



Mental Health During COVID-19 Outbreak: Poll #12



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Major Findings

- The mental health of Canadians slowly continues to improve. Though only marginally, **high levels of self-rated anxiety is trending positively from 24% in December 2021 to 21% this poll.** The Kessler 10, GAD-7 and PHQ-9 clinical screeners are demonstrating marginal improvement as well with a reduced number of respondents indicating symptoms of a severe mental health disorder and a higher number of respondents indicating no symptoms at all. Furthermore, the Sheehan scale of disability shows a slight drop in the percentage of Canadians experience day-to-day difficulty functioning caused by mental health challenges.
- **Concern around the continued threat of COVID-19 has not** dropped, increasing marginally from 59% to 61%, despite the cross country ease of related public health measures. In fact, a higher percentage of Canadians are of the opinion that all restrictions should be reimplemented due to the fact that “people are still catching the virus” (65%). Concern around yourself (34%) or a family member (41%) catching the virus has also increased as a factor in negative mental health.
- Mental health is a topic that is not frequently thought about, discussed, nor read about in Canada. One fifth of respondent report never thinking of their own mental health with those aged 55+ being the least likely to do so (4%) on a daily basis. Based on our metrics, students are demonstrating the highest levels of mental health literacy.

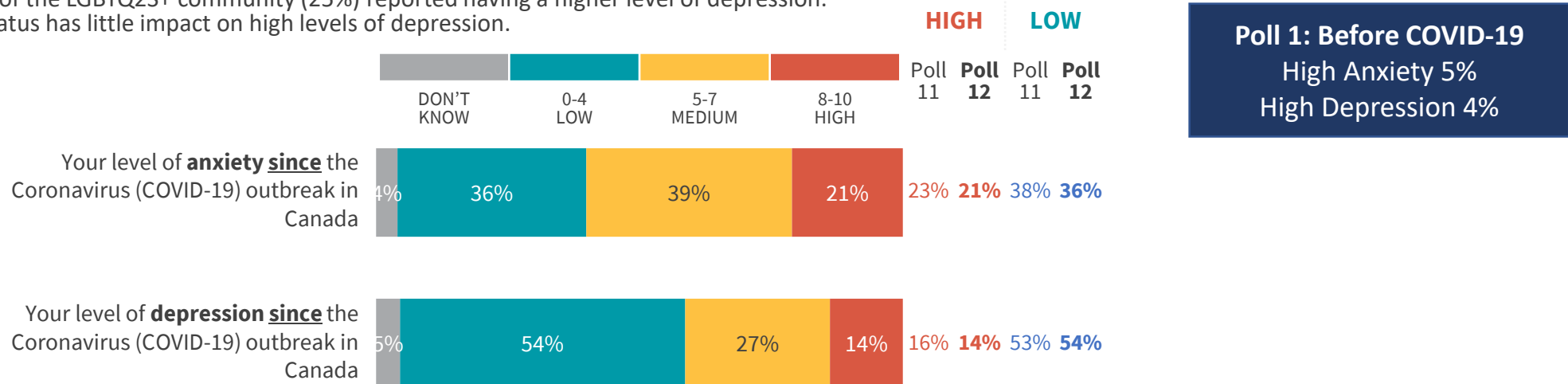
Major Findings

- More than one in ten Canadians have thought about suicide in the past year, and 3% report having planned an attempt in the same time frame. Our analysis is consistent with those of other organization in the Canadian mental health research field* in finding **higher rates of suicide ideation among Black Canadians with over 5% having planned a suicide attempt in the past three months**; we have found this increase to be specific to those who identify as a visible minority of primarily African ancestry.
- **The pandemic is contributing to high levels self-rated anxiety in new mothers**, 3-in-10 (31%) mothers of children between 0 and 1 year old are reporting high levels of anxiety compared to 21% of the population. They are particularly concerned with themselves or their family contracting the virus, while also being impacted by social isolation and the economic downturn. However, new mothers are very hopeful for the future and report having good relationships with other. While they do not spend a lot of time thinking about their own mental health, they are more likely to consider that of others and are more likely to talk to a professional about it, at least occasionally.

* Mental Health and Substance Use During COVID-19 – Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (January, 2022)

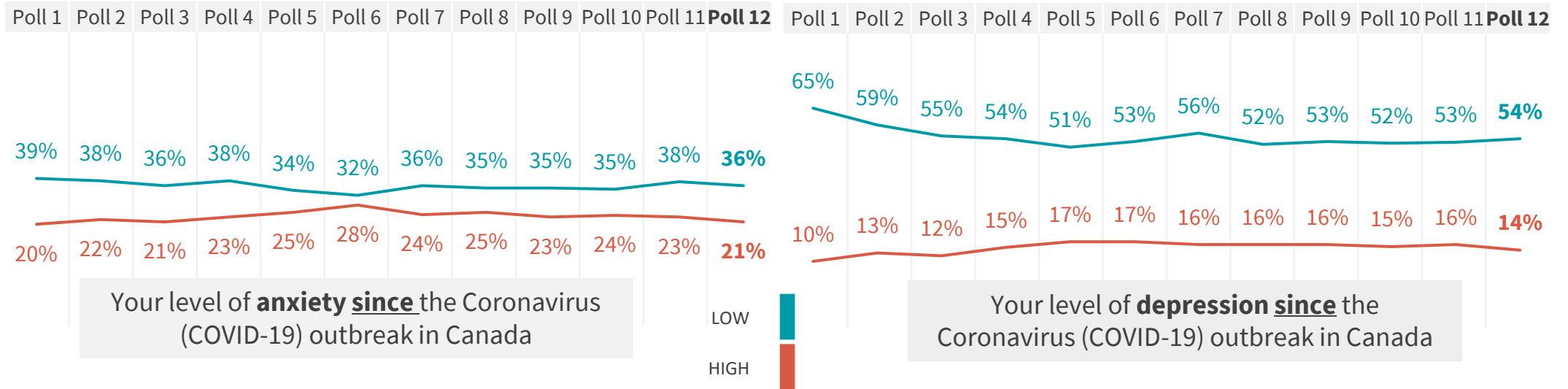
Levels of high anxiety are trending positively with another slight decrease since Poll 11

