



# Mental Health During COVID-19 Outbreak: Poll #6 – Abridged Report



*Financial contribution from*

Health  
Canada

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Canada



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## Major Findings (1 of 2)

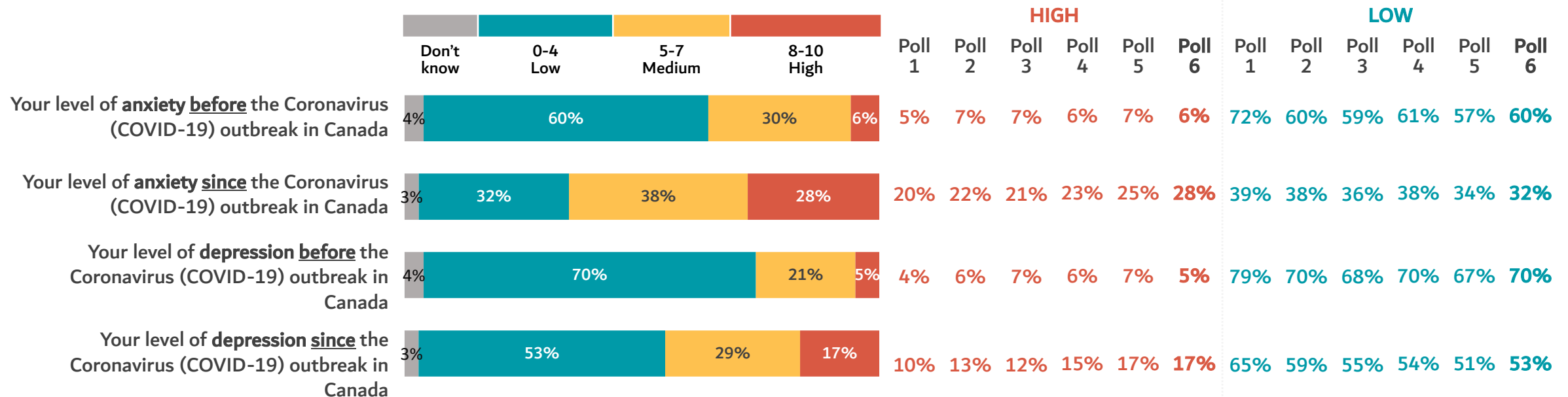
- Self-rated anxiety continues to rise, with 28% of Canadians indicating high levels of anxiety and 17% indicating high levels of depression. This is driven primarily by an increase in Ontario, where 1 in 3 (33%) indicate high anxiety and 1 in 5 (21%) indicate high depression. Specific groups and demographics continue to show the highest rates of self-rated anxiety and depression, including younger Canadians, those with young children at home, those living alone or with roommates, and frontline healthcare workers.
- Multiple symptom screeners including the Kessler 10 (General Distress), the PHQ9 (Depression) and the GAD7 (Anxiety) correlate with the self-rated scales. Three times as many younger Canadians scored as showing symptoms of moderate to severe levels of anxiety on the GAD-7 screener as did those age 55+.
- 30% of Canadians indicate their mental health is having an impact on their ability to function, with the greatest impact on social and family life. Of those in school or the workforce, 8% indicate they are losing school/work days to mental health, and 30% indicated their productivity was decreased.

## Major Findings (2 of 2)

- On the positive side, over two-thirds of Canadians (69%) indicate a high level of resiliency, suggesting a robust mental health recovery post-pandemic for the majority of Canadians. Further, looking ahead two months, the expected levels of anxiety (from 28% to 18%) are lower, suggesting the continuing vaccine efforts, reduction in lockdowns and the start of summer will improve mental health. Depression levels are expected to remain steady.
- Going outside / walking / hiking continues to be the most positive thing you can do to support your mental health.
- The number of Canadians accessing mental health services is increasing, with 11% of Canadians accessing services in the year before COVID-19, compared to 18% who accessed in the year since the pandemic started. The number of Canadians indicating “the cost of service” was a barrier is significantly reduced since COVID-19 started.

# Anxiety continues to increase and is at an all-time high

- Levels of anxiety and depression stay high as the pandemic continues. Similar to Poll 1, the proportion of Canadians reporting high levels of anxiety is close to four times pre-COVID-19 levels, with more than one-quarter (28%) reporting that they have high levels of anxiety, up from 6% before the outbreak.
- The proportion of Canadians reporting high levels of depression remains similar to Poll 5 (17%) but has increased by 7% since Poll 1.

