Mental Health During COVID-19 Outbreak:
Poll #5 of 13 in Series
(Data collected in February 2021)
Methodology

**Methodology:** This online survey was conducted among a sample of 3,005 adult Canadians, including an oversample of 500 surveys with residents of Saskatchewan. This was the fifth poll of this study (see below). Results between the polls are compared where applicable.

**Weighting:** National results have been weighted by the most current census data in terms of gender, age and region to ensure the total sample is representative of the population as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poll One</td>
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<td>Poll Four</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,761 ±1.9%</td>
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<td>3,005 ±1.8%</td>
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<td>275 ±5.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>252 ±6.2%</td>
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<td>273 ±5.9%</td>
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<td>Prairies</td>
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<td>701 ±3.7%</td>
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<td>231 ±6.5%</td>
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<td>803 ±3.5%</td>
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<td>918 ±3.2%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1541 ±2.5%</td>
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<td>75 ±11.3%</td>
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<td>808 ±3.5%</td>
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<td>150 ±8.0%</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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Table 1. Poll Sample Size, Margin of Error and Field Dates, Overall and by Province
Summary of Major Findings

• Self-reported levels of **anxiety (25%)** and **depression (17%)** are at their **highest**, with an increase in both self-reported and diagnosed anxiety and depression. This means that the proportion of Canadians who have reported their level of depression as high has increased by 70% since the height of COVID’s first wave.

• **6% of the population – or more than 1.8 million Canadians ages 18 and older – have the negative indicators, based on a composite index, that this polling uses to track mental health.** The four negative indicators are: rated high in anxiety and depression, showing moderate to severe mental health symptoms, low management of stress and low resiliency. Younger and female Canadians are over-represented in this group.

• **Being outside is the best activity to support positive mental health**, with two-fifths of Canadians indicating a positive impact on mental health even during the winter months. The impact is significantly more positive than physical activity (21%) and a number of indoor activities including reading (30%) and entertainment (25%).

• **The economy is again having a negative impact on mental health**, countering the signs of improvement noted in Poll 4. And more than one-half of Canadians are worried about making ends meet, a considerable increase since before the pandemic.

• **Social isolation is now the leading stressor** having a negative impact on mental health, increasing again in Poll 5.

• **Younger Canadians, ages 18 to 34, are the group who tend to be the most vulnerable to a decline in mental health.** This group reports a higher incidence of anxiety and depression and are more likely to be scored as severe on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and experience symptoms on a daily basis. Also, the economic decline, ability to make ends meet financially and social isolation are disproportionately having a negative impact on this group’s mental health. They are also less likely to be optimistic about their ability to recover and are less likely to be receiving treatment.
Key Findings
Anxiety and depression continue to show an upward trend

- The COVID-19 outbreak and restrictions were associated with an increase in both anxiety and depression, and almost a year into the outbreak this has not lessened. In Poll 1, the proportion of Canadians reporting high levels anxiety quadrupled while depression doubled following the start of the outbreak. The number of Canadians experiencing high levels of anxiety and depression has been increasing overtime.

- Anticipated levels of anxiety and depression if the lockdown continues for another two months increased by 3% and 4%, respectively, since Poll 4. This finding is worth monitoring.

- Levels of anxiety and depression are serious. Two-thirds of Canadians who report high levels of anxiety and/or depression are likely to be scored as moderate to severe on the Kessler 10 scale. In addition, one-third experience symptoms daily or have had signs of mental stress as recently as the past two days.

- Adding to mental health concerns, even Canadians who were handing stress well before the pandemic are starting to fray – one-third who handled stress well before are not able to do so anymore.

- A majority of Canadians diagnosed with a mood disorder are receiving some form of treatment. Prescription medication is the most common treatment reported (by a majority). And a third are receiving therapy administered by a professional.

- Close to a year into the pandemic Canadians are still not accessing mental health supports at the same rate as before the outbreak. Not only are they less likely to be getting in-person support from a mental health professional, but they are also less likely to be speaking to their physician.
Social isolation is now the leading self-reported stressor on mental health

• In Poll 1, one-third of Canadians reported that the fear they may catch the virus was having a negative impact on their mental health. In Poll 2, this number increased slightly to two-fifths and remains stable through to Poll 5.