- Despite the negative impact of COVID-19 on Canadians’ mental health and a sharp jump in their anxiety and depression levels since the onset of the pandemic, levels of anxiety and depression declined slightly in April, compared to February.
- Three-in-ten (31%) of the new mothers (those having children between 0-1 year old) are also experiencing high anxiety compared to 12% having high anxiety before COVID.
- A fifth of Canadians said they are experiencing high anxiety, which continues to be much higher than before COVID-19.
 - Anxiety continues to be worse for younger Canadians (16-17 28%, 18-34 26%, 35-54 27% vs. 55+ 12%), women (25% vs. 16% of men), and those who are unemployed (34%). LGBTQ2S+ identifying Canadians (32%) also experience higher levels of anxiety.
 - Vaccine status has little impact on high levels of anxiety.
- The percentage of Canadians reporting high depression has declined slightly since Poll 11.
 - Depression continues to be worse for Canadians aged 35-54 (16-17 15%, 18-34 17%, 35-54 19% vs. 55+ 7%), as well as among the unemployed (22%).
 - Members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (25%) reported having a higher level of depression.
 - Vaccine status has little impact on high levels of depression.



Levels of anxiety and depression are not back to levels seen in late 2021

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



A2A. Please rate each of the following using the scale 0-10 where “10” is Extremely high and “0” is None. Base: (Total n= 3,000)

More than half of the Canadians reported experience symptoms of moderate or severe anxiety and depression using the Kessler 10

- Two-thirds (60%) of the Canadians who rated their anxiety or depression high (8-10) since COVID-19 are reporting symptoms of a moderate (18%) or severe (42%) mental health disorder, while two-fifths (39%) are reporting symptoms of a mild (16%) or no (23%) mental health disorder. The percentages of those with symptoms of at least a moderate disorder have decreased only slightly this poll (from 64% to 60%), a trend worth noticing.
- Among those who rate their anxiety or depression as moderate (5-7), almost one-in-three is experiencing symptoms of a moderate (13%) or severe (15%) mental health condition, while a fifth (19%) are experiencing symptoms of mild mental health disorder.
- Canadians more likely to be classified as experiencing severe symptoms: Younger Canadians (16-17* 60%, 18-34 51% vs. 35-54: 42%; 55+: 27%); and men (47% vs. 39% of women).
- Members of LGBTQ2S+ community (59%) and visible minority (48%) and those who have been diagnosed with a mood disorder (48% vs. 25% with no mood disorder) are experiencing symptoms of a severe mental health disorder.

Mental Health Scores among Canadians with high and moderate anxiety or depression since COVID-19

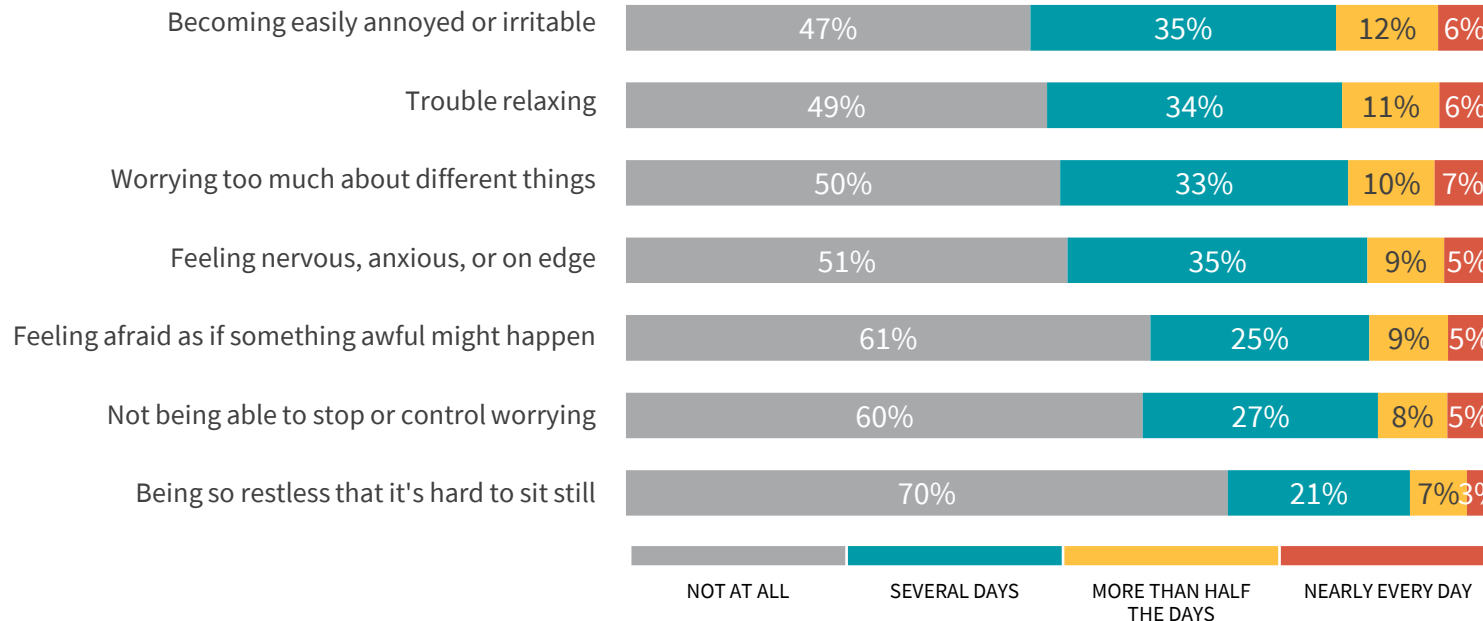
Psychological Distress 1-5 Point Scale Items	(All/Most)	(None/Little)
Tired out for no good reason	29%	39%
Nervous	23%	46%
That everything was an effort	22%	53%
Restless or fidgety	18%	56%
Depressed	17%	59%
Hopeless	15%	67%
Worthless	13%	71%
So sad that nothing could cheer you up	11%	70%
So restless you could not sit still	9%	75%
So nervous that nothing could calm you down	9%	75%