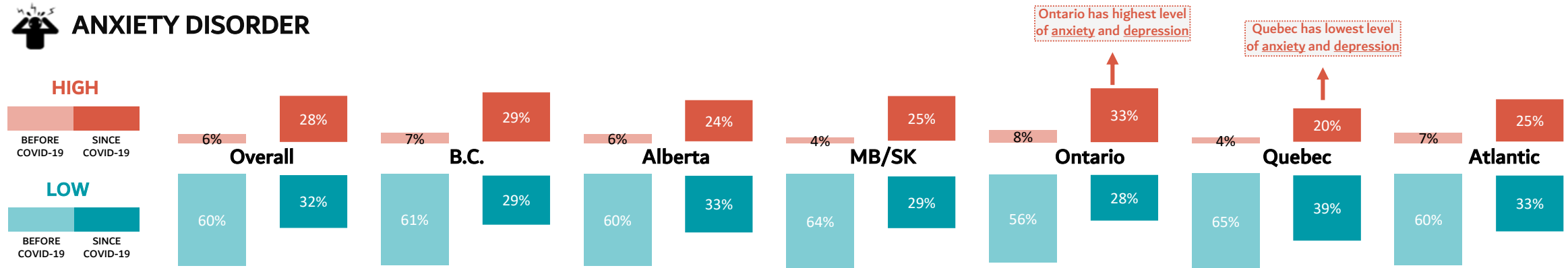


# Females and younger Canadians (ages 18 to 34) are most vulnerable to anxiety and depression

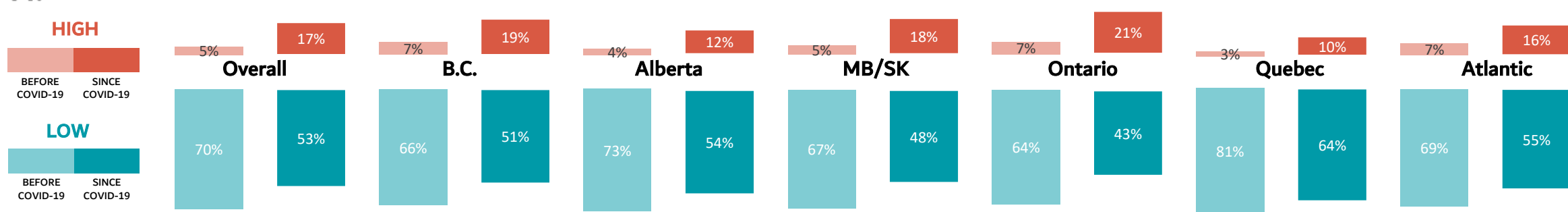
- Canadians most likely to rate **anxiety** as high (8-10) since COVID-19:
  - Females (32% vs. 22% of males)
  - Younger Canadians 18-34 (33% vs. 35-54: 29%; 55+: 22%)
  - Young children under 9 years in the home (30% vs. none: 26%)
  - Ontario residents (33%)
  - **Frontline Healthcare workers (38%)** – previous analysis indicated nurses are the primary driver of this increase
  - Familiar with Wellness Together Canada Program (39% vs. unfamiliar: 25%).
- Canadians most likely to rate **depression** as high (8-10) since COVID-19:
  - Females (19% vs. 14% of males)
  - Younger Canadians 18-34 (23% vs. 35-54: 17%; 55+: 11%)
  - Ontario residents (21%)
  - Frontline healthcare workers (20%)
  - Familiar with Wellness Together Canada Program (26% vs. unfamiliar: 16%).

