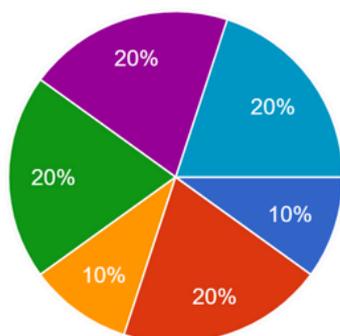
10 responses



- Mand
- Kvinde
- Andet
- Ønsker ikke at oplyse

#### Uddannelse

10 responses

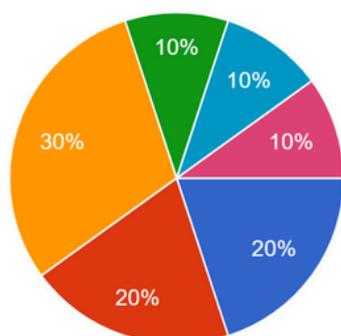


- Ungdomsuddannelse
- Erhvervsuddannelse
- Eriversakademisk uddannelse
- Bachelorgrad
- Kandidatgrad
- Ingen

### 3.3. Denmark

#### Boligsituation

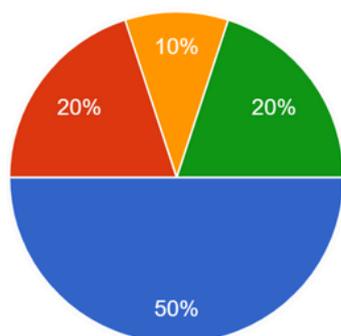
10 responses



- Bor alene
- Hjemmeboende
- Med samlever
- Med venner
- Andet
- Med Familie
- Med min familie

#### Hvor mange år har du boet alene?

10 responses



- 0-1
- 1-5
- 5-10
- Mere end 10 år

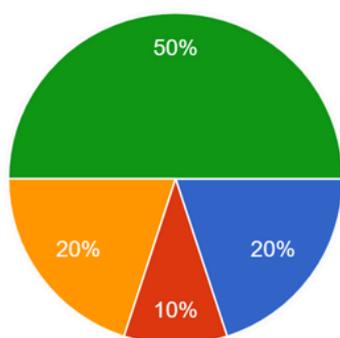
### 3.3. Denmark

#### 3.3.2 Perceived stress and anxiety

Most respondents report feeling daily anxiety and stress, although the degree varies. Some feel only a little stressed at the thought of living alone, while others find it very stressful. Especially younger respondents (18-24 years old) report feeling more stress at the thought of living alone without support.

Angiv niveauet af stress/angst du oplever i dit daglige liv.

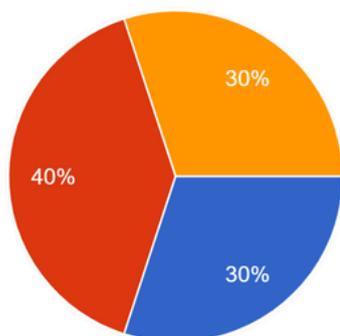
10 responses



- Jeg føle aldrig angst og/eller stress
- Jeg føler kun angst og/eller stress en til to gange om ugen
- Jeg føler angst og/eller stress tre til fire gange om ugen
- Jeg føler angst og/eller stress dagligt
- Jeg føler angst og/eller stress op til flere gange om dagen

Hvor stresset/angst føler du dig ved tanken om at bo alene uden støtte?

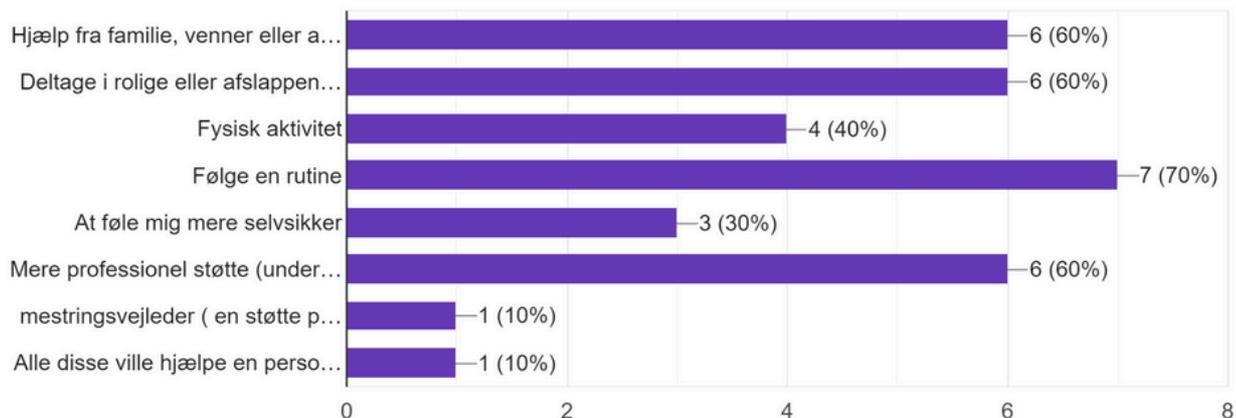
10 responses



- Jeg føler mig ikke stresset og/eller angst for at bo alene
- Jeg føler mig lidt stresset og/eller angst for at bo alene
- Jeg føler mig meget stresset og/eller angst for at bo alene

Hvilket af følgende føler du ville hjælpe dig med at håndtere stress/angst?

10 responses



### 3.3. Denmark

#### 3.3.3 Social interactions and feelings of isolation

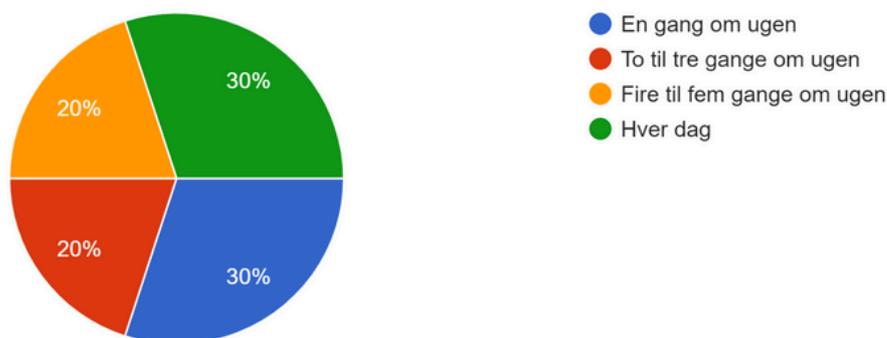
Most people interact with others at least once a week, but the intensity of these interactions varies.

Many mention that they would feel isolated if they lived alone without support, although some report feeling lonely only rarely.

Social skills support: Many respondents believe that training in social skills and interactions could reduce feelings of isolation.

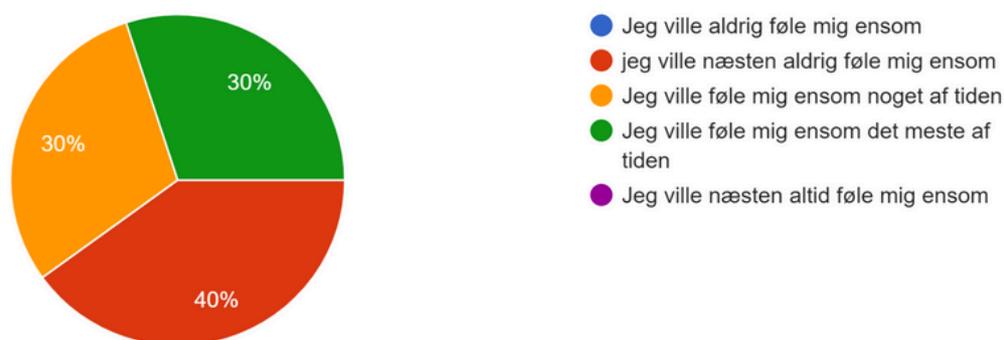
Hvor ofte interagerer du med andre (fysisk)?

10 responses



Føler du dig eller ville du føle dig isoleret/ensom, ved at bo alene uden støtte?

10 responses



Hvilket af følgende ville hjælpe dig med at føle dig mindre isoleret/ensom?

10 responses



### 3.3. Danmark

#### 3.3.4 Sensory overload

Several respondents experience sensory overload in daily life, with stimuli such as brightness and loud noises being particularly challenging: Some experience this daily or several times a day, while others rarely or never experience sensory overload. To reduce sensory overload, adjusting brightness and noise levels are mentioned as potential solutions.

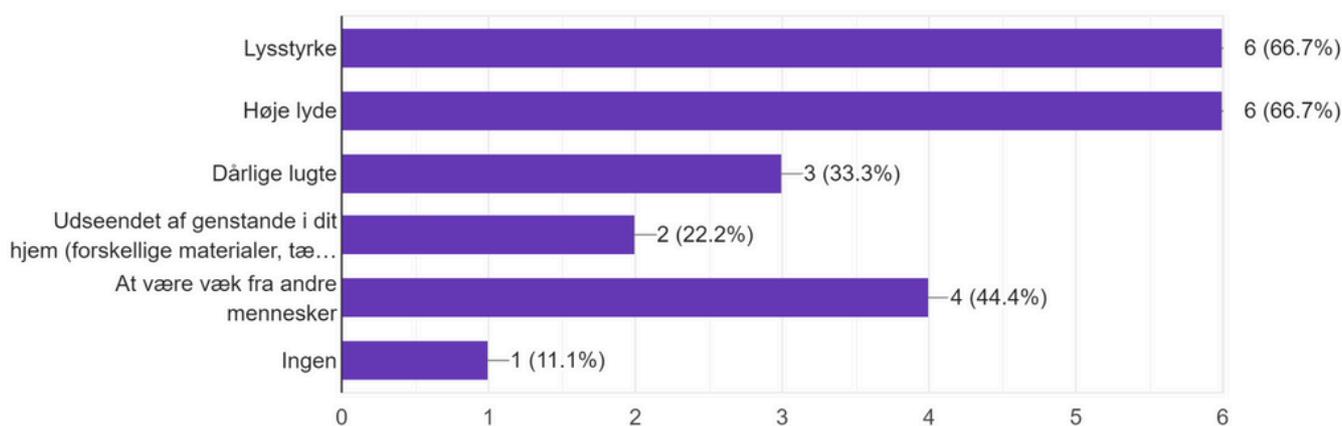
Oplever du nogensinde sensorisk overbelastning derhjemme eller under andre aktiviteter i dit daglige liv?

10 responses



Hvis du svarede, at du oplever sensorisk overbelastning i det sidste spørgsmål, ville det så hjælpe kunne kontrollere følgende? (Sæt gerne flere kryds)

9 responses



Synes du, at det er udfordrende at navigere i vigtige offentlige tjenester (sundhed, bank- og finanstjenester, forsikringer osv.)?

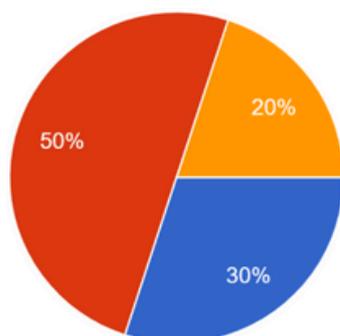
10 responses



### 3.3. Denmark

Føler du, at det er/ville være svært eller stressende at klare de daglige aktiviteter i hjemmet alene?  
(f.eks. at gøre rent, spise sundt, gå i supermarkedet osv.)

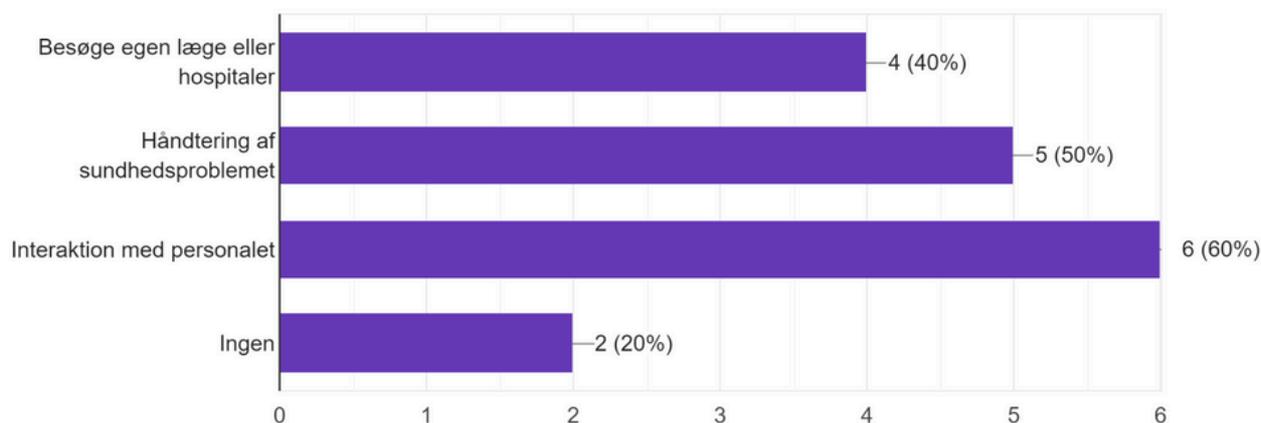
10 responses



- Jeg synes slet ikke, det er svært eller stressende.
- Jeg synes, det er lidt svært og/eller stressende
- Jeg ville finde det meget vanskeligt og/eller stressende

Hvilke af følgende scenarier synes du er svære at håndtere, når du oplever et helbredsproblem?  
(sæt kryds ved alt, hvad der gælder)

10 responses



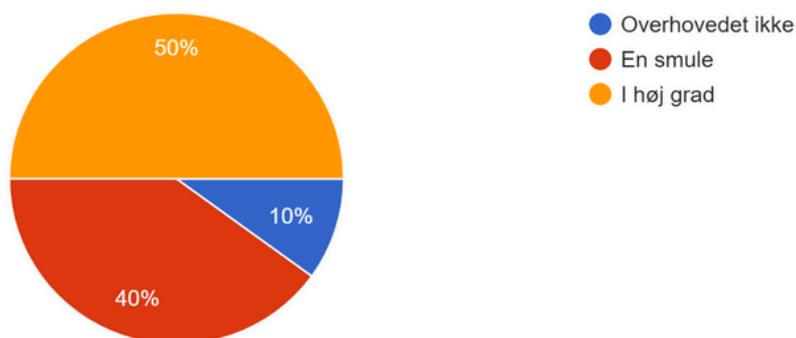
### 3.3. Denmark

#### Access to public services

There is a marked difference in how easy respondents find it to navigate public services such as healthcare and financial services: Some describe it as challenging and stressful, especially when interacting with staff or dealing with health issues. Several seek support and training in understanding and navigating complex services, which could ease their stress.

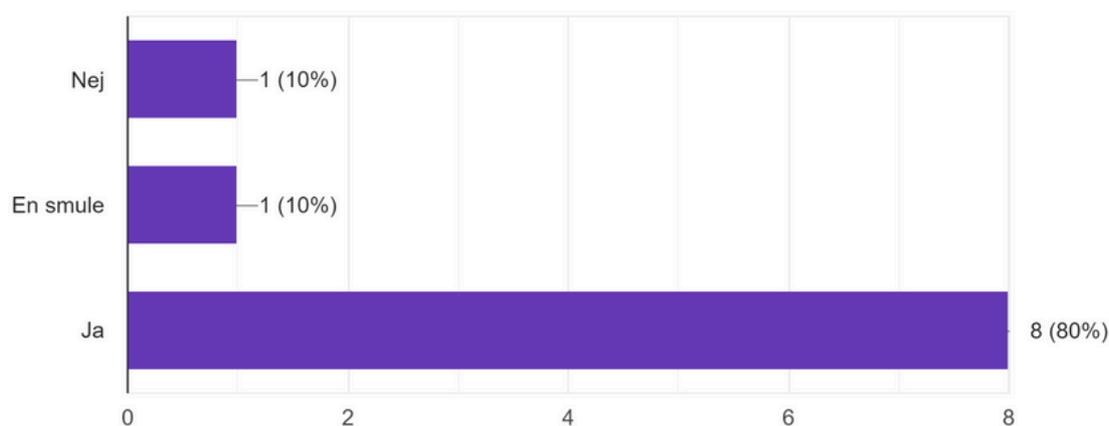
Føler du, at du ville have gavn af mere støtte fra pædagoger, terapeuter eller andre specialister for at kunne leve selvstændigt?

