



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MHRC's Latest Poll Unveils Increase in Negative Mental Health Indicators Among Canadians, alongside New Insights, from Poll 19 released today.

Toronto, Ontario — Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) unveils insights from its nineteenth poll today, capturing responses from 3,224 adult Canadians between January 15 and January 24, 2024. The findings delve into mental health indicators as well as previously unexplored topics:

- Results of this poll demonstrate the **worst self-rated mental health indicators since the end of the pandemic**, with more than one in ten Canadians reporting high self-rated anxiety or depression. We noted a significant increase in depression driven by higher rates in Alberta and Ontario.
- Questions about screen time reveal **a significant correlation between a high amount of personal screen time and negative mental health indicators**. One in four (26%) young Canadians spend 6 or more hours of their personal time on screens per day. While the negative impact of daily news on mental health is slightly better than during the pandemic, the impact of social media has worsened.
- **More than one in four Canadians (27%) currently live with chronic pain**, with the majority reporting that it has a daily, debilitating impact on their lives. Further insights explore the intersection of chronic pain and opioid use.

"It's evident that addressing mental health concerns in Canada is paramount. These findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support systems and proactive measures to safeguard the well-being of all Canadians." - Akela Peoples, CEO, MHRC

Additional major findings from Poll 19 include:

- Awareness of the new 988 crisis suicide helpline is high, with already 46% of Canadians having heard of it and 3% having used it.
- Most Canadians (70%) are concerned about climate change, but only one in three (34%) report that it has some negative impact on their mental health (5% say it has a strong negative impact).
- Two-fifths of Canadians still feel that the economic downturn is impacting their mental health, and food and housing insecurities remain at a consistent level.
- One-in-five (21%) of Canadians have either accessed a mental health support in the past year (15%) or feel they should be accessing a support (6%). This rate of

need rose last quarter and remains elevated when looking at post-pandemic indicators.

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ABOUT THE POLL

MHRC's national polling initiative 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 3,224 adult Canadians and was conducted from January 15 to January 24, 2024. 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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