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

## ANXIETY DISORDER



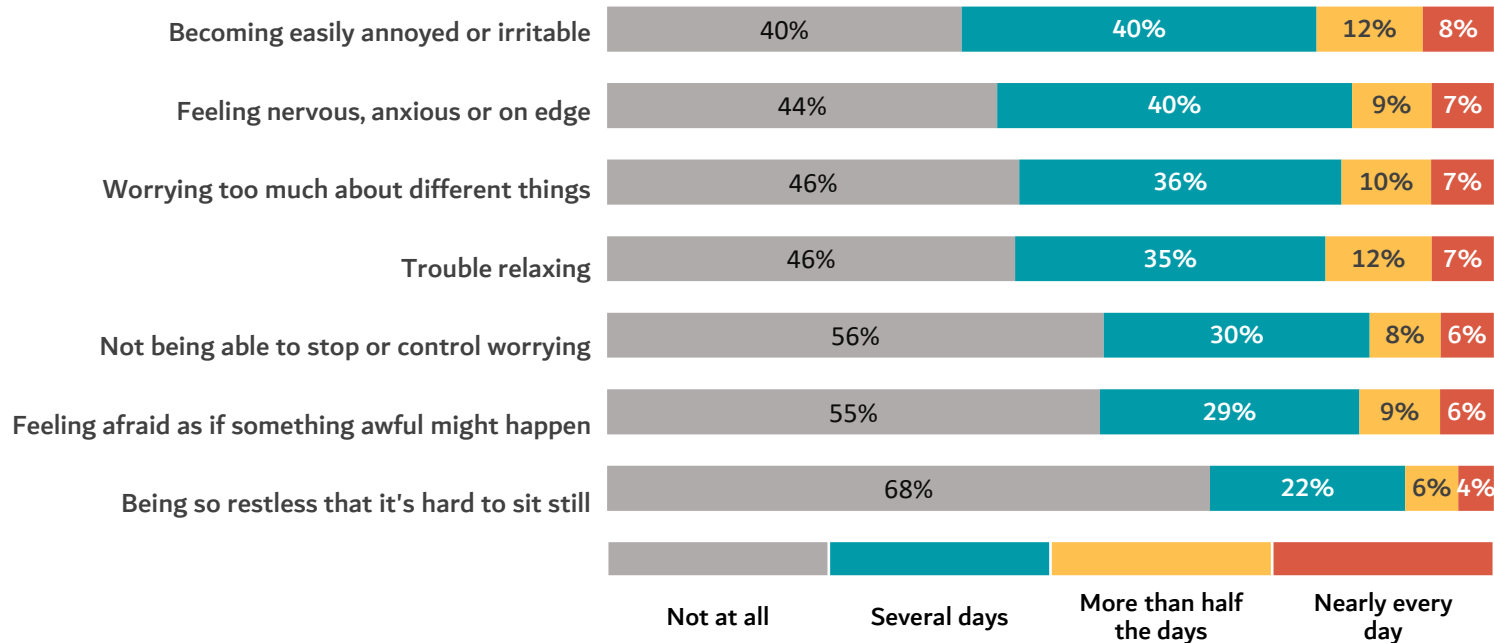
## DEPRESSION



# One-sixth of Canadians report having moderate-to-severe levels of anxiety using the GAD-7

- Using the General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) screening test, 6% of Canadians are demonstrating symptoms of severe anxiety and 9% are demonstrating symptoms of moderate anxiety.
- Levels of anxiety are highest among 18 to 34 year olds (9% severe, 14% moderate), particularly compared to those 55+ (3% severe, 5% moderate) and among women (7% vs. 4% of men, severe; 10% vs. 8% of men, moderate).
- Of those who demonstrate symptoms of severe anxiety based on this test, 85% have rated their anxiety since COVID-19 as high (8-10). Of those who have moderate anxiety, 65% have rated their anxiety since COVID-19 as high.

Psychological Distress Anxiety Frequency Scale Items



Mental Health Scores among Canadians with anxiety since COVID-19

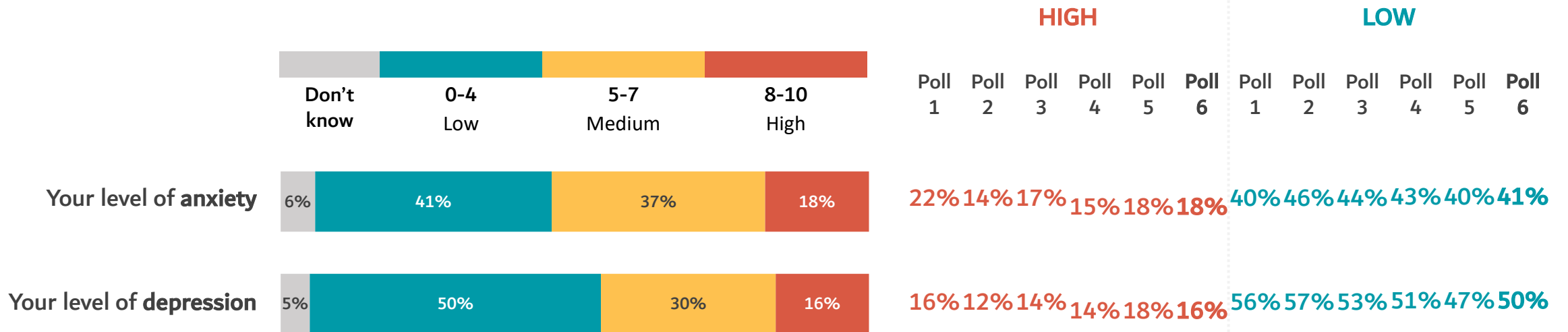
Poll 6	Score	Description
62%	0-5	Likely to have <b>no anxiety disorder</b>
23%	6-10	Likely to have a <b>mild anxiety disorder</b>
9%	11-15	Likely to have <b>moderate anxiety disorder</b>
6%	16-21	Likely to have <b>severe anxiety disorder</b>