10 responses



Mener du, at en større bevidsthed om og forståelse af autisme ville hjælpe disse fagfolk til at yde en mere effektiv støtte?

10 responses



### 3.3. Denmark

#### Challenges of independent living

When it comes to independent living, the main challenges for respondents are:

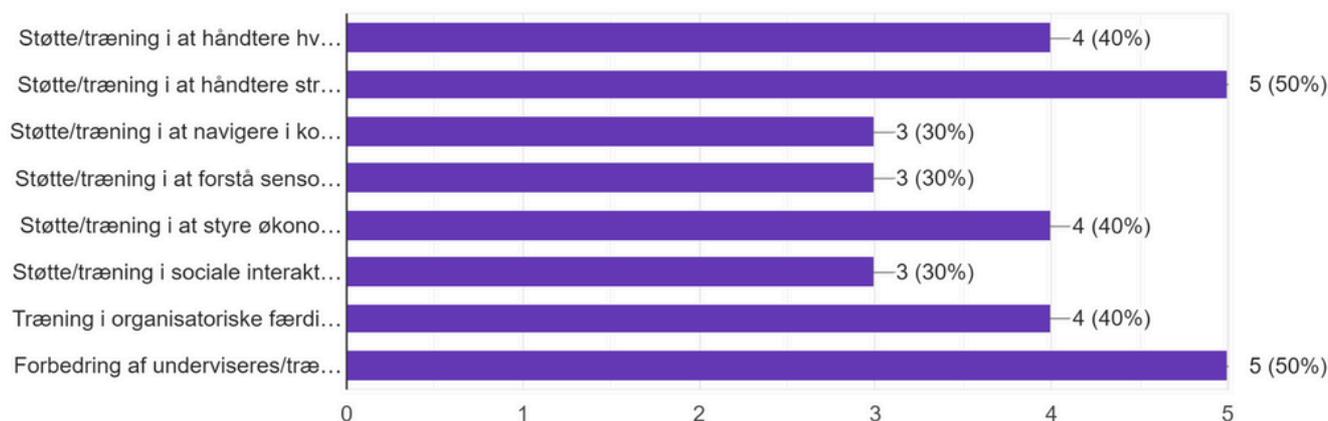
- Managing everyday activities: such as cleaning, healthy cooking and general housekeeping.
- Managing finances: Several find it difficult to manage their finances without support.
- Sensory overload and mental health: These aspects greatly affect their daily wellbeing.
- Social interactions: Many find social situations challenging and want training to better navigate them.

Hvis du føler, at der er andre barrierer, som påvirker din evne til at bo alene, så skriv det her:

1. Svært ved at finde boliger der lever op til mine krav, mht til støj, beliggenhed og selve boligens indvendige rumfordeling. *(Difficult to find accommodation that meets my requirements in terms of noise, location and the interior layout of the home itself.)*
2. Mental Health problems *(Mental Health problems)*
3. Jeg finder det svært at forstå sociale signaler og regler, hvilket gør det udfordrende at navigere i dagligdagen. *(I find it difficult to understand social cues and rules, making it challenging to navigate daily life.)*
4. Min følsomhed overfor lyde og lys kan gøre det svært at være i visse omgivelser uden at blive overvældet. *(My sensitivity to sounds and light can make it difficult to be in certain environments without becoming overwhelmed.)*
5. Jeg har svært ved at holde styr på tid og opgaver, hvilket fører til, at jeg ofte føler mig desorienteret og stresset. *(I find it difficult to keep track of time and tasks, which often leaves me feeling disorientated and stressed.)*
6. Jeg har ikke nogen større barrierer, men jeg kan nogle gange finde sociale situationer udfordrende. *(I don't have any major barriers, but I can sometimes find social situations challenging.)*
7. Jeg har svært ved at navigere i det offentlige system, især med bureaukrati og papirarbejde. *(I find it difficult to navigate the public system, especially with bureaucracy and paperwork.)*
8. Min angst kan ofte blive overvældende, hvilket gør det svært at tage beslutninger eller fuldføre opgaver. *(My anxiety can often become overwhelming, making it difficult to make decisions or complete tasks.)*

Hvilke af følgende ting ville hjælpe dig til at føle dig mere støttet, når du bor selvstændigt?

10 responses





### 3.3. Denmark

#### *Need for more support and understanding*

A common theme in the responses is a need for more targeted support:

- Training and coaching: Many respondents believe that training in managing everyday tasks and stress management would improve their quality of life.
- Greater understanding of autism: Several suggest that a better understanding of autism among professionals could improve support and make it easier for them to live independently.

Question: Er der andet, som du mener, ville hjælpe dig til at leve et selvstændigt liv?

1. Visual indicators for my daily needs, reminder to drink water and similiar
2. At have en mentor eller coach, der kan hjælpe mig med sociale færdigheder og kommunikative udfordringer. (*Having a mentor or coach to help me with social skills and communication challenges.*)
3. Mere tilgængelig støtte til at finde og tilpasse mit hjemmemiljø til mine sensoriske behov. (*More accessible support to find and adapt my home environment to my sensory needs.*)
4. Værktøjer eller apps til at organisere min dag og holde styr på mine opgaver kunne være en stor hjælp. (*Tools or apps to organise my day and keep track of my tasks would be a great help.*)
5. Lejlighedsvis adgang til rådgivning eller vejledning om sociale interaktioner kunne være nyttigt. (*Occasional access to counselling or guidance on social interactions could be useful.*)
6. Assistance med at forstå og håndtere officielle dokumenter og processer ville hjælpe mig med at blive mere selvstændig. (*Assistance with understanding and dealing with official documents and processes would help me become more independent.*)
7. Flere strategier og værktøjer til at håndtere angst og reducere stress ville være en stor hjælp for mig. (*More strategies and tools to manage anxiety and reduce stress would be a great help to me.*)

#### *3.3.5 Conclusion*

The data shows that people with high-functioning autism often experience daily stress and sensory overload, making it challenging to navigate daily life and live alone without support. Increased access to support in the form of training in activities of daily living, better understanding from professionals and social skills could help these individuals live more independently and reduce their sense of isolation.

The report points to a need for targeted initiatives and tailored support to help people with high-functioning autism thrive in everyday life.

### 3.4. Italy

#### Participants' Disclaimer

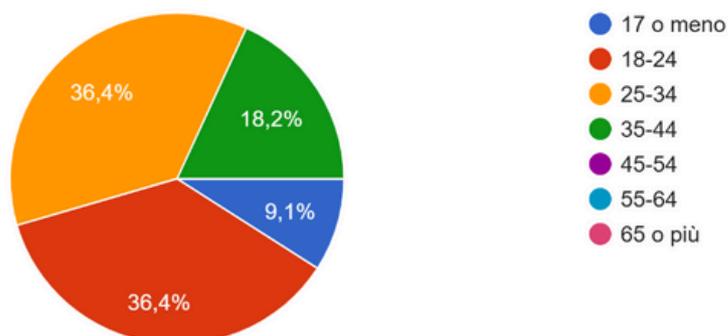
The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

#### 3.4.1 Overall Description of Participants

The study included participants from diverse age ranges, with the majority falling within the 18-24 and 25-34 categories, each representing 36.36% of the sample. A smaller percentage (18.18%) were aged between 35-44, and 9.09% were 17 or under. This age distribution indicates a broad representation of adults who might be transitioning to or already experiencing independent living.

##### Età

11 risposte

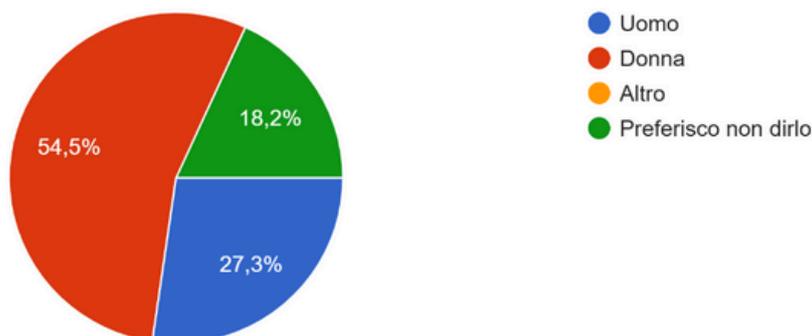


Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

Gender representation showed that 54.55% identified as female, 27.27% as male, and 18.18% preferred not to disclose their gender.

##### Genere

11 risposte



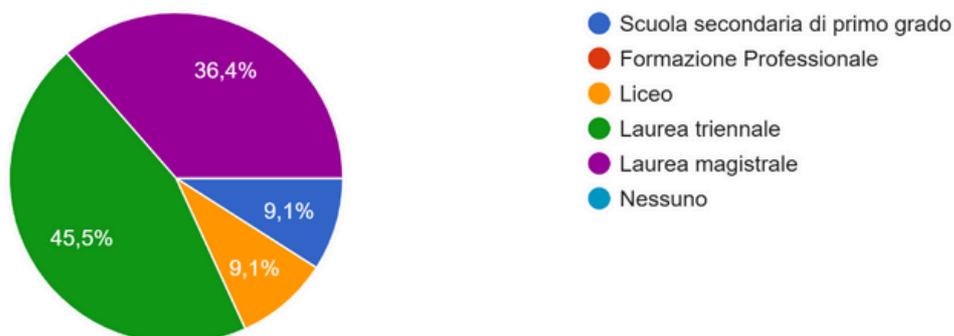
Graph 2: Visual Representation of the Sex Range of Participants

### 3.4. Italy

The educational backgrounds varied, with 45.45% having a bachelor's degree and 36.36% holding a master's degree, suggesting a relatively educated participant pool. The remaining participants had completed high school (9.09%) or middle school (9.09%).

#### Livello di istruzione

11 risposte

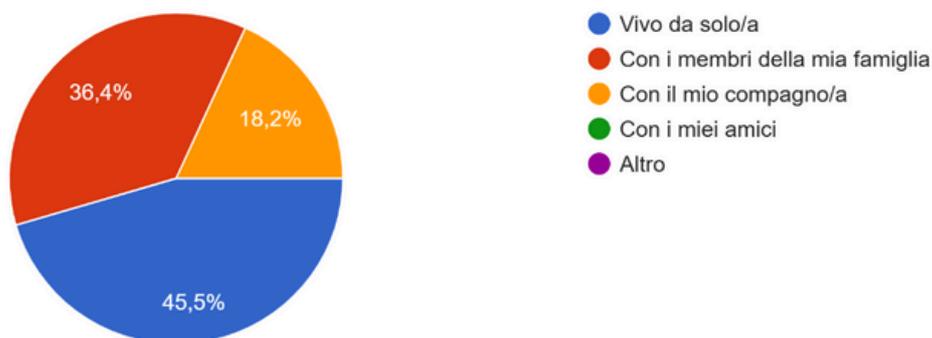


Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education level of Participants

In terms of living arrangements, 45.45% reported living alone, 36.36% lived with family members, and 18.18% resided with a partner.

#### Stato abitativo

11 risposte

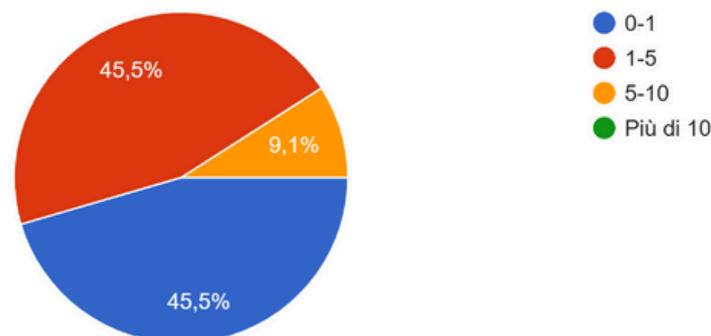


Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

Among those living alone, the duration was equally split, with 45.45% living independently for 0-1 year and another 45.45% for 1-5 years, indicating that many participants might be in the early stages of independent living.

#### Da quanto tempo vivi a solo? Se non vivi da solo seleziona 0

11 risposte



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

## 3.4. Italy

### 3.4.2 Stress and Anxiety

In the present study, stress was characterized as the sensation of having a mind overwhelmed by numerous thoughts and concerns, making it challenging to concentrate on other matters. In a similar vein, anxiety was described as a persistent fear that something negative might occur, even in the absence of any actual threat.

#### Daily Stress and Anxiety Levels

Participants reported varying levels of stress and anxiety in their daily lives, with 36.36% experiencing anxiety or stress 3-4 times a week, and an equal percentage feeling anxious or stressed 1-2 times weekly. Meanwhile, 18.18% indicated feeling anxious/stressed multiple times a day, and 9.09% experienced such feelings once a day. This highlights that over half of the participants face regular stress and anxiety, which could impact their ability to manage daily tasks and responsibilities.

Indica il livello di stress/ansia che provi nella tua vita quotidiana.

11 risposte



Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

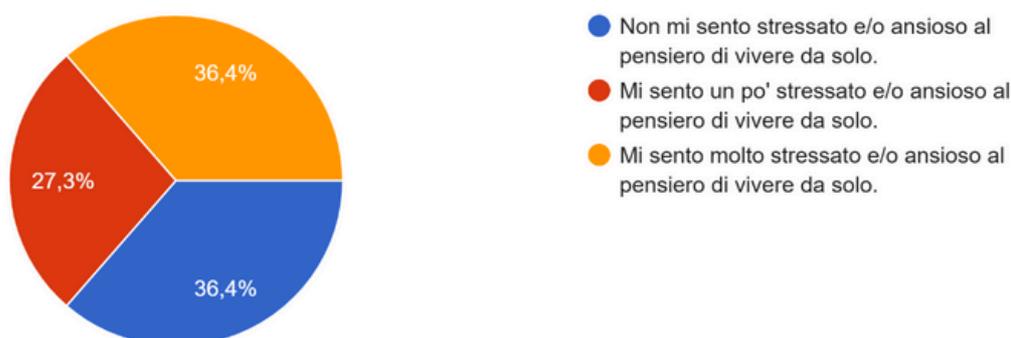
### 3.4. Italy

#### Stress and Anxiety

When asked about the prospect of living alone without support, responses were evenly divided, with 36.36% feeling very stressed or anxious and another 36.36% not feeling anxious at all. Meanwhile, 27.27% reported feeling a bit stressed or anxious. These results suggest that while some participants are confident in their ability to live independently, others require significant support to manage the associated stress.

Quanto ti senti stressato/ansioso al pensiero di vivere da solo senza supporto?

11 risposte



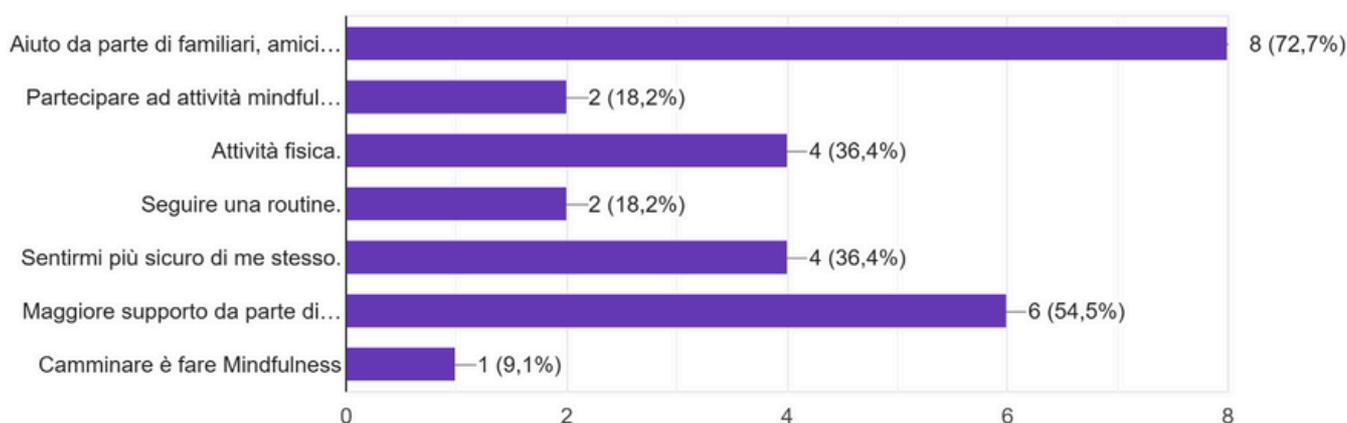
Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

#### Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants identified several strategies to manage stress and anxiety, the most common being support from family, friends, or support groups. Many also emphasized the importance of physical activity, professional support from educators or therapists, mindfulness or relaxing activities, and establishing a routine. These strategies reflect the multifaceted approach required to address stress and anxiety effectively.

