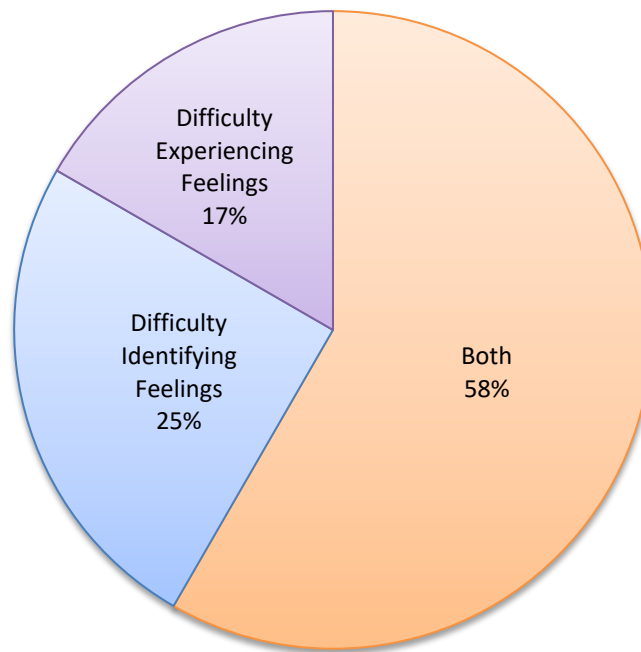


Section One: Alexithymia

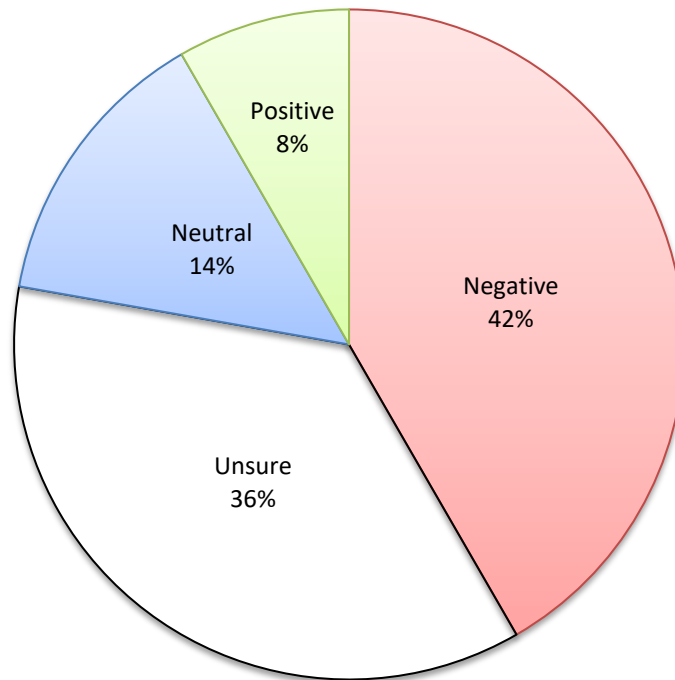
Alexithymia dimensions



Well over half of all respondents have trouble both experiencing and identifying feelings. Difficulty identifying is the more common dimension overall, but only by 9%.

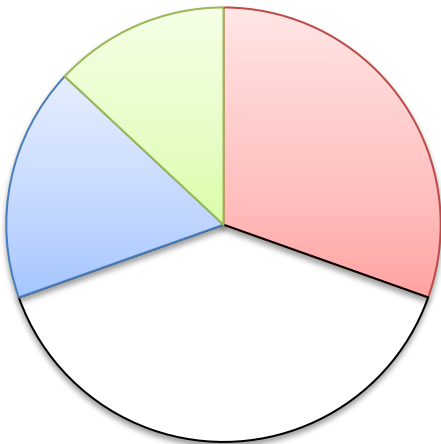
/r/Alexithymia Survey 2018

What impact does alexithymia have on your life?