A10. In the past 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by... Base: (Total n=4,005)

# Anxiety levels stay constant while depression levels saw a slight dip among Canadians

- If the lockdown continues, close to one-fifth (18%) of Canadians anticipate increased anxiety in Poll 6, similar to Poll 5 although not as high as estimated in Poll 1.
- In Poll 6, estimates of depression decreased by 2% since Poll 5, equal to Poll 1, a trend worth monitoring if restrictions stay in place.
- Of those who rated their anxiety as high, 59% feel their anxiety will be high if social isolation continues for 2 months. Of those who rate their depression as high, 62% feel it will be high if social isolation continues for 2 months.

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



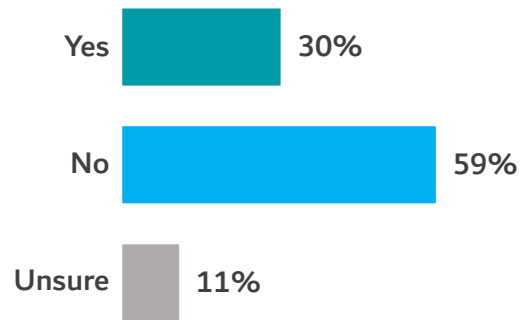
A2D. And, using the scale below... if COVID-19 – and the associated government guidelines and laws (social distancing, social bubbles/circles, masks, quarantines, etc.) – remains in your province for 2 more months... what do you expect the following to be? Base: (Total n=4,005)



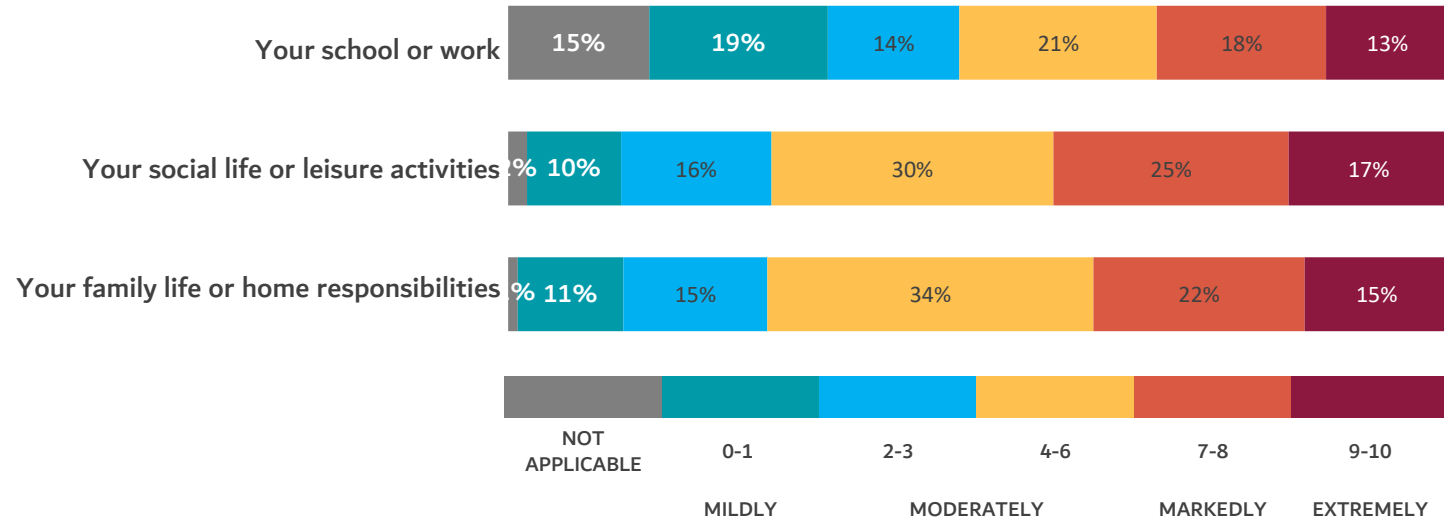
# Canadians report experiencing the effect of mental health symptoms on their day-to-day lives

- Social life and leisure activities faced most disruptions (9-10: 17%) due to mental health symptoms, compared to family life or home responsibilities (15%) and school or work (13%).
- Canadians more prone to be affected due to their mental health: younger Canadians (43%; 35-54: 32%; 55+: 18%); females (32% vs. 27% of males); employed (33% vs. 25% of unemployed); having a mood disorder (45% vs. 17% of those with no mood disorder).

## EFFECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH ON ABILITY TO FUNCTION



## DISRUPTIONS DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS



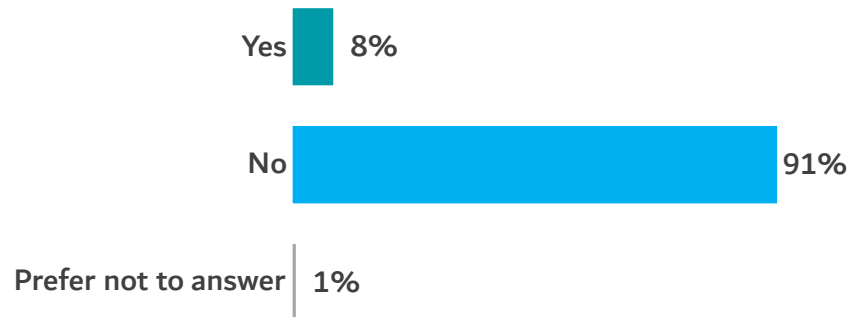
**A11.** The following question outlines the effect that mental health symptoms may be having on your day-to-day life. Do you feel that your mental health is having any effect on your ability to function? Base: (Total n=4,005)

**A12.** Have mental health symptoms disrupted any of the following: Base: (Yes at A11 n=1,138)

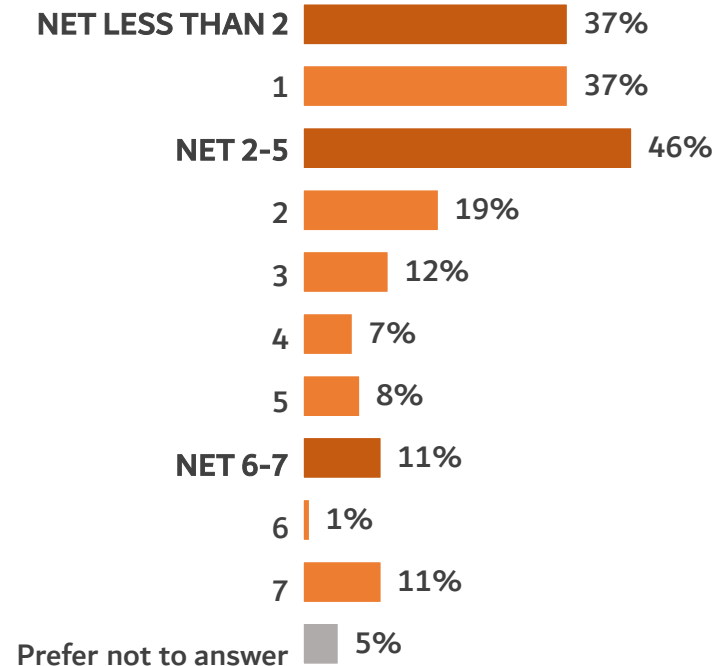
# Mental Health is causing a significant number of lost work or school days

- This is a bigger problem among young Canadians, with one-in-ten (11%) of 18 to 34 year olds missing an average of 2.5 of the last 7 days.
- More than one-in-ten frontline healthcare workers have lost work time (13%), missing an average of 2.6 of the last 7 days.
- Those who have severe disorders on the Kessler-10 (22%), the GAD-7 (26%) or the PHQ9 (27%) are most likely to have lost days.

## LOSING DAYS OF SCHOOL OR WORK BECAUSE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE PAST WEEK



## DAYS LOST BECAUSE OF MENTAL HEALTH



**Mean  
2.7  
DAYS**

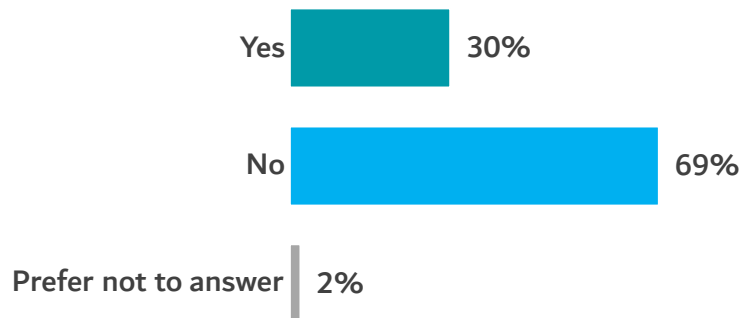
A13. Did you lose any days at school or work because of your mental health in the past week?

