



Understanding Mental Health in Canada: Poll #13



Financial contribution from

Health
Canada

Santé
Canada



July 2022

Major Findings

- Anxiety and depression are improving considerably in the COVID-19 recovery period with high self-rated levels of anxiety nearly halved from Poll 12 (21% to 11%) and high self-rated depression decreased by one third (from 14% to 9%). They have not, however returned to levels seen prior to the pandemic which indicates the continued need for effective mental health supports.
 - Despite these positive mental health indicators on the broader population, the Kessler 10 results demonstrate that those self-reporting high anxiety or depression still are much more likely to be experiencing symptoms of a severe mental health disorder (54% compared to 42% from last poll).
- One in ten Canadians have accessed mental health support in the past year. Of those, more than one quarter have paid for them (27%), at least partially, out of pocket. While most of those who have accessed support have done so through government provided services, nearly one fifth (17%) sought support through free community or campus based programs.
- A third (33%) of Canadians experience some level of food insecurity whether it be concern about their ability to feed themselves and their family or actively using food support programs. New mothers, unemployed Canadians, those with a physical impairment, those who rate their anxiety or depression as high (8-10) or with a severe mental health disorder, or those who demonstrate a dependence on alcohol or cannabis are considerably more likely to report moderate to serious levels of food insecurity.

Major Findings

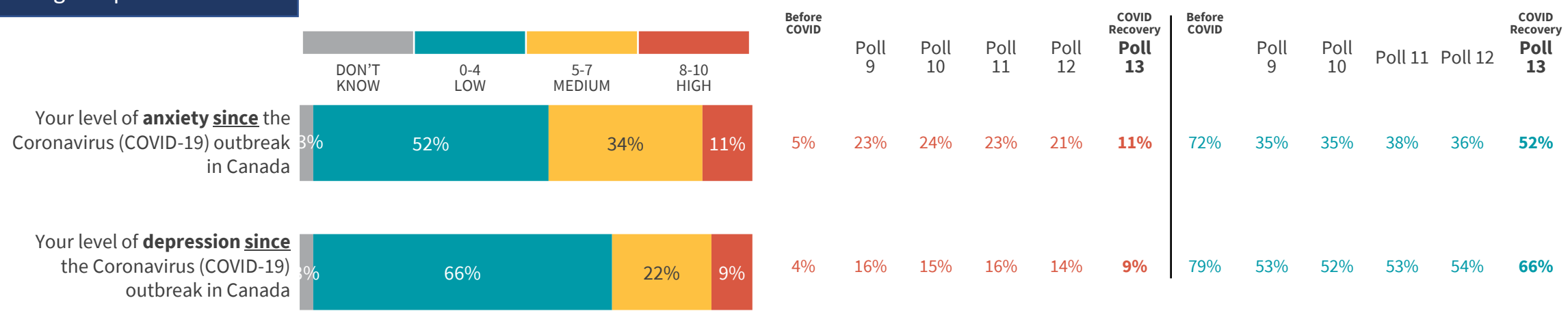
- While over half of Canadians are experiencing some symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, one-in-ten (10%) indicate experiencing symptoms at a level that is considered severe. Younger respondents, those who identify as 2SLGBTQ, young mothers, and those with financial instability are some of the groups who indicated being particularly vulnerable to these symptoms.
- According to the AUDIT screening tool, 5% of Canadians are demonstrating signs of alcohol dependency and 9% are indicating harmful behaviours. One in ten report being unable to stop drinking once they have started at least once a month. This is particularly prevalent among young Canadians, and those with high self rated levels of anxiety or depression.
 - Canadians experiencing cannabis use disorder also demonstrate to be more likely to show symptoms of alcohol dependency (48%). One in ten respondents indicate using cannabis to an extent that is considered (through the CUDIT screening tool) to range from hazardous to dependent.
- Mothers with newborn children (under 1 year) demonstrate more negative mental health indicators than the average Canadian. They are more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder (16% vs. 5%), and are more likely to indicate feeling they needed mental health support but not accessing it (14% vs. 5%).

High anxiety and depression are down considerably in the COVID-19 recovery period

- A tenth of Canadians report experiencing high levels of anxiety, which continues to be higher than before COVID-19.
 - Anxiety continues to be worse for younger and middle-aged Canadians (16-17: 16%, 18-34: 16%, 35-54: 13% vs. 55+: 5%), women (12% vs. 9% of men), and those who are unemployed (19%). Members of LGBTQ2S+ community (18%) also experience higher levels of anxiety.
 - Those relying on financial support (28%), dependent on alcohol (34%) or having a disorder of cannabis use (35%) are likely to have high anxiety.
- The percentage of Canadians reporting high levels of depression has also declined considerably since Poll 12.
 - Depression also continues to be worse for younger Canadians (16-17: 10%, 18-34: 13%, 35-54: 11% vs. 55+: 5%), as well as among the unemployed (18%).
 - Members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (16%) report experiencing a higher level of depression.
 - Those relying on financial supports (30%), experiencing alcohol dependency (31%) or having a disorder of cannabis use (32%) are likely to experience high levels of depression.

