

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 23, 2023**

## **Results from Poll 15 released today demonstrate a possible “new normal” for the mental health of Canadians**

Toronto, Ontario — Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) released the results from its fifteenth poll today, where 3,238 adult Canadians reported on factors influencing their mental health between January 23 and February 6, 2023. The data demonstrates that mental health indicators remain flat (or have gotten slightly worse) after a long period of improvement. Levels of high anxiety (10%) and depression (8%) have remained constant, and not coping well with stress (14%) have not changed since our last data collection in November 2022. Future polls will validate whether this is indicative of a new normal for Canadians, or the result of transitional changes, such as a seasonal impacts or the current state of the economy.

Additional major findings of concern from Poll 15 include:

- A quarter of Canadians are feeling exhausted and burnt out (24% - but higher among the unemployed and students)
- The disproportionate level of mental health challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians, including in self-rated anxiety and depression, and resilience indicators.
- While half of Canadians indicate that inflation is not having a negative mental health impact on them, those whose mental health has been affected by inflation are showing significant signs of worsening mental health.
  - These Canadians indicate higher self-rated anxiety (33%) and depression (32%), higher rates of recent diagnosis of a mood disorder since the pandemic (14%), higher suicide ideation (31%) and alcohol (23%) or cannabis dependency (22%), as report being less able to handle their stress well (30%).
- We have also noted increases in similar negative mental health indicators in parents of children under the age of nine.

The poll results also showed some positive trends:

- Hopefulness remains on the higher side (64%).
- Those accessing mental health services in the past year has risen slightly.
- Canadians are generally happy (81%), with two-fifths saying they are interested in life (42%) or somewhat happy (39%).

“We collect this data, analyse and report on it within weeks to give stakeholders relevant and timely information about Canadian’s mental health,” says Akela Peoples, CEO, MHRC. “The fact that we are no longer seeing improvements in the mental health of Canadians is of concern, particularly now that we are in COVID’s recovery period. This could be a reflection of various factors impacting mental health. We will continue to

monitor indicators closely, to see how this may shift in the coming year, paying close attention to which demographics are most adversely affected.”

These, and other key findings, are featured in both the summary and full report of the survey, “Understanding the Mental Health of Canadians through COVID-19 and Beyond: Poll 15” released today by MHRC and available at [www.mhrc.ca/findings-of-poll-15](http://www.mhrc.ca/findings-of-poll-15).

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#### ABOUT THE POLL

MHRC’s national polling is part of a multi-year effort to track the mental health challenges of COVID-19 and beyond. The goal of MHRC’s polls one through twelve was to capture Canadians’ reported perception of their level of anxiety and depression, and to identify and evaluate the factors that influence mental health through the pandemic. As we move into the pandemic’s recovery period, MHRC has begun shifting its focus from mental health as it relates to COVID-19, to a more current and broader approach. This change in language and timing could account for a portion of the considerable decrease in the indicators noted above.

This study was conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights with an online sample of 3,238 adult Canadians and was conducted from January 23 to February 6, 2023. Results from a probability sample of this size could be considered accurate to within  $\pm 1.7$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Results have been weighted based on age, gender and region to be representative of the Canadian population.

#### ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH CANADA

Mental Health Research Canada is a national charitable organization dedicated to improving the lives of the **1 in 5 Canadians living with mental illness**, as well as their families, caregivers, and communities. We advance evidence-based mental health knowledge that is problem solving and applicable in the real world. We are committed to doing research differently; emphasizing collaboration between academia and community, and ensuring those with lived experience are engaged throughout the research process.

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