Quale delle seguenti cose pensi che ti aiuterebbe a gestire lo stress/l'ansia?

11 risposte



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

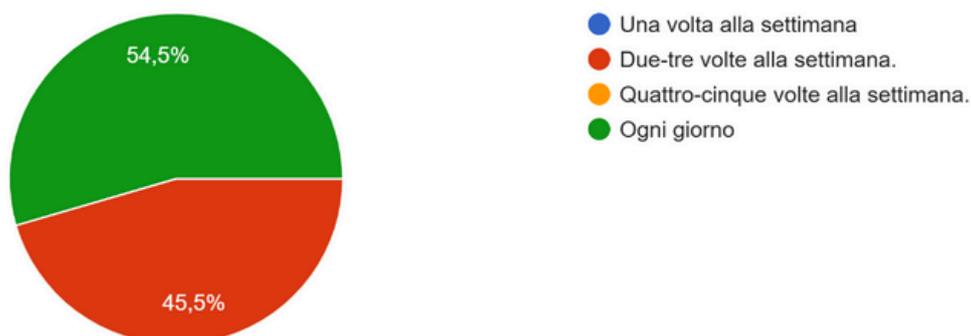
## 3.4. Italy

### 3.4.3 Social Isolation and Loneliness

This section of the survey addressed social isolation or loneliness, which were described as the experience of being in the presence of others yet still feeling detached and disconnected, as if an invisible barrier hinders genuine connection with those around you.

Quanto spesso interagisci con gli altri (di persona)?

11 risposte



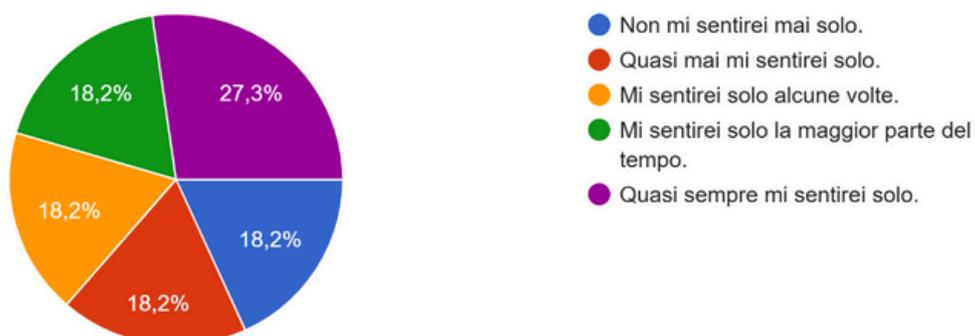
Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

### Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

Despite regular interactions, 27.27% of participants reported that they would feel lonely almost always if living independently, while 18.18% felt they would be lonely sometimes, most of the time, rarely, or never. This indicates that a substantial proportion may experience loneliness even if they have some level of support, emphasizing the need for social interventions and community integration.

Ti senti o ti sentiresti isolato/solo vivendo da solo senza supporto?

11 risposte



Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

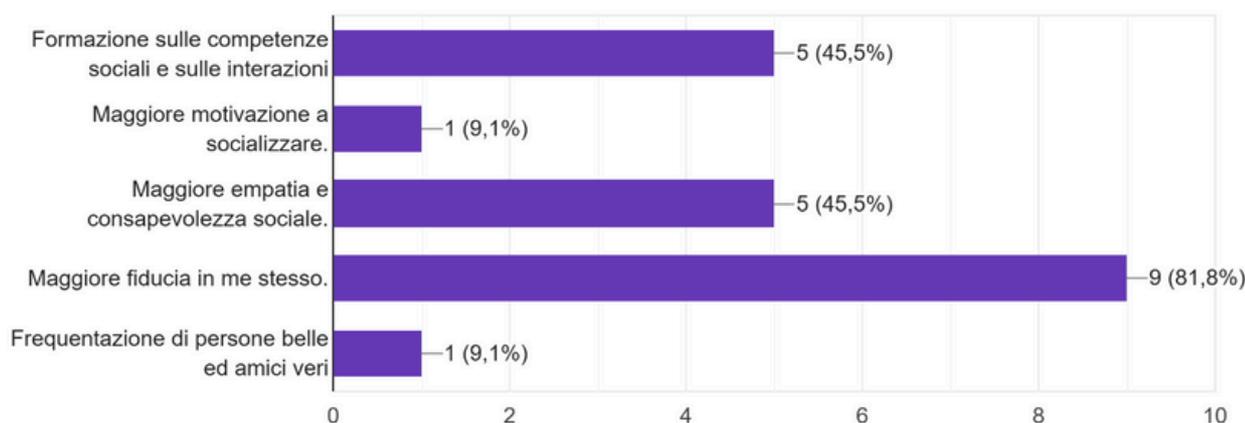
### 3.4. Italy

#### Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

Participants identified increased self-confidence (27.27%) and greater empathy/social awareness (also 27.27%) as crucial strategies for mitigating loneliness. Training in social skills, motivation to socialize, and building relationships with genuine friends were also seen as valuable. These findings highlight the need for tailored programs that enhance social skills and confidence to reduce isolation among individuals with high-functioning autism.

Quale delle seguenti opzioni ti aiuterebbe a sentirti meno isolato/a?

11 risposte



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

#### 3.4.4 Sensory Overload

Sensory overload was characterized as the sensation of being in a space where it feels like all eyes are on you, with lights that are excessively bright, sounds that are overwhelmingly loud, and touches that are uncomfortably intense, all occurring simultaneously. This overwhelming experience can hinder one's ability to focus, engage with others, or carry out even basic tasks until the sensation diminishes.

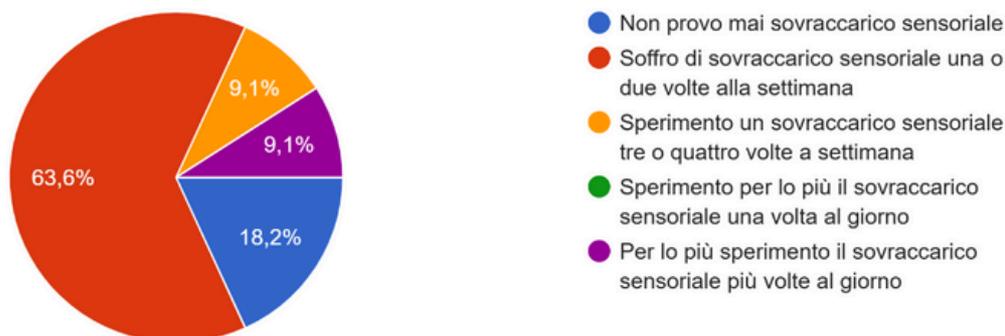
#### Incidence of sensory overload in daily life

Sensory overload was a significant issue, with 63.64% experiencing it 1-2 times a week, while 9.09% experienced it 3-4 times weekly or multiple times a day. Only 18.18% reported never experiencing sensory overload. This indicates that sensory overload is a common challenge, necessitating strategies to manage this aspect of daily living.

### 3.4. Italy

Ti capita mai di avvertire un sovraccarico sensoriale a casa o durante altre attività della tua vita quotidiana?

11 risposte



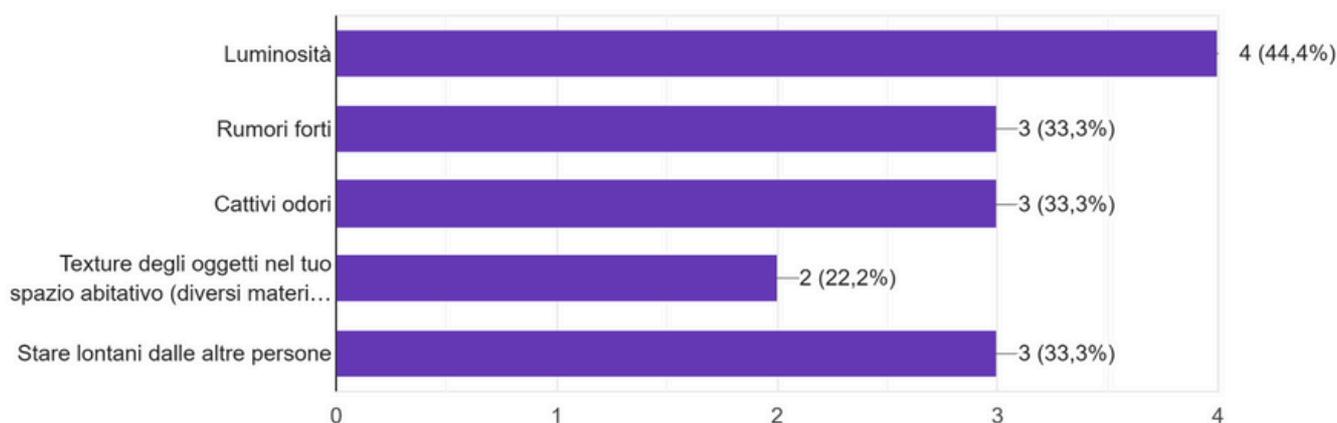
Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

#### Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

Preferred solutions included staying away from other people (22.22%) and managing textures in the living space, brightness, strong odors, and loud noises. These preferences underscore the need for personalized approaches that enable individuals to control their sensory environment to enhance comfort and well-being.

Se nell'ultima domanda hai risposto che soffri di sovraccarico sensoriale, questa sensazione migliorerebbe se fossi in grado di controllare quanto segue? (Spunta tutte le risposte pertinenti)

9 risposte



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

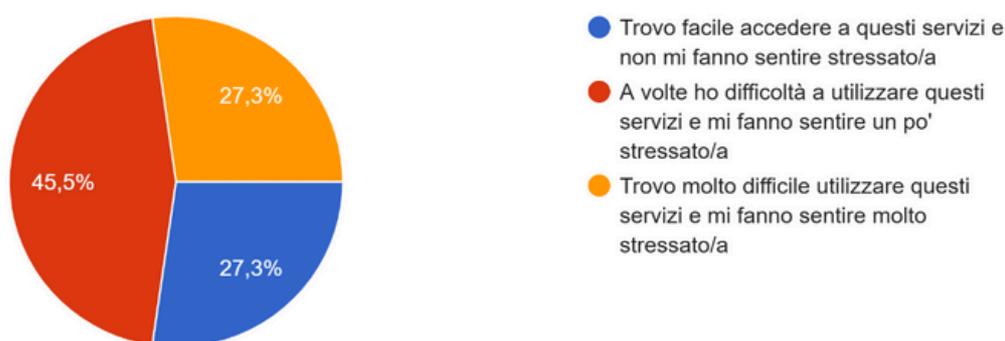
### 3.4. Italy

#### Difficulties in accessing public services

Participants faced challenges in accessing public services, particularly during health crises. While 45.45% reported no difficulties, others struggled with visiting medical offices/hospitals (18.18%) or interacting with health professionals (18.18%). This highlights the importance of making public services more accessible and accommodating for individuals with high-functioning autism.

Trovi difficile orientarti tra i servizi pubblici essenziali (sanità, servizi bancari e finanziari, assicurazioni, ecc.)?

11 risposte



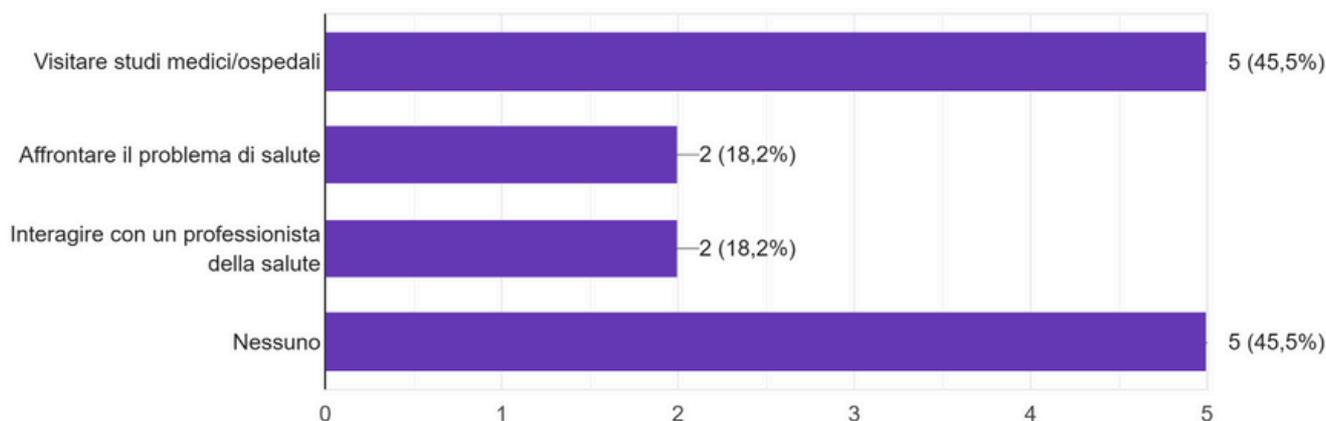
Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

#### Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. The survey revealed that when faced with health-related issues, 45.45% of participants reported no particular difficulties, indicating a level of comfort or adequacy in managing such situations independently. However, a notable portion of respondents (18.18%) experienced challenges specifically with visiting medical offices or hospitals. An equal percentage (18.18%) struggled not only with visiting medical facilities but also with interacting with healthcare professionals. Additionally, 9.09% faced difficulties in handling the health problem itself, and another 9.09% found both visiting medical facilities and dealing with the health issue challenging.

Quale dei seguenti scenari trovi difficile da affrontare quando riscontri un problema di salute? (spunta tutte le risposte pertinenti)

11 risposte



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

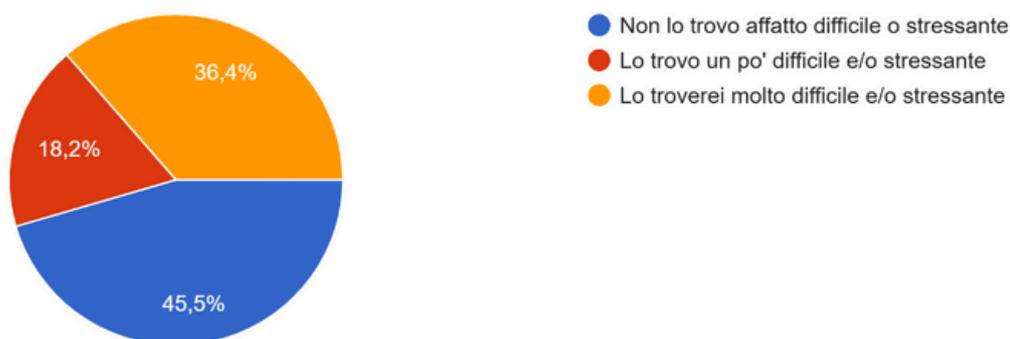
### 3.4. Italy

#### Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Managing daily home activities was not seen as difficult or stressful by 45.45% of participants, yet 36.36% found it very difficult, and 18.18% found it somewhat challenging. These findings suggest that while some participants are adept at home management, others may need additional support to maintain independence.

Pensi che gestire da solo le attività domestiche quotidiane (come pulire, mangiare sano, andare al supermercato, ecc.) sia/sarebbe difficile o stressante?