Poll 1: Before COVID-19
 High Anxiety 5%
 High Depression 4%

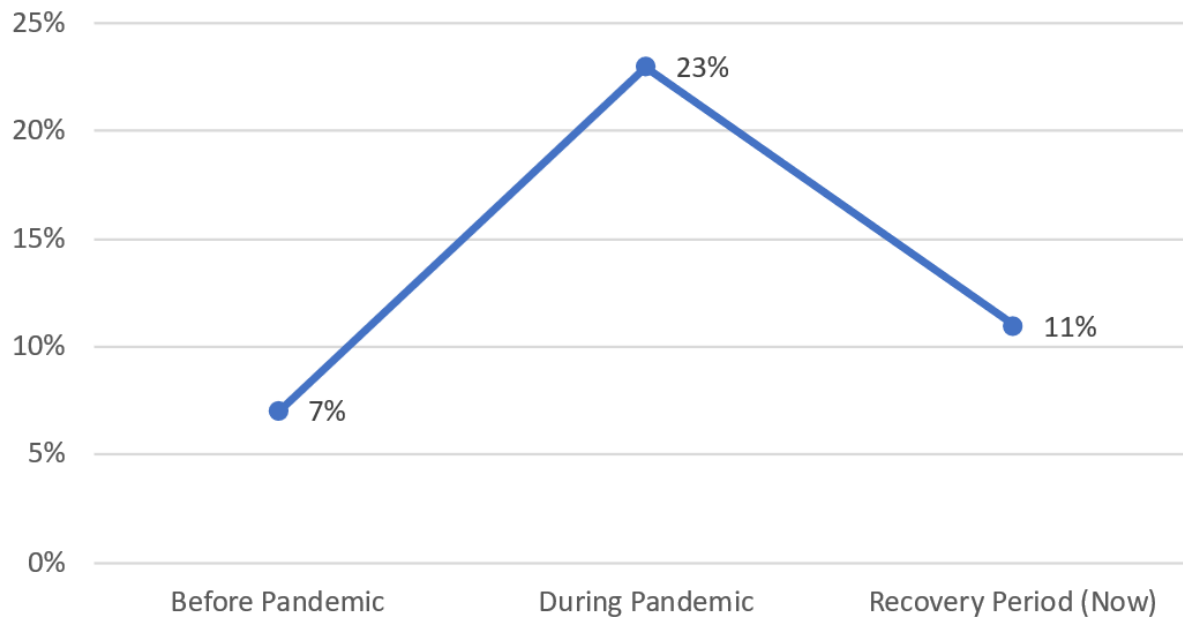
Polls 1-12 asked anxiety/depression levels since COVID-19
 Poll 13 asked current level of anxiety/depression



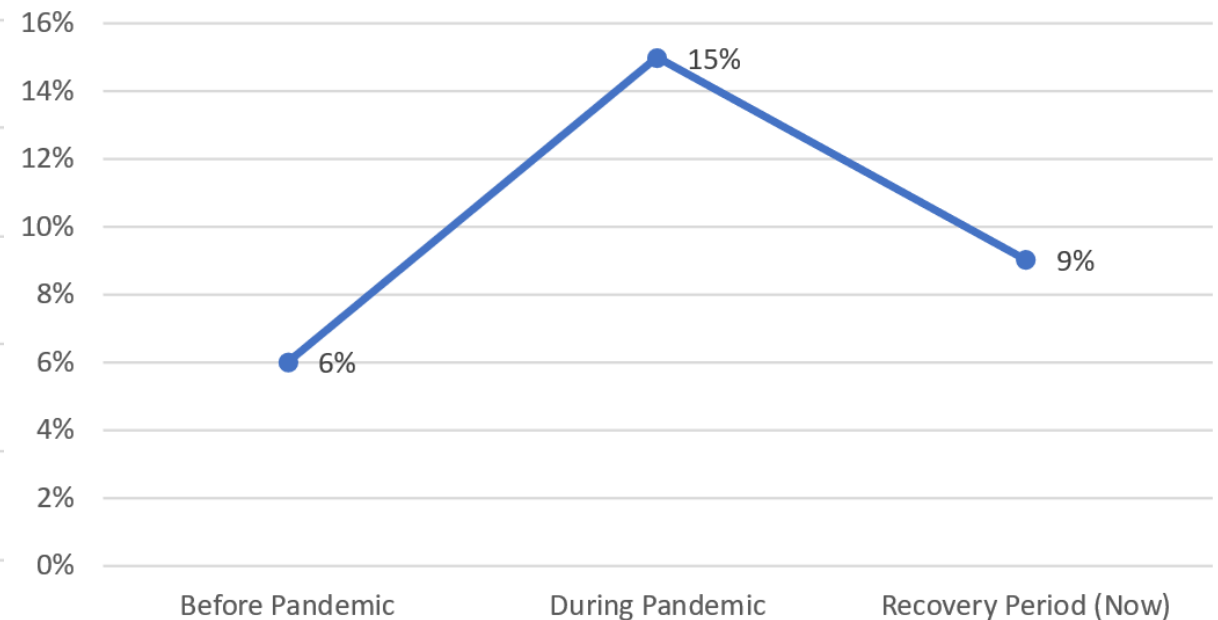
A2A. Please rate each of the following using the scale 0-10 where “10” is Extremely high and “0” is None. Base: (Total n= 3,023)

Levels of high anxiety and depression are at a pandemic low, but are still double pre-COVID-19 numbers

Canadians Reporting High Anxiety (8-10)



Canadians Reporting High Depression (8-10)



The averages for “Before Pandemic” and “During Pandemic” were taken from an aggregate data set to accurately represent levels of self-rated anxiety and depression. To account for a potential for recollection bias, the “Before Pandemic” average was taken from the aggregate data of polls 1 to 7 and “During Pandemic” was taken from polls 1 to 12.

Those reporting a high level of anxiety or depression are more likely to have symptoms of a moderate to severe mental disorder

- Three quarters (75%) of the Canadians who rated their anxiety or depression high since COVID-19 (8-10) are likely to have symptoms of a moderate (21%) or severe (54%) mental health disorder, while a quarter (25%) are likely to have symptoms of a mild (13%) or no (12%) mental health disorder.
- While levels of high anxiety and depression have declined, the likelihood that these people will have symptoms of a moderate to severe mental disorder has increase since April (from 60% to 75%).
- Among those who rate their anxiety or depression as moderate (5-7), almost two-in-five is likely to have symptoms of a moderate (19%) or severe (23%) mental health condition, while a fifth (23%) are likely to have symptoms of a mild mental health disorder and a third (36%) are likely to have no mental health disorder.
- Canadians more likely to be classified as severe: Younger (16-17*: 42%, 18-34: 38% vs. 35-54: 27%; 55+: 15%).
- Members of LGBTQ2S+ community (37%) and visible minority (36%) and those who are diagnosed with a mood disorder (36% vs. 15% with no mood disorder) are likely to have a severe mental disorder.