• Canadians remain more concerned about family members, with one-half reporting that the concern for family continues to have a negative impact on their mental health.

• Social isolation continues to have a negative impact on mental health for more than one-half of Canadians, increasing slightly in Poll 5 (+4%) to become the leading self-reported stressor on mental health.

• Poll 2 saw a deterioration of social support through family and friends. This poll shows that these levels have remained stable – while there has been no further decline, positive impacts of communication with family and friends have not returned to Poll 1 levels.

• The negative impact of the economic downturn decreased slightly in Poll 4 but has returned to previous levels in Poll 5 with Canadians again reporting that the economic downturn is having a negative impact on mental health. Adding to this, more than one-half of Canadians are now worried about making ends meet, up from only just over one-quarter with this concern before the pandemic.
Positive mental health supports continue to be less impactful

• Following the COVID-19 outbreak, Canadians reported that physical activity and engaging in reading and entertainment was having a positive impact on their mental health. By Poll 2, the positive aspects of these activities had declined and continue at the same levels in Poll 5.

• Going outside continues to have a positive impact on mental health, increasing again (+4%) in Poll 5 despite the winter months.

• The negativity of daily news about COVID-19 remains steady in Poll 5 for the first time since Poll 2 to 4, which saw increases in all three polls.

• Canadians continue to follow the rules and regulations required to limit the spread of the virus, with three-quarters saying they monitor the guidelines and do what is expected. Of those who do not, most say they monitor the guidelines, but do what they think is reasonable.
Anxiety and Depression in the COVID-19 Outbreak
One in four Canadians has been diagnosed with anxiety or depression

- Prior to COVID, one-fifth of Canadians have dealt with a personal or family diagnosis of anxiety (19% personal, 19% family) or depression (20% personal, 19% family). Other mood disorders are less common, with 6% having a personal diagnosis and 9% a diagnosis in their family.

- Since the outbreak, another 5% say they have personally been diagnosed with anxiety or depression, increasing the reported incidence of anxiety and depression to one in four. And another 7% say a family member has been diagnosed with anxiety or depression.

Base: (Total N=3,005)

A1. Have you ever, either before the Covid-19 outbreak or since it, received a diagnosis from a healthcare professional stating that you are affected by any of the following:
Younger Canadians, frontline healthcare workers & women among the most vulnerable to anxiety and depression

OF THE ONE IN FOUR DEALING WITH A MOOD DISORDER:

• Canadians most likely to be diagnosed with **anxiety:**
  • Females (27% vs. 19% of males)
  • Younger (18-34: 32%; 35-54: 28% vs. 55+: 13%)
  • People with children in the home (0-8 years: 29%; 9-17: 28%; vs. None: 22%)
  • Ontario (26%)
  • Frontline healthcare workers (40%)

• Canadians most likely to be diagnosed with **depression:**
  • Females (28% vs. 21% of males)
  • Younger (18-34: 30%; 35-54: 30% vs. 55+: 17%)
  • Frontline healthcare workers (36%)
  • Canadians with children under 9 years (29% vs. 24% with no children)
  • Ontario (27%)

HOUSEHOLDS DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS:

**TOTAL YES 46%**
(Individual or households suffering from anxiety or depression or other mood disorder)

- **35%** ANXIETY
- **37%** DEPRESSION
- **17%** OTHER

*Base: (Total N=3,005)*

**A1.** Have you ever, either before the Covid-19 outbreak or since it, received a diagnosis from a healthcare professional stating that you are affected by any of the following:
In the past year
Between 1 and 2 years ago
Between 3 and 5 years ago
Between 6 and 10 years ago
More than 10 years ago
Don’t know

• One-third (31%) of those who received a mental health diagnosis before COVID-19 received it in the past two years, with 11% receiving it in the past year.

• Two-thirds (70%) of those who have had a personal or family diagnosis are doing something to treat the condition, with prescription medication being most common (60%). Close to one-third (30%) talk to a therapist on a regular basis, and one-fifth (21%) talk to a doctor.