Base: (Those who are employed or are students n=2,501) A13A. How many days? Base: those who have lost days n=200)

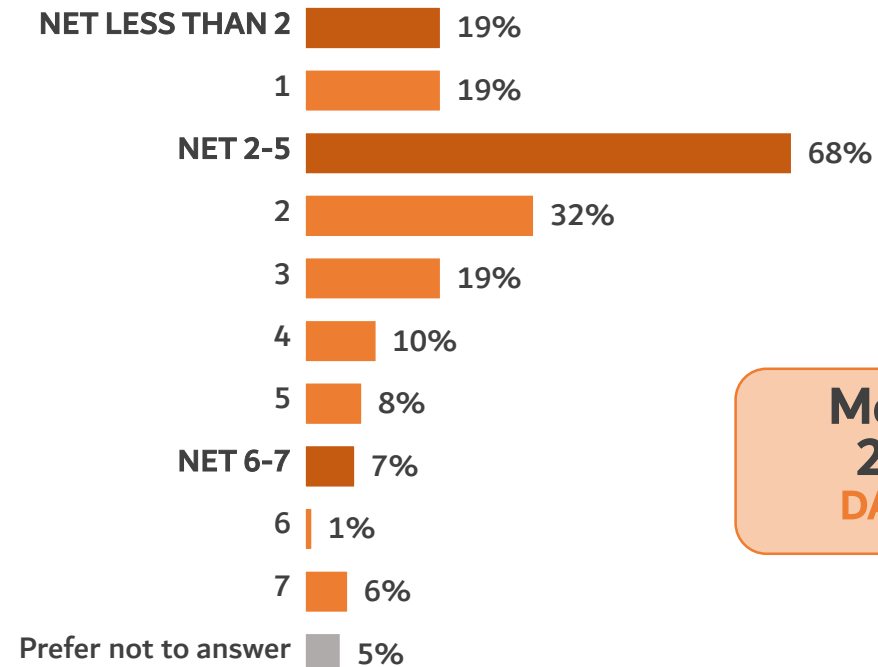
# Of the one-fifth who felt impaired or experienced low productivity, most spent 2 to 5 days feeling that way

- Canadians more prone to feeling impaired and have reduced productivity: younger Canadians (37%; 35-54: 23%; 55+: 9%); females (24% vs. 18% of males); employed (27% vs. 14% of unemployed); having a mood disorder (31% vs. 13% of those with no mood disorder).
- Canadians feeling impaired and have reduced productivity for 6-7 days: Males (10% vs. females: 5%).

