

48% of Daters Hide Mental Health Struggles, Study Finds

New research from The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center finds 59% of singles feel judged after opening up about mental health, reshaping modern dating norms.

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-- As conversations about mental health become more normalized in American culture, singles are bringing those discussions into the dating world—but not without hesitation. A [new survey from The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center](#) finds that nearly half of active daters (48%) admit to hiding, softening, or avoiding discussion of their mental health early in dating, despite widespread cultural encouragement to be emotionally open.



Nearly half of singles hide their mental health struggles while dating, and 59% say they feel judged after opening up, according to new research from The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center.

The study surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults who are currently dating or have dated within the past year to examine how mental health disclosure impacts attraction, commitment, and trust. The results reveal a dating landscape where vulnerability can both deepen connection and trigger rejection.

More than half of Gen Z daters (56%) say they have intentionally downplayed their mental health struggles while dating—making them the most likely generation to self-censor. Meanwhile, 59% of respondents reported feeling judged, ghosted, or rejected after opening up about their mental health.

Among those who faced negative reactions:

- 18% said a date became distant or cold
- 14% were ghosted
- 12% said someone pulled away after initially being supportive

- 9% were unmatched or blocked

Yet disclosure isn't universally punished. In fact, 26% said honesty about mental health made a partner more attractive, and 41% reported feeling closer after someone opened up.

Language also plays a role. Nearly half of daters (47%) say they respect a potential partner more when they use therapy-informed language like "boundaries," "triggers," or "emotional intelligence," while 38% say it allows for more honest conversations early in dating. However, 29% admitted to intentionally using therapy-style language to appear more emotionally mature—suggesting authenticity remains critical.

Emotional readiness—not diagnosis—appears to be the true differentiator. Nearly one in four daters (23%) have avoided someone who seemed emotionally closed off, while 22% have ended a relationship due to emotional unavailability. Conversely, 24% said they avoided someone who seemed overly intense about their mental health.

"Having emotional intelligence and coping mechanisms is far more important than a diagnosis," said [Jaime Blaustein](#), Co-Founder and CEO of The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center. "For many singles, the dealbreaker isn't whether or not someone has a mental illness — it's how they talk about it."

The survey also found that mental health impacts relationship pacing. Nearly one in five respondents (18%) said they have kept a relationship casual because a partner's mental health struggles felt too heavy to take on. Additionally, 12% said they ended a relationship rather than navigate ongoing mental health challenges.

Blaustein notes that emotional readiness applies to both people in a relationship. "An emotionally ready partner demonstrates self-awareness, effective communication skills, and a willingness to engage in mutual growth," he said. "Open discussions about mental health may cause some people to withdraw, but they also attract those who value authenticity. It's better to learn early whether someone has the capacity for emotional intimacy."

The center advises modern daters to prioritize genuine communication over performative vulnerability. Throwing around therapeutic buzzwords does not replace emotional maturity, and using stigmatizing language—whether self-directed or toward a partner—can undermine progress in reducing mental health stigma.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that modern dating is not about avoiding mental health conversations—but navigating them thoughtfully. Healthy relationships depend less on diagnosis and more on emotional responsibility, communication skills, and the capacity to support one another realistically.

Key Findings:

- 48% hide or soften mental health struggles early in dating
- 56% of Gen Z downplay their mental health while dating
- 59% felt judged or rejected after disclosing
- 47% respect partners more when they use therapy-informed language
- 23% avoid emotionally closed-off partners
- 18% have kept relationships casual due to mental health concerns

The full findings are available here:

<https://sylviabrafman.com/mental-health-disclosure-dating-trends/>

About The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center

The Sylvia Brafman Mental Health Center is a nationally recognized mental health treatment facility specializing in personalized care for mood disorders, anxiety, trauma, and complex mental health conditions. Through evidence-based therapy and individualized treatment plans, the center helps clients build emotional resilience, self-awareness, and healthier relationships.

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