A1C. When did you/your family member receive the latest diagnosis of anxiety, depression or another mood disorder? Base: (Those who received diagnosis before COVID-19 n=1,184)
A1D. What, if anything, are you/your family member currently doing to treat the anxiety, depression or other mood disorder? (Base: Those who have received a diagnosis n=1,415)

Majority of Canadians receive treatment; prescription medications the most common

LENGTH OF TIME SINCE DIAGNOSIS

TREATING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS: 70% Receiving treatment

In the past year 11%
Between 1 and 2 years ago 20%
Between 3 and 5 years ago 25%
Between 6 and 10 years ago 15%
More than 10 years ago 24%
Don’t know 4%

Taking prescription medication 60%
Taking non-prescription or natural medications 11%
Talking to a doctor on a regular basis 21%
Talking to a therapist, counsellor, or social worker on a regular basis 30%
Am still suffering from the condition but am not longer being treated 12%
No longer suffering from the condition 9%
Don’t know 5%

Younger Canadians (18-34: 65%) are significantly less likely to be receiving treatment compared with older (35-54: 71%; 55+: 74%)
Canadians with benefits are significantly more likely to receive treatment (74%) and treat with medications (65%)
Anxiety levels continue to be four times as high as pre-outbreak levels (1/3)

- Levels of anxiety and depression are not lessening as the pandemic continues. Similar to Poll 1, the proportion of Canadians reporting high levels of anxiety is close to four times pre-COVID levels with one-quarter (25%) reporting that they have high anxiety, up from 7% before the outbreak.
- The proportion of Canadians reporting high depression doubled following the COVID outbreak (from 4% to 10%) and by Poll 5 has increased to 17%, remaining more than double pre-COVID estimates (7%).
- Since the onset of COVID-19, one-in-three Canadians are indicating high anxiety and/or depression (29%), with 13% suffering from both.

![Graph showing the percent of the population with high levels of anxiety and depression since COVID-19](chart.png)
Younger Canadians (18-34) among most vulnerable to anxiety and depression (2/3)

• Canadians most likely to rate **anxiety** high (8-10) since COVID:
  • Females (31% vs. 19% of males)
  • Younger 18-34 (34% vs. 35-54: 27%; 55+: 18%)
  • People with young children under 9 years in the home (30% vs. none: 24%)
  • Adults living with their parents are most likely to have high anxiety (37%) even more so than those living alone (25%), but those living with a spouse have the lowest likelihood of high anxiety (22%)
  • Ontario residents (30%)
  • Canadians exposed to COVID (32%), know someone with COVID (32%), or someone who has died (36%)
  • Canadians who either remain worried (42%) or are worried since COVID about making ends meet (38%)
  • Those who are negatively impacted by winter months (35%)

• Canadians most likely to rate **depression** high (8-10) since COVID:
  • Females (18% vs. 15% of males)
  • Younger 18-34 (23% vs. 35-54: 18%; 55+: 11%)
  • Adults living with their parents are most likely to have high depression (25%) even more so than those living alone (19%), but those living with a spouse have the lowest likelihood of high depression (14%)
  • Ontario residents (21%)
  • Frontline healthcare workers (26%)
  • Canadians exposed to COVID (22%) or know someone with COVID (20%)
  • Canadians who either remain worried (32%) or are worried since COVID about making ends meet (25%)
  • Those who are negatively impacted by winter months (24%)

*Base: (Total N=3,005)*

*A1. Have you ever, either before the Covid-19 outbreak or since it, received a diagnosis from a healthcare professional stating that you are affected by any of the following:
Levels of anxiety and depression since COVID outbreak are similar across the country (3/3)

ANXIETY DISORDER

Overall

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

HIGH

LOW

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

Ontario has highest level of anxiety and depression.

Quebec has lowest level of anxiety and depression.

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

DEPRESSION

Overall

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

HIGH

LOW

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

Quebec has lowest level

Ontario has highest level

BEFORE COVID

SINCE COVID

A2A. Please rate each of the following using the scale 0-10 where “10” is Extremely high and “0” is None. Base: (Total N=3,005)
Two-thirds of Canadians reporting high depression or anxiety levels score as moderate or severe using the Kessler 10 scale

- Two-thirds (62%) of Canadians who rated their anxiety or depression high since COVID (8-10) are likely to have a moderate (20%) or severe (43%) mental health symptoms, while two-fifths (37%) are likely to have a mild (18%) or no (19%) mental health disorder. Results are relatively consistent across polls with a small decrease in severe mental health disorders noted in Poll 3.