Moderate: 5-7	High: 8-10											
	Poll 12	Poll 12	Poll 11	Poll 10	Poll 9	Poll 8	Poll 7	Poll 6	Poll 5	Poll 4	Poll 3	
53%	23%	19%	19%	20%	21%	20%	23%	19%	19%	18%	21%	Likely to have no mental health disorder symptoms (<20)
19%	16%	17%	19%	19%	20%	19%	18%	18%	18%	19%	16%	Likely to have a mild mental disorder symptoms (20-24)
13%	18%	19%	18%	22%	22%	21%	21%	20%	22%	26%	21%	Likely to have moderate mental disorder symptoms (25-29)
15%	42%	45%	44%	38%	38%	40%	37%	43%	40%	36%	42%	Likely to have severe mental disorder symptoms (30-50)

5% of Canadians with high self-rated anxiety report symptoms of a moderate to severe anxiety disorder using the GAD-7

- Using the General Anxiety Disorder -7 (GAD-7) screening test, 5% of Canadians have severe anxiety and 8% have moderate anxiety. Scores have remained consistent since this test was started in Poll 6.
- Symptoms of anxiety are highest among younger Canadians, particularly 16-17 year olds* (11% severe, 13% moderate), but also 18-34 year olds (5% severe, 14% moderate), particularly compared to those 55+ (3% severe, 4% moderate). Those with physical impairments (12% severe, 13% moderate) and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community are also more likely to suffer from symptoms of severe (12%) or moderate (15%) anxiety based on this test.

Psychological Distress Anxiety Frequency Scale Items



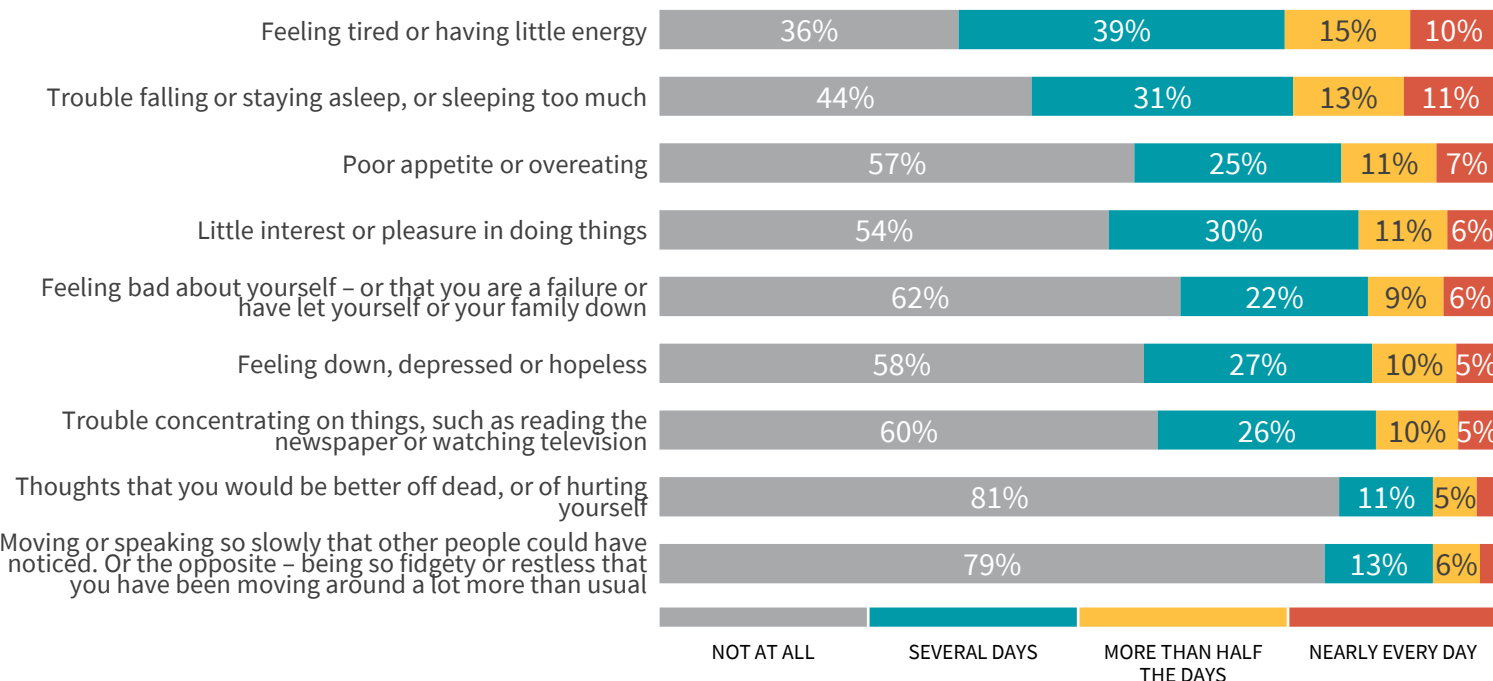
Mental Health Scores among Canadians with anxiety since COVID-19