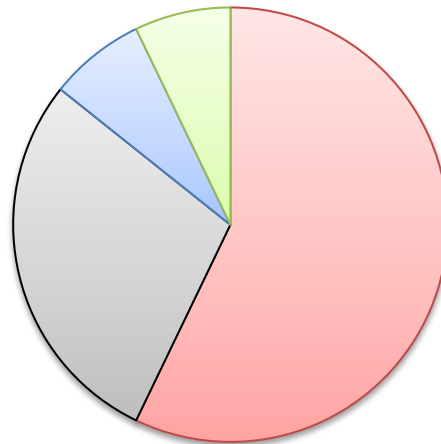


40% of respondents consider alexithymia to overall have a negative impact on their lives, while only 10% consider it to be a net positive. The remaining 50% of respondents either consider the impact negligible or are unsure.

Without mental illness



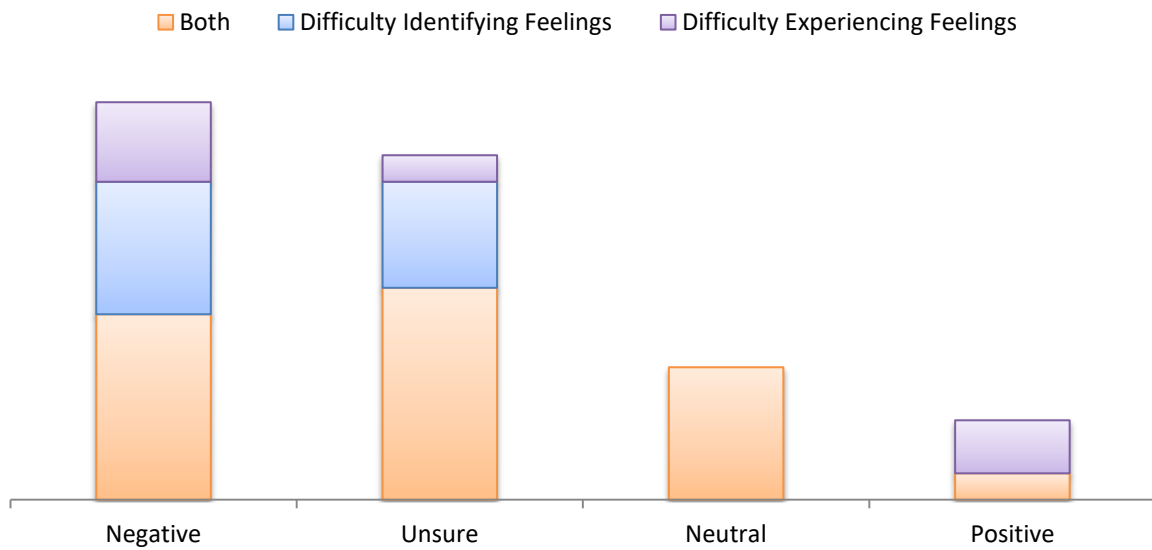
With mental illness



Respondents who reported mental illnesses (see next section) were nearly twice as likely to report a negative impact as those who reported no mental illness. The shares of other responses shrink proportionately.