- Among those who rate their anxiety or depression as moderate (5-7), more than one-quarter (29%) are likely to have a moderate (14%) or severe (15%) mental health condition, while one-fifth (21%) are likely to have a mild mental health disorder and one-half (50%) are likely to have no mental health disorder.

- Canadians more likely to be scored as severe: Ontario residents; younger (18-34 Canadians); parents with children under 9; those exposed to COVID and those who continue to worry or worry about making ends meet since COVID; those living with roommates or their parents.

### Psychological Distress 1-5 Point Scale Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All/Most</th>
<th>None/Little</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tired out for no good reason</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That everything was an effort</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restless or fidgety</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeless</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthless</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So restless you could not sit still</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So sad that nothing could cheer you up</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So nervous that nothing could calm you down</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</table>

### Mental Health Scores among Canadians with high and moderate anxiety or depression since COVID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poll 5</th>
<th>Poll 4</th>
<th>Poll 3</th>
<th>Poll 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A2C. In the past 4 weeks, how often did you feel...: Base: (Depression or anxiety since COVID rated 5-10 N=2,003; 8-10 N=879; 5-7 N=1,463)
One-third of Canadians frequently experiences multiple symptoms of anxiety/depression

- More than one-third (36%) of Canadians say they experienced multiple symptoms of depression/anxiety recently, scoring as high (13%) or moderate (23%).

- Canadians more likely to be rated as high: Ontario (15%) and Alberta (19%) residents; younger 18-34 (18% vs. 35-54: 14%; 55+: 7%); living alone (16%); and children under 9 (16% vs. None: 12%).

- In addition, those exposed to COVID (19%) and those who continue to worry (24%) or are now worried about making ends meet (19%) are more likely to classify as high.

A7. In the last three days, how often have you felt …Base: (Total N=3,005; Those who answered all four questions N=2885)
Negative impact of lockdown on mental health remains low with younger Canadians

- Following the outbreak, just over one-fifth (22%) of Canadians expected their anxiety levels to be high after two months of isolation (8-10). Close to a year since the outbreak, this has increased slightly by 3%. As well, the proportion who expect to have a high level of depression increased by 4%. While not yet an upward trend, it’s worth monitoring.

- Canadians younger than 55 (18-34: 24%; 35-54: 20%; vs. 55+: 13%) are significantly more likely to have an expectation of increased anxiety if they must isolate for another two months. And younger Canadians (18-34) are also more likely to anticipate higher rates of depression (18-34: 23%; 35-54: 20%; vs. 55+: 12%).

- Canadians living in Ontario are more likely to anticipate higher levels of anxiety (22%) and depression (21%) if the lockdown continues.

- Women anticipate higher levels of anxiety (21% vs. 15%) and depression (20% vs. 15%) compared with men if the guidelines remain in place.

- Canadians with children anticipate continued guidelines could increase both anxiety (under 9 years: 23%; 9-17: 23%; vs. None: 17%).

- Canadians worried about making ends meet both before and since COVID anticipate higher levels of anxiety and depression.

- Frontline healthcare workers anticipate a higher level of anxiety (31%) and depression (26%) than the general population as the pandemic wears on.

- Those who are negatively impacted by the winter are more likely to feel their anxiety (25%) and depression (25%) will be high if restrictions are in place for two more months.
Canadians remain optimistic about their mental health under restrictions

- Close to one-fifth (18%) of Canadians anticipate increased anxiety, a small increase of 3% since Poll 4, although not as high as estimates in Poll 1.
- Estimates of depression increased by 4% since Poll 4, and is at the highest level since the survey began, a trend worth monitoring if restrictions stay in place.
- Those living with their parents and, to a slightly lesser degree, roommates are most likely to feel their anxiety (25% and 21%) and depression (27% and 26%) will be high in two months. Those with a spouse are least likely to think so (anxiety 16%, depression 14%).
- Of those who rated their anxiety high now, 64% feel their anxiety will be high if social isolation continues for two months. Of those who rate their depression high now, 75% feel it will be high if social isolation continues for two months.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety Level</th>
<th>Poll 1</th>
<th>Poll 2</th>
<th>Poll 3</th>
<th>Poll 4</th>
<th>Poll 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depression Level</th>
<th>Poll 1</th>
<th>Poll 2</th>
<th>Poll 3</th>
<th>Poll 4</th>
<th>Poll 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>18%</td>
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*And, using the scale below... if COVID-19 – and the associated government guidelines and laws (ex. social distancing, social bubbles/circles, masks, quarantines, etc.) – remains in your province for 2 more months... what do you expect the following to be? Base: (Total N=3,005)
Ontario residents expect the highest levels of anxiety and depression if social isolation continues.