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

Psychological Distress 1-5 Point Scale Items	(All/Most)	(None/Little)
Tired out for no good reason	33%	32%
That everything was an effort	26%	43%
Nervous	25%	36%
Depressed	21%	52%
Restless or fidgety	19%	48%
Hopeless	19%	58%
Worthless	19%	61%
So sad that nothing could cheer you up	15%	64%
So restless you could not sit still	11%	68%
So nervous that nothing could calm you down	10%	67%

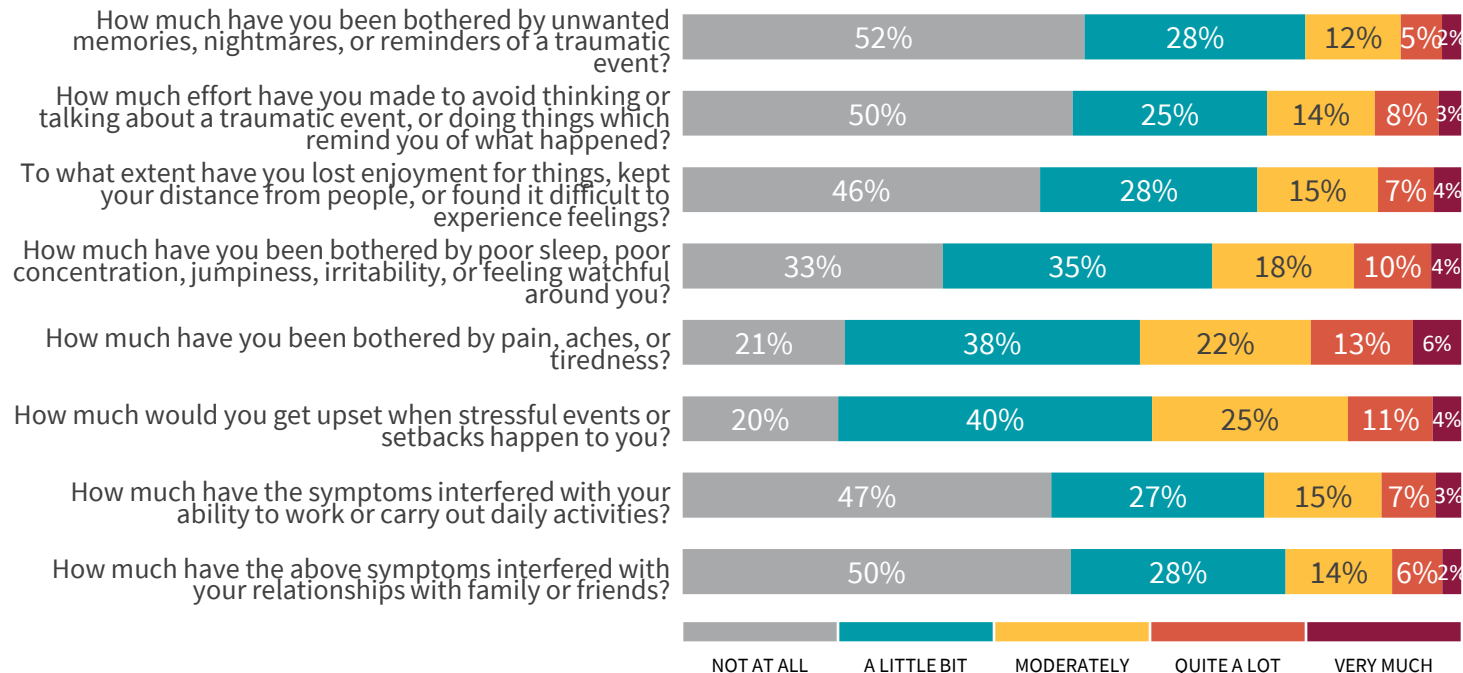
Moderate: 5-7					High: 8-10								
Poll 13	Poll 13	Poll 12	Poll 11	Poll 10	Poll 9	Poll 8	Poll 7	Poll 6	Poll 5	Poll 4	Poll 3	Poll 2	
36%	12%	23%	19%	19%	20%	21%	20%	23%	19%	19%	18%	21%	Likely to have no mental health disorder symptoms (<20)
23%	13%	16%	17%	19%	19%	20%	19%	18%	18%	18%	19%	16%	Likely to have symptoms of a mild mental disorder (20-24)
19%	21%	18%	19%	18%	22%	22%	21%	21%	20%	22%	26%	21%	Likely to have symptoms of a moderate mental disorder (25-29)
23%	54%	42%	45%	44%	38%	38%	40%	37%	43%	40%	36%	42%	Likely to have symptoms of a severe mental disorder (30-50)

* Small sample size

One-in-ten Canadians are exhibiting symptoms of severe PTSD

- Using the SPRINT Short PTSD Rating interview, one-in-ten (12%) Canadians are showing severe symptoms of PTSD, while one-fifth (20%) are showing moderate symptoms.
- Younger Canadians are most likely to have severe symptoms (16-17*: 30%, 18-34: 15%, 35-54: 14%, 55+: 6%) as are unemployed (20%), frontline healthcare workers (17%), those with a physical impairment (25%), a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community (23%) or a visible minority (16%).
- Those with symptoms of alcohol dependency (45%) or cannabis disorders (41%), as well as those dependent on financial support (32%) are most likely to have severe symptoms
- These results are in line with Statistics Canada's *Survey on Mental Health and Stressful Events, August to December 2021*.

