



Mental Health During COVID-19 Outbreak Wave 1

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April 2020

Methodology

Methodology: On behalf of the MHRC, Pollara Strategic Insights conducted an online survey among a randomly-selected, reliable sample of **N=1,803** adult (18+) Canadians.

Field Window: April 22 to 28, 2020

Reliability: As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of $\pm 2.3\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments. Although demographic and regional quotas were employed to ensure reliable and comparable sub-segment analysis, the data was weighted by the most current gender, age, & region Census data, to ensure the sample reflects actual population of adult Canadians. Discrepancies in total % are due to rounding.

Region	Number of Interviews	Margin of error
British Columbia	251	$\pm 6.2\%$
Alberta	252	$\pm 6.2\%$
Prairies	200	$\pm 6.9\%$
Ontario	701	$\pm 3.7\%$
Quebec	300	$\pm 5.6\%$
Atlantic Canada	99	$\pm 9.8\%$
National	1,803	$\pm 2.3\%$



Results in Detail

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Anxiety and Depression in the COVID-19 Outbreak

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Anxiety is high and depression is rising, the longer we are in self-isolation

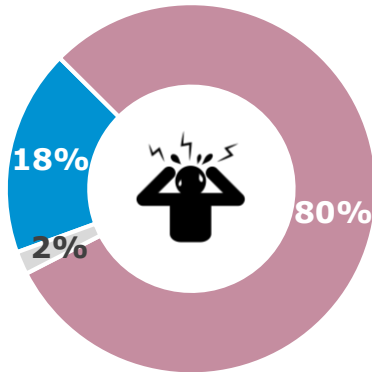
IMPACT ON CANADIANS' MENTAL HEALTH DUE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK

- **Two-in-ten Canadians indicate they have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (18%) or depression (17%),** while less than one-in-ten (6%) report other types of mood disorder. All of these conditions are more likely to be present among younger Canadians (18-34 years 25% anxiety 21% depression) and women (20% anxiety, 19% depression).
- Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the levels of very high **anxiety have quadrupled (from 5% to 20%)** while the levels of high **depression have doubled (from 4% to 10%)**. Those who had low levels of anxiety before the outbreak, have been cut in half (72% to 39%), whereas the proportion of Canadians who described their level of depression as low decreased from 79% to 65%. **Among those with an anxiety disorder or depression - their already high levels of anxiety and depression have doubled since the outbreak (16% to 38% and 12% to 28% respectively).**
- **The number of people predicting they will experience a high level of depression increases to 16%** if social distancing and **self-isolation were to continue for another 2 months**. The number predicting high anxiety (in 2 months) tends to remain the same as the current levels (from 20% to 22%).

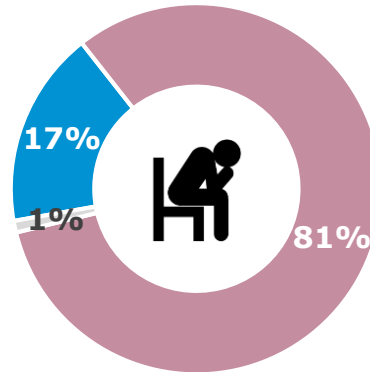
One-in-five Canadians have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or depression

- 6% say they have been diagnosed with another mood disorder.
- Those diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or depression are more likely to be younger, 18-34 years old (25% anxiety; 21% depression) and women (20% anxiety; 19% depression). Those diagnosed with another mood disorder are also more likely to be 18-34 years olds (9%) but are equally represented in men and women.
- Two-thirds of those diagnosed with an anxiety disorder also say they have been diagnosed with depression (64%) and vice versa (63%). One-quarter of those with another mood disorder also say they have an anxiety disorder (26%) or depression (27%).
- Regionally, right now, Alberta has the highest prevalence of those diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (23%), while Quebec (13%) and the Prairies (15%) are among the lowest. Atlantic Canada (25%) and Alberta (22%) have the highest number of those who report being diagnosed with depression and the lowest prevalence is in Quebec (5%).
- While 24% of residents in rural Canada reported a previous diagnosis of depression compared to 16% in urban Canada, the current level of those indicating a high level of depression is approximately the same for both.

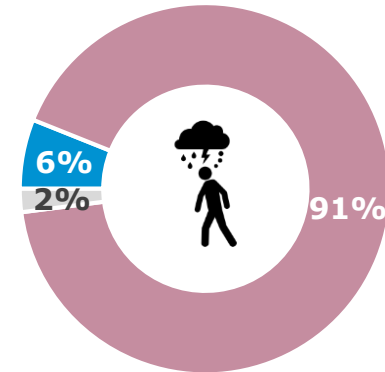
AN ANXIETY DISORDER



DEPRESSION



ANOTHER MOOD DISORDER



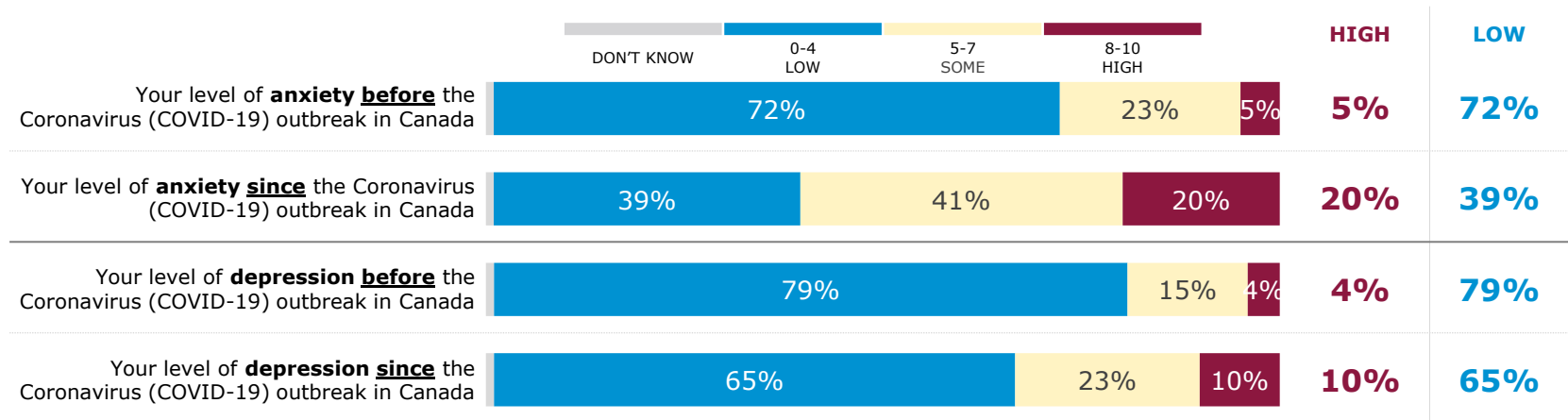
YES NO DON'T KNOW

Base: (Total N=1,803)