A2D. And, using the scale below... if COVID-19 – and the associated government guidelines and laws (ex. social distancing, social bubbles/circles, masks, quarantines, etc.) – remains in your province for 2 more months... what do you expect the following to be? Base: (Total N=3,005)
Half of Canadians report feeling down during winter months

- Younger Canadians, ages 18 to 34, are more likely to report feeling down in the winter months (60% vs. 35-54: 53%; 55+: 22%).
- Groups identified as being more vulnerable to seasonal affective disorder include women (58% vs. 45% of men); Ontario residents (54%); and Canadians with a mood disorder (64%).
- Winter is affecting those with multiple mental health risk factors – they are more likely to be impacted by the winter months (71%).

A9. Some people find the seasons affect their moods. In past years, before the COVID-19 outbreak, which of the following statement best describes how you have felt during the winter months? Base: (Total N=3,005)
COVID-19 continues to have a negative impact on the management of stress/mental health

- 47% of the Canadians say they were doing well managing feelings of stress, anxiety and depression prior to COVID. That is a 4% decrease from Poll 4.
- Consistent with Poll 4 findings, the proportion of Canadians in Poll 5 who say they are doing well managing their mental health following the outbreak dropped to just one-third (33%) with close to one-quarter (24%) reporting they are not doing well.
- Only 37% of the younger Canadians (18-34) felt that they were managing stress well before the pandemic. This fell further after the outbreak (26%) – the 35-54 group had a similar decline (42% to 29%, respectively).
- Those who are negatively impacted by winter months are not managing their feelings of stress, anxiety and depression well since the pandemic (29% vs. 17% of those not impacted by seasons).

### Managed Feelings of Stress, Anxiety and Depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>0-4 Not well</th>
<th>5-7 Neutral</th>
<th>8-10 Well</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Poll 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Well</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well</strong></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most likely to handle stress well (8-10) since COVID:
- Men (38% vs. 28% women)
- 55+ age group (42% vs 35-54 29%, 18-34 26%)
- No children (34% vs. children under 9 28%)
- Not worried about finances (35% vs. now worried 24%)

**A2B.** On a scale of 0-10, how well were you are managing any feelings of stress, anxiety and depression that you may have: Base: (Total N=3,005)
Impacts on Mental Health

Financial contribution from

pollara
strategic insights
Fear of the spread of COVID-19 continues to have a negative impact on mental health

• Two-fifths (38%) of Canadians say concerns about contracting COVID-19 is having a negative impact on their mental health while close to one-half (47%) remain concerned about family members contracting COVID-19. Results are on par with Poll 3 and 4 findings.

• **Social isolation** is now the leading stressor on mental health with one-half (51%) reporting a negative impact, an increase of 4% since Poll 4 and 10% since the first Poll. Those who live alone feel that social isolation has less of a negative impact (45%), although it is higher among those living with roommates (68%).

• However, social isolation is particularly hard on those who are more vulnerable to mental health conditions, with two-thirds (66%) saying it is having a negative impact on their mental health.

• In the early stages of the outbreak, Canadians reported that communication with friends/family outside and inside the home had a positive impact on mental health, but Poll 2 saw an increase in the negative impact of these interactions. In Poll 5, these interactions continue to have more of a negative impact with just over one-quarter saying communication with those outside the home (26%) and one-quarter saying that communication within the home is having a negative impact (27%, +4%).

• Younger Canadians, ages 18-34, are feeling the negative impact of the pandemic on their mental health. They are more likely to be impacted by the following: social isolation (56% vs. 35-54: 51%; 55+: 47%); family member catching COVID (53% vs. 35-54: 47%; 55+: 43%); and buying necessities (33% vs. 35-54: 29%; 55+: 26%).

• Younger Canadians, ages 18-34, are more likely to identify communicating with others outside the home (28% vs. 35-54: 18%; 55+: 21%) and inside the home (24% vs. 35-54: 20%; 55+: 16%) as a positive influence on mental health despite the overall negative impact of communication already noted.