Poll 12	Poll 11	Poll 10	Poll 9	Poll 8	Poll 7	Poll 6	
65%	64%	62%	65%	63%	63%	62%	Likely to have no anxiety disorder symptoms (0-5)
23%	22%	23%	22%	23%	22%	23%	Likely to have a mild anxiety disorder symptoms (6-10)
8%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	Likely to have moderate anxiety disorder symptoms (11-15)
5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	Likely to have severe anxiety disorder symptoms (16-21)

More than a fifth of the Canadians report symptoms of moderate to severe levels of depression using the PHQ-9

- Using the Patient Health Questionnaire -9 (PHQ-9) test, 23% of Canadians are experiencing symptoms of a moderate to severe depression disorder, with 4% experiencing symptoms of severe, 7% moderately severe, and 12% moderate disorder. Results have remained consistent since the implementation of this test (Poll 6).
- Canadians more likely to be classified as severe: Younger 16-17* (12%, 18-34: 4% vs. 35-54: 5%; 55+: 1%); unemployed (7% vs. employed 3%), members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (12%) and those experiencing physical impairment (12%), and income less than 30k (8%).

Psychological Distress Depression Frequency Scale Items



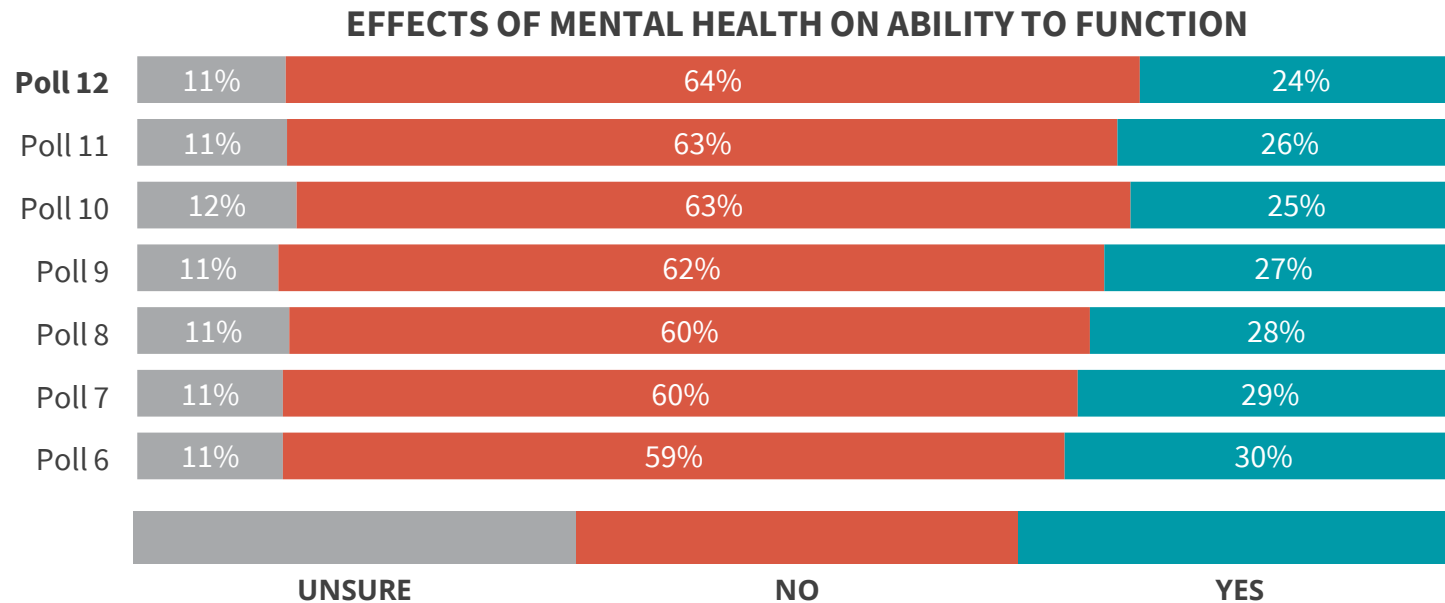
Mental Health Scores among Canadians with depression since COVID-19

Pol 12	Poll 11	Poll 10	Poll 9	Poll 8	Poll 7	Poll 6	
55%	55%	54%	55%	53%	52%	52%	Likely to have no depression disorder symptoms (0-4)
23%	21%	21%	21%	23%	24%	24%	Likely to have a mild depression disorder symptoms (5-9)
12%	12%	12%	13%	12%	12%	12%	Likely to have moderate depression disorder symptoms (10-14)
7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%	9%	Likely to have moderately severe depression disorder symptoms (15-19)
4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	Likely to have severe depression disorder symptoms (20-27)

A10. In the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by... Base: (Total n=3,000)

A quarter of Canadians continue to experience the effect of mental health symptoms on their day-to-day life

- The percentage of Canadians who say their mental health has impacted their ability to function has decreased slightly by two percent since the Poll 11 (26% to 24%). This continues the downward trend that has been evident since Poll 6.
- Younger people are more likely to say their mental health has impacted their ability to function (16-17: 33%, 18-34: 32%, 35-54: 31% vs. 55+ 12%), as are registered nurses (39%), unemployed (39% vs. employed 26%), members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (48%) and those with physically impairments (38%).
- Vaccine status has a limited impact on the ability to function.