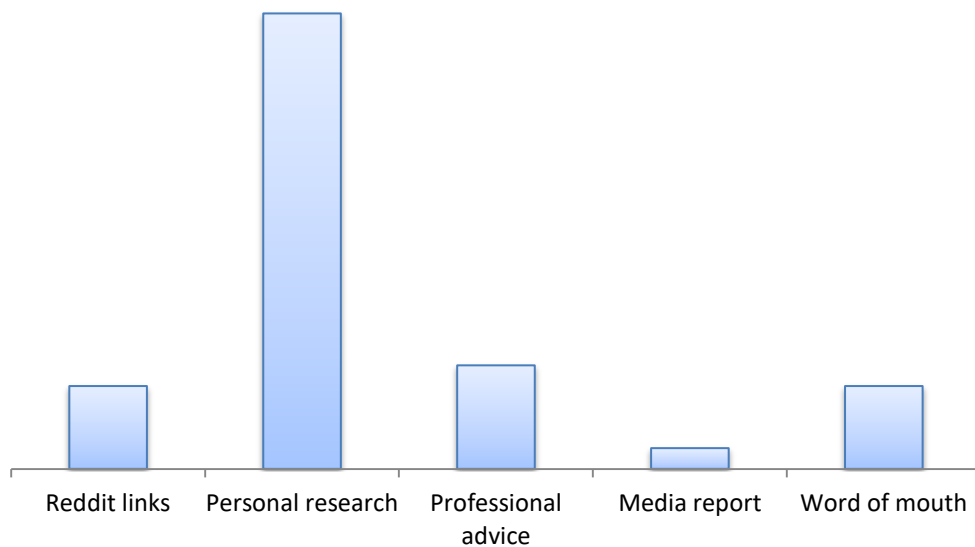
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Impact on life vs. alexithymia dimensions



The results suggests that Difficulty Identifying Feelings is more closely associated with negative life impact than Difficulty Experiencing Feelings. However, there are not yet enough responses to draw a firm conclusion.

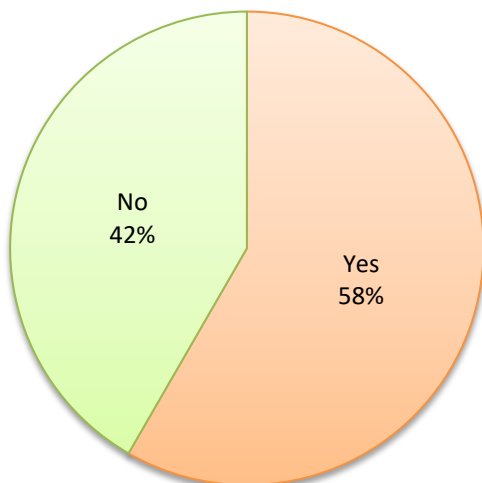
How did you first discover alexithymia?



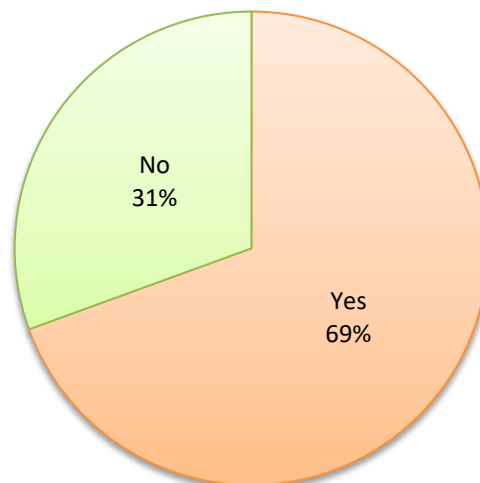
An overwhelming majority of respondents discovered alexithymia though personal online research. Clearly there is much awareness work to be done!

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**Have you discussed
alexithymia with
anyone?**



**Do people ask you to
explain your emotions?**

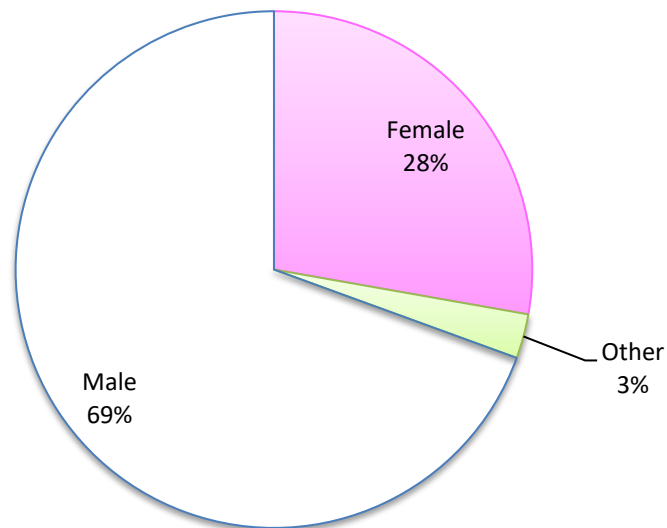


We're a talkative bunch, with two thirds responding that they had discussed alexithymia with someone (other than a therapist), and two thirds responding that other people asked them about their emotions (again excluding therapists).