A1. Before the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada... did you ever receive a professional medical diagnosis stating that you suffered from the any of the following:

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, anxiety levels have quadrupled and depression levels have doubled

- While three-quarters (72%) say their anxiety levels were low before the outbreak, only a two-fifths (39%) feel the same since the outbreak. More are rating their anxiety levels as average, and those who rate their anxiety levels as high have quadrupled (from 5% to 20%) since the outbreak.
- While reported depression levels have increased, they have not increased as much – with only 4% rating their depression as high before the outbreak and 10% saying the same since.
- 16% of those with an anxiety disorder rated their anxiety level as at high before the outbreak. These levels have more than doubled to 38% since the outbreak. Likewise, one-in-ten (12%) of those with a mood disorder rated their depression as high before the outbreak, this increased to 28% since the outbreak.
- While overall, the 18-34 year olds are more likely to say their anxiety levels were high before (9%) and since the crisis (27%; +18pts), the 35-54 year olds see a similar spike in high anxiety levels since the outbreak (+16pts). The older group (55+) also feel a rise in anxiety levels since the outbreak (+13pts). Depression levels increase to a similar extent across all age groups (+5 to +9pts). Women (24%) are more likely to feel higher levels of anxiety than men (16%) since the outbreak, but depression levels are similar.



Base: (Total N=1,803)

A2A. Please rate each of the following using the scale 0-10 where "10" is Extremely high and "0" is None.

Overall, anxiety and depression levels increase to a higher extent among Alberta, Ontario and Atlantic Canada residents, and increases the least among Quebecers

- Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Alberta residents feel the highest increase in high anxiety levels (+20pts), while Ontario (+17 pts), Atlantic Canada (+16pts) and BC (+15pts) residents see a similar extent of increase in their anxiety levels. The least increase is seen among the Prairies (+11pts) and Quebec (+10pts) residents since the outbreak.
- High levels of reported depression increase the most in Atlantic Canada (+12pts), followed by Ontario (+8pts) and Alberta (+8pts), and least among Quebec residents (+2pts) since the outbreak.
- High levels of anxiety increase to the same extent (+15pts) for urban and rural residents. High depression levels among rural residents increase by 9pts to 11% (from 2% before the outbreak) and levels increase to 10% (from 4%, +6pts) among urban residents.

	Total		BC		AB		MN/SK		ON		QC		ATL	
	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Your level of anxiety before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada	5%	72%	6%	71%	5%	67%	2%	69%	6%	69%	3%	80%	6%	68%
Your level of anxiety since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada	20%	39%	21%	37%	25%	35%	13%	43%	23%	35%	13%	46%	22%	38%
Your level of depression before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada	4%	79%	4%	78%	6%	75%	3%	79%	5%	76%	2%	89%	5%	72%
Your level of depression since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada	10%	65%	8%	64%	14%	59%	10%	67%	13%	61%	4%	77%	17%	59%

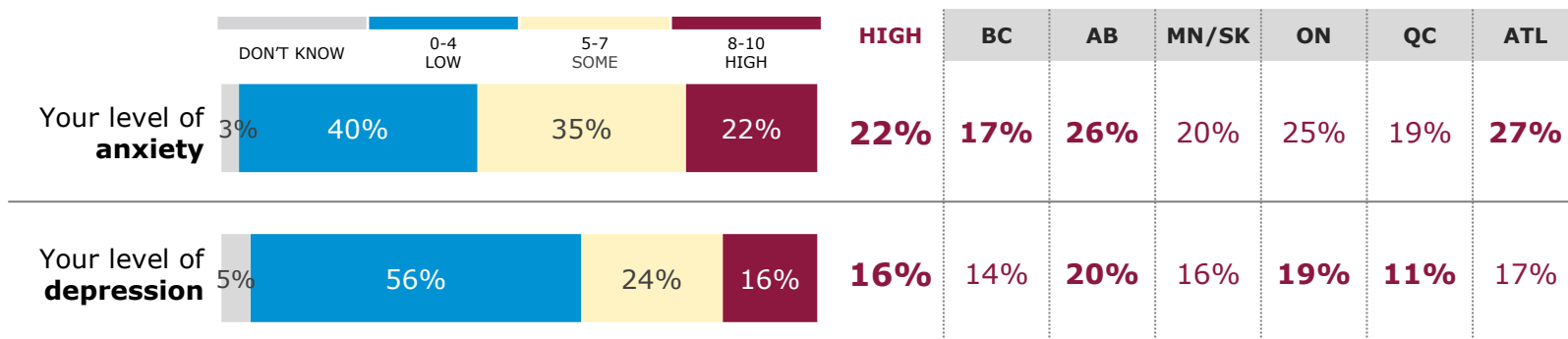
Base: (Total N=1,803)

A2A. Please rate each of the following using the scale 0-10 where "10" is Extremely high and "0" is None. HIGH = 8-10; LOW = 0-4

Canadians expect their depression levels to further increase if the isolation continues for 2 more months; anxiety levels are expected to stay the same

- The frequency of high depression is expected to increase by 6% from where it is now (10%) and by 12% from where it was before the COVID-19 outbreak (4%) (if isolation continues for another 2 months).
- Four-in-ten of those with a mood disorder expect their anxiety levels to be high (40%). One-third (33%) of those reporting a mood disorder expect their depression to be high. This increases to 41% when looking specifically at those who report depression already.
- The anxiety (30%) and depression (23%) levels that the 18-34 year olds are expecting are higher than those of the older age groups. Of the 35-54 year olds, 23% expect their anxiety levels and 16% expect their depression levels to be high. Women are more likely to expect their anxiety levels to be high (27%) and fewer among men expect the same (18%). However, similar proportions between women (18%) and men (15%) expected high depression levels.
- Atlantic Canadians (27%) and Albertans (26%) are most likely to expect their anxiety levels to be high if isolation continues for 2 months and BC residents are least likely to expect high anxiety levels (17%). Alberta (20%) and Ontario (19%) residents expect higher depression levels if isolation continues for another 2 months. Quebec (11%) residents expect the least increase in their depression levels. Increase in anxiety (21-23%) and depression (16%) levels is the same between urban and rural residents.

