



Mental Health During COVID-19 Outbreak: Poll #8



September 2021

Major Findings

- **There is a growing divide in the mental health of the vaccinated compared to the unvaccinated.**
This is four-fold:
 - Those who are **vaccinated are far more concerned about the ongoing threat of the virus** (75% of vaccinated vs. 38% of unvaccinated)
 - Those who are **not vaccinated are indicating COVID-19 related restrictions will impact their mental health** in the coming months (28% of unvaccinated vs. 12% of vaccinated predict high anxiety and 26% unvaccinated and 11% vaccinated predict high depression).
 - Those who are **unvaccinated are indicating considerably more symptoms of mental distress** (49% showing severe on the Kessler 10 vs. 36% fully vaccinated).
 - The **unvaccinated are indicating high levels of anxiety and depression today** (31% High Anxiety, 24% High Depression) compared to the fully vaccinated (22% High Anxiety, 14% High Depression).
- **Alberta is now experiencing the highest self-rated levels of anxiety** - Ontario held this spot throughout our other recent polls. We have noted higher regional impacts on mental health in the past based on lockdowns. This is unique as this increase does not coincide with lockdowns but instead appears to coincide with higher COVID-19 case counts.
- **Despite this being our first poll with the vast majority of Canadians double vaccinated** (84%), levels of self-rated anxiety and depression have not decreased.

Major Findings

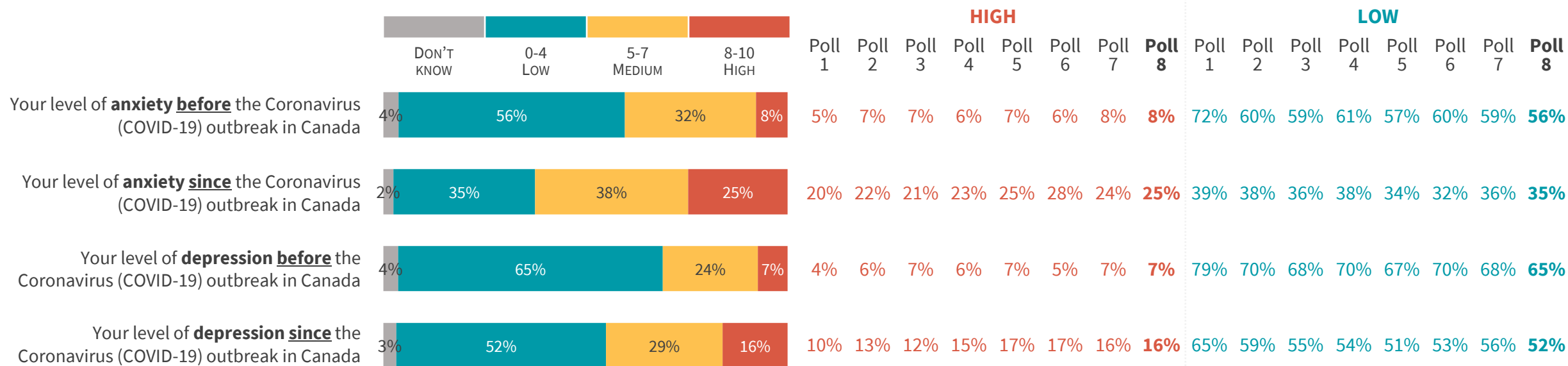
- **Suicide ideation is at its highest since April 2021.** 14% of Canadians have thought about suicide in the past year, trending upward from 13% in Poll 7 and 12% in Poll 6. Thoughts of suicide are higher among those who live alone, those in the frontline healthcare sector, and those with high rated anxiety or depression.
- Over the past four weeks, **80% of Canadians felt they had relationships they could count on**, always or most of the time. Over the same period, a similar percentage say their relationships with friends and family have been generally good.
- One-in-four parents (26%) indicate their **children have rarely or never had opportunities to socialize** with other children in the past month. Lack of socialization has been shown to have a significant impact on children.
- One-in-three Canadians (32%) indicate they're **accessing mental health supports since COVID-19, or should be accessing supports**. The increase in service delivery is almost entirely in virtual services (phone, text, online) increasing from 4% of Canadians accessing services this way in the year prior to COVID-19 to 14% in this poll.