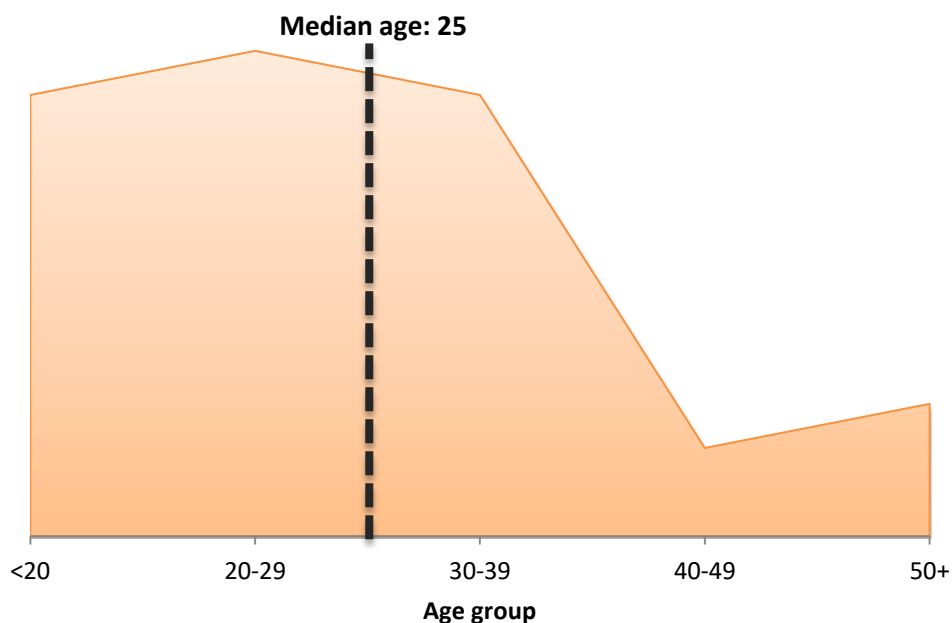
Being in a relationship increases the probability of being asked about emotions by 14% the probability of having discussed alexithymia by 6%.

Section Two: Personal Details

Gender



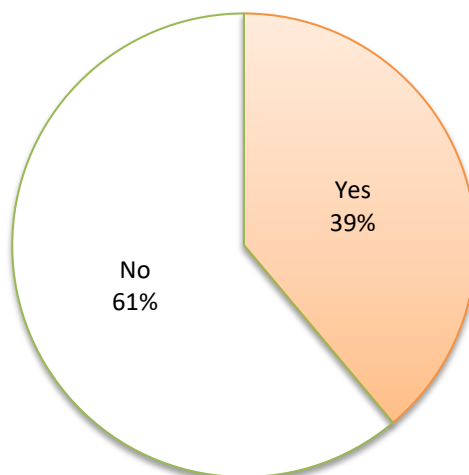
Age



Gender and age are both skewed toward young men, but this is merely a reflection of Reddit's audience. We know from scientific research that the prevalence of alexithymia does not differ between genders, and while age does play a part it is not nearly as dramatic a factor as might be suggested by the chart above.