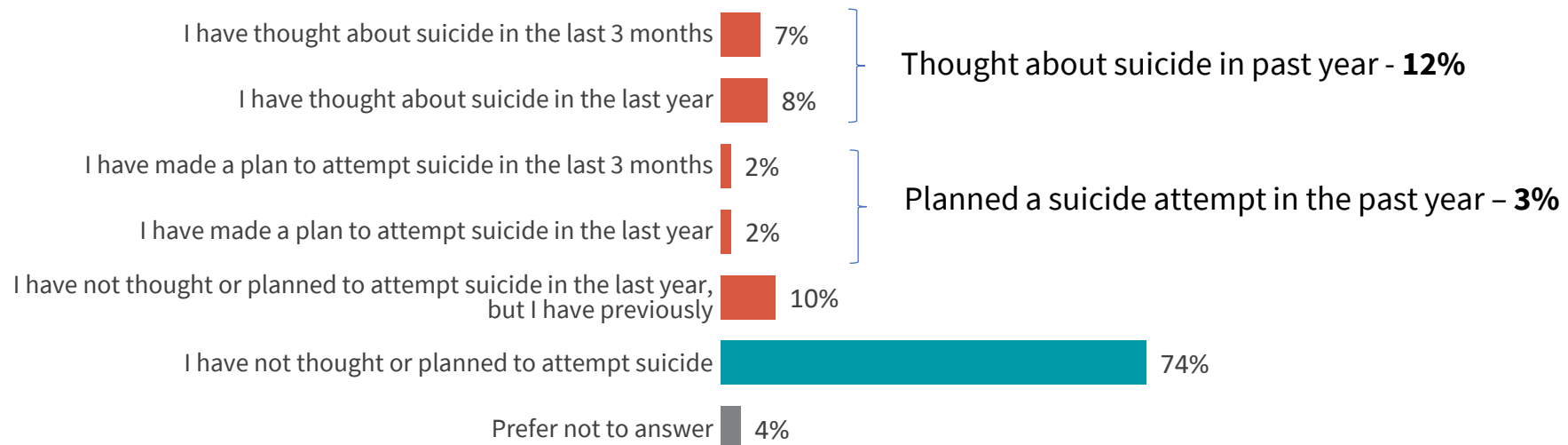


A11. The following question outlines the effect that mental health symptoms may be having on your day-to-day life. Do you feel that your mental health is having any effect on your ability to function? Base: (Total n= 3,000)

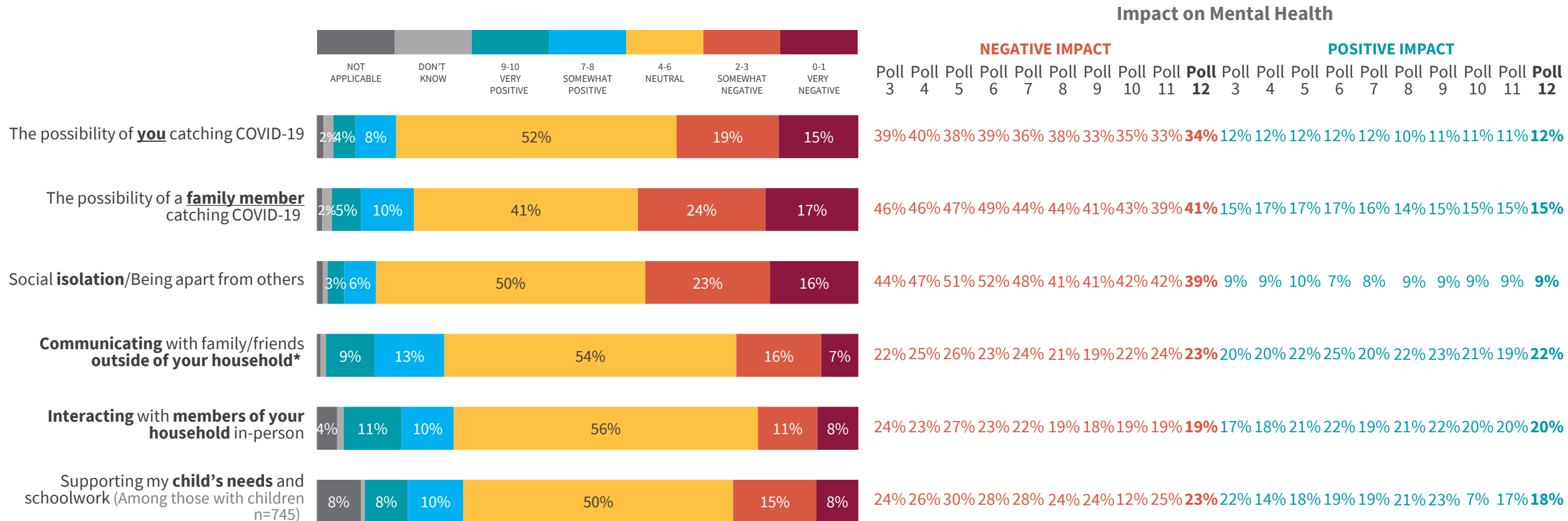
More than a tenth of Canadians have thought about suicide in the past year