Most Canadians have been at least partially vaccinated, but those who have not are hesitant

- **As the vaccine roll out continues, approximately nine-in-ten Canadians have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.** However, of those who have not yet received a vaccine, half are hesitant to do so, with one-quarter saying they will not get it.
- While those who have not been vaccinated are feeling the same level of anxiety as those who have, they are more likely to be experiencing high depression and they are more likely to have severe mental health disorders using the Kessler-10, GAD-7 and PHQ-9 scales.
- While the majority believe they will be concerned about the continuing threat of COVID-19 in the post-pandemic world, this concern has declined by 8% since Poll 6. However, the vaccine roll out may have limited impact on this, with those receiving vaccines being more concerned than those who have not.

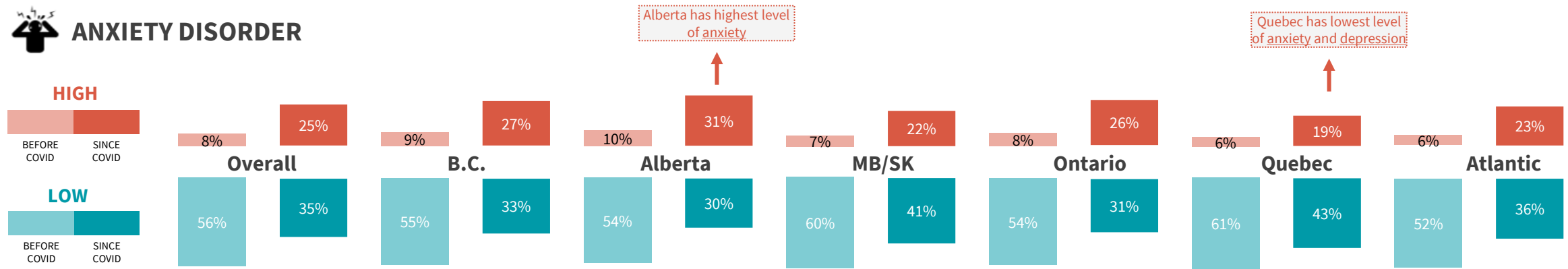
Anxiety levels stay consistent this poll, but remain higher than they were in 2020

- Poll 7 saw a decline in levels of high anxiety (dropping from 28% to 24%). This downward trend did not continue this poll, with high anxiety increasing slightly (up to 25%), but not back to the survey highs seen in Poll 6.
- The proportion of Canadians reporting high depression has remained similar over the last four polls, declining by just 1% (from 17% in Poll 5 and 6 to 16%).
- Vaccination is helping alleviate high anxiety and depression slightly. Those who have received both doses are least likely to rate their anxiety (22%) or depression (14%) as high, while among those who have not been vaccinated 31% are reporting high levels of anxiety and 24% are reporting high levels of depression.