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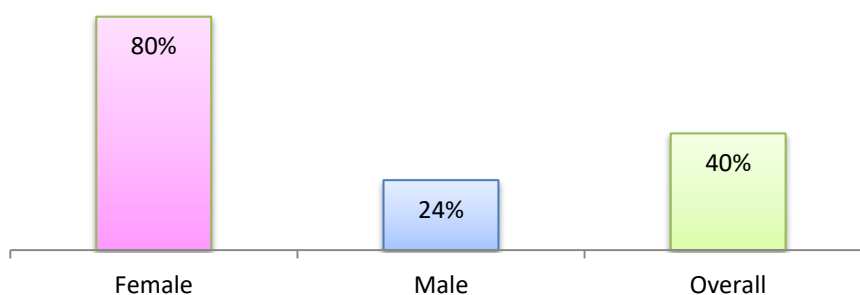
Do you have a diagnosed mental illness?



Alexithymia is often referred to as a disorder or illness, but this is wrong. The survey results show that only around a third of respondents actually have a mental illness. Most of these people gave their precise diagnoses; autism, depression, and anxiety were the most common.

It's difficult to say whether these results are skewed. Someone with a diagnosed illness might be expected to spend more time pursuing psychological topics online, but would arguably be more likely to frequent communities specific to their condition than /r/Alexithymia.

Are you in a relationship?

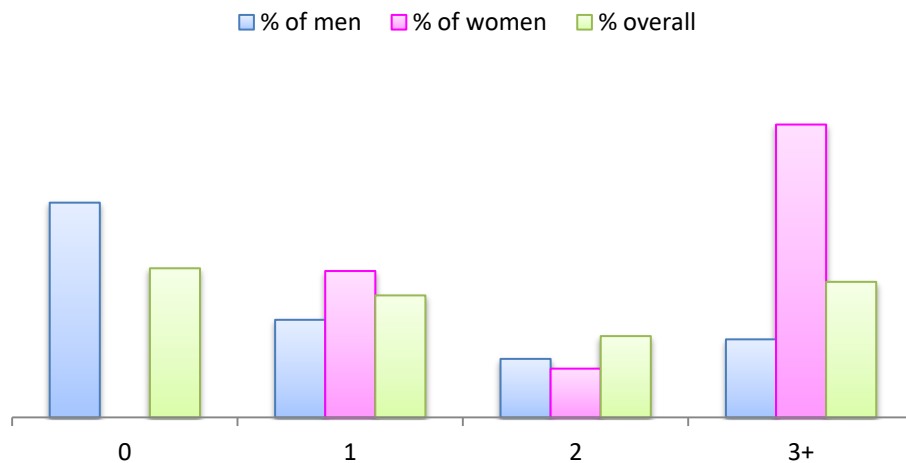


Female respondents are over three times more likely to be in a relationship than male respondents. This is easily the largest divergence between any two groups in the survey. It is exaggerated by female respondents being on average ten years older than male respondents, but not by nearly enough to close the gap.

In cultures across the world, men are expected to approach those in whom they are romantically interested, while women are approached. This may explain why alexithymia seems to disproportionately blunt male love lives.