- Thoughts of suicide are more predominant among younger people, with 19% of 16-17 year olds and 18% of 18-34 year olds having thought of it in the past year (11% and 10% respectively in the past three months), and 10% of 16-17 year olds and 5% of 18-34 year olds having planned an attempt in the past year (7% and 3% in the past three months).
- Thoughts of suicide are almost similar among men and women (13% for men and 11% for women).
- One-fifth of front-line healthcare workers have thought about suicide in the past year (20%).
- Those who rate their anxiety and depression as high (rated 9-10) since COVID have more thoughts of suicide. Half (49%) of those with high depression have thought of it in the past year (35% in the past three months) and one-in-ten (12%) have planned an attempt in the past year (8% in the past three months). Of those rating their anxiety as high, 35% have thought about suicide in the past year (25% in the past three months) and 10% have planned an attempt in the past year (6% in the past three months). These numbers also show an upward trend in this Poll compared to the last Poll(s).
- In the LGBTQ2S+ community, 34% have thought about suicide in the past year (21% in the past three months, similar to the findings of Poll 11) and 9% have made a plan in the past year (6% in the past three months).

THOUGHTS RELATING TO SUICIDE



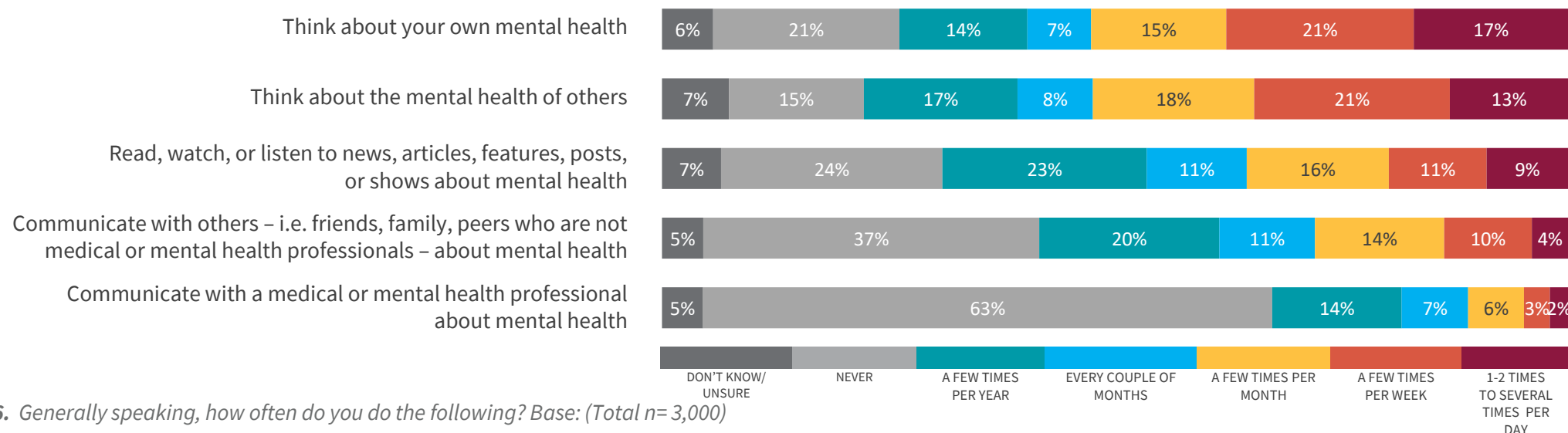
Social isolation remains one of the dominant factors in poor mental health and the possibility of a family member catching COVID-19 has a more negative impact this poll



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= 3,000) *W9 Wording: Communicating with family/friends outside of your household via phone, email, video chats, etc.

Two-fifths think of their own mental health at least few times a week

- Two-fifths (38%) of the Canadians think of their mental health at least a few times a week with a fifth (17%) thinking of it several times a day. Younger Canadians (18-34 14%, 35-54 12% vs. 55+ 4%), unemployed and students (15% and 16% respectively vs. 10% of employed), those with diagnosed anxiety (19%) and depression (18%) compared to those with no mental health disorder (3%), and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (25%) think of their mental health several times per day.
- Only one-third (34%) think of the mental health of others at least a few times in a week with 13% thinking about it several times a day.
- Consuming information about mental health is infrequent among Canadians, with only a fifth consuming it at least a few times a week and a quarter (24%) saying they never do.
- Mental health remains a topic that is not discussed often. Only 14% communicate at least a few times a week with people who are not professionals and 5% talk to professionals. The majority (63%) never talk to professionals about their mental health.