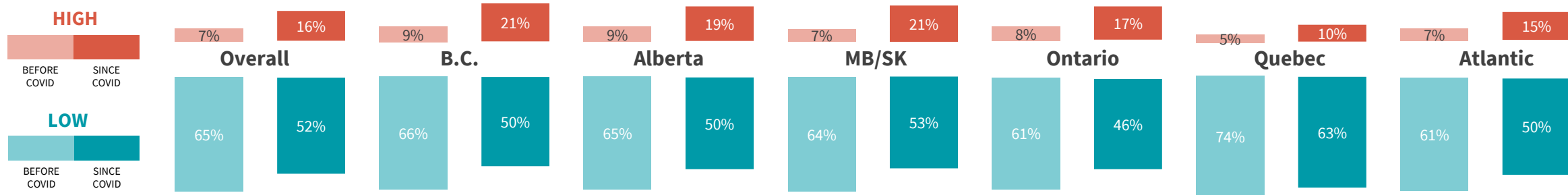


Alberta reports the highest levels of anxiety and depression since COVID-19

ANXIETY DISORDER



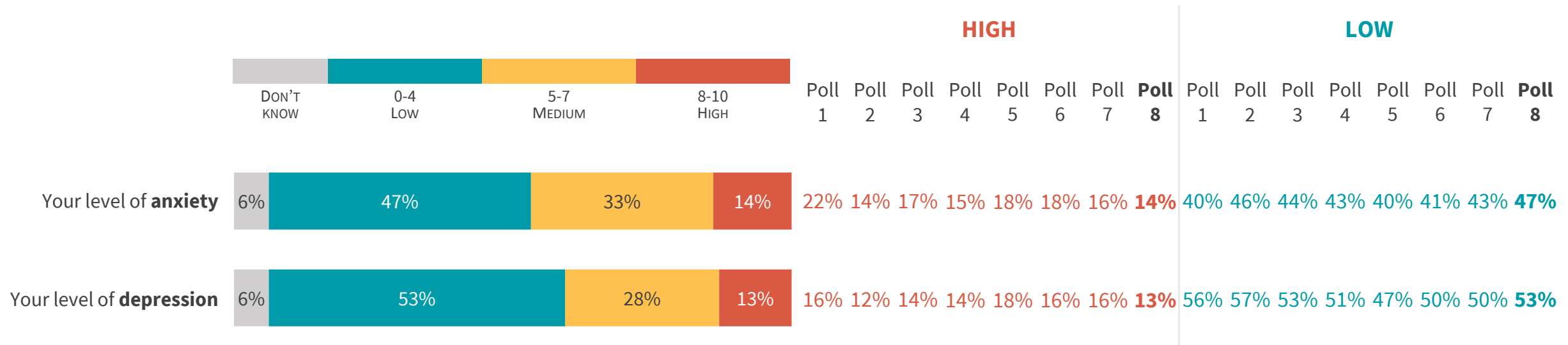
DEPRESSION



Both the anxiety and depression levels saw a slight dip among the Canadians

- If the government guidelines persists, a seventh (14%) of Canadians anticipate high anxiety and depression in Poll 8, with a slight dip for both anxiety (down by 2%) and depression (down by 3%).
- Those who have not received a vaccine are more likely to anticipate high anxiety and depression if guidelines continue for another two months compared to those who are fully vaccinated (anxiety: 28% unvaccinated vs. 12% vaccinated; depression: 26% vaccinated vs. 11% unvaccinated).

IF SOCIAL ISOLATION CONTINUES FOR 2 MORE MONTHS, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT...



A2D. And, using the scale below... if COVID-19 – and the associated government guidelines and laws (ex. social distancing, social bubbles/circles, masks, quarantines, etc.) – remains in your province for 2 more months... what do you expect the following to be? Base: (Total n=3,010)

More than half of the Canadians reported to have moderate or severe levels of anxiety and depression using the Kessler 10



- Three-fifths (60%) of the Canadians who rated their anxiety or depression high (8-10) since COVID-19 are likely to have symptoms of a moderate (22%) or severe (38%) mental health disorder, while two-fifths (41%) are likely to have symptoms of a mild (20%) or no (21%) mental health disorder. Incidence of having a severe mental health disorder has decreased slightly (down 2%) since Poll 7.
- Among those who rate their anxiety or depression as moderate (5-7), almost one-in-three is likely to have symptoms of a moderate (16%) or severe (14%) mental health condition, while one-fifth (20%) are likely to have symptoms of a mild mental health disorder and half (50%) are likely to have no mental health disorder symptoms.
- Canadians more likely to be classified as severe: Younger 18-34 (49% vs. 35-54: 35%; 55+: 25%); frontline healthcare workers (32%).
- Those who have not received a vaccine are more likely to have symptoms classified as severe (49% vs. 40% one dose, 36% two doses).