IF SOCIAL ISOLATION CONTINUES FOR 2 MORE MONTHS, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT...



Base: (Total N=1,803)

A2B. And, using the same scale... if social isolation continues for 2 more months, what do you expect the following to be?



Impacts on Mental Health

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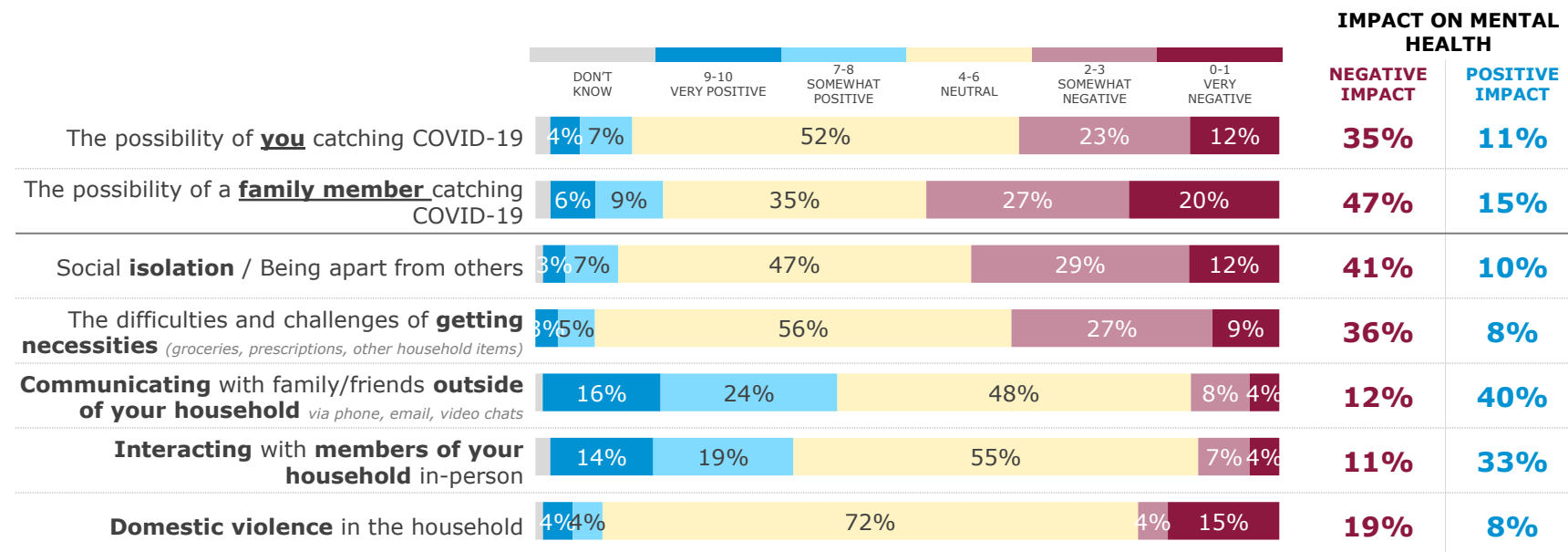
Fiscal and family health concerns have a negative impact on mental health, while family outside the home, reading and pets have positive impacts

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

- On a personal level, Canadians are **more concerned about their family members catching the virus (47%)**, than are worried about themselves (35%). These worries, along with **self-isolation (41%)** is having a **negative impact on their mental health**. However, **pets (41%) communication** between friends and family outside their household (40%) as well as **interaction with family members** within their household is **having a positive impact (32%)**. A quarter (27%) say that non-physical conflict in their household has increased.
 - Of those **who have kids** under 18 years, one-third say there is an **increase in non-physical conflict (36%)** in their household, with half (49%) saying its at the same level as before. Despite this, **two-fifths (41%) feel there is a positive impact on their mental health, due to the in-person interactions with family members in their household**. In comparison, those who have older children (18+) or have **no kids see a lesser increase in non-physical conflict (23%)**; 60% say non-physical conflict is at the same level as before the outbreak, and are also less likely to report a positive impact on their mental health due to in-person interactions (30%).
- Daily news of the outbreak is taking its toll on about one-third (36%) of Canadians who are seeing negative impacts. But **social distancing is also showing some positive impacts**, as Canadians are able to catch up on TV shows, movies, other forms of **entertainment (39%)**, they are **reading (44%) and exercising more (31%)**, and are able to spend **quality time with their pets (41%)**.
 - **Parents** who have kids under 18 years are seeing a much **higher positive impact on their mental health due to physical activity and exercise (42%)** than those who have older children or no children (27%).
- **Concern is highest for the economy (48%) and the impact that the outbreak is having on their jobs** – many are worried about losing work hours or pay (42%), getting laid off themselves (38%) or having a family member lose their job (43%), and some have already suffered a recent job loss (57%). These factors are having a **strong negative impact on their mental health (as noted above)**.

Personal/Social Circle: Canadians are more concerned about their family members catching COVID-19, one-third are worried about themselves; isolation has significant negative impacts

- Almost half (47%) feel the negative impact of worrying that their family member may catch COVID-19, while one-third (35%) feel that worry about themselves.
- Four-in-ten (41%) feel the negative impacts of self-isolation on their mental health, however, just one-in-ten feel a negative impact on communicating with friends/family outside their household (12%) or interacting with members of their own household (11%) - these are having a positive impact instead on the mental health of Canadians.