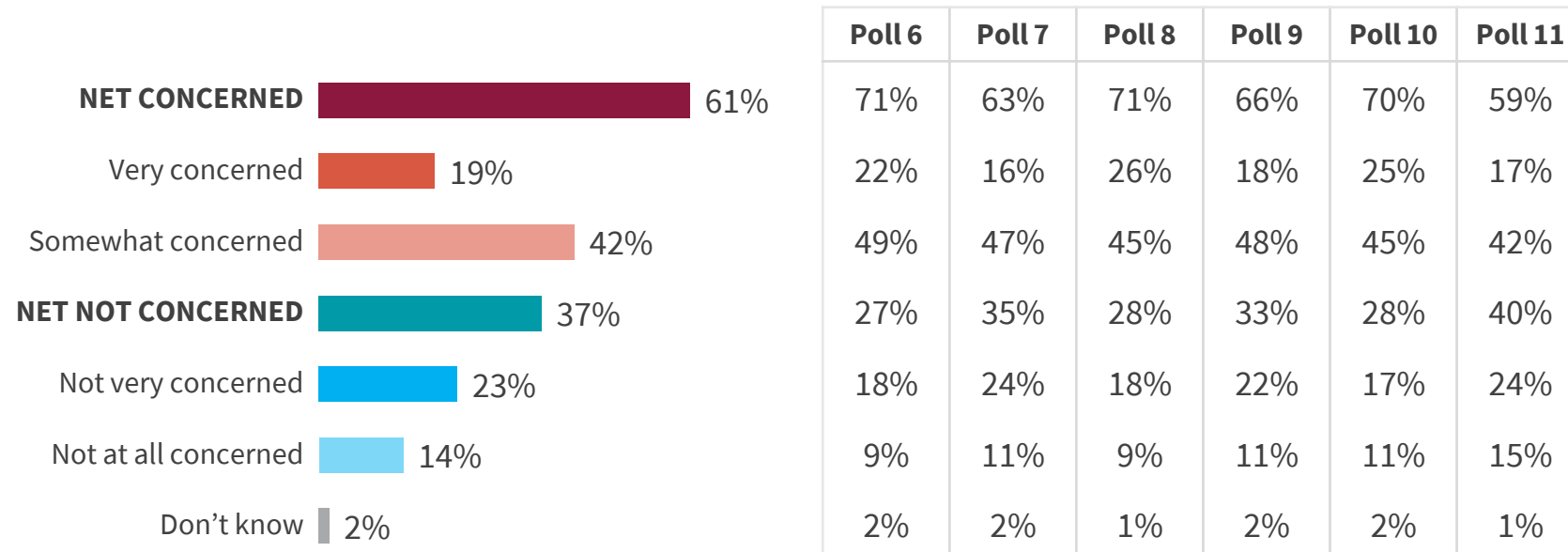


A6. Generally speaking, how often do you do the following? Base: (Total n=3,000)

Concern over the continuing threat of COVID-19 has gone up slightly this poll

- The continuing threat of COVID-19 has fluctuated from poll to poll. While this threat decreased from December to February (Poll 10 to Poll 11), it increased again in April 2022 (Poll 12 – from 59% to 61%).
- Concern continues to be lowest in Quebec (43%, a 4% increase from last Poll), while being highest in BC (68) and Ontario (67%). Those living in urban centers (63% vs. 53% in rural), women (64%) and those 55+ (70%) are most concerned.
- Those who have received vaccines continue to be more concerned about this threat than those who have not (vaccinated: 65%, none 22%).

CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONTINUING POTENTIAL THREAT OF COVID-19



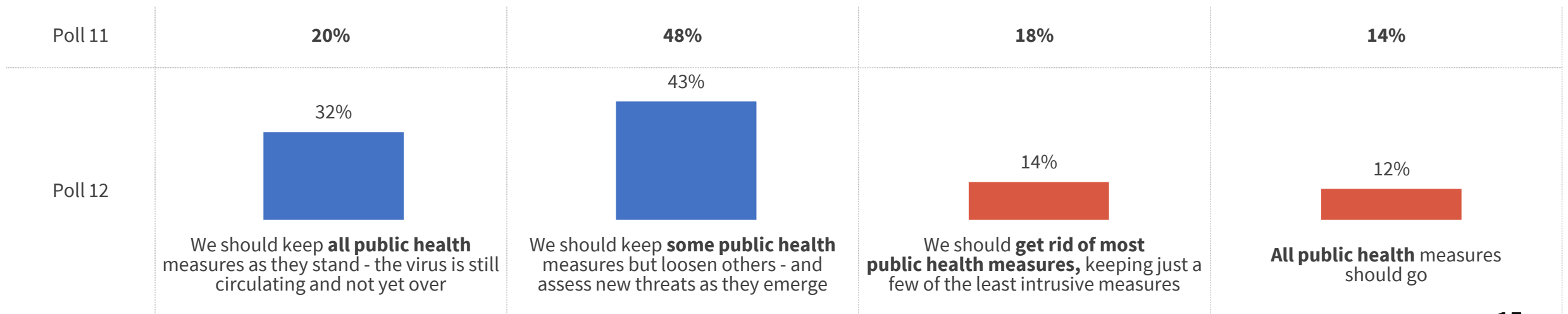
Students demonstrate to be the most literate in mental health