Psychological Distress 1-5 Point Scale Items (All/Most) (None/Little)

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| Tired out for no good reason | 27% | 40% |
| That everything was an effort | 21% | 53% |
| Nervous | 19% | 45% |
| Depressed | 17% | 58% |
| Restless or fidgety | 15% | 57% |
| Hopeless | 14% | 63% |
| Worthless | 13% | 70% |
| So sad that nothing could cheer you up | 10% | 72% |
| So restless you could not sit still | 7% | 78% |
| So nervous that nothing could calm you down | 7% | 76% |

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

Moderate: 5-7

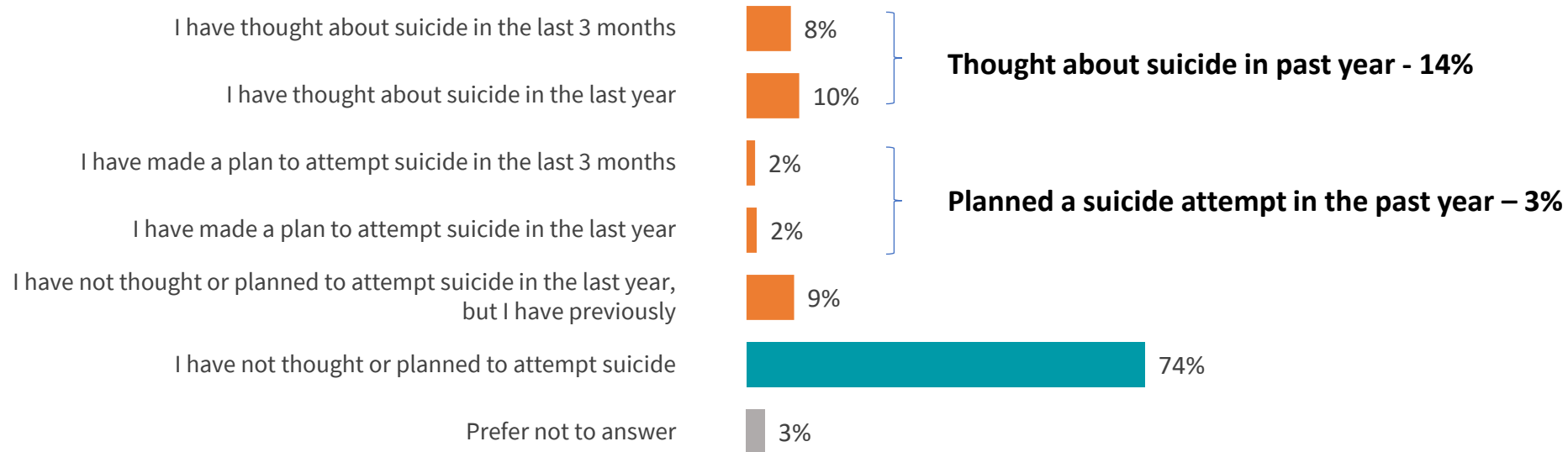
High: 8-10

| Poll 8 | Poll 8 | Poll 7 | Poll 6 | Poll 5 | Poll 4 | Poll 3 | Poll 2 | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| 50% | 21% | 20% | 23% | 19% | 19% | 18% | 21% | Likely to have no mental health disorder (<20) |
| 20% | 20% | 19% | 18% | 18% | 18% | 19% | 16% | Likely to have a mild mental disorder (20-24) |
| 16% | 22% | 21% | 21% | 20% | 22% | 26% | 21% | Likely to have moderate mental disorder (25-29) |
| 14% | 38% | 40% | 37% | 43% | 40% | 36% | 42% | Likely to have severe mental disorder (30-50) |

Almost one-sixth of Canadians have thought about suicide in the past year

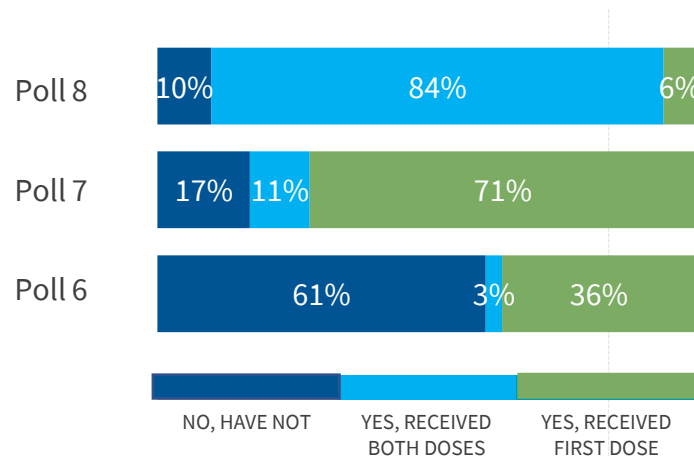
- Thoughts of suicide are more predominant among younger people, with 24% of 18-34 year olds having thought of it in the past year (14% in the past three months), and 6% having planned an attempt in the past year (4% in the past three months).
- Thoughts of suicide are also higher among those who live alone (17% having thought about suicide in the past year).
- One-fifth (18%) of frontline healthcare workers have thought about suicide in the past year (27%) and 4% have planned an attempt.
- Those who rate their anxiety or depression as high (rated 9-10) since COVID-19 have more thoughts of suicide. Of those rating their anxiety as high, 37% have thought about suicide in the past year (23% in the past three months) and 6% have planned an attempt in the past year (4% in the past three months).
- Half (50%) of those with high self-rated depression have thought of it in the past year (38% in the past three months) and more than one-in-ten (12%) have planned an attempt in the past year (9% in the past three months). Results remain consistent with Poll 7 findings.