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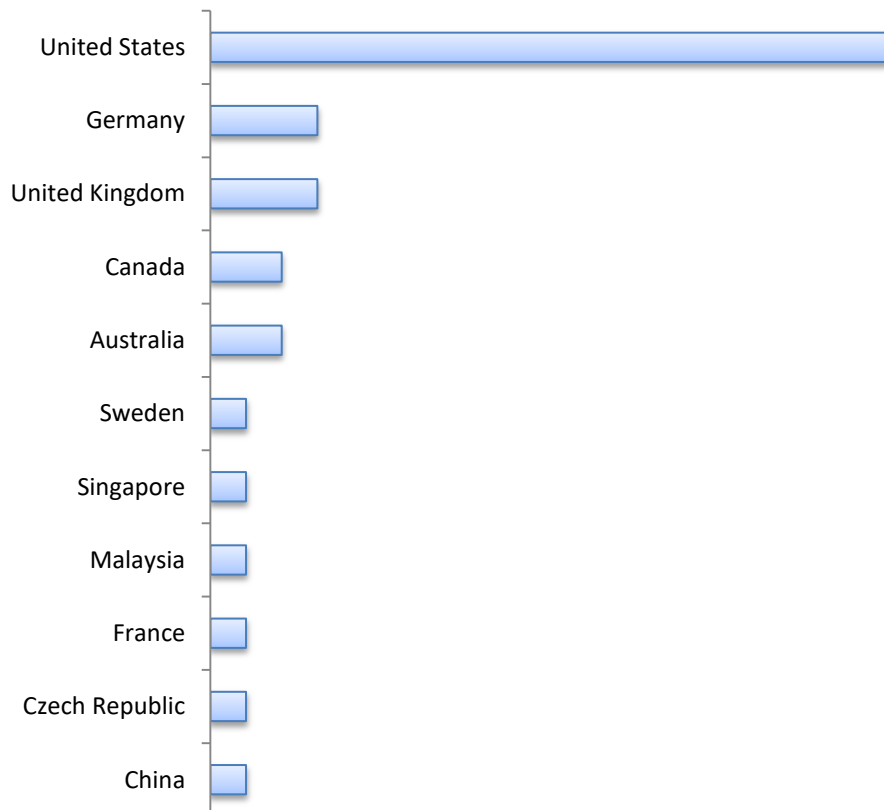
How many friends do you have?



This is not a pretty sight. Nearly two thirds of respondents had either zero friends or only their partner.

60% of women had three or more friends, but only 20% of men could say the same. At the other end of the scale 40% of men and 0% of women reported having no friends at all.

Where do you live?