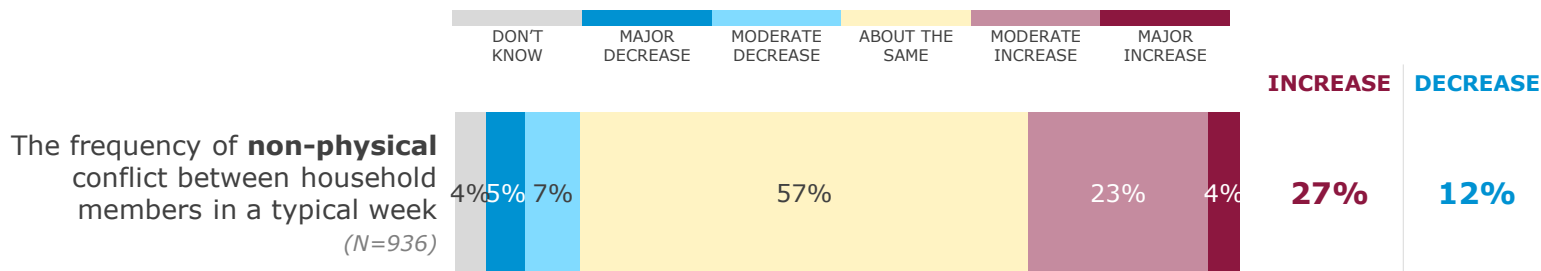


Base: (Total without Not Applicable for each)

A3A. During the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, please rate each of the following in terms of the impact they are currently having on your mental health, if any:

Frequency of non-physical conflict between household members increases by a quarter, but majority say its about the same as before the outbreak

- Four-in-ten of those with an anxiety disorder (41%) and depression (37%) say that conflicts in their households have increased.
- Non-physical conflict increases (40%), almost twice as much among 18-34 year olds than the other age groups – 24% among 35-54 year olds and 18% among 55+ year olds.
- Among those who have kids under 18 years, one-third say non-physical conflict (36%) in their household has increased, with half (49%) saying its at the same level as before. While, those who have older children (18+) or have no kids report a lesser increase in non-physical conflict (23%); 60% say non-physical conflict is at the same level as before the outbreak.

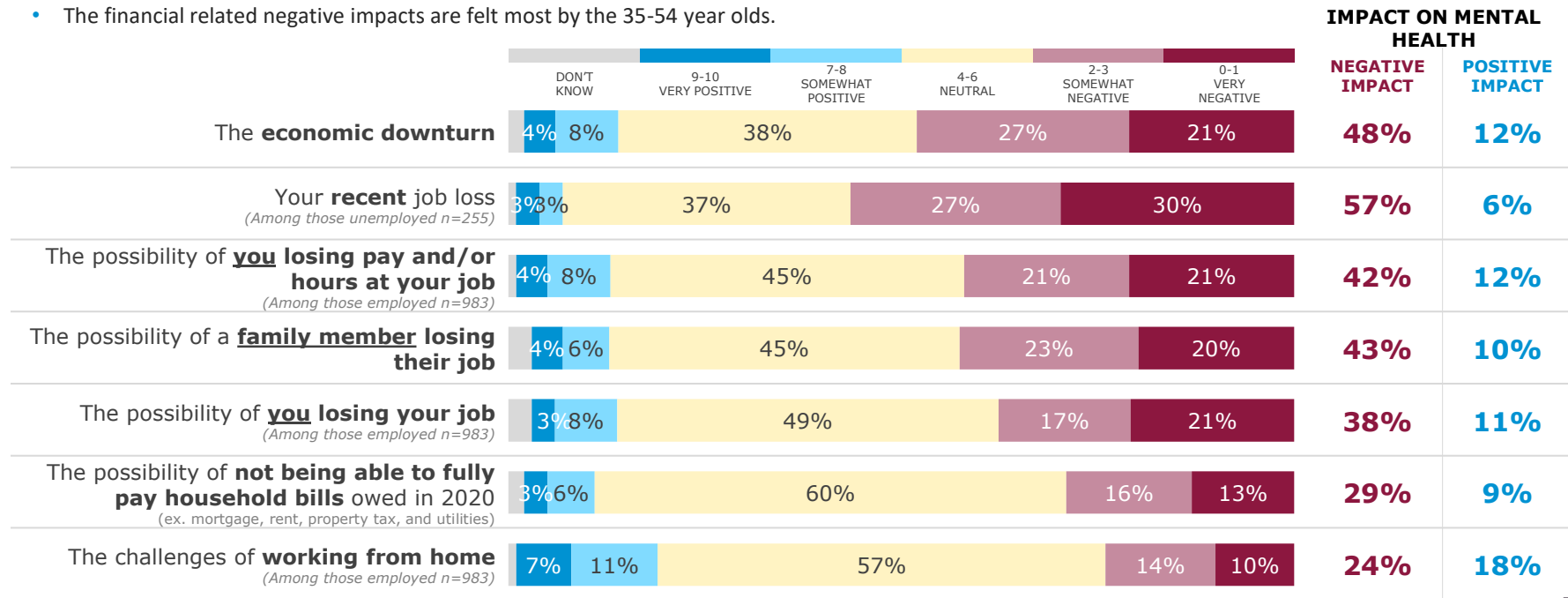


Base: (Excluding Not Applicable – did not happen/do this before)

A4. Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, have the following increased, decreased or stayed the same in your life?

Economic Impact: The economic downturn, worrying about job security and paying bills is negatively affecting the mental health of almost one-fourth to half of Canadians

- More than one-third worry about job security, that is, the possibility of losing work hours or pay (42%), their family member losing their job (43%) or they themselves losing their job (38%), which is impacting their mental health negatively. For those who have recently lost their job, the negative impact of this change is even higher (57%).
- The financial related negative impacts are felt most by the 35-54 year olds.