## FEELING IMPAIRED AND PRODUCTIVITY WAS REDUCED AT SCHOOL OR WORK DURING THE LAST WEEK



## DAYS WHEN FEELING IMPAIRED AND PRODUCTIVITY WAS REDUCED



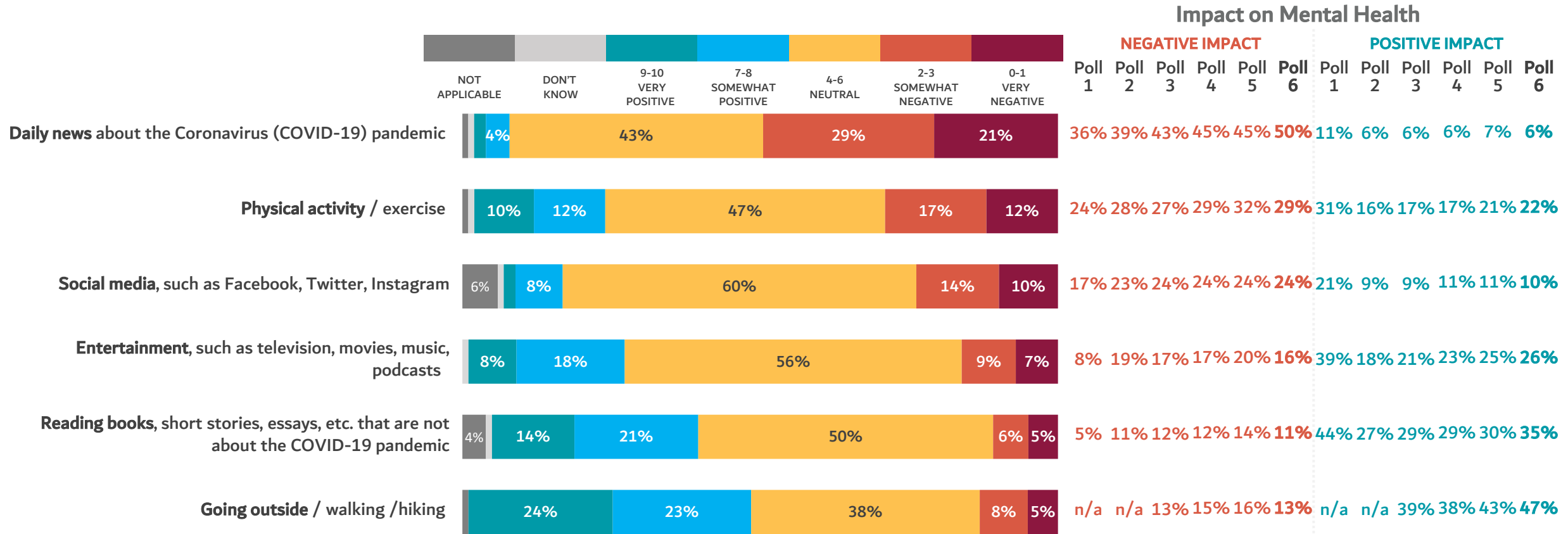
**Mean  
2.9  
DAYS**

A14. Did you have any days in the last week in which you felt so impaired that, although you were at school or work, your productivity was reduced?

Base: (Those who are employed or are students n=2,501)

A14A. How many days? Base: (those who have lost days n=714)

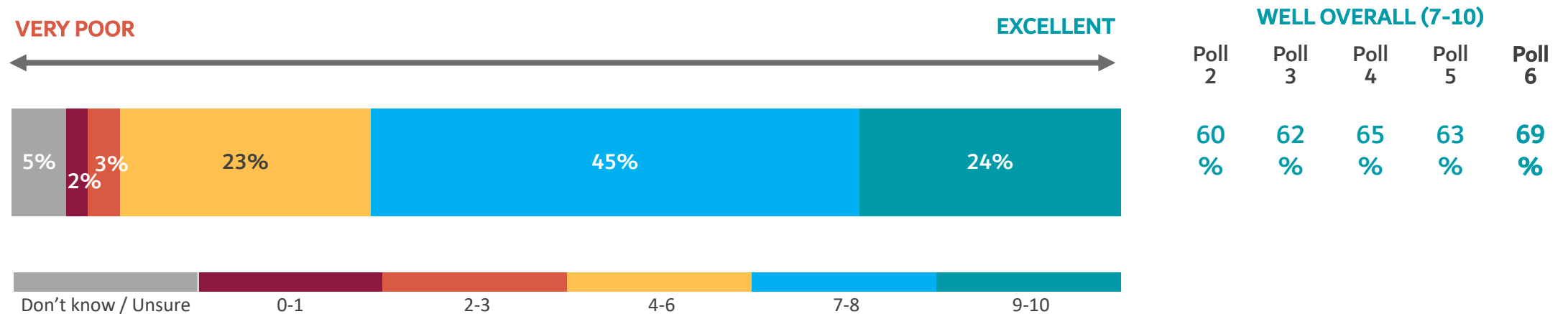
# Going outside continues to have the most positive impact on mental health



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=4,005)

# An increasing number of Canadians feel confident about their ability to recover from the challenges presented by COVID-19