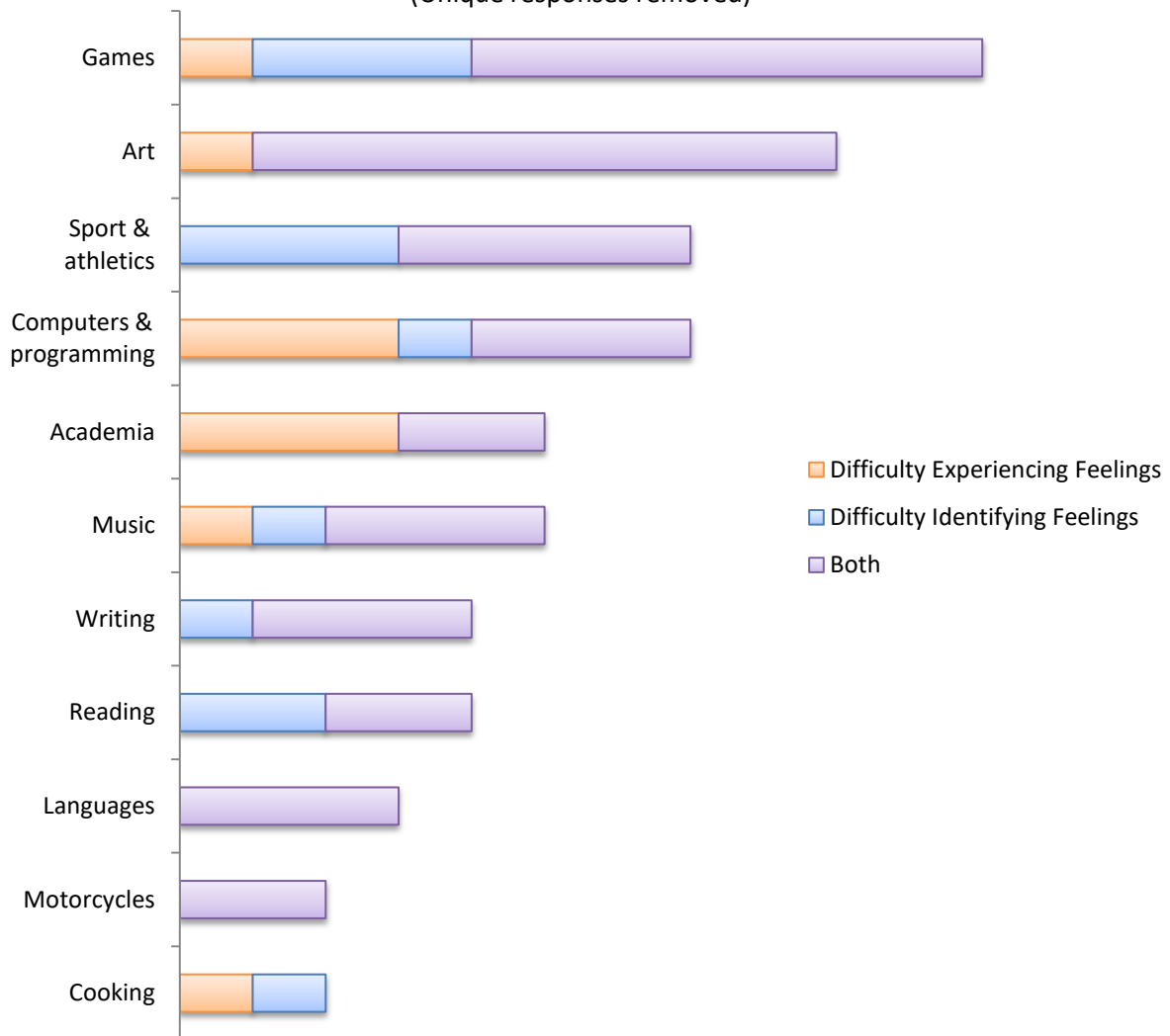


Responses have arrived from every continent besides Africa, but unsurprisingly the anglosphere dominates, in particular the USA.

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What are your hobbies and interests?

(Unique responses removed)

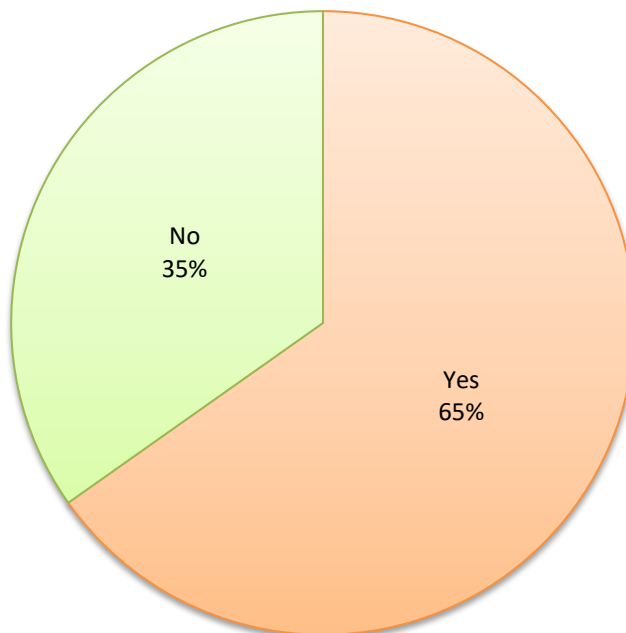


We love computer games! While this is likely to be another case of Reddit's overall demographics leaking into the results, the breakdown of each hobby by alexithymia dimension reveals patterns of more substance.