11 risposte



Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

#### Impact of support from professionals on well-being

Participants were divided on the usefulness of professional support: 27.27% felt it had a minor or significant effect on their well-being, while 18.18% considered it essential. This diversity of responses suggests that while some individuals can thrive with minimal intervention, others benefit greatly from consistent professional guidance.

Indica quanto è utile il supporto di educatori, terapisti e altri professionisti del supporto per il tuo benessere generale.

11 risposte



Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

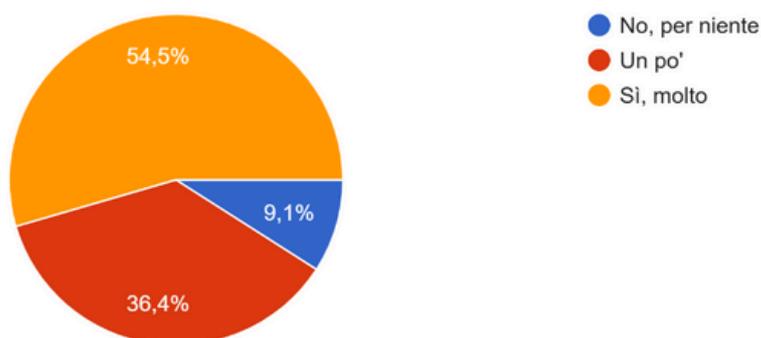
### 3.4. Italy

#### Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

The majority (54.55%) expressed a strong need for more professional support to live independently, while 36.36% indicated a moderate need. Only 9.09% felt no need for additional support. These findings emphasize the importance of providing tailored professional services to support independent living.

Ritieni che trarresti beneficio da un maggiore supporto da parte di educatori, terapisti o altri specialisti per vivere in modo indipendente?

11 risposte



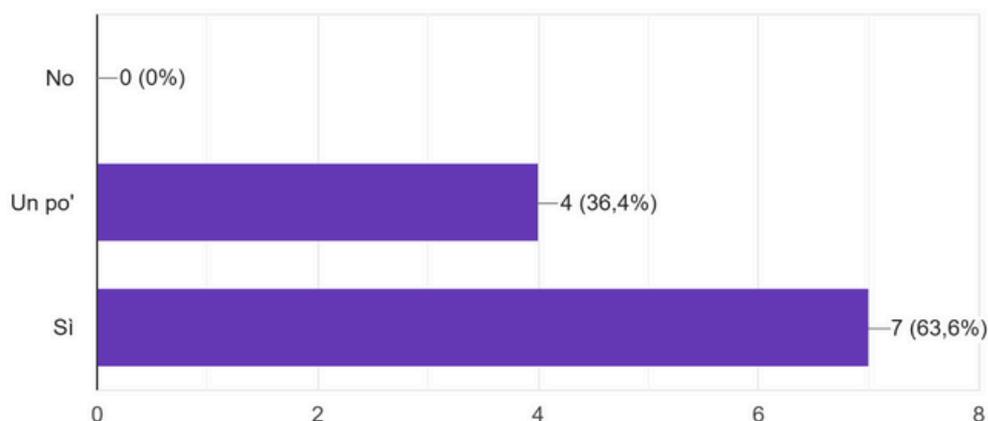
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

#### Role of autism awareness in effective support

Participants strongly felt that greater autism awareness would enhance the effectiveness of support provided by professionals, with 63.64% agreeing and 36.36% indicating some agreement. This suggests that increasing autism awareness and understanding is crucial for delivering effective support services.

Ritieni che una maggiore consapevolezza e comprensione dell'autismo aiuterebbe questi professionisti a fornire un supporto più efficace?

11 risposte



Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.



### 3.4. Italy

#### Challenges in various aspects of independent living

The most prominent difficulties reported were in managing their social life and interactions, with 45.5% of participants indicating that they find this aspect particularly challenging. This suggests that many individuals feel uncertain or struggle with maintaining social connections and relationships, which are crucial components of independent living.

Similarly, 45.5% of participants expressed difficulties in managing their mental health, specifically stress and anxiety. This finding underscores the importance of emotional and psychological support for individuals with high-functioning autism, as these internal struggles can significantly impact their ability to cope with day-to-day responsibilities and challenges.

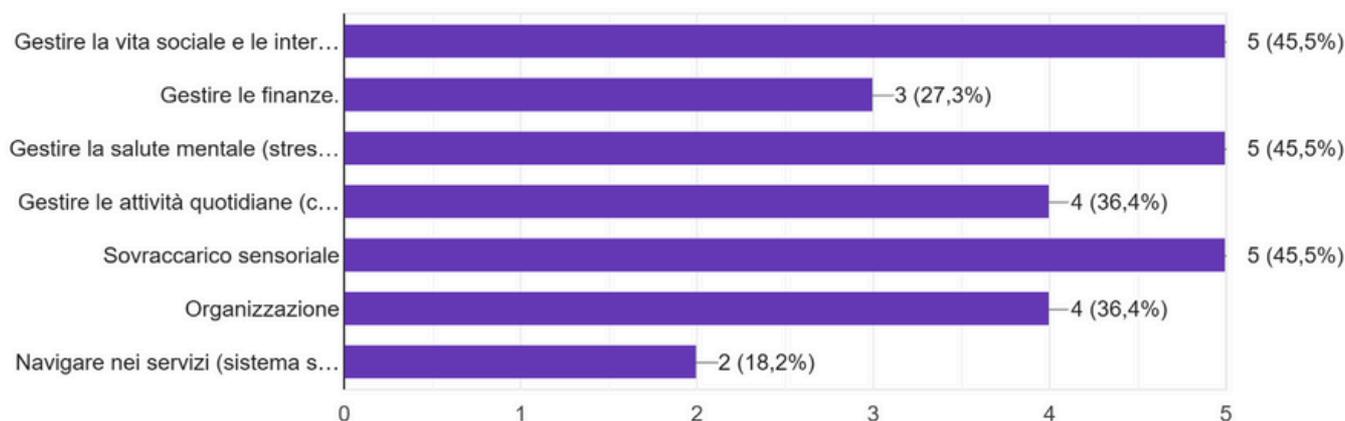
The issue of sensory overload was another significant challenge, with 45.5% of participants reporting difficulties in this area. Sensory sensitivities can be overwhelming and disruptive, making it harder for individuals to manage other aspects of daily life, especially in environments that are not adapted to their sensory needs.

Organization emerged as another area of concern, affecting 36.4% of respondents. This difficulty could manifest in managing schedules, household tasks, or maintaining an organized living space, all of which are essential skills for independent living. Similarly, 36.4% of participants reported challenges with daily activities such as cooking, cleaning, and performing household chores, indicating that practical life skills are a crucial area where support is needed.

Financial management posed a problem for 27.3% of participants, suggesting that while it may not be a universal issue, a significant portion still finds it difficult to handle budgeting, expenses, or understanding financial matters. This challenge can be a substantial barrier to achieving full independence.

Lastly, navigating essential services such as healthcare and financial institutions was reported as a challenge by 18.2% of participants. This lower percentage indicates that while most may feel capable of accessing these services, there is still a need for guidance and support in dealing with complex systems that can be daunting and difficult to manage alone.

Con quale delle seguenti aree della vita indipendente senti di avere difficoltà o avresti difficoltà?  
11 risposte



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.



## 3.4. Italy

### Additional barriers to independent living

Additional barriers mentioned included difficulties in daily management, disorder or clutter, and lack of motivation (each 33.33%). These findings point to the need for support systems that address both practical and motivational aspects of independent living.

### Support systems for independent living

The survey results clearly show that the majority of participants expressed a strong need for support or training in several key areas to help them feel more confident and capable of living independently. The most significant need identified was training in the management of domestic activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and handling daily chores, with 72.7% of participants indicating this as a priority. This suggests that practical life skills are a fundamental area where individuals with high-functioning autism require guidance and structured support to maintain their independence.

The second most commonly identified need was support for managing stress, anxiety, and overall mental health, as indicated by 54.5% of participants. This highlights the importance of providing mental health resources and training that can help individuals cope with the emotional challenges associated with independent living, ensuring they have the tools to handle stress and maintain a sense of well-being.

Furthermore, 36.4% of participants expressed the need for support in navigating complex services such as healthcare, financial systems, and other essential public services. This finding suggests that many individuals find it challenging to understand or access these systems independently, indicating the necessity for guidance or training in navigating such environments.

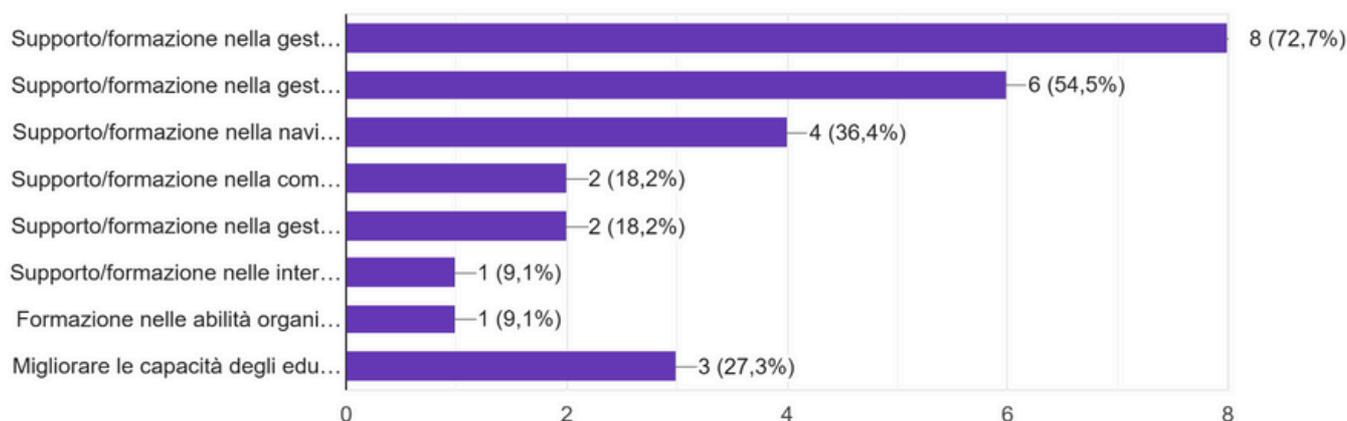
Support or training in understanding and managing sensory issues was also mentioned by 18.2% of participants, which reflects the ongoing need for tailored strategies to manage sensory overload in various settings. Another 18.2% indicated that they would benefit from assistance in managing their finances, underscoring the importance of financial literacy and management skills in fostering true independence.

In addition to these areas, 9.1% of participants identified the need for training in social interactions and organizational skills, emphasizing that social and planning skills are also vital components of successful independent living. Lastly, 27.3% of respondents felt that enhancing the skills of educators and trainers who work with autistic individuals would be beneficial, indicating that professional development for those providing support is just as critical in helping individuals with autism navigate independent living.

### 3.4. Italy

Quale delle seguenti opzioni ti aiuterebbe a sentirti più supportato/a vivendo in modo indipendente?

11 risposte



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

#### 3.4.5 Conclusion

The data reveals that individuals with high-functioning autism face a range of challenges in independent living, with particular difficulties in managing social interactions, mental health, sensory overload, and daily activities. The need for comprehensive support is evident, especially in areas such as training for domestic tasks, mental health management, navigating services, and financial literacy. While some participants are capable of navigating aspects of independent living, many require tailored interventions and greater professional support to thrive. These findings highlight the importance of developing structured, multifaceted support systems to facilitate independence and improve the quality of life for individuals with high-functioning autism.

### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Participants' Disclaimer

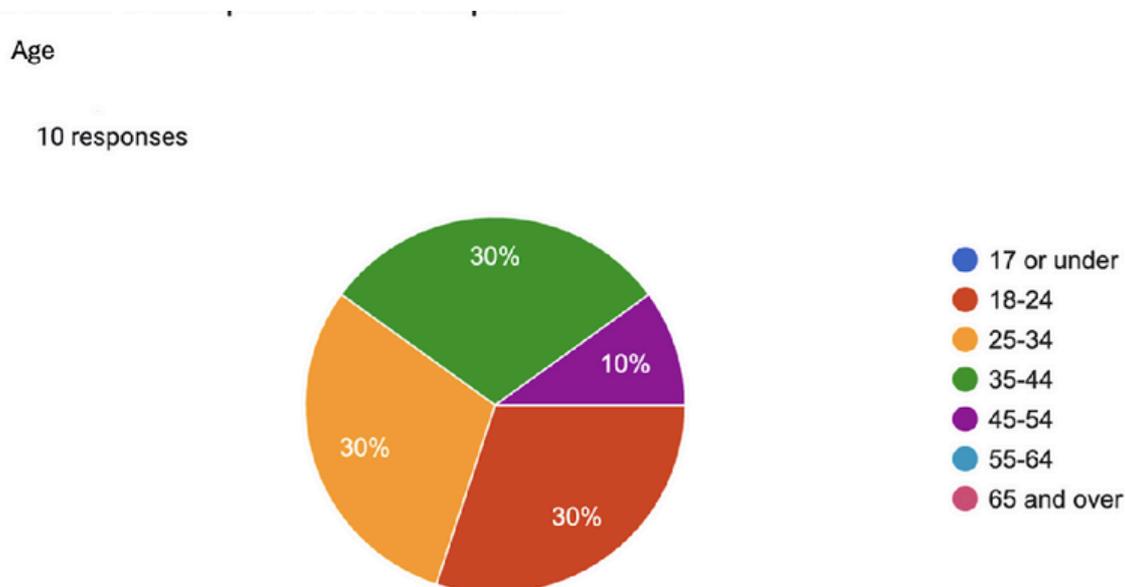
The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

#### 3.5.1 Overall Description of Participants

Ten adults voluntarily participated in this study. All of them identified as having high-functioning autism; this was the main criterion of participation. The participants were found using the "snow ball" principle, where two people with whom we have contact are sent to other people with autism that they know.

#### The age range of the participants

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 54. 30% were between 25 and 34, one-third (30%) were between 18 and 24, one-third (30%) were between 35 and 44, and one participant (10 %) was between 45 and 54. Details on the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants can be found in graph nr. 1.



Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Gender representation among the participants

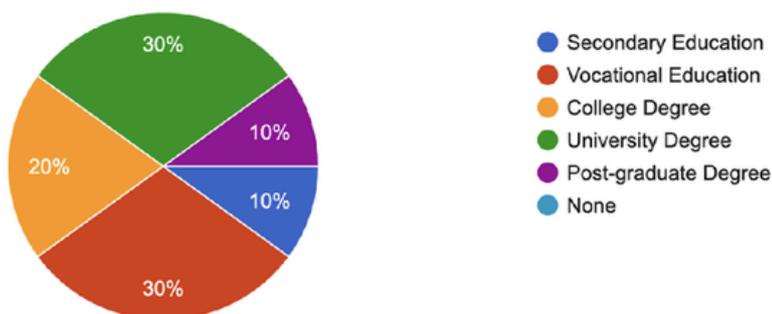
All the participants were male.

#### The educational levels of the participants

Most participants have completed higher levels of education, with university and vocational education being the most common. Therefore, 30% of the participants hold a university degree, 20% have completed secondary education, 10% have a postgraduate degree, 30% have vocational education, and 10% have secondary education.

#### Education

10 responses



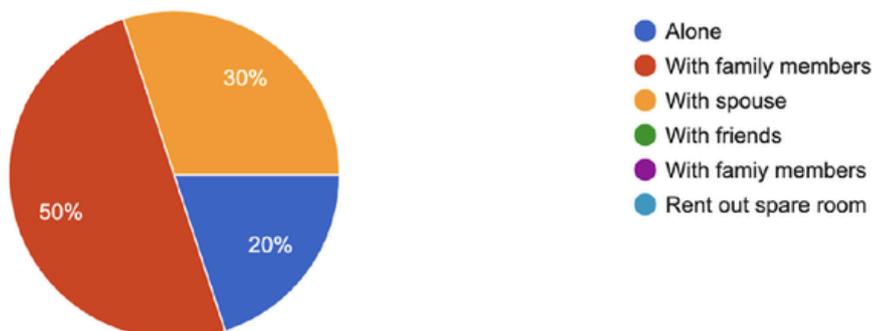
Graph 3: Visual Representation of the Education Level of Participant

#### Living arrangements of the participants

Half of the participants (50 %) currently live with family members, 30% live with their spouse, 20% live alone.