THOUGHTS RELATING TO SUICIDE

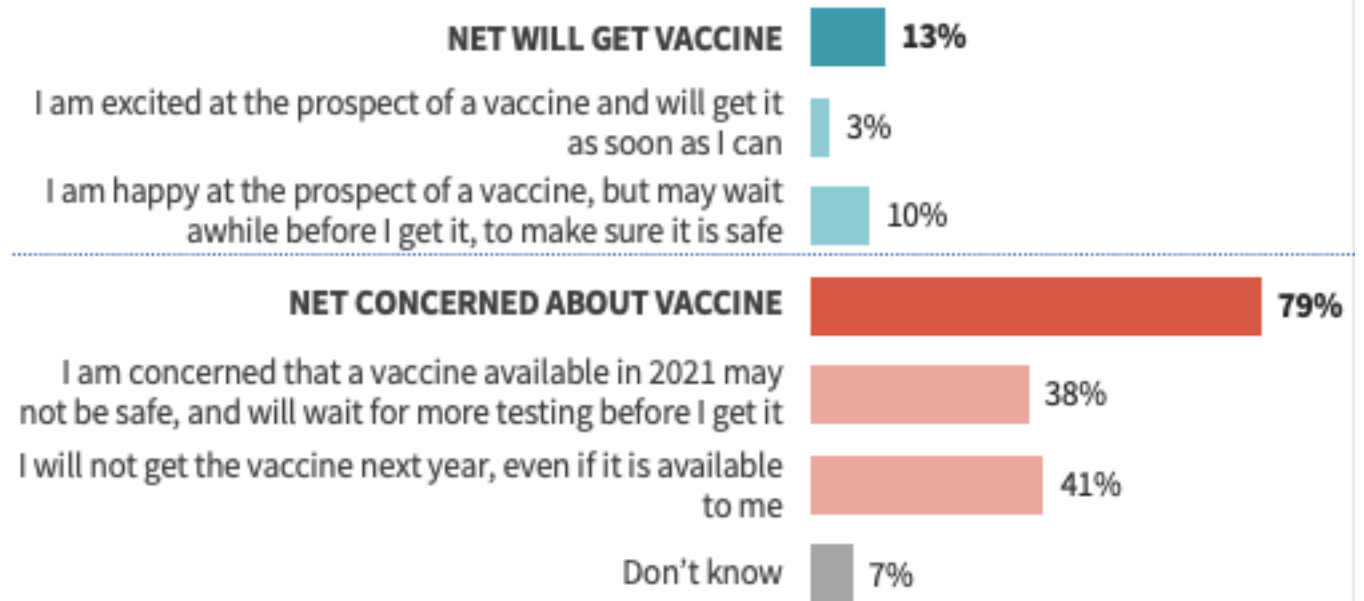


While nine-in-ten Canadians have received at least one dose, of those who have not, four-fifths are hesitant

- A vast majority of Canadians have received at least one dose of the vaccine (90%), and 84% have received both.
- However, of the 10% who have not yet received a vaccine, four-fifths (79%) are hesitant to do so, with 38% saying they may wait and 41% saying they will not get it.
- Of those who are not yet vaccinated, hesitancy is highest in Alberta (15%) and among younger Canadians (18-34: 13%, 35-54: 13% vs. 55+: 6%).



