



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Canadians brace for holiday financial strain: Concerns rise over managing seasonal expenses, according to results from Poll 18 released today.

Toronto, Ontario — Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) unveils insights from its eighteenth poll today, capturing responses from 3,207 adult Canadians between November 1 and November 16, 2023. The findings underscore a prevalent concern gripping many families as the holiday season approaches, revealing heightened anxiety surrounding financial matters. Other major findings in this pan-Canadian collection include:

- Nearly **one in four Canadians (23%) navigate ongoing struggles with food and housing security**, heightening anxiety over meeting rent or mortgage obligations.
- Financial concerns continue to be a predominant factor of mental health with two in five Canadians (41%) indicating **the economic downturn has negatively impacted their mental health**.
- Canadians report **record high access to mental health care (15%)** – these are the highest levels since moving into the COVID-19 pandemic “recovery period”.

“It is crucial that we persist in tracking the factors influencing negative mental health. Our commitment to data-driven decision making continues. We are pleased that this data is informing critical conversations and impacting policy to address the evolving needs Canadians mental health.” - Akela Peoples, CEO, MHRC

Additional major findings from Poll 18 include:

- The prevalence of suicide ideation is alarmingly elevated among individuals experiencing financial challenges with a staggering 42% reporting having thought about suicide in the past year.
- Nearly half of Canadians have experienced a chronic pain issue – with half of those (27% of all Canadians) currently experiencing it. Notably, one-in-ten (11%) Canadians aged 16-34 report currently being affected by chronic pain.
- Reported use of opioid medications for chronic pain management has doubled over the last five years from 5% to 10%.
- In-person mental health support is preferred by Canadians (46%), followed by hybrid approaches (26%), encompassing both virtual and in-person elements.

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 18” released today by MHRC and available at www.mhrc.ca.

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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 is to capture Canadians’ reported perception of their level of anxiety and depression, and to identify and evaluate the factors that influence mental health. Since this work began in early 2020, MHRC now has the largest, most comprehensive database on COVID-19 and the mental health of Canadians, with more than 60,000 responses to our polls to date.

This study was conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights with an online sample of 3,207 adult Canadians and was conducted from November 1 to November 16, 2023. Results from a probability sample of this size could be considered accurate to within ± 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 (MHRC) is a national charity that serves to advance mental health through studentships, granting, data collection/analysis and strategic initiatives. As a leading mental health organization in Canada, we are dedicated to improving the lives of all Canadians by advancing mental health knowledge in unique ways—notably by leading, seeding and influencing to create better mental health systems. One example of our work is funded by Health Canada to monitor and report on the mental health of Canadians. We collect population data, analyze and report on it to governments and stakeholders nationally to support data informed decision-making on what people need and how our services are performing. Mental health systems and services cannot improve without research – research is an investment in the future.

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