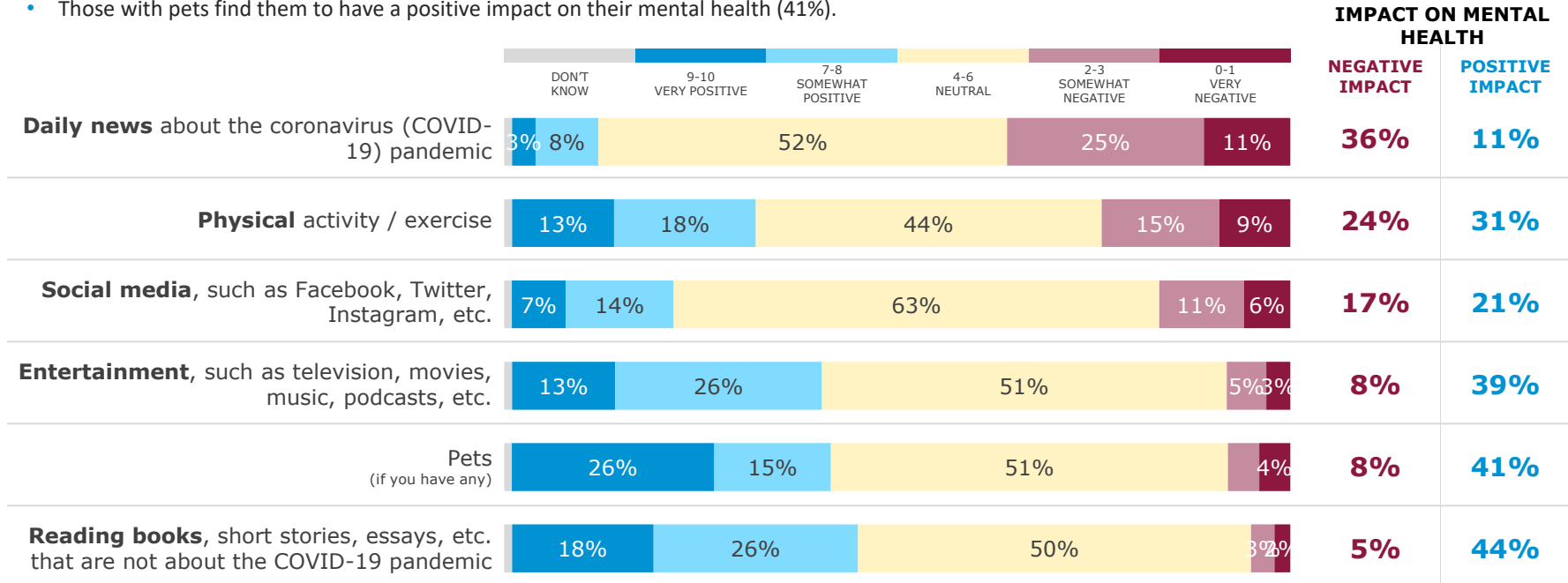


Base: (Total without Not Applicable for each)

A3A. During the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, please rate each of the following in terms of the impact they are currently having on your mental health, if any:

Daily activities: Receiving news about the pandemic is negatively affecting the mental health of a third of Canadians. Many are using this time to catch up on their reading or TV shows, movies, music, etc.

- Though one-quarter (24%) feel their current physical activity is having a negative impact on their mental health, more are feeling it has a positive impact (31%). Two-fifths of Canadians are feeling the positive impacts of reading (44%) and entertainment (39%) on their mental health. Social media is having a mixed impact, with 21% saying it has a positive impact on mental health and 17% saying it has a negative one.
- Those with pets find them to have a positive impact on their mental health (41%).



Base: (Total without Not Applicable for each)

A3A. During the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, please rate each of the following in terms of the impact they are currently having on your mental health, if any:



Consumption of Substances and its Impact on Mental Health

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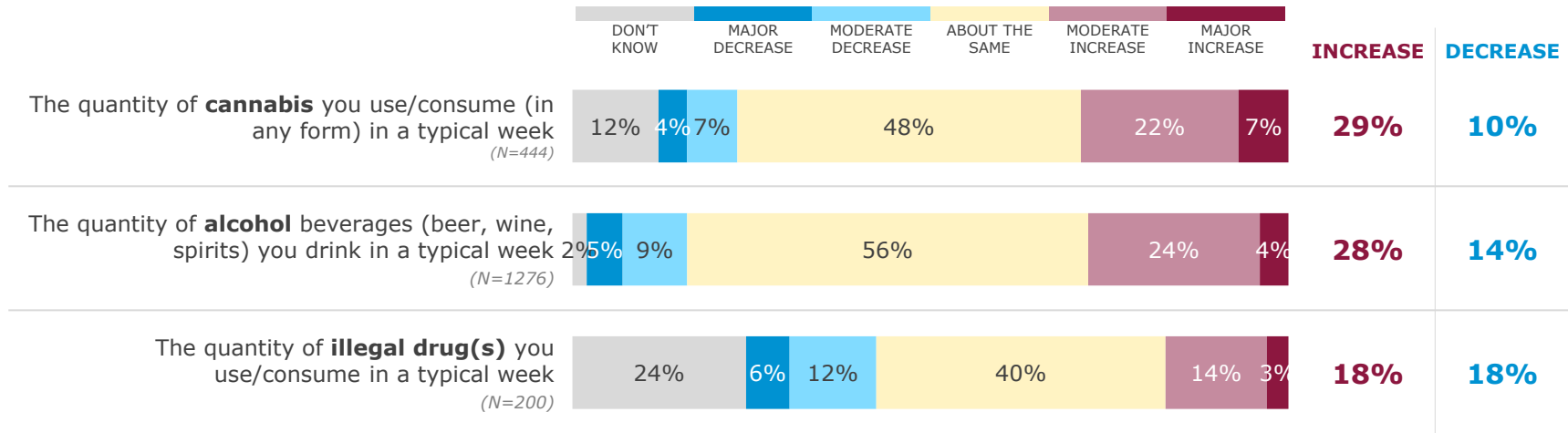
While use of alcohol and cannabis has increased, Canadians do not see this having a negative impact on their mental health

CONSUMPTION OF SUBSTANCES

- About one-quarter to a third among those who report using substances say their **consumption of alcohol (28%) and cannabis (29%) has increased**. However, respondents report that using these substances is not having a strong positive or negative impact on Mental Health, **most feel the impact is neutral (alcohol 75%, cannabis 64%)**. Notably, among those who report a diagnosis of **an anxiety disorder or depression**, one-third say their consumption of alcohol has increased (34% and 33%) and **two-fifths** say the same about **cannabis (47% and 41%)**. Notably, one-third among this cohort feel that **consuming cannabis has a positive impact (34% and 33%)** on their mental health.
- **Usage of illegal drugs was reported to remain the same** among the those who report using them. However, they are more likely to **feel the negative impact (22% vs. 10% positive impact)** of consuming these drugs on their mental health. One-third of those with **an anxiety disorder or depression** say their **usage** of illegal drugs has **increased since the outbreak (37% and 31%)** – however, they are more likely to feel these drugs have a **neutral impact on their mental health**.
- **Those who have kids** under 18 years of age are more likely to say their **alcohol (36%) and illegal drugs (25%) consumption has increased since the outbreak**, than those who have older kids or no kids (25% alcohol, 13% illegal drugs). **Cannabis consumption increases to a similar extent** among parents (31%) and the others (29%).
- That said, **parents** are much more likely to say **consumption of these substances** – alcohol (24%) and cannabis (28%) – **is having a positive rather than a negative impact (11%, 12% resp.) on their mental health**. They are also more likely to see the positive impacts than those who have 18+ kids or don't have children (11%, 16% resp.).