#### Leaving status

10 responses



Graph 4: Visual Representation of the Living Arrangements of Participants

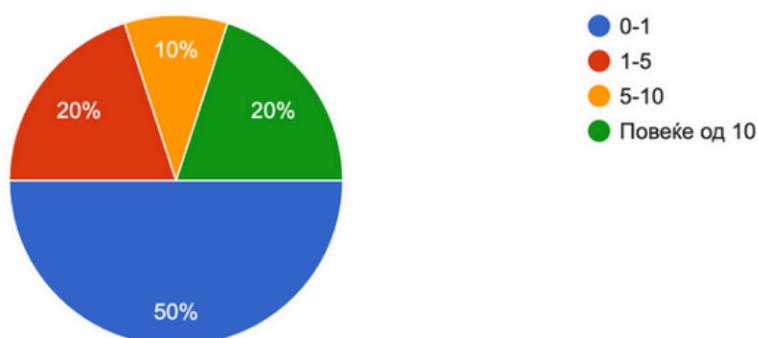
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Duration of living independently among the participants

The answers to this question suggest that half of the participants are relatively new to independent living, while the other half have more extended experience with it. The graph shows that 50% of participants have been living independently for 0-1 year, 20% of participants have been living independently for 1-5 years, 10% of participants have been living independently for 5-10 years, and 20% of participants have been living independently for more than 10 years.

#### Години на самостојно живеење

10 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of the Duration of Independent Living of Participants

#### 3.5.2 Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

For the current study, stress was defined as the feeling that someone's mind is constantly racing with too many thoughts and worries, making it hard to focus on anything else. Similarly, anxiety was defined as the constant worry about something terrible happening, even if there's no real danger.

#### Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

In the question 'Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life', participants had five options to choose. The data indicates that a significant majority (70%) of participants experience stress or anxiety on a weekly basis, while a smaller proportion of participants experience higher frequencies of stress or no stress at all. This could highlight a need for stress management strategies in our project, particularly for those facing frequent or daily stress. In the graph, we can see that 70% of participants feel anxious and/or stressed once or twice a week, 10% of participants feel anxious and/or stressed three or four times a week, 10% mostly feel anxious and/or stressed every day, 10% never feel anxious and/or stressed.

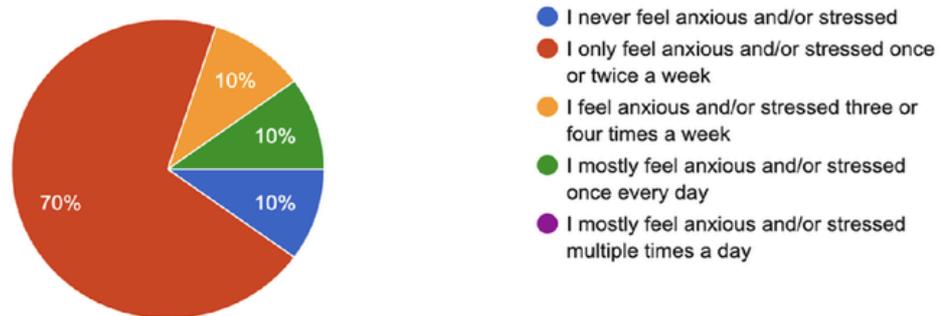
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia



#### Stress and Anxiety

Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

20 responses



Graph 6: Visual Representation of the level of stress/anxiety participants experience in their daily life

In the question ‘How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?’, the participants reported as follows: (30%) chose the option ‘I do not feel stressed and/or anxious about living alone’, the majority of them, (40%), mentioned ‘I feel a little stressed and/or anxious about living alone’, and 30% reported ‘I feel very stressed and/or anxious about living alone’.

How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

20 responses



Graph 7: Visual Representation of the how stressed/anxious participants feel about the thought of living on their own without support

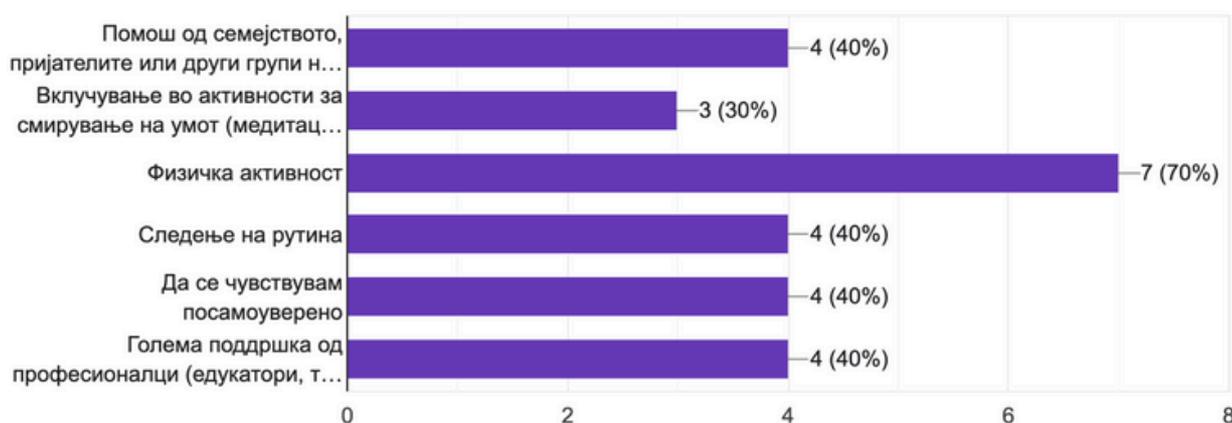
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Participants were given seven options to choose from coping strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety. Participants were allowed to select multiple answers, and they could add their own answers in 'other'. The most popular answers were "Physical activity" with , "Help from family, friends or other support groups" (40%), and other answers were presented with 30%.

Кое е твоето мислење, што од подолу наведеното би ти помогнало да се справиш со стрес /анксиозност?

10 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of the coping strategies for dealing with stress/anxiety

#### 3.5.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

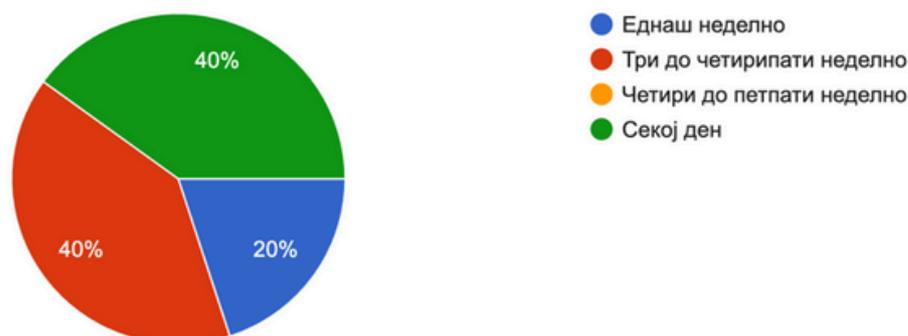
This part of the survey focused on social isolation or loneliness, which was defined as the feeling of being surrounded by people but still feeling isolated and disconnected, as if there is an invisible barrier preventing you from truly connecting with others.

#### Frequency of social interactions among the participants

The following question focused on the frequency of in-person social interactions of participants, ranging from "once per week" to "every day". The results showed that almost half (40 %) ...

Колку често си во контакт со други луѓе (лично)?

10 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of how often the participants interact with others.

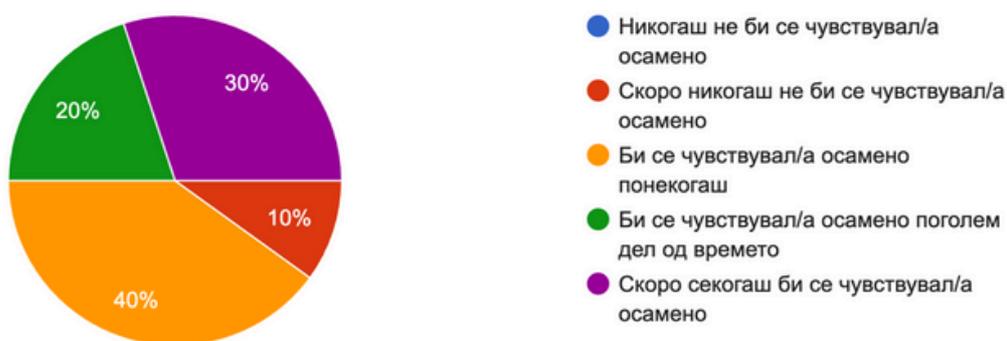
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Perceived isolation and loneliness in independent living

To the question, “Do you or would you feel isolated/ lonely when living alone without support?” Five options ranged from “never” to “almost always”. 10% reported “I would almost never feel lonely”, the majority of them (40%) reported “I would feel lonely some of the time”, (20%) reported “I would feel lonely most of the time,” and (30%) reported “I would almost never feel lonely” when living alone without support.

Дали се чувствуваш или би се чувствувал изолирано/осамено кога би живеел самостојно без поддршка?

10 responses



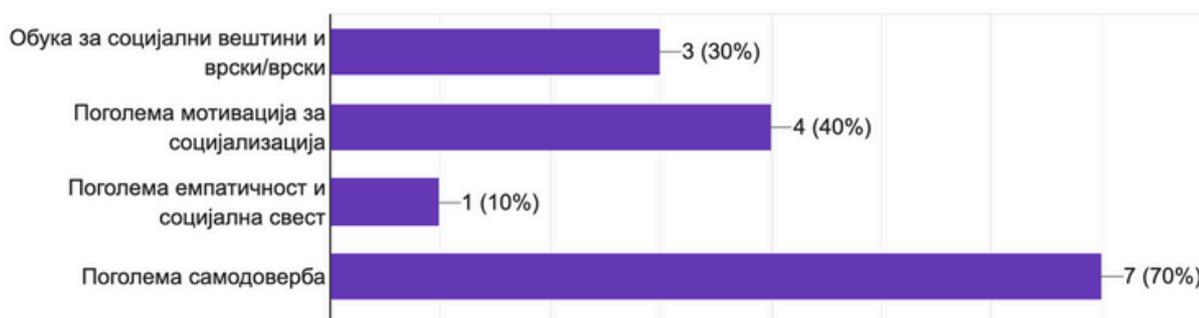
Graph 10: Visual Representation of the perceived isolation of the participants when living alone without support.

#### Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

To the question “Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?”, 30% answered “Training on social skills and interactions”, 40% answered “Greater motivation to socialise”, 1% answered “Greater empathy and social awareness” and 70% “Greater self-confidence”.

Кое од подолу наведеното би ти помогнало да се чувствуваш помалку изолирано/осамено?

10 responses



Graph 11: Visual Representation of approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness.

## 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

### 3.5.4 Measurement of Sensory Overload

Experiencing sensory overload was described as feeling like being in a room where everyone is watching you, the light is too bright, every sound is too loud and every touch is too intense, all at the same time. This feeling can make it difficult to concentrate, interact with others, or even perform simple tasks until the overload subsides.

#### Incidents of sensory overload in daily life

The participants were asked the following question: "Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?". 70% reported "experiencing sensory overload once or twice a week", 20% "multiple times every day" and (10%) answered "I never experience sensory overload."

Дали воопшто си искусил сензорно преоптоварување во домот или при други активности во твојот секојдневен живот?

10 responses



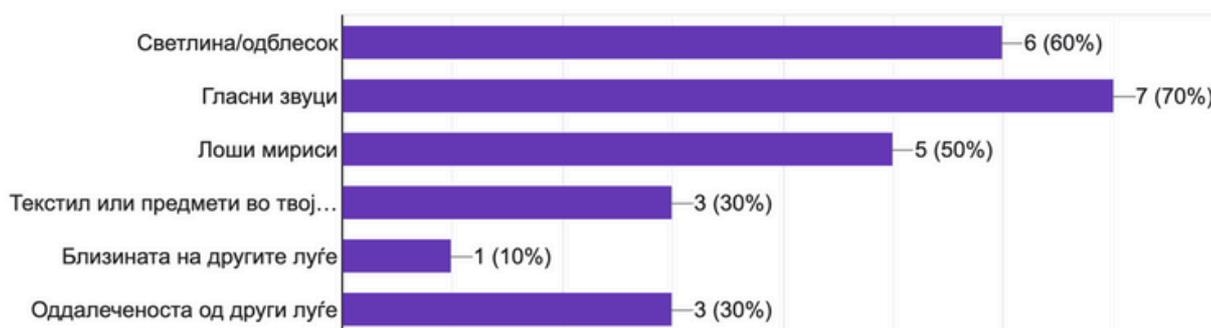
Graph 12: Visual Representation of the frequency of experiencing sensory overload in their daily life.

#### Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

Participants were able to select as many answers as they liked. The majority of participants (70%) chose "Loud noises", 50% "Bad smells", 30% "Brightness", 60% "Being away from other people" and 1% "Texture of objects around their living space (different clothing materials, bed sheets, etc.)" and 30% answered nothing.

Доколку одговори дека си искусил/а сензорна преоптовареност во претходното прашање, дали би било подобро доколку би можел/а да г...тролираш следното? (Означи го секој одговор)

10 responses



Graph 13: Visual Representation of the preferred solutions for managing sensory overload.

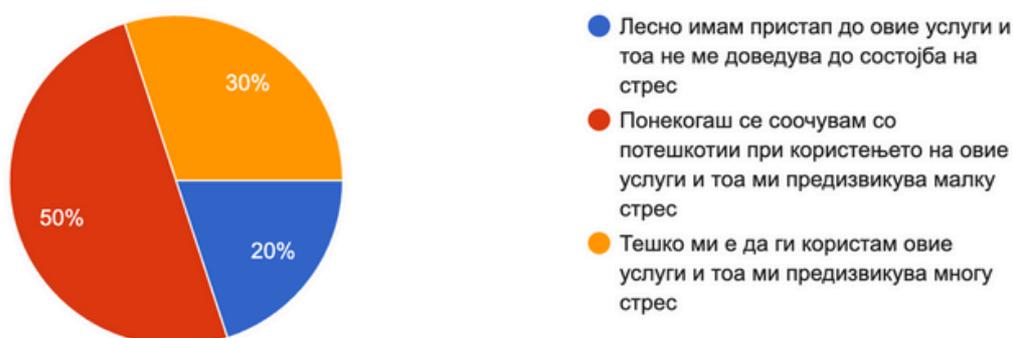
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Difficulties in accessing public services

In the following question, participants were asked whether they find it challenging to navigate essential public services such as healthcare, bank and financial, insurance etc. Out of the 3 options, (50%) responded with “I sometimes find it difficult to use these services and they make me feel a little stressed”, 30% responded with “I find it very difficult to use these services and they make me feel very stressed” and 20% responded “I find it easy to access these services and they don’t make me feel stressed”.

Дали сметаш дека се соочуваш со придизвик при користењето на значајни јавни услуги (здраствена заштита, банарски и финансиски услуги, осигурување и др.)?

10 responses



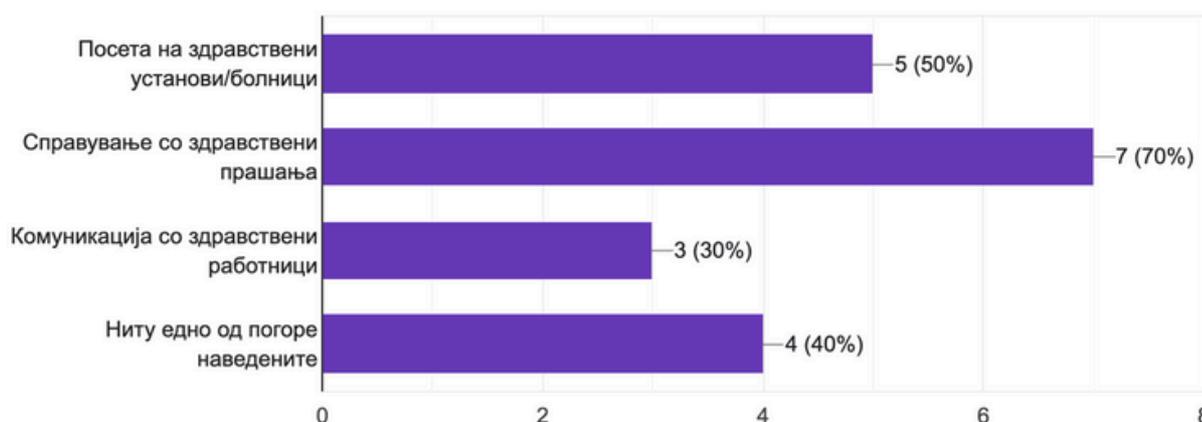
Graph 14: Visual Representation of the difficulties in accessing public services.