- Older Canadians (55+) are not in tune with their mental health. They are less likely to think about it (55+ 20% vs. 18-34: 55%, 35-54: 43%)*, consume information about it (55+: 14% vs. 18-34: 25%, 35-54: 21%)*, or talk about it (55+: 5% vs. 18-34: 24%, 35-54: 15%)*. Those under 55 are more likely to consider their own and others' mental health (18-34: 48%, 35-54: 41% vs. 55+ 20%)*, 18-34 year olds are not only thinking about it, but they are also talking about it (with professional 18-34: 10%, 35-54: 6%, 55+: 1%, with family/friends 18-34: 24%, 35-54: 16%, 55+: 6%)
- Those living in the urban centers are more vigilant about their mental health. They are more likely to think of their own (18% vs. 13% rural)** as well as others' mental health (14% vs. 10% rural)**, consume information about it (10% vs. 6% rural)**, and talk to their friends and family (4% vs. 2% rural)**. However, when it comes to speaking with a medical professional, the numbers are similar between urban and rural populations (2%).
- When it comes to being more actively involved in mental health, women demonstrate to more frequently think of others' mental health (39% vs. 31% men)*, and talk more about it with family and friends (15% vs. 12% men)*. However, men more frequently seek professional advice/help (7% vs. 3% women)*.
- The household composition also plays a role in mental health literacy to some extent. Those living alone tend to think of their mental health more frequently (21%)** compared to those living with others (16%)**. In contrast, those living with others, think of others' mental health more (14% vs. 9% living alone)** , consume more knowledge, and often talk to friends and family about their mental health. The likelihood of seeing a medical professional is not affected by household composition (2%).
- Students (28%)** and those unemployed (25%)** think about their mental health more often. Retired people report thinking about it less frequently (7%)** than other groups. Students are the most literate about mental health as they consume more information (10%)** as well as see medical professionals (4%)** more often than any other group.
- While new mothers are not more likely than others to consider their own mental health, almost half (49%) think of others' mental health at least weekly. They do not talk to a professional about this often, though they do occasionally, with less than half saying this never happens (48%).

Canadians increasingly want public health measures to remain in place

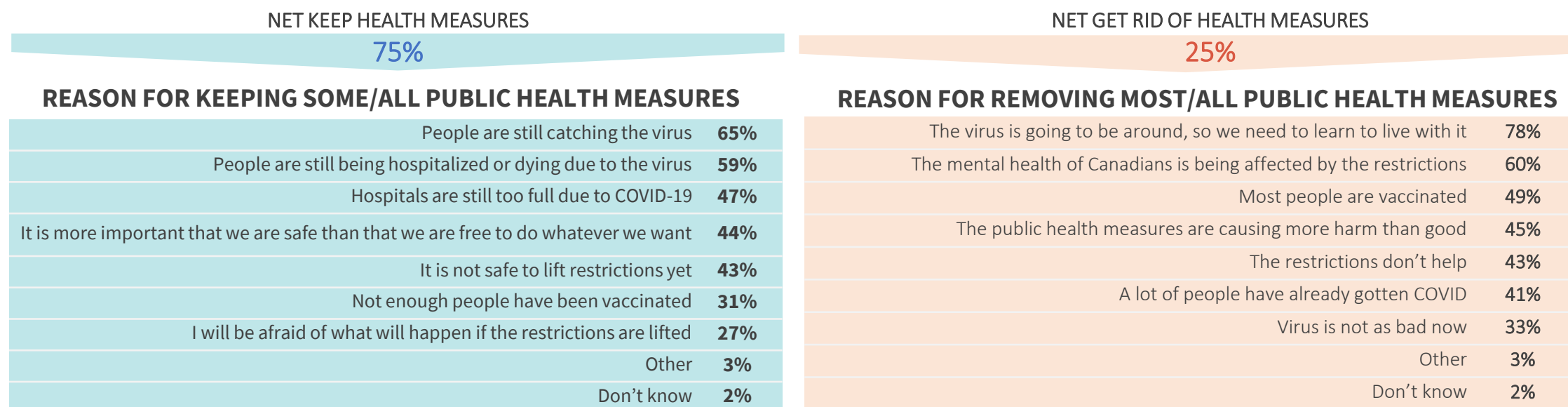
- Three quarters (75%, significantly up by 7% since Poll 11) are in the favor of keeping some (43%, a 5% decrease) to all (32%, significantly up by 12%) public health measures in place. Those living in urban centers (76% vs. rural 66%), older 55+ (81% vs. 16-17: 70%) and vaccinated (79% vs. unvaccinated 27%) want the public health measures to stay.
- Those experiencing anxiety or depression are more likely to want to keep all the public health measures. This is true among those who report their anxiety and depression as high since the virus (Keep all measures – anxiety: 42%, depression: 40%), but it is felt even more strongly among those who report their anxiety and depression as high before COVID-19 (Keep all measure – anxiety: 51%, depression: 54%).
- Residents of Ontario (79%) and BC (80%) are most in favour of keeping at least some of the public health measures, with residents of Alberta (68%) and particularly Quebec (67%) being least in favour. Quebec (33%) and Alberta (32%) are most likely to want to get rid of at least most of the measures, with Quebecers being more likely to say it should be most (19%) rather than all (15%) while Alberta residents would rather see all go (17%) rather than just most (15%).
- A quarter (26%, down by 4%) reported that they want to get rid of most (14%, down by 4%) to all (12%, down by 2% since Poll 11) of the health measures.

OPINION OF WHAT TO DO TO LIVE WITH THE VIRUS AT THIS TIME



Reasons for keeping or getting rid of the public health measures

- Of those who want the public health measures to stay, two-thirds (65%, significantly up by 11% since Poll 11) want to keep the measures because people are still catching the virus, three-fifths (59%, a finding consistent with the last Poll) because people are still being hospitalized or dying and 47% (significantly down by 7%) because hospitals are still too full due to the pandemic.
- Of those who want to get rid of the measures, three-quarters (78%, up by 2% since Poll 11) are of the opinion that the virus is going to be around, so they need to live with it. While three-fifths (60%, down by 6% since last poll) are concerned about the mental health of Canadians.



SCR22A. Why do you feel some or all of the public health measures should stay? Base: (Those who feel health measures should stay n=2,211)

SCR22B. Why do feel we should get rid of most or all of the public health measures? Base: (Those who feel health measures should be removed n=789)



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