• Overall, women remain more likely to say the pandemic is having a negative impact including: social isolation (55%), a family member catching COVID (50%), catching COVID themselves (40%), and buying necessities (32%).
Social isolation remains a leading factor in poor mental health

The possibility of you catching COVID-19
- 4% VERY NEGATIVE
- 9% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 46% NEUTRAL
- 21% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 18% VERY POSITIVE

The possibility of a family member catching COVID-19
- 6% VERY NEGATIVE
- 11% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 34% NEUTRAL
- 24% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 23% VERY POSITIVE

Social isolation / Being apart from others
- 6% VERY NEGATIVE
- 11% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 39% NEUTRAL
- 30% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 21% VERY POSITIVE

The difficulties and challenges of getting necessities (groceries, prescriptions, other household items)
- 5% VERY NEGATIVE
- 13% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 61% NEUTRAL
- 18% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 11% VERY POSITIVE

Communicating with family/friends outside of your household via phone, email, video chats
- 9% VERY NEGATIVE
- 13% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 50% NEUTRAL
- 16% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 10% VERY POSITIVE

Interacting with members of your household in-person
- 4% VERY NEGATIVE
- 10% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 49% NEUTRAL
- 14% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 13% VERY POSITIVE

Supporting my child’s needs and schoolwork (Among those having children 17 and under n=780)
- 3% VERY NEGATIVE
- 7% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE
- 47% NEUTRAL
- 20% SOMEWHAT POSITIVE
- 10% VERY POSITIVE

Impact on Mental Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poll 1</th>
<th>Poll 2</th>
<th>Poll 3</th>
<th>Poll 4</th>
<th>Poll 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE IMPACT</strong></td>
<td><strong>POSITIVE IMPACT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Mental Health</td>
<td>Impact on Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT APPLICABLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>DON’T KNOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>0-1 VERY NEGATIVE</strong></td>
<td><strong>2-3 SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4-6 NEUTRAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>7-8 SOMEWHAT POSITIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9-10 VERY POSITIVE</strong></td>
<td>**11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The economy remains a stressor for Canadians and is disproportionately affecting younger Canadians

- In Poll 4, the negative impact of the economy had lessened for a few indicators (economic downturn, job loss, paying bills), but in Poll 5, the negative impact has returned to similar levels reported in the earlier polls.

- Two-fifths (44%) of Canadians continue to feel that the economic downturn has had a negative impact on their mental health, up slightly (+3%) since Poll 4 and similar to the earlier polls.

- More than half (55%) of unemployed Canadians say job loss is having a negative impact as the pandemic continues, an increase of 7% since Poll 4 and similar to the earlier polls.

- The negative impact on mental health of the possibility of individuals (40%) or their family (41%, +3%) losing their jobs remains and is consistent with previous polls.

- One-third (30%) agree that the possibility of not being able to pay bills is having a negative impact (+3% since Poll 4), in line with the findings from Poll 1 and 2.

- The negative impact on mental health as a result of working from home increased significantly in Poll 4 to over one-third (36%) and remains at this level in Poll 5.

- Younger Canadians, ages 18-34, are more likely to report that the economic downturn is having a negative impact on their mental health including: fear of a family member losing a job (49% vs. 35-54: 40%; 55+: 35%) and concern about paying bills (35% vs. 35-54: 32%; 55+: 23%).

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: Base: (Total N=3,005)
The economic downturn continues to have a negative impact on mental health as pandemic continues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Mental Health</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
<th>9-10 VERY POSITIVE</th>
<th>7-8 SOMEWHAT POSITIVE</th>
<th>4-6 NEUTRAL</th>
<th>2-3 SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE</th>
<th>0-1 VERY NEGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The economic downturn</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your recent job loss</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of you losing your job or losing pay and/or hours at your job</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of a family member losing their job</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of not being able to pay household bills in full owed in 2020 (ex. mortgage, rent, property tax, and utilities)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges of working from home (Among those employed n=1,467)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: Base: (Total N=3,005)
Daily news about the pandemic continues to have a negative impact on mental health for many Canadians