#### Common issues encountered during health crises

This question provided some scenarios that one might find difficult to deal with when experiencing a health issue. These included visiting healthcare services, coping with the health issue, interacting with the health professionals or none of the above. Participants were able to choose all answers that applied to them. The results yielded that the majority of participants (50%) find “visiting medical practices/hospitals, and all other answers yielded 70% (“coping with the health issue”, 30% “interacting with a health professional”, and 40% “ don’t find .

Кое од следните сценарија ти претставува потешкотија да се соочиш кога е твоето здравје или здравствена услуга во прашање ? (Означи го секој одговор)

10 responses



Graph 15: Visual Representation of the common issues encountered during health crisis.

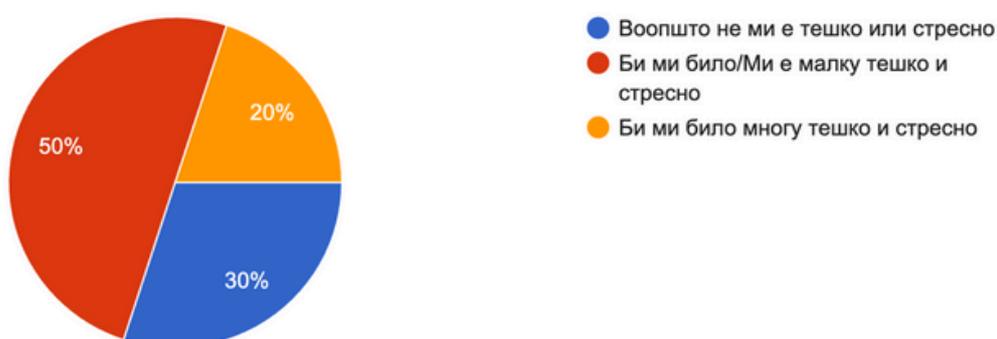
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Stress and difficulty in daily home management

Participants were asked how they felt about managing everyday home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.), and whether it would be difficult or stressful. Participants had 3 options to choose from, ranging from “I do not find this difficult or stressful at all” to “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”. 50% of the participants reported the middle option: “I find this a little difficult and/or stressful”, 30% “I do not find this difficult or stressful”, and 20% “I would find this very difficult and/or stressful”.

Дали имаш чувство дека самостојното справување со секојдневните домашни активности (како чистење, здрава исхрана, пазарување и сл.) е/би било тешко или стресно?

10 responses



Graph 16: Visual Representation of the stress and difficulties in daily home management.

#### Impact of support from professionals on well-being

This question investigated how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals were to well-being. 10% reported this having “A minor effect on their wellbeing”, 10% reported “This is essential for their well-being”, 70% having “A great effect on my well-being” and 10% reported that “This support has no effect” on their well-being.

Те молиме посочи колку поддршката од едукатори, терапевти и други професионалци би ти била корисна за твоја целокупна благосостојба?

10 responses



Graph 17: Visual Representation of the perceived impact of support from professional in the participants well-being.

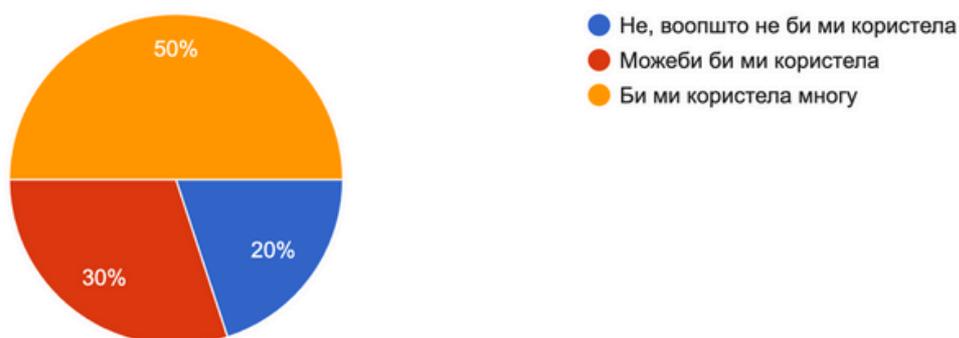
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

Participants were asked whether they felt they would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently. Out of the three given options, almost half of them, 50% responded “Yes”, 30% responded “Somewhat” and 20% responded “No” to benefitting from greater support from professionals. Role of autism awareness in effective support.

Дали имаш чувство дека би ти користела поголема поддршка од еукатори, терапевти и други професионалци со цел да живееш самостојно?

10 responses



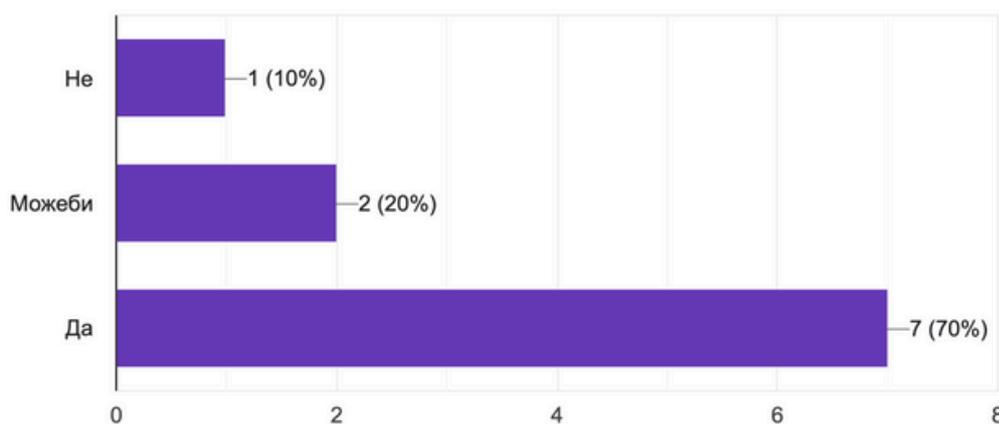
Graph 18: Visual Representation of the possible benefits received from enhanced professional support.

#### Role of autism awareness in effective support

Further to the previous question, participants were asked to what extent a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support. Most of them 70% responded ‘Yes’, followed by 20% who answered ‘Somewhat’, and lastly 10% responded ‘No’.

Дали имаш чувство дека поголема свест и разбирање за аутизмот би помогнало професионалците да ти обезбедат поефективна поддршка?

10 responses



Graph 19: Visual Representation of the role of autism awareness in effective support.

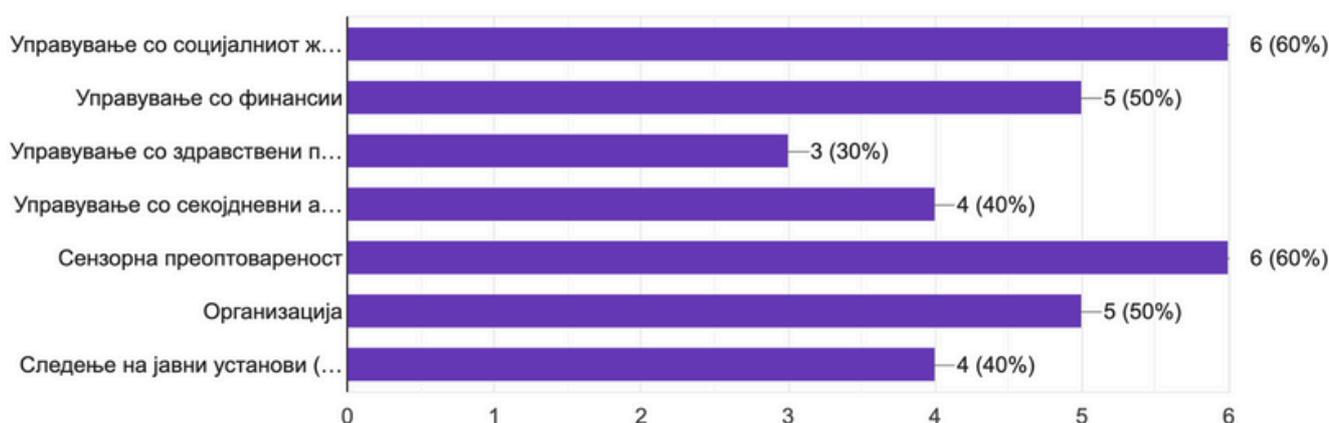
### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

#### Challenges in various aspects of independent living

This question focused on various areas of independent living that participants felt they struggle/would struggle with. They were able to choose as many of the options as they wanted. The most popular was “managing social life and interactions”. The second most popular responses 50% were: “Managing finances”, 30% “managing mental health (stress, anxiety, etc.)”, and 30% “Navigating Services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. 30 % reported struggling with “Managing daily life activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”, 60% reported with “Sensory Overload”, and 50% with “Organisation”.

Со кое од следните области од самостојно живеење сметаш дека ти претставуваат/би ти претставувале потешкотија

10 responses



Graph 20: Visual Representation of the challenges participants face in the various aspects of independent living.

#### Additional barriers to independent living

Adapted sensory spaces at work, education according to my interests, personal assistance, paying bills and communication with people.

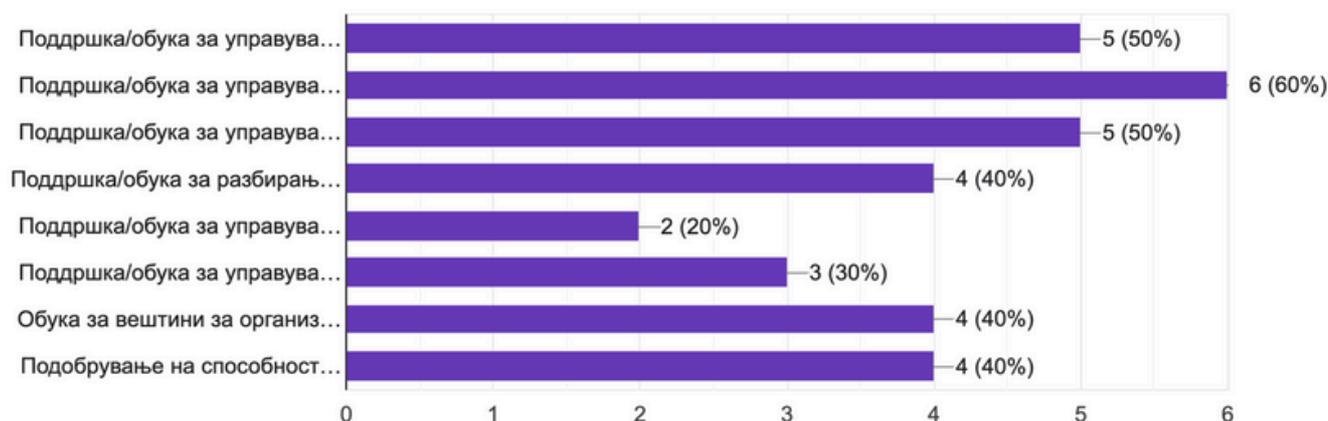
#### Support systems for independent living

The following question investigated additional support systems which participants felt would help with their independent living. 8 options were provided, of which participants could choose as many as they wanted. The most popular answer, with 60 % electability, was “Support/training in navigating complex services (healthcare system, financial services, etc.)”. The second most popular answer, with 50%, was “Support/training in managing stress, anxiety and mental health”. The third most selected answer, with 50%, was “Improving the abilities of educators/trainers to train autistic people in the above fields”. Next, with 40%, was “Support/training in managing finances”. With 30% was “Support/training in managing everyday home activities (cooking healthily, cleaning, household chores, etc.)”, 40 % electability were “Support/training in social interactions and social skills” and “Organisational skills training”. Lastly, with 20%, was “Support/training in understanding sensory issues/overload and how to manage them”.

### 3.5. The Republic of North Macedonia

Кое од подолу наведеното би ти обезбедило поголема поддршка при самостојно живеење?

10 responses



Graph 21: Visual Representation of the options participants think will help them feel more supported when living independently.

#### Further support required for independent living

“Meeting other people that live alone”; “Successful examples”, Support from third person and I need love.

#### 3.5.5 Overall Conclusion

In summary, most study participants are males aged between 18 and 54. All of them have completed school education, with many pursuing further studies. Most continue to live with their families, while others live independently, with partners, or with support. Participants reported feeling stressed once or twice a week, with some expressing mild stress over living alone. The top three stress management strategies highlighted by participants include support from groups, physical exercise, and additional professional assistance. Most engage in daily social interactions, yet most believe they would feel lonely living alone without support. Participants suggested that training in social skills and communication, encouragement to socialize, and increased empathy and understanding from others could help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Sensory overload, primarily caused by loud noises, occurs two to four times weekly for most participants. Many find accessing public services, particularly medical facilities, challenging and struggle with managing daily household tasks independently. Opinions on the influence of professional support on well-being are mixed, but enhanced support appears to benefit independent living. Participants emphasised the need for greater autism awareness among professionals to provide effective support. Key challenges to independent living include managing social interactions, finances, mental health, and navigating services. Notably, two participants cited their parents as barriers in response to an open-ended question. Finally, crucial support systems for independent living identified by participants include guidance on navigating complex services, managing stress and mental health, and improving educators' ability to teach skills like financial management and handling daily tasks.

### 3.6. Ireland

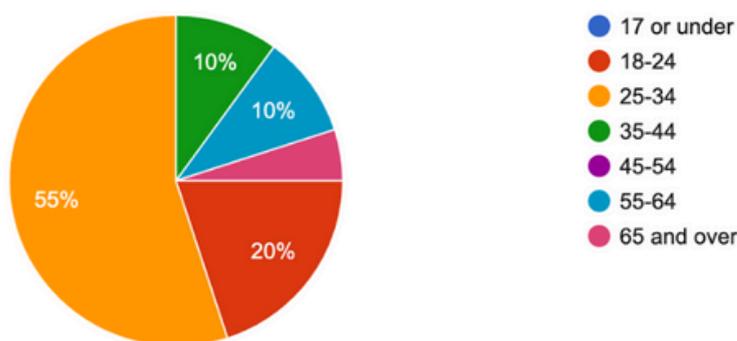
The question "Do you consider yourself to have high-functioning autism?" was included in the survey to gather self-reported data on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals who identify as having high-functioning autism. This question aims to better understand the specific needs and perspectives of this group, which can vary significantly from those with different forms of autism. It is important to note that the term "high-functioning autism" is a self-identification and may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. The data collected through this question will be used to inform and improve support services, ensuring they are more tailored and effective for those who identify as having high-functioning autism.

#### 3.6.1. Overall Description of Participants

The majority of participants (75%) are young adults between 18 and 34 years old, indicating that independent living is a pressing concern primarily among individuals transitioning into adulthood and early stages of independent life.