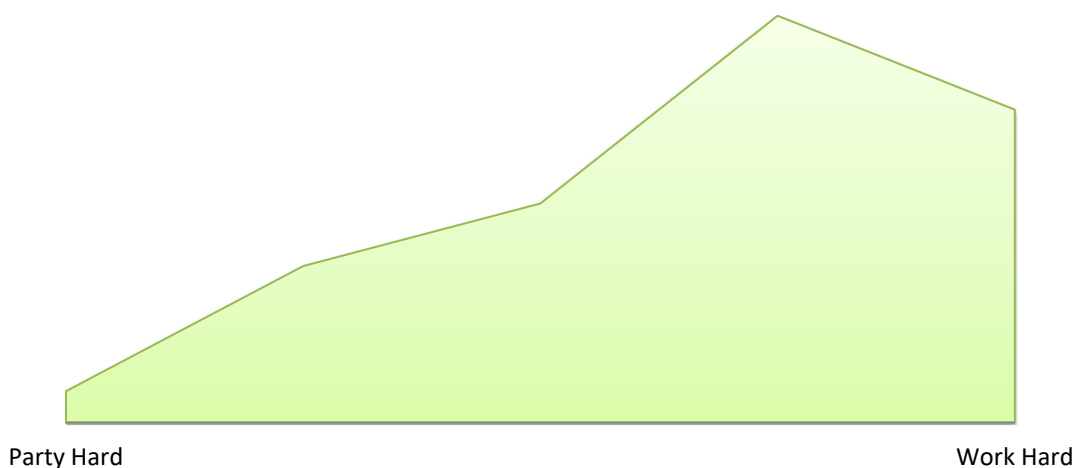
Writing, reading, and sports are all considerably more popular among respondents who have difficulty identifying feelings. Meanwhile, academic pursuits and computers are often chosen by those with difficulty experiencing feelings.

Section Three: Career

Does your work bring you into contact with the public?



What is your work-life balance?

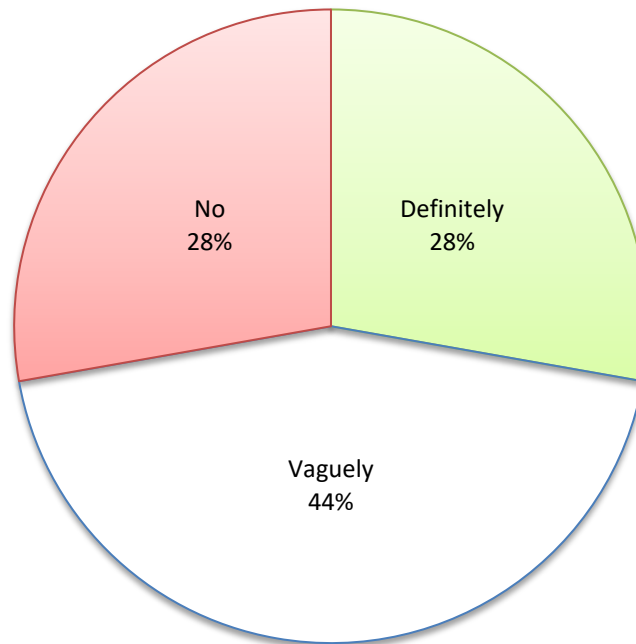


Respondents reported a huge variety of careers ranging from retail to programming to the arts. There is no way to sensibly plot the results in one graph, but thankfully the survey pulled out some important aspects of work into their own questions.

Respondents reported themselves as being hard working, and with nearly 70% in a public-facing job it seems that we don't hide ourselves away from the world.

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Do you have any life goals?



Responses to this question showed no correlation with any others, and frankly I'm not sure what this pie chart is *supposed* to look like. Trying to search for anything containing the phrase "life goals" is a gateway to motivational quote hell...

Conclusions

There were some big surprises in this survey, not least the number of people who report difficulty both experiencing and identifying feelings. The next survey will record this data with a scale of responses in order to better unpick such a large block of identical answers.

The other large surprise was the enormous gulf between male and female respondents' relationship statuses and friendship group size. The picture is grim for men.

The survey reveals that mental illness doubles the likelihood of a respondent reporting alexithymia as a negative impact on their life and suggests that cognitive alexithymia (i.e. difficulty identifying/describing feelings) is more closely linked to negative impacts than affective alexithymia. However, the lack of granular dimension information makes it impossible to draw a firm conclusion on this latter point.

Some of the hobbies recorded in the survey show a bias toward one dimension: academia and programming toward difficulty experiencing feelings, and sport, reading, and writing toward difficulty identifying feelings.