Psychological Distress Anxiety Frequency Scale Items



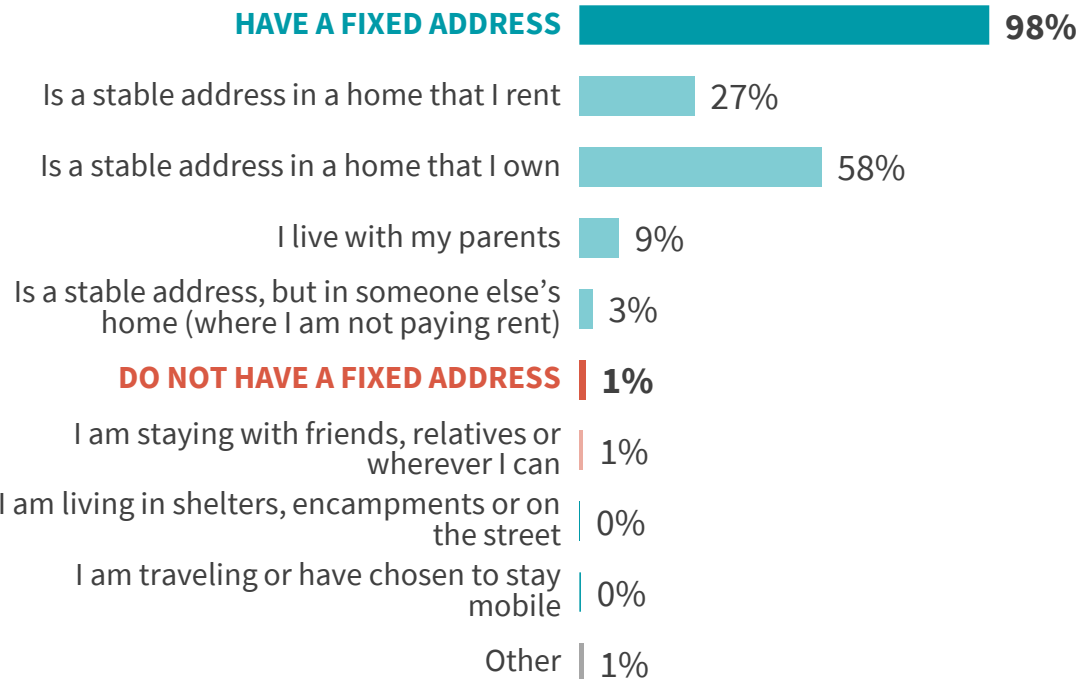
Mental Health Scores among Canadians with anxiety since COVID-19

Poll 13	
42%	Likely to have no symptoms of PTSD
26%	Likely to have a mild symptoms of PTSD (6-10)
20%	Likely to have moderate symptoms of PTSD (11-17)
12%	Likely to have severe symptoms of PTSD (18+)

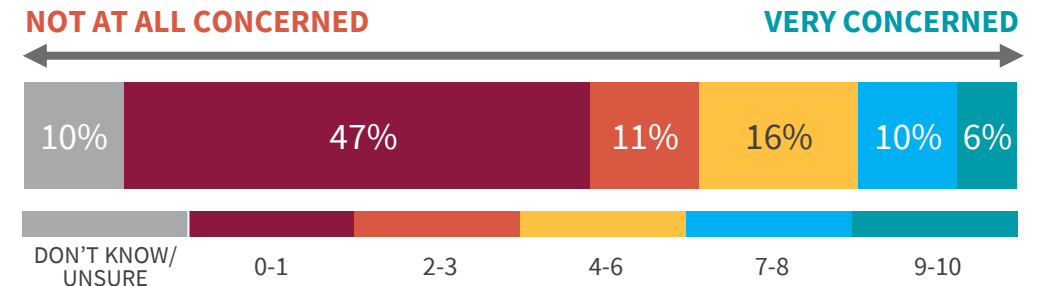
One-third of Canadians experience food insecurity

- Most Canadians facing food insecurity (98%) report having a fixed address.
- When asked about how concerned Canadians are about paying rent or mortgage, 16% have housing insecurities, with 6% being very concerned, and half (47%) are not at all concerned.
- One-third of respondents have food insecurities, and are worried about how they will feed their family, with 3% relying on food supports already.
- **Profile of those with food insecurities:** Residents of Alberta (43%), younger Canadians (18-34: 41%, 35-54: 43% vs. 55+: 21%), those who have children under 9 (52%), unemployed (45% vs. 35% of employed), visible minorities (42% vs. 32%), those with a physical impairment (55%) and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (46%).

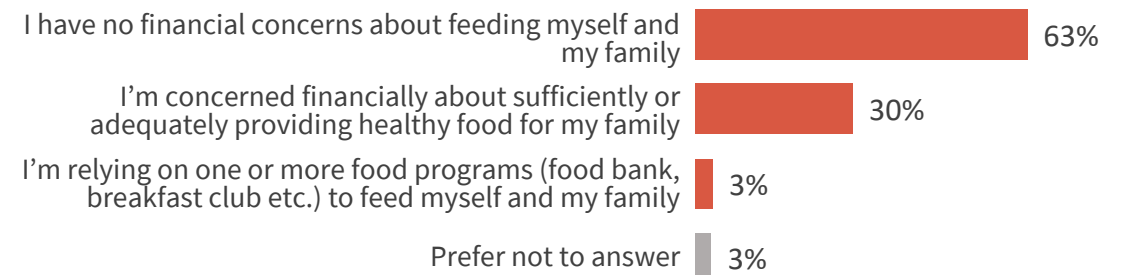
CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION



RENT/MORTGAGE MONTHLY PAYMENTS



CURRENT SITUATION



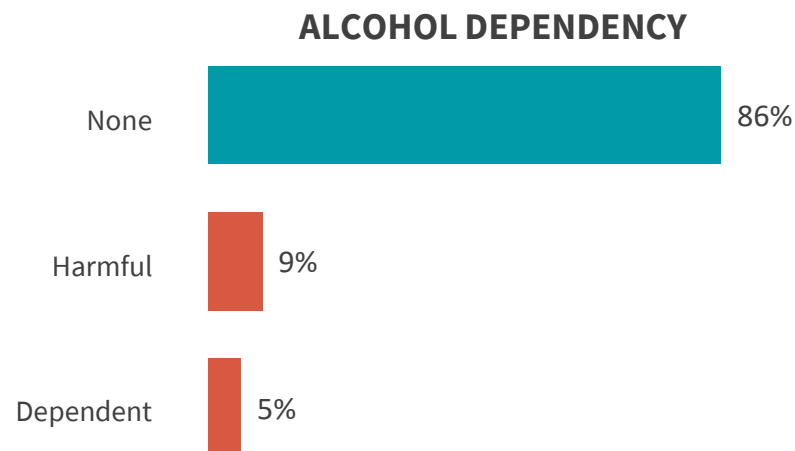
A22A: Which of the following best describes your current housing situation? Base: (Total n= 3,023)