##### Age

20 responses



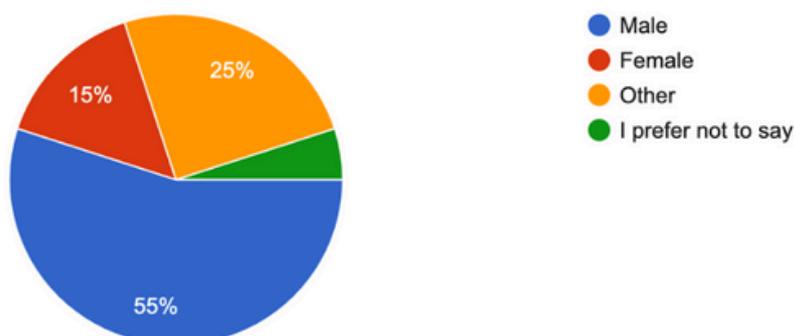
Graph 1: Visual Representation of the Age Range of Participants

#### Gender representation among the participants

A higher proportion of male participants reflects the general diagnosis rates of autism, which tend to be higher in males. However, the representation of females and non-binary individuals underscores the importance of inclusive approaches that address diverse gender-specific needs.

##### Gender

20 responses



Graph 2: Visual Representation of Gender representation among the participants

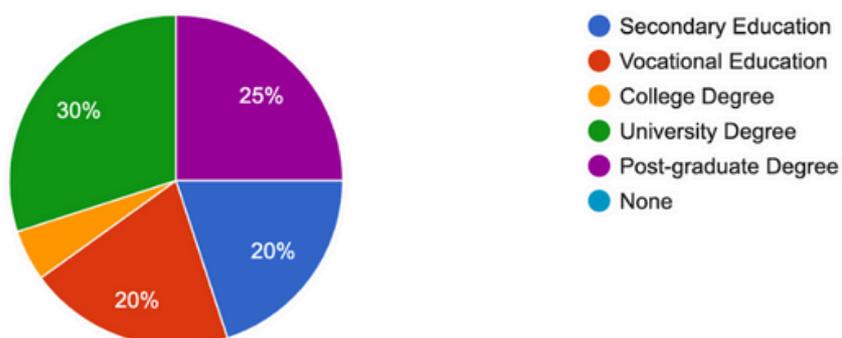
### 3.6. Ireland

#### Educational levels of the participants

A significant portion of respondents have attained higher education degrees, suggesting that despite educational achievements, autistic individuals may still face substantial challenges in achieving independent living, highlighting gaps between educational support and life skills development.

#### Education

20 responses



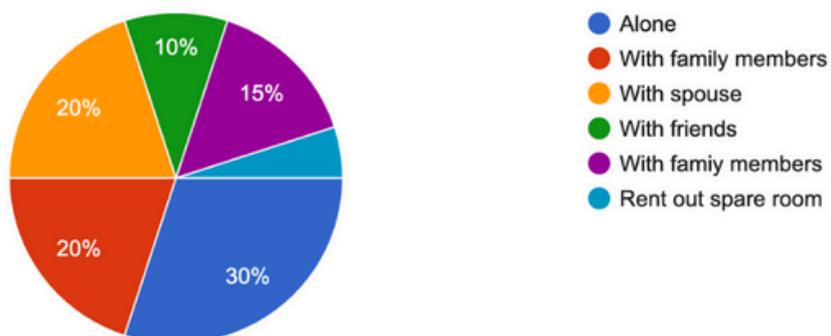
Graph 3: Visual Representation of Educational levels of the participants

#### Living arrangements of the participants

Less than a third of respondents were currently living alone, indicating potential challenges or barriers in transitioning to independent living. The largest group of respondents were those that lived with family, which may reflect the struggles of autistic people to live as independent adults.

#### Living Status

20 responses



Graph 4: Visual Representation of living status of the participants

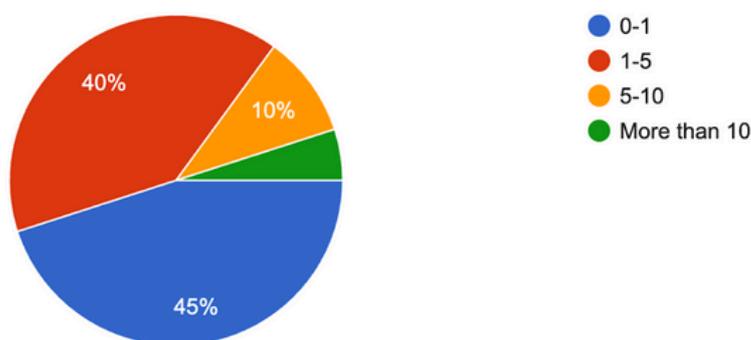
## 3.6. Ireland

### Duration of living independently among the participants

The data shows that a significant portion of respondents have experience living alone, with 40% having lived independently for 1-5 years, and 5% for over 5 years. This indicates that independent living is a reality for many autistic adults, though it comes with varying levels of experience and associated challenges. The most significant portion had never or had just started living independently (0-1 years), which may be consistent with the standard rates of independent living for mainstream young adults.

#### Years of Living Alone

20 responses



Graph 5: Visual Representation of duration of living independently among the participants

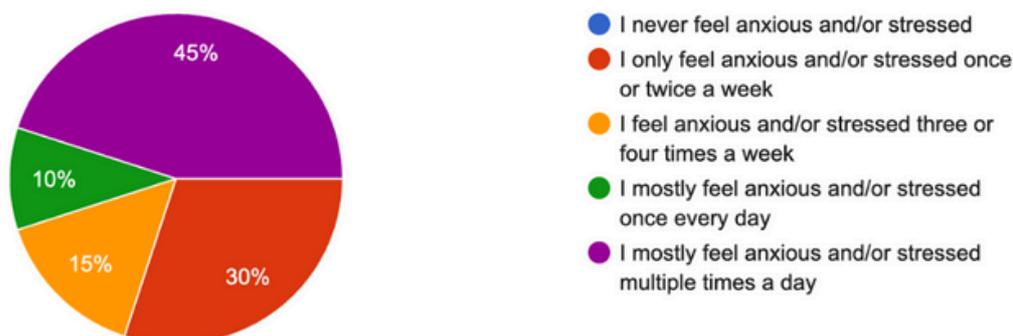
### 3.6.2. Measurement of Stress and Anxiety

#### Participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

This data shows that nearly half of the respondents (45%) experience stress and anxiety multiple times a day, indicating a high level of daily distress. Another significant portion (30%) experiences stress or anxiety less frequently, about once or twice a week. The remaining respondents fall somewhere in between, with 15% feeling stressed three or four times a week and 10% feeling anxious or stressed once a day.

Indicate the level of stress/anxiety you experience in your daily life.

20 responses



Graph 6: Visual Representation of duration of participants' daily stress and anxiety levels

### 3.6. Ireland

This data shows that while a significant portion of respondents (45%) feel only a little stressed about the prospect of living independently, there is still a substantial group (25%) who feel much stressed about it. Additionally, 30% of respondents do not feel stressed about living alone, which may indicate confidence in their ability to manage or existing support structures that they rely on.

How stressed/anxious do you feel about the thought of living on your own without support?

20 responses



Graph 7: Visual Representation of anxiety levels of participants

#### Effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Help from family, friends, or other support groups was the most commonly cited strategy, with 85% of respondents identifying it as a potential means to deal with stress and anxiety. This highlights the significant role that close personal relationships and support networks play in helping individuals manage their mental health. Social support can improve the ability of adults with autism to live independently by providing a coping mechanism for stress and anxiety. Feeling more confident was identified by 65% of respondents as a key factor in managing stress and anxiety. This suggests that building self-esteem and self-efficacy should be an important part of any support program. Confidence helps individuals feel more in control of their lives, which can mitigate the impact of stressors.

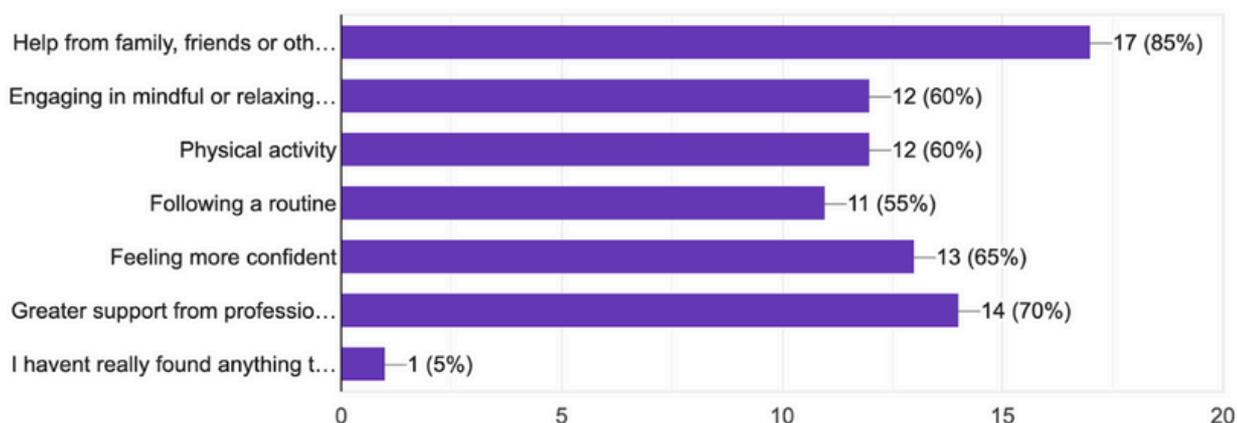
Engaging in mindful or relaxing activities and physical activity were each cited by 60% of respondents. These strategies are well-known for their effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety. Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, help in grounding and calming the mind, while physical exercise is beneficial in reducing stress hormones and boosting mood through the release of endorphins.

Following a routine was highlighted by 55% of respondents. The structure and predictability that routines provide can be particularly comforting for autistic individuals, helping to reduce anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. Routines also help in organizing daily tasks, making them more manageable and less overwhelming.

## 3.6. Ireland

Which of the following do you feel would help you to deal with stress/anxiety?

20 responses



Graph 8: Visual Representation of effective Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety

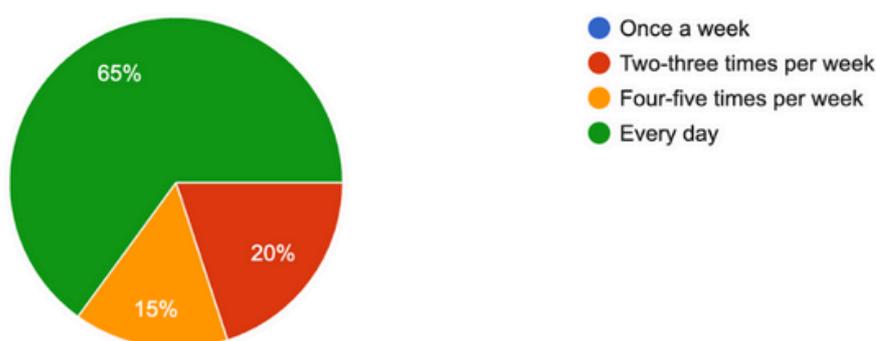
### 3.6.3 Measurement of Social Isolation and Loneliness

#### Frequency of Social Interactions Among the Participants

The data reveals a strong inclination toward daily social interactions, with 65% of respondents engaging with others every day. This frequent social engagement highlights the importance of regular social contact for maintaining mental well-being among autistic individuals. However, despite this frequent interaction, there is still a significant concern about loneliness when living

How often do you interact with others (in person)?

20 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of frequency of social interactions among the participants

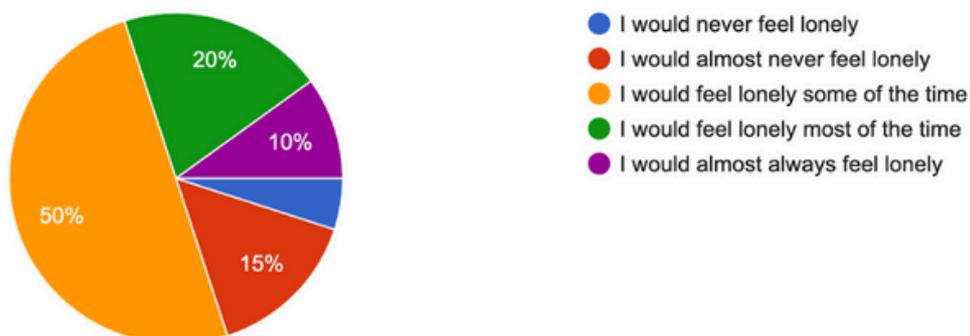
#### Perceived Isolation and Loneliness in Independent Living

Half of the respondents (50%) expect to feel lonely some of the time when living alone, indicating that even with regular social interactions, the risk of isolation remains high. A further 20% fear feeling lonely most of the time, which underscores the emotional challenges that come with independent living. Only 5% of participants would never feel lonely when living independently, highlighting that social support is critical for adults with autism.

### 3.6. Ireland

Do you or would you feel isolated/lonely when living alone without support?

20 responses



Graph 10: Visual Representation of frequency of Perceived Isolation and Loneliness in Independent Living

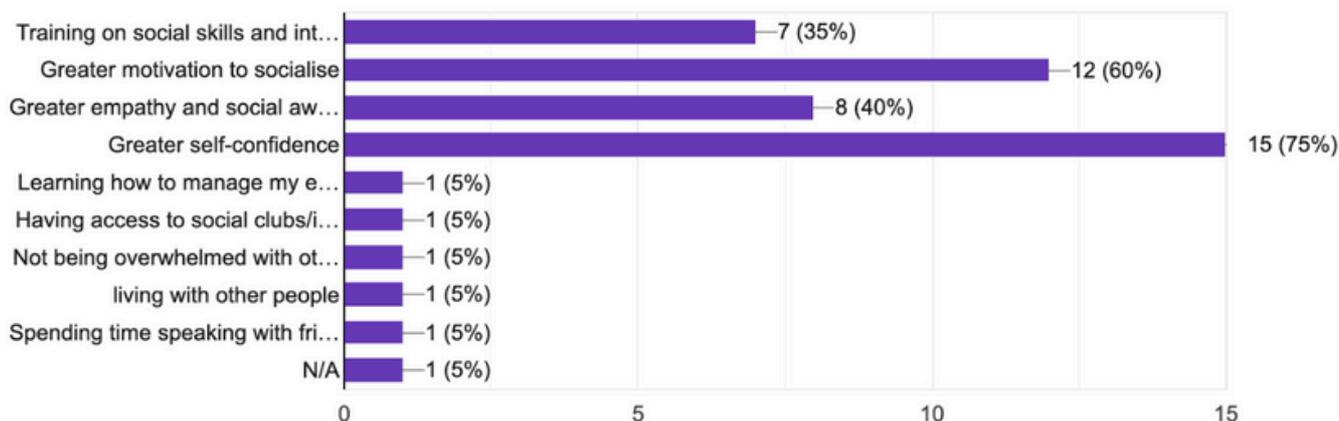
#### Approaches to mitigate isolation and loneliness

In terms of mitigating loneliness, the most effective strategies identified by respondents include increasing self-confidence (75%) and motivation to socialize (60%). These responses suggest that internal factors, such as self-esteem and the drive to engage with others, play crucial roles in reducing feelings of isolation. Additionally, the need for greater empathy and social awareness (40%) and social skills training (35%) indicates that external support and skill-building are also vital.

Interestingly, 20% of respondents mentioned practical solutions like access to social clubs or living with others, which may indicate that these are seen as less effective compared to psychological and social skill improvements. However, most of these focused on having access to support groups.

Which of the following would help you to feel less isolated/alone?

20 responses



Graph 9: Visual Representation of frequency of social interactions among the participants

## 3.6. Ireland

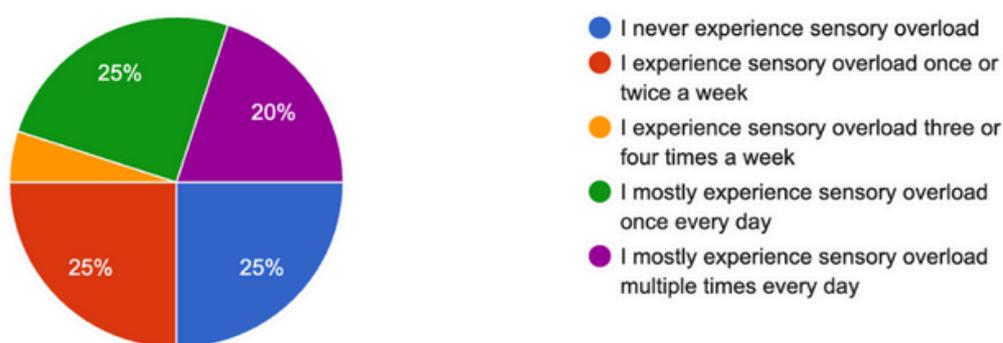
### 3.6.4. Measurement of Sensory Overload

#### Incidents of sensory overload in daily life

The responses to the experience of incidences of sensory overload are mixed, with 50% of participants experiencing sensory overload once or more a day. This may indicate that autistic adults could be better equipped to make changes in their environment to reduce the likelihood of experiencing sensory overload. 25% expressed that they never experience sensory overload, and 45% experience it 1-4 times per week. It is important to note that sensory overload can be particularly difficult to recognise among people with autism (>>>).