Canadians who have received at least first dose – 90%



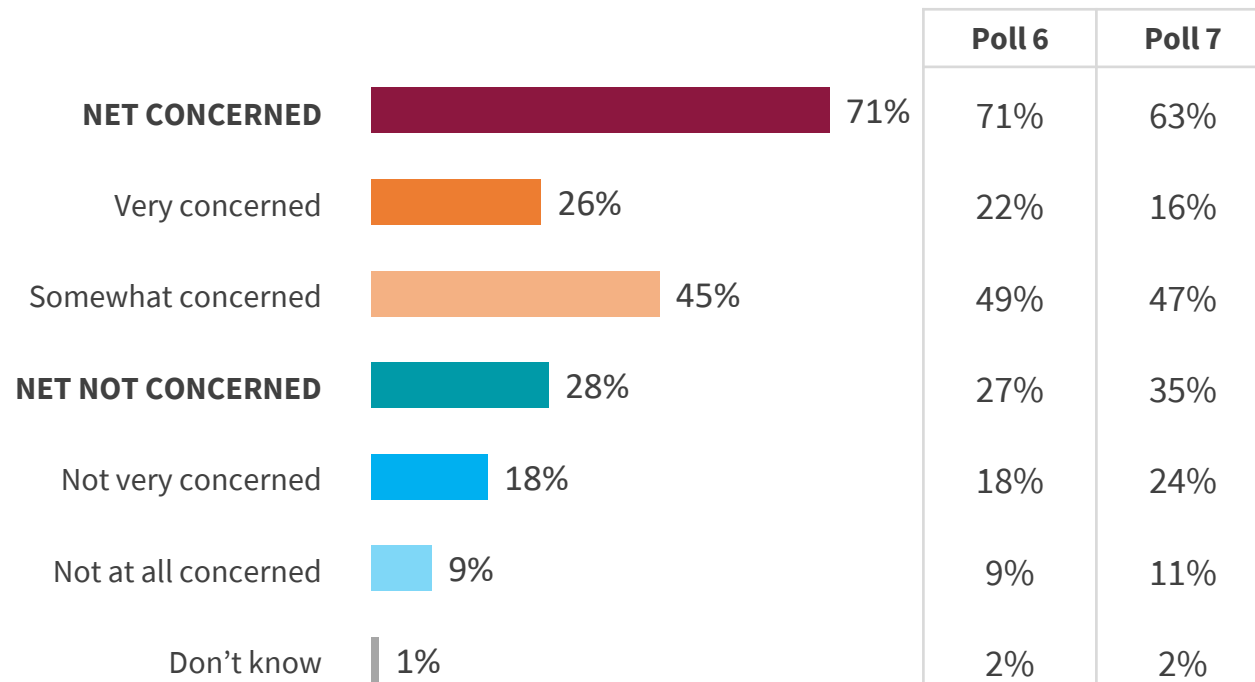
A5A. Have you received the COVID-19 vaccination? Base: (Total n=3,010)

A6. Which of the following best describes your feelings about a potential vaccine that may be available to Canadians in 2021? Base: (Not been vaccinated yet n=306)

Most Canadians feel they will still be concerned about COVID-19, and levels of concern are back to those seen in Poll 6

- Almost seven-in-ten Canadians say they will remain concerned about the potential threat of COVID-19 after the pandemic is over. This has increased by 8% since Poll 7, returning to levels seen in Poll 6.
- Concern is lowest in Quebec (48%), and highest in Ontario (80%) and BC (80%). Those living in urban centres (72% in urban vs. 64% in rural), women (75%) and those 55+ (76%) are also most concerned.
- Those who have received vaccines are more concerned about this continuing threat than those who have not (vaccinated: 75%, unvaccinated: 38%)