A22B: How concerned are you about your rent/mortgage being paid each month? Base: (Total n=2,579)

A22C: Which of the following describes your current situation? Base: (Total n= 3,023)

One-in-seven Canadians have exhibited at least harmful behaviour with alcohol

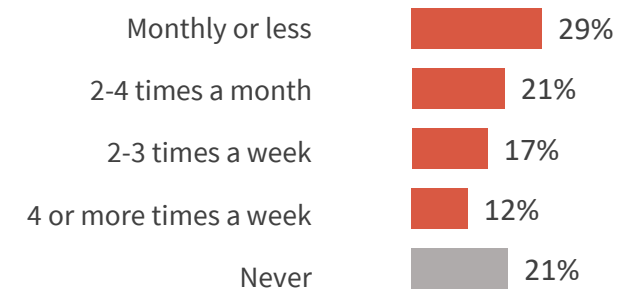
- On the alcohol dependency chart, 5% of Canadians show signs of being dependent on alcohol, while 9% are exhibiting harmful behaviours.
- Profile of those dependent on alcohol: Younger (18-34: 10% vs. 55+: 2%), those with children under 9 (12%), employed (7% vs. unemployed 4%), those with high anxiety (18%) and high depression (20%), having financial troubles (21% vs. none: 3%) and having a cannabis consumption disorder (48% vs. normal consumption: 3%).
- Those with mental health disorders and those dependent on financial supports are more likely to demonstrate signs of alcohol dependency. Almost one-half (48%) of those with a cannabis disorder also demonstrate being dependent on alcohol.
- One-in-seven frontline healthcare workers express signs of a dependency on alcohol (16%).
- Nearly one in ten (9%) Canadians report having caused harm while drinking, but very few of these have occurred in the past six months.



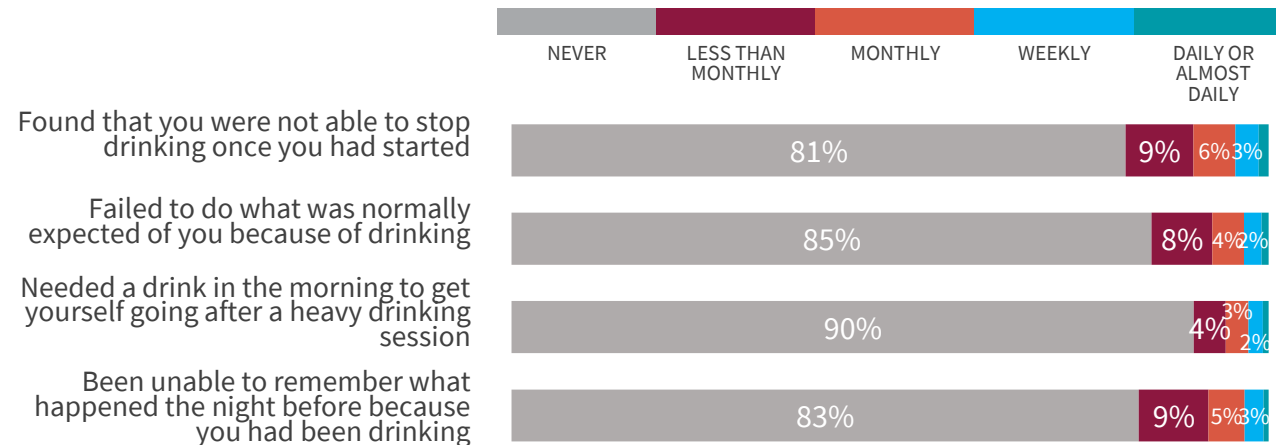
Half of Canadians consume alcohol at least twice a month

- These results are consistent with those found in a collaborative study by Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. MHRC thanks them for their guidance in conducting the AUDIT and CUDIT screeners for alcohol and cannabis dependency.

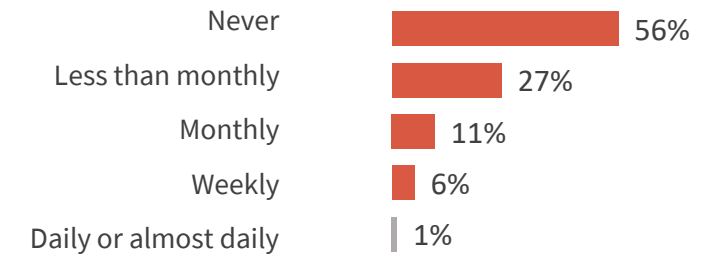
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION



IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS



6 OR MORE DRINKS - ONE OCCASION



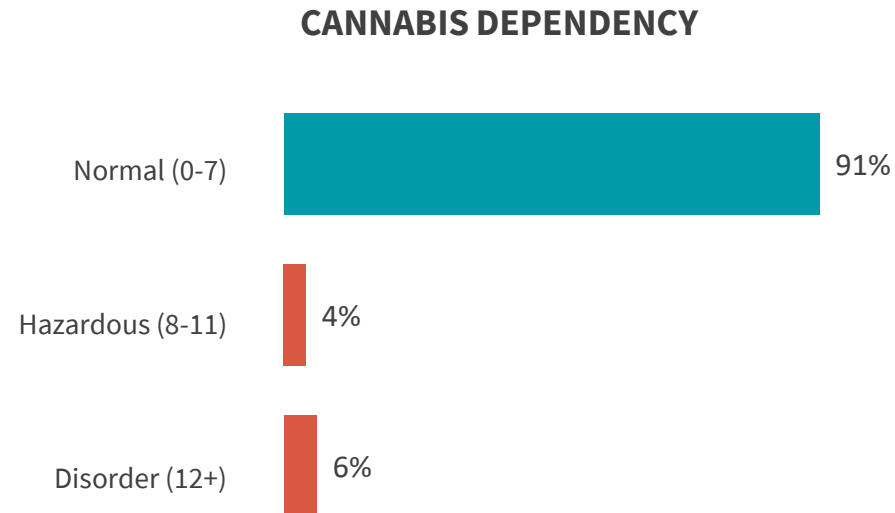
C1: How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? Base: (Total n=3,023)