- Two-fifths (45%) of Canadians report that daily news about COVID continues to have a negative impact on mental health, similar to Poll 4.
- Physical activity, considered a positive influence on mental health in Poll 1 and declining in Poll 2, remains a negative influence in Poll 5 (32%, +3) with only one-fifth (21%, +4) agreeing physical activity has a positive impact.
- Entertainment (25% say positive) and reading books (30%) remain a more positive than negative impact on mental health, similar to Poll 4, but are still not as positive an influence as in Poll 1.
- Going outside even during winter continues to be the self-reported activity with the most positive (43%, +5) impact on mental health – only 15% say going out has a negative impact.
- Younger Canadians, ages 18-34, are more likely to say a number of activities are having a positive impact on mental health during the pandemic compared with other age groups. This includes: entertainment (33% vs. 35-54: 23%; 55+: 22%); physical activity (23% vs. 35-54: 19%; 55+: 18%); and social media (14%; 35-54: 10%; 55+: 11%).
- The influence of social media on mental health polarizes younger Canadians, 18-34. While it is a positive influence on mental health for some, it can also have a significant negative impact (0-3 rating) compared with older Canadians: (28% vs. 35-54: 26%; 55+: 20%).

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:
Base: (Total N=3,005)
According to our polls, going outside continues to have the most positive impact on mental health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily news</strong> about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical activity / exercise</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social media</strong>, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment</strong>, such as television, movies, music and podcasts</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading books</strong>, short stories, essays, etc. that are not about COVID-19</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Going outside / walking / hiking</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poll 1: Daily news about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
Poll 2: Physical activity / exercise
Poll 3: Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
Poll 4: Entertainment, such as television, movies, music and podcasts
Poll 5: Reading books, short stories, essays, etc. that are not about COVID-19
Poll 6: Going outside / walking / hiking

**Base:** (Total N=3,005)

**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:

**Base:** (Total N=3,005)
Canadians continue to feel confident about their ability to recover from the challenges presented by COVID-19

- Similar to Poll 4, three-fifths of Canadians continue to feel somewhat confident about their ability to bounce back from the challenges created by COVID (63% rate this 7 to 10, when 10 means excellent), with less than one-fifth feeling very confident (19% rating this a 9 or 10).
- Younger Canadians under age 55 are not as positive (7-10 rating) about their ability to bounce back from the challenges presented by COVID as older Canadians (18-34: 53%; 35-54: 60%; 55+: 73%).

A3B. Thinking about challenges and unexpected troubles that you have faced in your life... Overall, how would you rate your ability to manage and bounce back from these challenges and unexpected troubles? Base: (Total N=3,005)
Canadians are compliant with the government’s COVID-19 guidelines

- While the majority of Canadians from across the country report they are following the guidelines, compliance is highest in the Atlantic region (83%) and Quebec (79%).
- Also more likely to follow guidelines: older Canadians 55+ (85% vs. 18 to 34: 64%; 35-54: 76%); and women (80% vs. 73% of men).
- Findings of Poll 4 show that those who do not monitor guidelines are more likely to rate their anticipated anxiety (29% vs. 18% of those who try to follow and 16% of those who do follow) and depression (25% vs. 15% of those who try to follow and 12% of those who do follow) as high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Poll 3</th>
<th>Poll 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I monitor the guidelines, but tend to do more than what is mandated</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I monitor the guidelines and do what is expected</td>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I monitor the guidelines but do what I think is reasonable - sometimes following the guidelines, sometimes not</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to monitor the guidelines, but generally do what I think is right</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know what the guidelines are, I just do what I think is right</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not take any extra precautions as I feel they are unnecessary</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A5. Which of the following best describes how you are complying with government COVID-19 guidelines and laws (ex. social distancing, social bubbles/circles, masks, quarantines, etc.) in your area? Base: (Total N=3,005)
Effect of COVID in the Workplace
Close to a year into the pandemic, half of Canadians still report no change in their job situation

- Close to one-half (47%) of Canadians say their job situation has not changed and one-quarter (25%) report they now work from home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Situation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working from home all or more of the time</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid off with the possibility of returning to work at some point</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid off but have now returned back to work</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid off with no possibility of returning to work</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My hours were reduced</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My hours were increased</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My rate of pay decreased</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My rate of pay increased</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid off or terminated, but now have found new work</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never laid off or terminated but I have started a new job</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose to take a leave of absence due to COVID-19 concerns</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit my job due to COVID-19 concerns</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit my job for reasons not related to COVID-19 concerns</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company had to shut down or limit business due to COVID-19 restrictions</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job situation has changed in another way</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job situation has not changed</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Younger Canadians (18-34) are significantly more likely to have experienced employment instability as a result of the pandemic*

*Caution: Low base size
Since the pandemic, Canadians are more worried about finances

- Prior to the outbreak, only one-quarter (27%) of Canadians worried about making ends meet. Since the outbreak, the proportion has increased to two-fifths (41%).