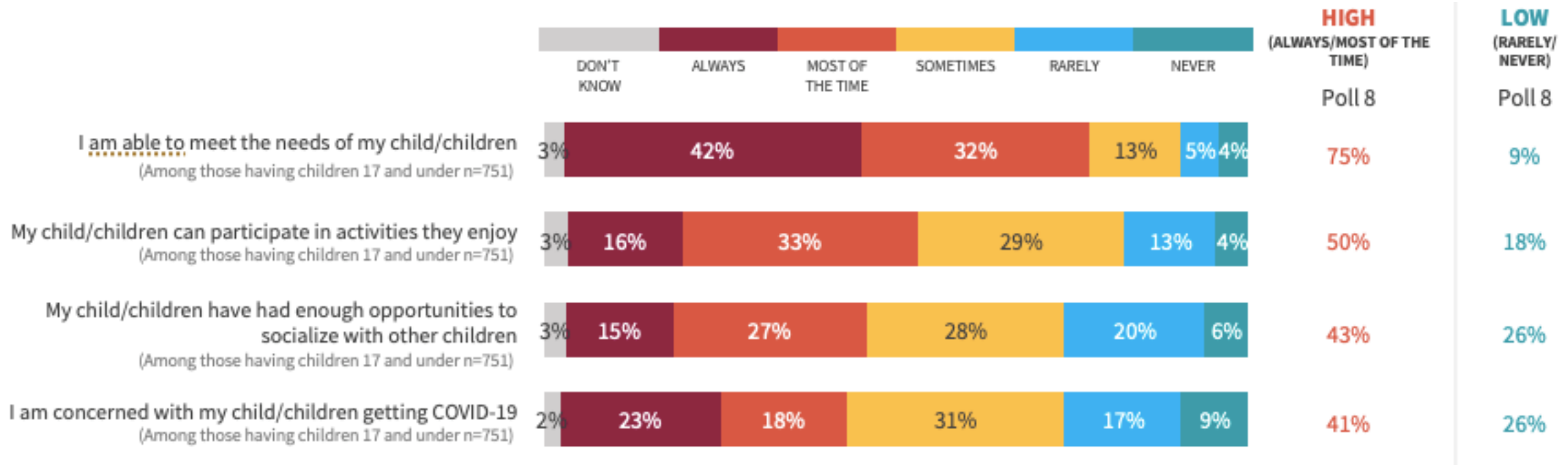
CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONTINUING POTENTIAL THREAT OF COVID-19



SCR18. When thinking about the return to the post-pandemic world, how concerned will you be about the continuing potential threat of COVID-19? Base: (Total n=3,010)

While parents feel they can meet the needs of their children, they worry about the impacts of the pandemic

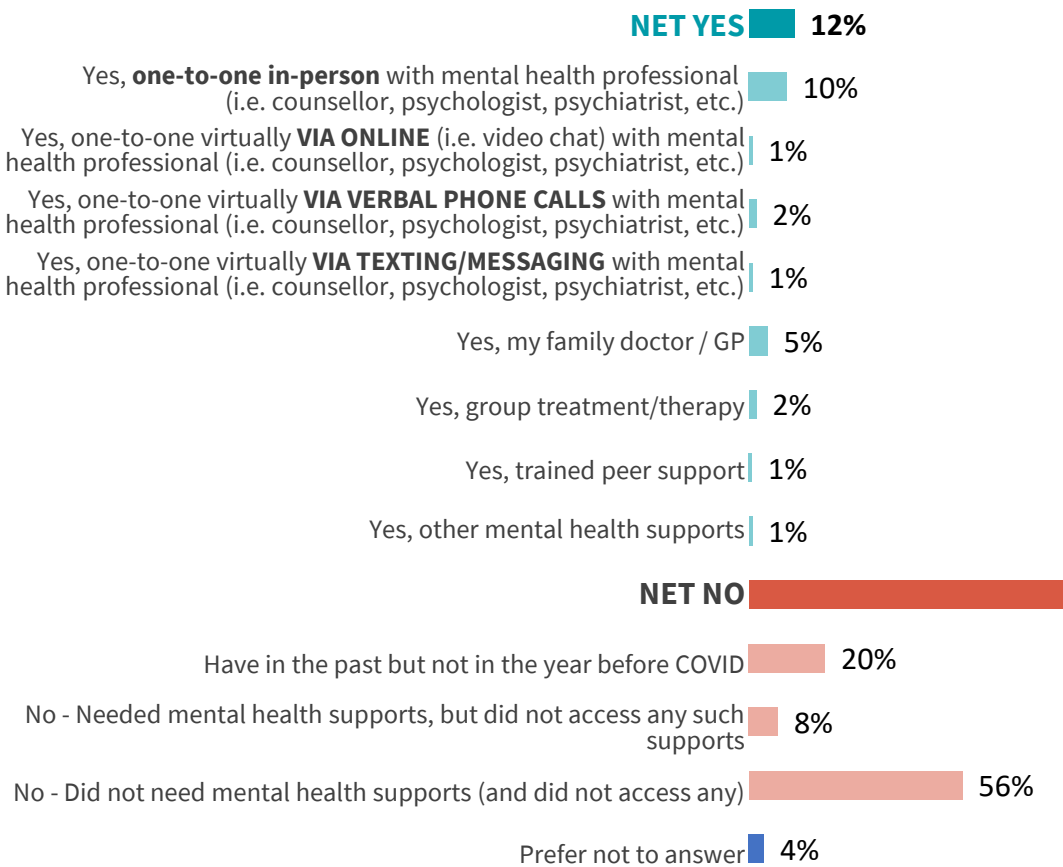
- Three-quarters of the Canadians reported to be most of the time (32%) to always (42%) concerned about meeting the needs of their child/children, followed by half who are concerned about their children participating in the activities that they enjoy.
- Canadians are adapting well to work from home and other forms of working patterns as they are rarely (20%) to never (40%) concerned about their level of productivity at work.