C2: How many standard drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when drinking? Base: (Total n=2,373)

C3: How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion? Base: (Total n=2,373)

One-in-ten Canadians show signs of cannabis dependency that is at least hazardous

- Cannabis dependency is currently less prominent than alcohol dependency, with 4% exhibiting hazardous behaviours and 6% a disorder.
- Usage is higher among younger people, with their use being more likely to be hazardous or a show signs of a disorder (16-17*: 18%, 18-34: 18%, 35-55: 10%, 55+:3%). Men are more likely to have signs of a disorder than women (7% vs. 4% respectively), as are those with children under 9 years old (14%).
- Frontline health care workers are more likely to exhibit traits of a disorder (20%).
- Those with a mental health disorder or who are dependent on financial supports are likely to be classified as having signs of a disorder, as are those with a physical impairment (12%) and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (10%).



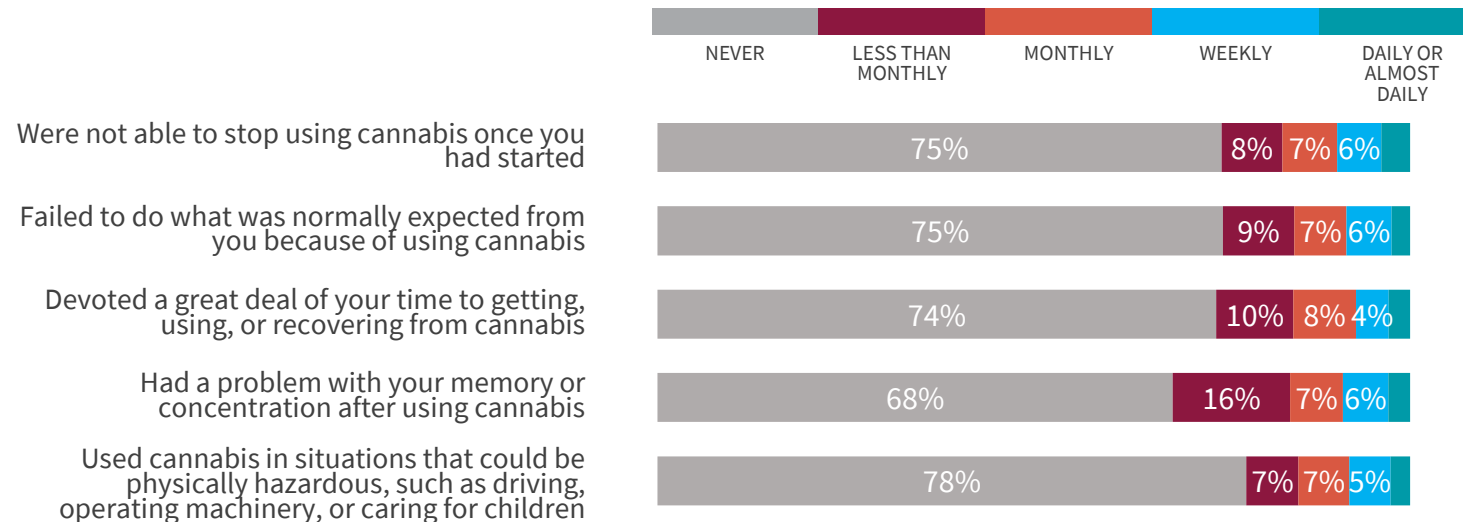
* Small sample size

C7-10: Cannabis Dependency Base: (Total n= 3,023)

One-in-ten Canadians consume cannabis on a weekly basis

- A quarter of Canadians say they use cannabis, one in ten say they use it multiple times a week.
- Of that quarter of Canadians, one third report being “stoned” for at least three hours on days when they use cannabis; 6% say they remain under the effect of cannabis for 7 hours or more on these days.
- Most Canadians who report consuming cannabis say they have never considered cutting down, or stopping their use.

IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS



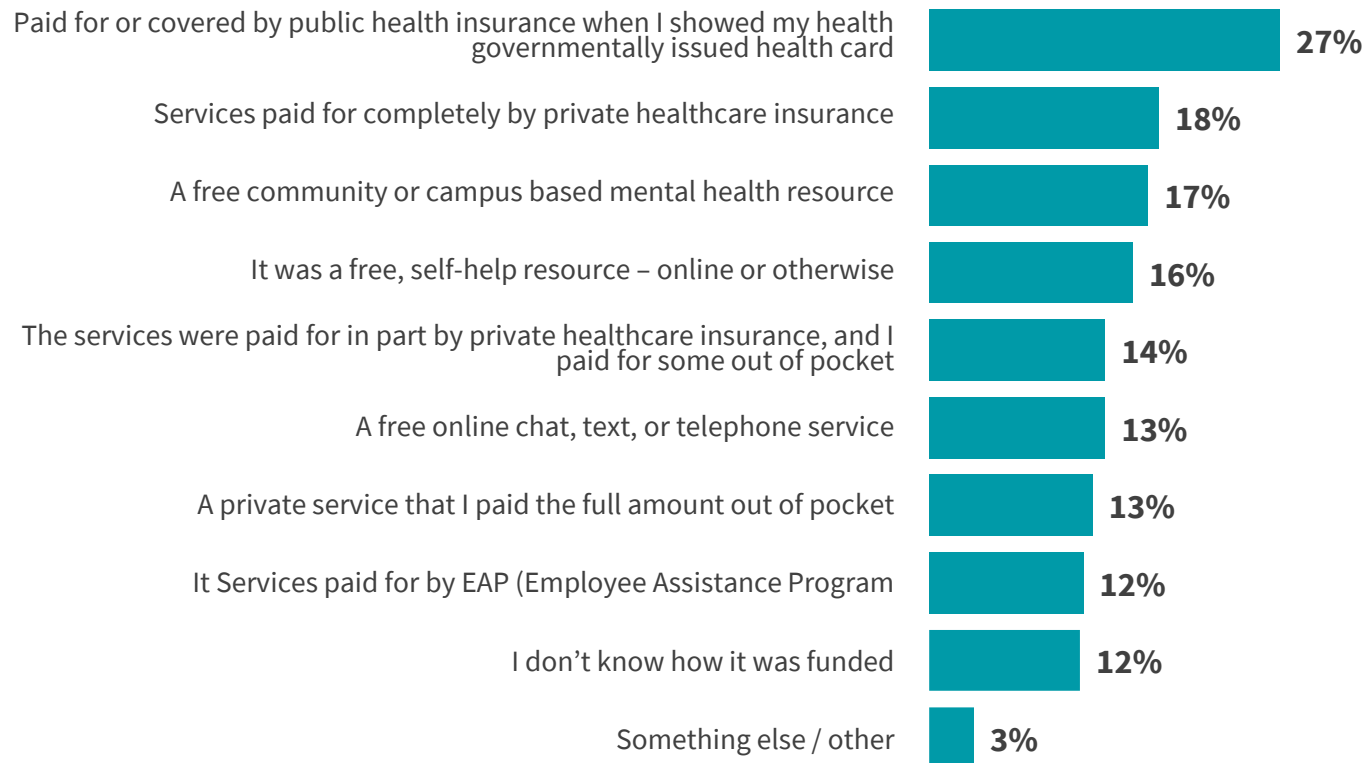
C7: How often do you use cannabis? Base: (Total n= 3,023)

C8: How many hours were you “stoned” on a typical day when you had been using cannabis? **C9:** In the past six months, how often have you done each of the following?

C10: Have you ever thought about cutting down, or stopping, your use of cannabis? Base: (Total n= 779)

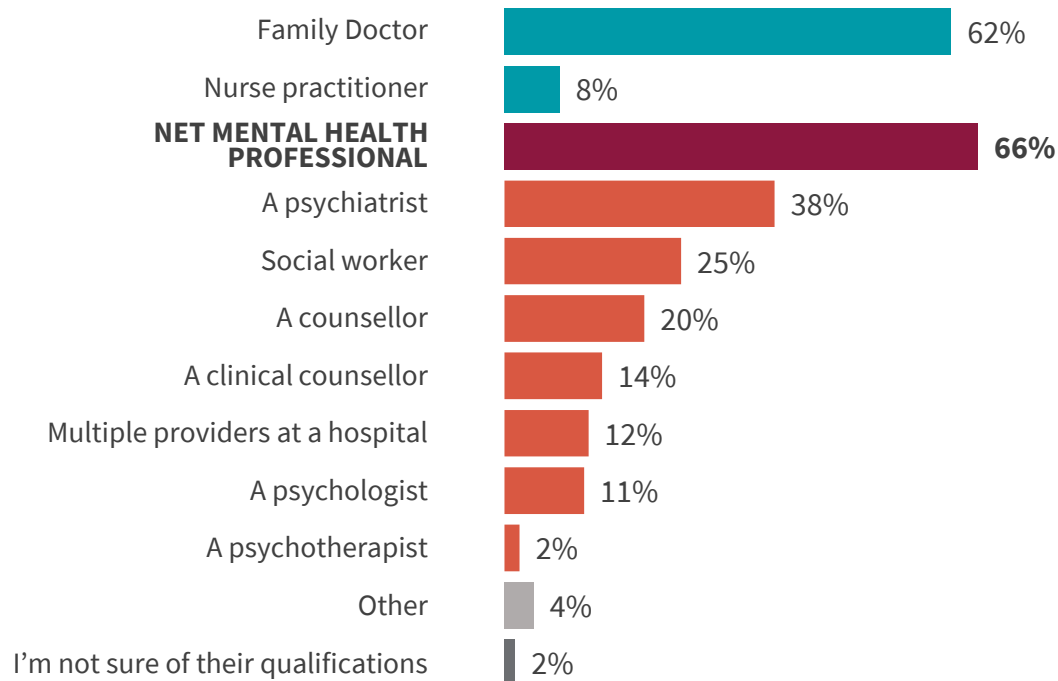
Canadians are most likely to access free mental health supports than private ones

- One-quarter (27%), of those who accessed supports accessed those provided through government programs, while 18% accessed those covered by benefits programs and 17% provided through community or campus resources.
- One-quarter (27%) paid for mental health supports, either through services that were partially covered and partially paid for (14%) or private services that they paid for completely (13%).



Of those funded by the public health system, two-thirds talked to a mental health professional

- Those who were covered by the public health system chose to talk to a mental health professional (66%), three-fifths talked to their family doctor (62%) and 8% talked to a nurse practitioner.
- Three-fifths (61%) reported that they are still using the services while only 5% accessed the services for 1 to 2 months and 6% accessed them for 10 months to a year.
- More than a tenth (12%) accessed the services at least weekly with a sixth (16%) accessing it monthly and three-in-ten used it only a couple to few times.
- Over 60% of Canadians who indicated accessing a publicly funded mental health service in the last year are still using that service, and about one in ten used the service for less than a month



Base: (Paid by public health n=95)

B17A. Which of the following did you talk to specifically about your mental health. **B17B:** Thinking specifically about the past year, how long did you use the service paid for by public health insurance? **B17C:** And during the time that you were using service, how often did you meet with a publicly funded mental health professional?

Of those who paid for mental health services out of their pocket, most talked to a psychologist

- Two-fifths (41%) talked to a psychologist with another a third (32%) talking to a counsellor, one-fifth (18%) reported getting help from a psychotherapist and only 3% went to a treatment facility.
- Half (51%) reported that they are still using the services while 12% accessed the services for 1 to 2 months and 8% accessed them for 10 months to a year.
- A tenth (9%) accessed the services at least weekly while three-in-ten accessed it monthly and a fifth (21%) used it only a couple to few times.
- Of those who went to a treatment facility, three-fifths (59%) stayed there for 2 to 4 weeks while two-fifths (41%) stayed for a week or less.