Do you ever experience sensory overload at home or during other activities in your daily life?

20 responses



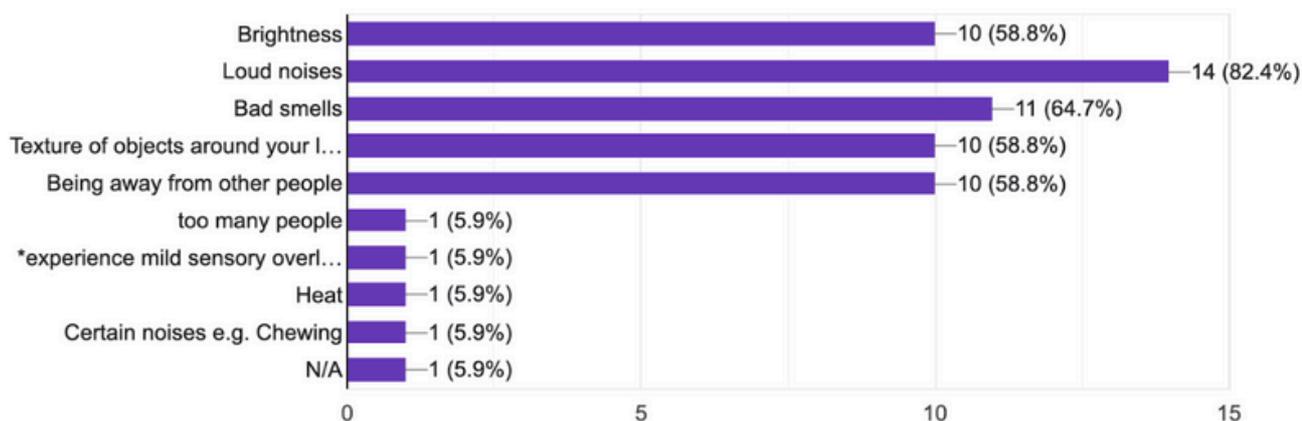
Graph 12: Visual Representation of incidents of sensory overload in daily life

#### Preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

The responses highlight that loud noises and bad smells are the two most significant triggers for sensory overload among the survey participants. This suggests that environmental control measures focusing on reducing or mitigating these sensory inputs could greatly improve their ability to manage daily tasks independently. Moreover, brightness, texture, and being away from other people are also prominent concerns, indicating that personal space and environmental customisation are critical for creating a comfortable living environment.

If you answered that you experience sensory overload in the last question, would it be improved by being able to control the following? (Tick all that apply)

17 responses



Graph 13: Visual Representation of preferred solutions for managing sensory overload

### 3.6. Ireland

#### Difficulties in accessing public services

The results suggest that accessing essential public services is a significant source of difficulty and stress for autistic adults. The majority of respondents (65%) face considerable challenges, which suggests a gap in the accessibility or user-friendliness of these services for individuals with autism. This might point to barriers such as complex communication methods, overwhelming sensory environments, or difficulties in understanding bureaucratic processes. Meanwhile, a smaller portion of the population finds the process somewhat easier, indicating a possible variation in personal coping mechanisms or external support available.

Do you find it challenging to navigate essential public services (healthcare, bank and financial services, insurance, etc.)?

20 responses



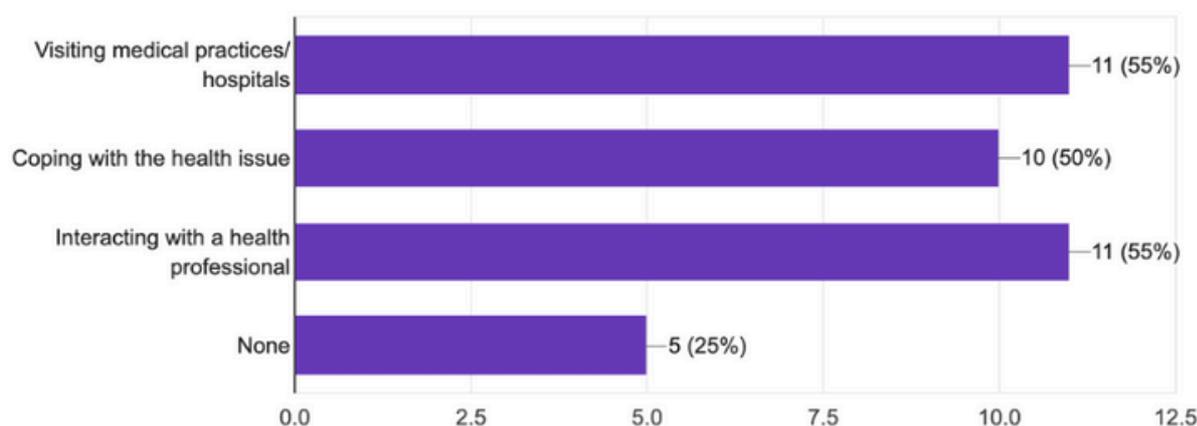
Graph 14: Visual Representation of Difficulties in accessing public services

#### Common issues encountered during health crises

The results suggest that visiting medical practices/hospitals and interacting with health professionals are the two most challenging aspects for autistic adults when dealing with health issues. This could be due to sensory overload, communication difficulties, or anxiety in clinical environments. Additionally, coping with the health issue itself is also a significant challenge, indicating that managing the symptoms and stress of illness is a barrier. A smaller proportion (25%) of respondents reported no difficulties, which may reflect either individual resilience or the presence of adequate support systems.

Which of the following scenarios do you find difficult to deal with when you experience a health issue? (tick all that apply)

20 responses



Graph 15: Visual Representation of Common issues encountered during health crises

### 3.6. Ireland

#### Stress and difficulty in daily home management

The responses suggest that while a significant portion of respondents (35%) do not struggle with managing daily activities, the majority (65%) experience varying degrees of difficulty. Half of the participants find it somewhat challenging, which may point to specific obstacles such as executive functioning issues, sensory sensitivities, or a lack of external support. The 15% who find these activities very difficult likely face more profound barriers in maintaining independent living without additional assistance or accommodations.

Do you feel that managing every day home activities alone (such as cleaning, eating healthily, going to the supermarket, etc.) is/would be difficult or stressful?

20 responses



Graph 17: Visual Representation of Stress and difficulty levels in daily home management

#### Impact of support from professionals on well-being

The responses show that a majority (60%) of participants find support from educators, therapists, and other professionals to be either essential or to have a substantial positive effect on their well-being. This underscores the critical role that professional support plays in improving the lives of autistic adults, potentially helping them navigate everyday challenges, manage sensory overload, and achieve better mental health. However, 40% of respondents find that this support has only minor or no effect on their well-being, which could point to gaps in the effectiveness or relevance of the services they are receiving.

Please indicate how useful the support from educators, therapists, and other support professionals is to your overall well-being?

20 responses



Graph 18: Visual Representation of the Impact of support from professionals on well-being

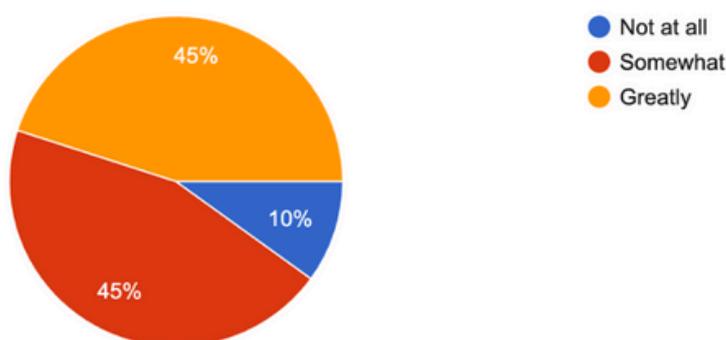
### 3.6. Ireland

#### Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

The results reveal that the majority of respondents (90%) believe they would benefit, either somewhat or greatly, from increased support to live independently. This highlights a significant need for expanded or more personalized services to help autistic adults manage the challenges of independent living. The equal split between "greatly" and "somewhat" suggests that while some individuals need extensive assistance, others may require more moderate levels of support. Only a small percentage (10%) do not feel that additional support is necessary, possibly due to already effective coping mechanisms or adequate support systems in place.

Do you feel you would benefit from greater support from educators, therapists or other specialists in order to live independently?

20 responses



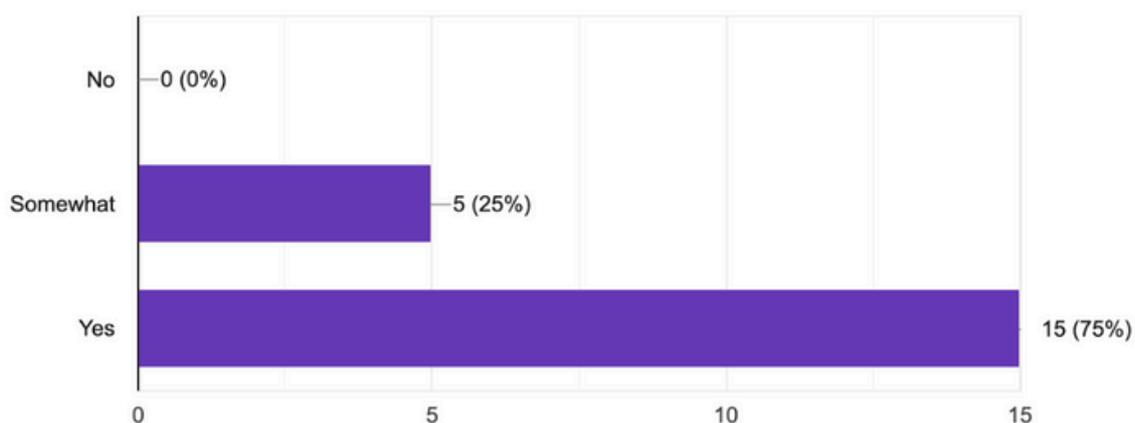
Graph 19: Visual Representation of the Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

#### Role of autism awareness in effective support

The overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) strongly feel that professionals could provide better support with a deeper understanding of autism, suggesting that many current services may lack the necessary insight into autistic needs and challenges. A further 25% believe that greater awareness would somewhat help, highlighting that even incremental improvements in understanding could enhance support. The absence of any "No" responses indicates a consensus among respondents that professionals need to improve their awareness of autism to deliver more effective care and assistance.

Do you feel that a greater awareness and understanding of autism would help these professionals to provide more effective support?

20 responses



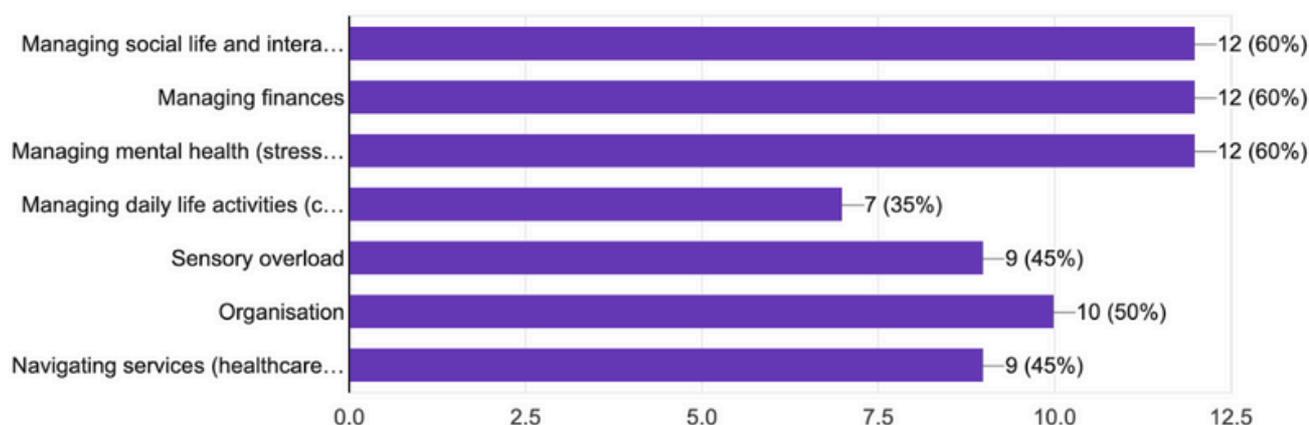
Graph 20: Visual Representation of the Need for enhanced professional support for independent living

### 3.6. Ireland

#### Challenges in various aspects of independent living

The top areas of struggle—managing social life, finances, and mental health—are consistent among 60% of respondents, reflecting a widespread challenge in handling social interactions, financial responsibilities, and emotional well-being. Difficulties with organization and sensory overload are also significant, with 45-50% of respondents identifying these as areas of concern. Navigating services, often a complex task due to bureaucratic procedures and communication challenges, is similarly challenging for a large portion of respondents.

Which of the following areas of independent living do you feel you struggle/would struggle with  
20 responses

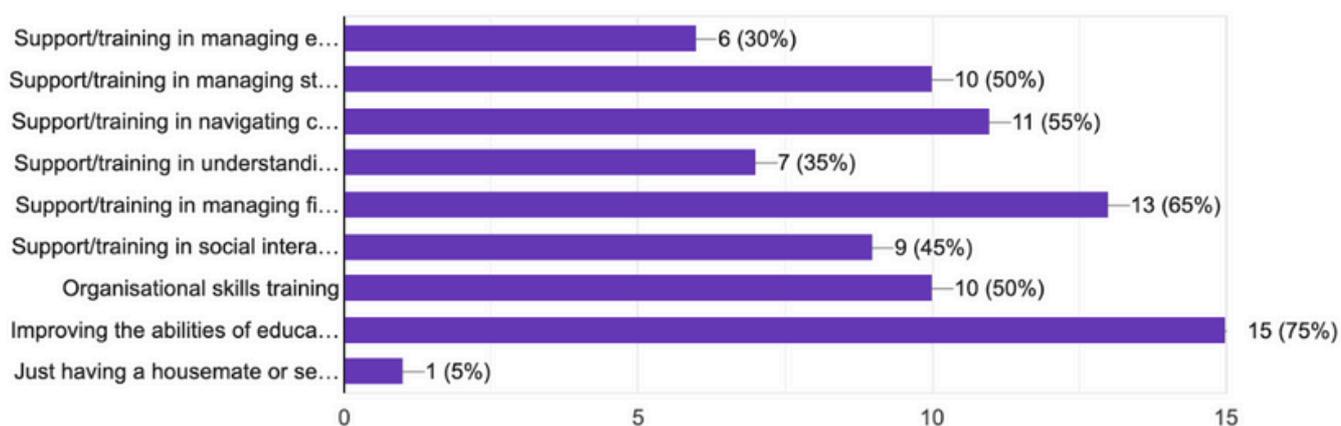


Graph 21: Visual Representation of Challenges in various aspects of independent living

#### Support systems for independent living

The most significant factor, with 75% of respondents agreeing, is the need to improve the abilities of educators, therapists, and other support professionals. This suggests a perception that better-trained professionals could provide more effective support, highlighting the critical role that professionals play in fostering independent living. Financial management is also a prominent concern, with 65% of respondents needing support in this area. Similarly, navigating services, managing stress, and improving organizational skills are key areas where respondents seek assistance, which aligns with the earlier responses about struggles in independent living.

Which of the following would help you to feel more supported when living independently?  
20 responses



Graph 22: Visual Representation of Support systems for independent living



## Project Partners



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