Alcohol and cannabis consumption per week increases since the outbreak

- Use of illegal drugs remains the same - equal proportions say they have increased or decreased consumption (18%).
- Among those diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or depression, one-third say they have increased alcohol consumption (34%, 33% resp.); two-fifths have increased cannabis usage, more so among those with anxiety (47%), than those with depression (41%) – only 13% among both these cohorts say they have reduced the consumption of cannabis. Additionally, they also claim that their usage of illegal drugs has increased (37% with anxiety, 31% with depression).
- The Millennials (18-34 years) are much more likely to say their consumption of alcohol (36%), cannabis (40%) and illegal drugs (26%) has increased since the outbreak as compared to the older age groups (Alcohol:20-30%; Cannabis: 12-25%; Illegal drugs: 9-10%).
- Increase in consumption of alcohol and cannabis levels is the same in men and women, but men are more likely to increase the use of illegal drugs.

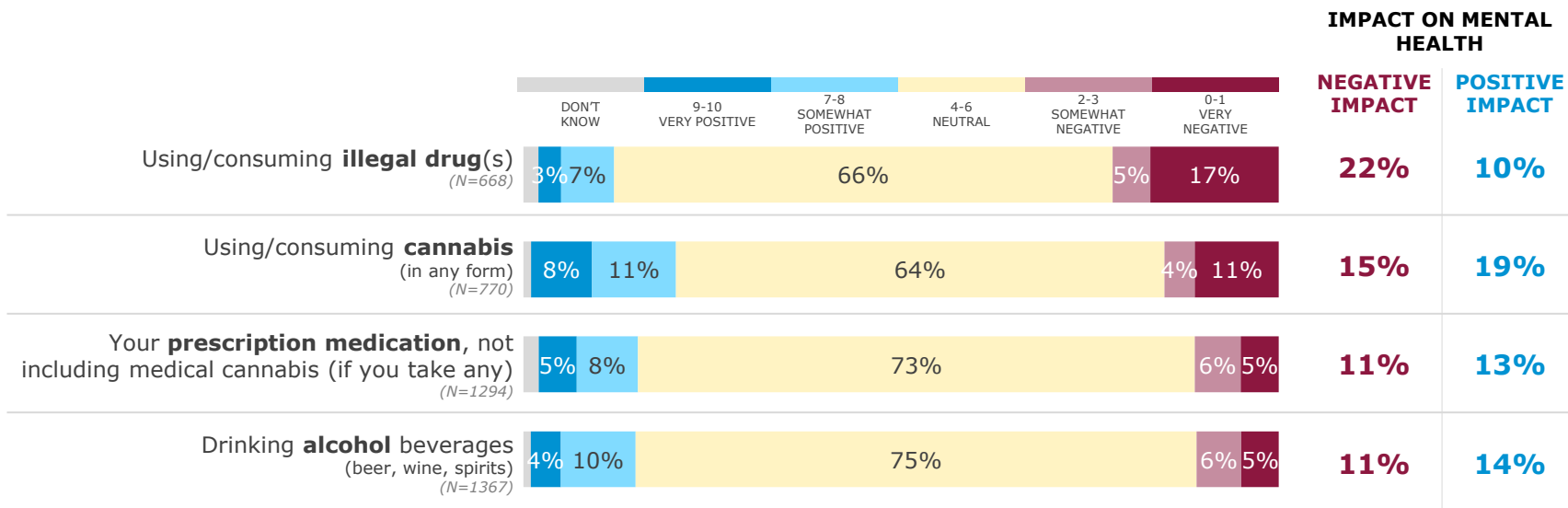


Base: (Excluding Not Applicable – did not happen/do this before)

A4. Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, have the following increased, decreased or stayed the same in your life?

Substance Consumption: Among those who consume alcohol or cannabis, the impacts on their mental health during the pandemic is mostly neutral

- For two-in-ten (22%) consuming illegal drugs has a negative impact on their mental health. Similar impact is seen across all age groups.
- Among those who reporting using cannabis, slightly more feel a positive impact (19%) than a negative impact (15%). Positive impacts are significantly higher among the 18-34 year olds (36%), and men (23% vs. 16% of women).
- For those who have an anxiety disorder or depression likelihood of feeling a negative (25%, 21%) or a positive impact (22%, 23%) of illegal drugs on their mental health is similar. For half there is a neutral impact. Cannabis usage on the other hand, is reported to have a positive effect on the mental health of those with an anxiety disorder (34%) or depression (33%). 14% see a negative impact and for half the impact is neutral.



Base: (Excluding not applicable)

A3A. During the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada, please rate each of the following in terms of the impact they are currently having on your mental health, if any:



Mental Health Supports

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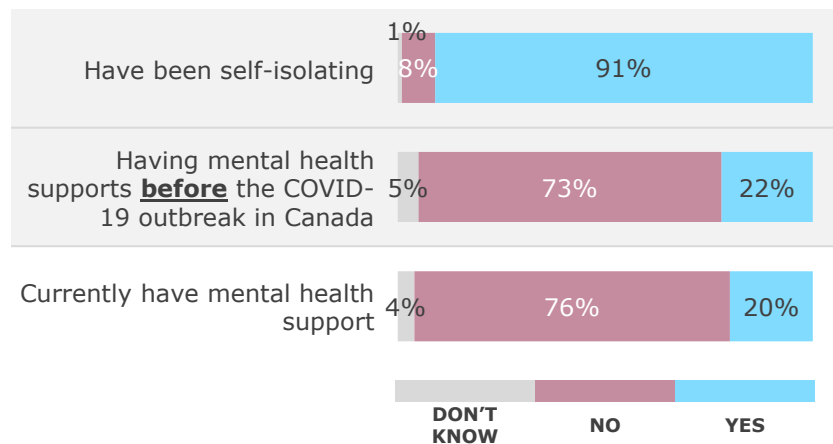
While mental health supports are available, a plurality feel the access and quality of this support has declined

ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

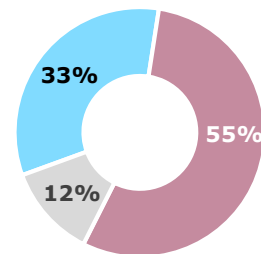
- **One-fifth of Canadians have reported accessing mental health support before the outbreak (22%),** and a similar proportion currently have mental health support (20%). Of those who are self-isolating and have accessed mental health supports before the outbreak, **one-third (33%) feel they have less frequent access to mental health support since the outbreak and one-fourth (27%) also feel that the quality of mental health support has declined.**
- Six-in-ten (57%) of those with an anxiety disorder or depression had accessed mental health supports before the outbreak, and **two-fifths among them feel they have lesser access to mental health supports (43% anxiety, 45% depression)** and feel the quality of the supports has declined (36% anxiety, 38% depression).
- **Rural (23%) and urban (22%) residents report equal access to mental health supports before the outbreak.** This is **true for current access to mental health supports as well** – 18% of rural and 20% of urban residents say they currently have mental health supports available.
- Since the outbreak, among those who have had previous access to mental health supports and are self-isolating, the rural residents are only slightly more likely to feel that the access frequency of these supports has reduced (36% vs. 32%), and that the quality has declined (31% vs. 26%) as compared to urban residents.

One-fifth of Canadians have accessed mental health support before the outbreak, and a similar proportion currently have mental health support

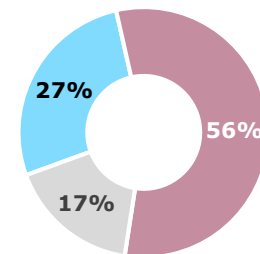
- Of those who have been self-isolating and have had mental health supports before the outbreak, one-third feel they have less frequent access to mental health support since the outbreak (33%). One-fourth additionally feel that the quality of mental health support has declined since the outbreak (27%).
- 57% of those with an anxiety disorder or depression had mental health supports before the outbreak, and 45-46% currently have mental health support. Two-fifths among them say they have less access to mental supports since the outbreak (43% anxiety, 45% depression). They are also more likely to feel that the quality or effectiveness of the supports have declined since the outbreak (36% anxiety, 38% depression).



Among those who are currently self-isolating and had mental health supports before the outbreak
(n=391)



less frequent access to mental health supports since the Coronavirus



Quality or effectiveness of mental health supports **declined** since the Coronavirus



Government Action & Employer Attitude

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Half feel the government needs to provide more support. Half feel their employers are supportive of their mental health needs

GOVERNMENT ACTION

- More than half of Canadians feel that the federal government (55%) as well as the provincial government (47%) **should be doing more to support the mental health of Canadians.**
- 66% of those with an anxiety disorder and 69% with depression feel the federal government should be doing more, while 71% with an anxiety disorder and 69% with depression feel the provincial government should be doing more.

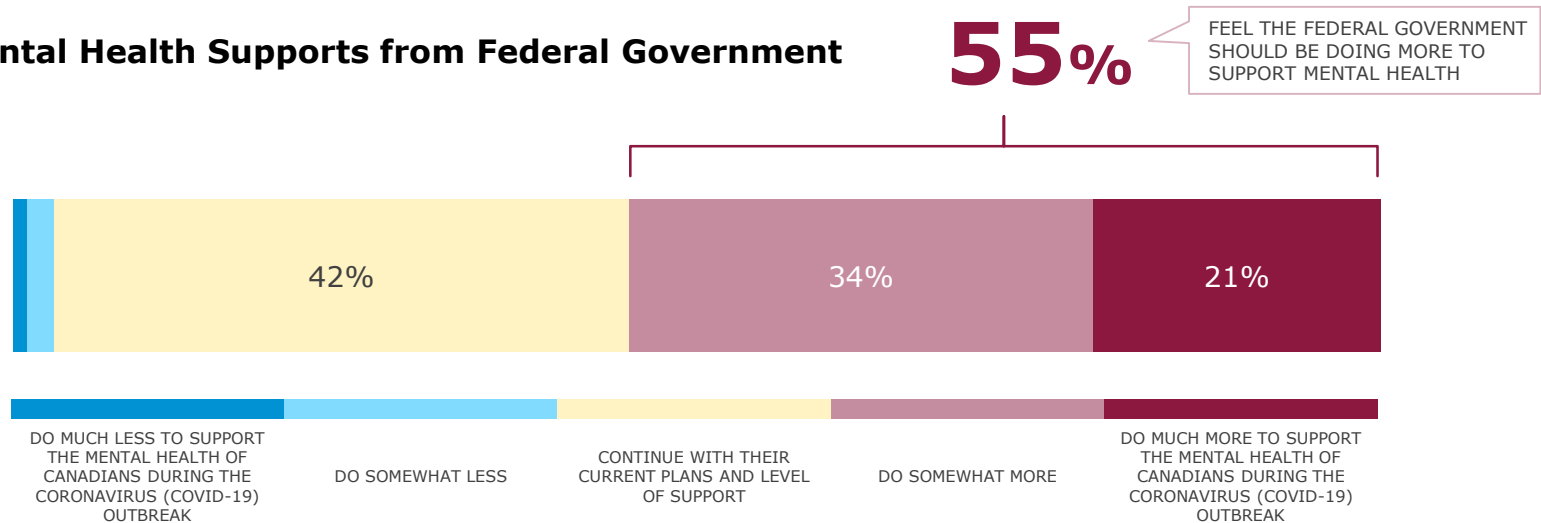
EMPLOYERS ATTITUDE DURING THE OUTBREAK

- Half (51%) of the employed Canadians rate that their employers are considerate and supportive of their mental health needs, with one-fourth (25%) rating the support as neutral. **These levels, however, remain the same before and since the outbreak (before 49% and 27%).**

More than half feel the federal government should be doing more to support mental health of Canadians during the coronavirus outbreak

- Four-in-ten (42%) believe the federal government should continue with their current plans and supports.
- More than two-thirds of those with an anxiety disorder (66%) or depression (69%) feel the government should be doing more to support mental health, a third among them feel they should continue with current plans. Two-thirds of Millennials (61%) also feel the government should do more.
- Regionally, Quebec (61%) and BC (60%) residents expect more from the government, this is true for half of Prairies (54%), Ontario (53%) and Alberta (49%) residents, fewer among the Atlantic Canadians (39%) want the government to do more – they are more likely to say the government should continue with current efforts (57%).