- Younger Canadians (18-34) did not worry about finances more than other age groups prior to the outbreak, but since the pandemic they are significantly more likely to worry about making ends meet (48% vs. 55+: 29%) and are now on par with 35-54 year olds (48%) who continue to be worried about making ends meet (both before and after COVID).*

* The 35-54 group were significantly more likely to worry about making ends meet before the pandemic as well as after (33% and 48%, respectively)

---

**SCR15:** Before the COVID-19 pandemic reached Canada, did you worry about making ends meet? *Base: (Total N=3,005)*

**SCR16:** Considering your current situation, are you now worried about making ends meet? *Base: (Total N=3,005)*
Since COVID-19 the number of Canadians accessing mental health supports has decreased significantly.

**BEFORE COVID: one-third accessed support**

- **NET YES**
  - Yes, one-to-one in-person with mental health professional (counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) - 35%
  - Yes, one-to-one virtually VIA ONLINE (video chat) with mental health professional (counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) - 23%
  - Yes, one-to-one virtually VIA TEXTING/MESSAGING with mental health professional (counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) - 3%
  - Yes, my family doctor / GP - 12%
  - Yes, group treatment/therapy - 2%
  - Yes, trained peer support - 1%
  - Yes, other mental health supports - 3%

- **NET NO**
  - No - Needed mental health supports, but did not access any such supports - 7%
  - No - Did not need mental health supports (and did not access any) - 54%
  - Prefer not to answer - 4%

**SINCE COVID: less than a one-fifth accessed support**

- **NET YES**
  - 19%

- **NET NO**
  - 77%

A majority of those receiving mental health support before COVID still have support but two-fifths do not.

Younger Canadians 18-34 are more likely to continue to access supports since COVID (30% vs. 35-54: 24%; 55+: 8%).
Canadians continue to be most interested in individual activities and mental health information

- Canadians continue to be most interested in activities they can do on their own (49%, +5 since Poll 4) and less interested in activities involving a group (only one-fifth are interested in group activities or counselling).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Concerns</th>
<th>Interested (%)</th>
<th>Not Interested (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities you can do on your own (videos, exercises)</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about specific concerns you have regarding yourself or someone else</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one counselling with a mental health professional</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-help activities with the support of a mental health professional</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with someone or a group of people who have similar experiences</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support through text messaging</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activities with the support of a coach or teacher</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group counselling led by a mental health professional</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group counselling led by a person with lived experience</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B5. How interested would you be in obtaining more information about each of the following mental health services either for yourself or to get information for someone else? Base: (Total N=3,005)
Canadians suffering from anxiety/depression want one-on-one professional support or activities that they can do on their own.

**High Anxiety since COVID (rated 9-10)**

- Interested: 69% Poll 4, 71% Poll 5
- Not Interested: 24% Poll 4, 17% Poll 5

- 1-to-1 counselling: 67%
- Self-help activities led by professional: 64%
- Solo Activities: 66%
- Info about concerns: 69%
- Text message support: 61%
- Connecting with people/same experience: 48%
- Group counselling led by lived experience: 47%
- Group counselling led by professional: 46%
- Group activities with coach: 40%

**High Depression since COVID (rated 9-10)**

- Interested: 79% Poll 4, 70% Poll 5
- Not Interested: 24% Poll 4, 17% Poll 5

- 1-to-1 counselling: 67%
- Self-help activities led by professional: 63%
- Solo Activities: 59%
- Info about concerns: 67%
- Text message support: 62%
- Connecting with people/same experience: 50%
- Group counselling led by lived experience: 51%
- Group counselling led by professional: 46%
- Group activities with coach: 40%
Lesli Martin, Vice President, Pollara
Michael Cooper, Director, MHRC
Thanks to Dr. David Dozois, MHRC Board Member & National Spokesperson