SERVICES PAID FOR



B20A: You indicated you paid for mental health service out of your own pocket. What services did you pay for? Base: (**Paid for mental health service in full or some out of pocket** n= 80)

B20C: Thinking specifically about the past year, how long did you see the psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or counsellor? Base: (**Paid for a psychologist** n= 63)

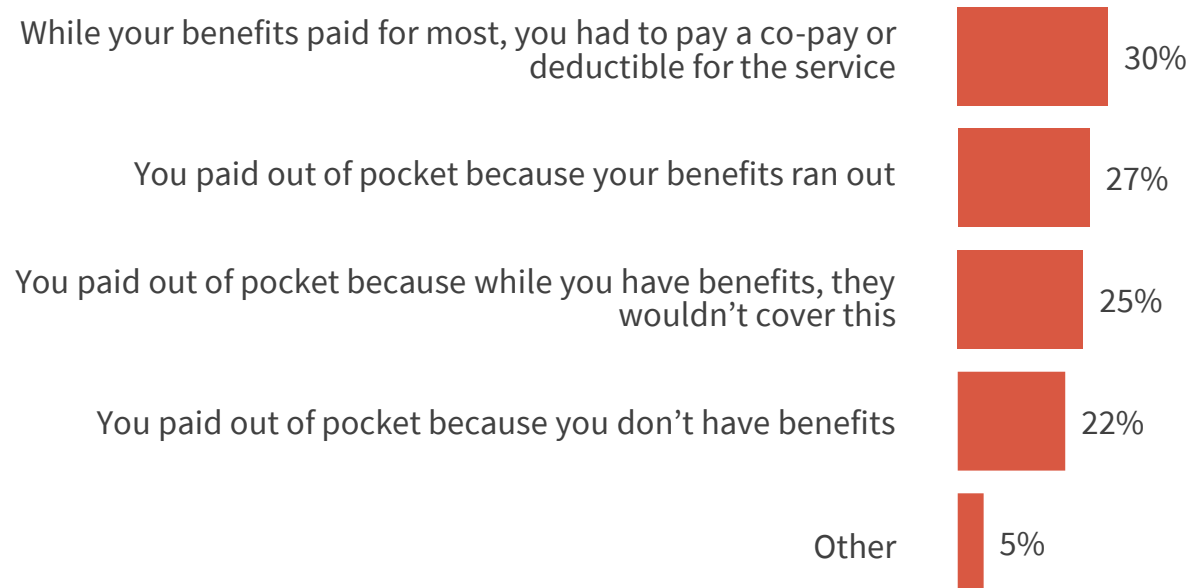
B20D: And during the time that you were using this service, how often did you meet with this mental health professional? Base: (**Paid for a psychologist, social worker, counsellor or psychotherapist** n= 72)

B20E: How long did you stay in a treatment facility in total over the last year? Base: (**Paid for treatment facility** n= 2) (* Very Small Sample Size)

Canadians who paid out of their own pocket were often paying the deductible, but many did not have proper coverage

- Three-in-ten report having paid out of pocket for their mental health supports because they had to pay a deductible. However, one-quarter (27%) did not have enough benefits to cover the support, they did not have benefits to cover the support at all (25%) or they did not have benefits (22%).

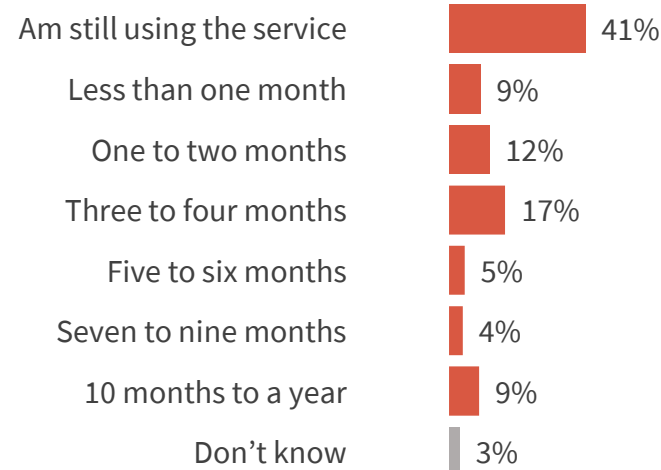
REASONS FOR PAYMENT OUT OF POCKET



For Canadians who paid for the services accessed through their insurance, most talked to a psychologist or a social worker

- Of those who were covered by private health insurance, a third (35%) chose to talk to a psychologist, while three-in-ten (31%) got help from a social worker or counsellor. A quarter (25%) talked to a psychotherapist with 9% accessing a treatment facility.
- Two-fifths (41%) reported that they are still using the services while only 12% accessed the services for 1 to 2 months and 9% accessed them for 10 months to a year.
- A tenth accessed the services at least weekly with a fifth (22%) accessing it monthly and two-in-ten used it only a couple to few times.

TIME USING THE SERVICE



B21A: You indicated your private health insurance paid for a mental health service. What did they pay for? Base: (**Paid by private healthcare insurance or EAP** n= 101)

B21B: Thinking specifically about the past year, how long did you see the social worker, counsellor or psychologist? Base: (**Health Insurance paid social worker or counsellor, a psychologist or psychotherapist** n= 80)

B21C: And during the time that you were using this service, how often did you meet with this mental health professional? Base: (**Health Insurance paid social worker or counsellor, a psychologist or psychotherapist** n= 80)

B21D. How long did you stay in a treatment facility in total over the last year? Base: (**Health insurance paid for treatment facility** n= 7) (* Very Small Sample Size)



Lesli Martin, Senior Vice President, Pollara
Michael Cooper, Vice President, MHRC
Brittany Saab, National Coordinator of Stakeholder
Engagement, MHRC



Financial contribution from

Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