Mental Health Supports from Federal Government



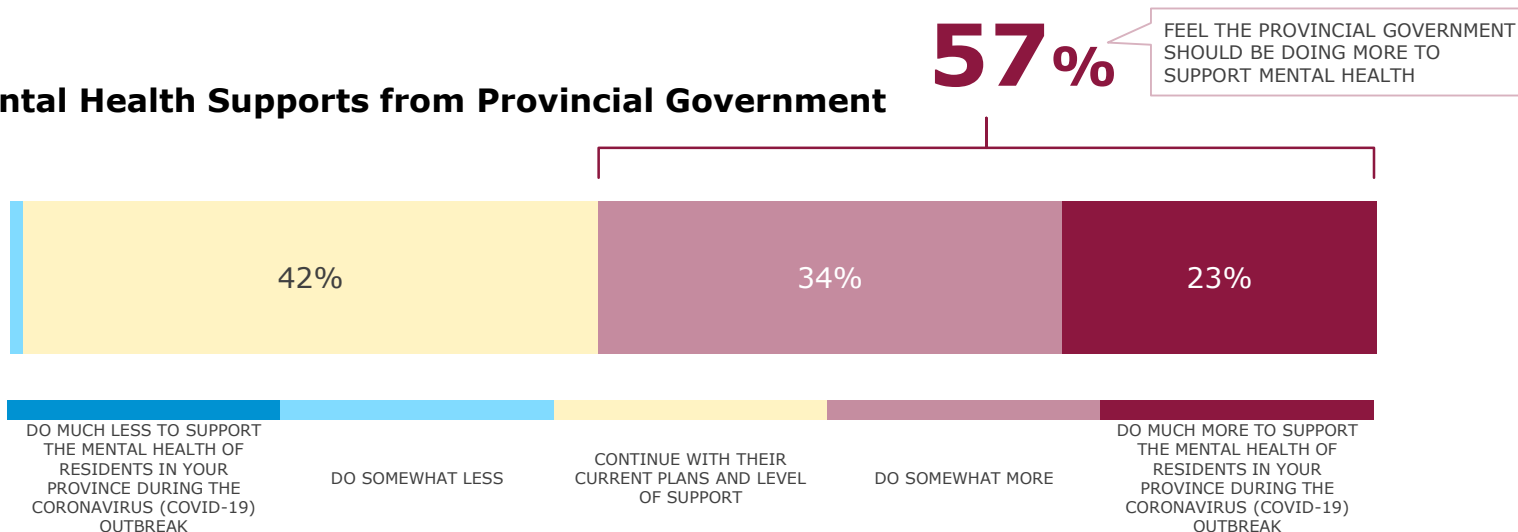
Base: (Split Sample N=901)

A7. Overall, do you feel that the federal government should...

More than half of Canadians also feel their provincial governments should be doing more, similar to the expectations from the federal government

- More among those with an anxiety disorder (71%) and depression (69%) feel their provincial government should be doing more to support the mental health of residents in their province.
- While six-in-ten among Quebec (60%) and Ontario (59%) residents feel their provincial government should do more, half of those in Alberta (55%), BC (52%) and Atlantic Canada (51%) and fewer among the Prairies' residents feel the same.

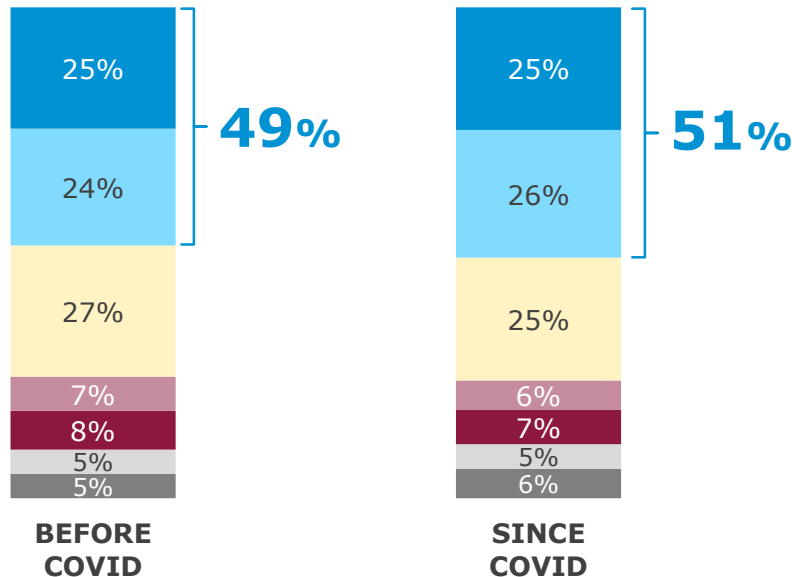
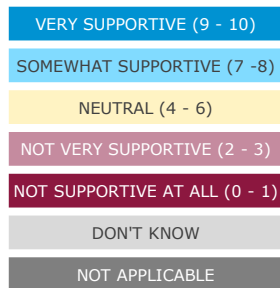
Mental Health Supports from Provincial Government



Half of the employed Canadians feel their employer is supportive of their mental health and needs; the level of support has not changed since the COVID-19 outbreak

- 13-15% of employers are not supportive of the mental health and the associated mental health needs.
- Two-fifths of those with an anxiety disorder (46%) or depression (44%) feel their employers were supportive before the outbreak, and since the outbreak a similar proportion feel their employer continues to be supportive and considerate (48%, 44% respectively).
- Across age groups and gender, the level of support received before or since the coronavirus outbreaks, remains the same. However, more among the 35-54 year olds feel their employers are not supportive, both before (17%) and after (16%) the outbreak.

EMPLOYER IS BEING CONSIDERATE AND SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND ASSOCIATED MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS...



Base: (Among those employed N=879)

A5. Overall, thinking of your primary place of employment, please rate your employer in terms of... Being considerate and supportive of your mental health and associated mental health needs before/since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada



Lesli Martin, Vice President , Pollara Michael Cooper, Director, MHRC

leslimartin@pollara.com

mcooper@mhrc.ca

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