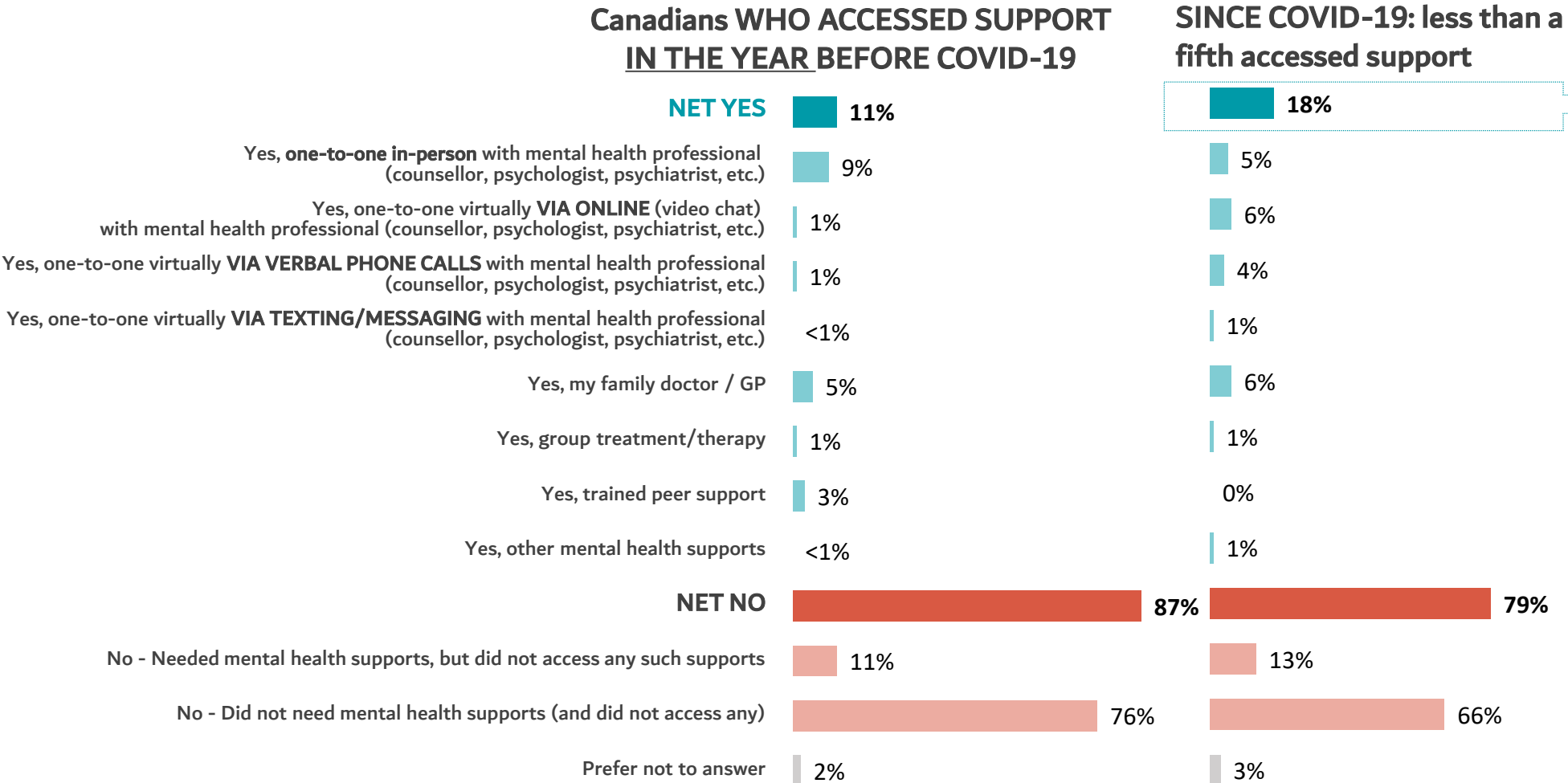
- More than two-thirds (69%) of Canadians continue to feel somewhat confident about their ability to bounce back from the challenges created by COVID-19 (69% rate this 7 to 10, when 10 means excellent), with one-quarter feeling very confident (24% rating this a 9 or 10). While there was a slight dip in Poll 5, the numbers have increased significantly since Poll 1 (up by 9%).
- Younger Canadians (below 55 years old) are not as positive about their ability to bounce back from the challenges presented by COVID-19 as older Canadians (18-34: 57%; 35-54: 64%; 55+: 80%).
- Canadians not diagnosed with any mental health disorder are significantly more positive (7-10) about bouncing back from the challenges they faced due to the pandemic (77%) compared to those who are suffering from mental illness (58%).



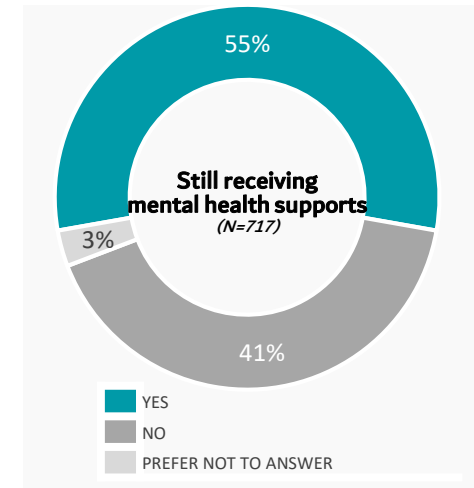
A3B. Thinking about challenges and unexpected troubles that you have faced in your life... Overall, how would you rate your ability to manage and bounce back from these challenges and unexpected troubles? Base: (Total n=4,005)

# Accessing mental health supports since COVID-19 remain steady at less than one-fifth

- In the year before COVID, 11% of Canadians had accessed mental health supports. This has increased to 18% in the year since the pandemic started. Of those who have not, one-in-ten both time frames felt they needed this support.



A majority of those receiving mental health support before COVID still have support but two fifths do not



**Younger Canadians 18-34** are more likely to continue to access supports since COVID-19 (24% vs. 35-54: 22%; 55+: 9%)

**B11.** BEFORE the outbreak of Coronavirus in Canada, have you ever had mental health support from any health care professionals? (Total n=4,005)  
**B13.** SINCE the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Canada, have you had any support from any mental health professionals? (Total: n=4,005)  
**B14.** Are you currently still receiving these mental health supports? (Total: n=717)



**Lesli Martin, Vice President, Pollara**  
**Michael Cooper, Vice President, MHRC**  
**Brittany Saab, Stakeholder Engagement, MHRC**



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