Accessing mental health supports since COVID remain steady at one-fifth

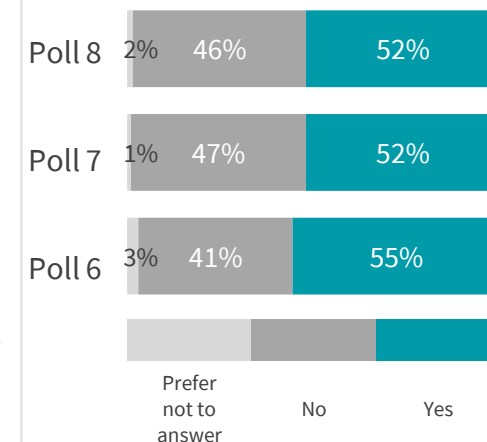
- In the year before COVID-19, 12% of Canadians had accessed mental health supports. This has increased to 20% (consistent to Poll 7) in the year since the onset of the pandemic. Of those who have accessed support since COVID-19, half (52%) are continuing to use these supports.

ACCESSED SUPPORT IN YEAR BEFORE COVID:



| | Poll 6 | Poll 7 | SINCE COVID: | Poll 6 | Poll 7 |
|--|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| NET YES | 11% | 12% | 20% | 18% | 20% |
| Yes, one-to-one in-person | 9% | 10% | 6% | 5% | 6% |
| Yes, one-to-one virtually VIA ONLINE | 1% | 2% | 7% | 6% | 8% |
| Yes, one-to-one virtually VIA VERBAL PHONE CALLS | 1% | 1% | 6% | 4% | 5% |
| Yes, one-to-one virtually VIA TEXTING/MESSAGING | <1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Yes, my family doctor / GP | 5% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 6% |
| Yes, group treatment/therapy | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Yes, trained peer support | 3% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| Yes, other mental health supports | <1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| NET NO | 84% | 87% | 78% | 79% | 78% |
| Have in the past but not in the year before COVID | NA | 21% | NA | NA | NA |
| No - Needed mental health supports, but did not access any such supports | 11% | 8% | 12% | 13% | 13% |
| No - Did not need mental health supports (and did not access any) | NA | 56% | 65% | 66% | 65% |
| Prefer not to answer | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 3% |

WHETHER RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS



Younger Canadians 18-34 are more likely have accessed supports since COVID-19 (18-34: 29% vs. 35-54: 23%; 55+: 11%)

B11. BEFORE the outbreak of Coronavirus in Canada, have you ever had mental health support from any health care professionals? (Total n=3,010)

B13. SINCE the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Canada, have you had any support from any mental health professionals? (Total: n=3,010)

B14. Are you currently still receiving these mental health supports? (Total: n=610)



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