COVID-19 effects on the mental health of vulnerable populations

People in Canada are feeling the effects of COVID-19.*

- 38% say their mental health has declined due to COVID-19
- 46% feel anxious and worried
- 14% are having trouble coping
- 6% have had suicidal thoughts
- 2% have tried to harm themselves in response to COVID-19

Healthy and unhealthy ways to cope

- 56% are connecting virtually with family and friends
- 43% are maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- 19% are using more alcohol

Everyone is affected – but not everyone is affected equally.

- 6% of the general population
- 18% of people already struggling with their mental health
- 15% of people with a disability
- 14% of people with low incomes
- 16% of people who are Indigenous

have had suicidal thoughts since the outbreak of COVID-19.
COVID-19 has made things worse for those who are already vulnerable.

People already struggling with their mental health

- 2x more likely to say their mental health has declined due to COVID-19 (59% vs 38%)
- 3x more likely to be having trouble coping (28% vs 11%)
- 4x more likely to have had suicidal thoughts (18% vs 4%)
- 46% say they are feeling depressed (vs 17% of the general population)

Further, very few people with existing mental health struggles are accessing in-person (2%) or virtual mental health care (14%) or using online resources (3%).

People with a disability

- More likely to report worse mental health (47% vs 37%)
- More likely to experience stress (47% vs 36%)
- More likely to feel depressed (36% vs 22%)
- More likely to have tried to harm themselves (3% vs 2%)

People with low incomes

- 2x more likely to be having trouble coping (28% vs 14%)
- 43% say their mental health has declined due to COVID-19

People who are Indigenous

- More likely to be having trouble coping (26% vs 15%)
- More likely to feel depressed (31% vs 23%)
- More likely to feel lonely and isolated (46% vs 31%)
- More likely to have increased alcohol use (25% vs 19%)

People of colour

- 2x more likely to worry about being safe from physical or emotional domestic violence (18% vs 7%)

People who identify as LGBTQ+

- 3x more likely to have tried to harm themselves (7% vs 2%)
- 3x more likely to have increased use of cannabis (18% vs 6%)

It’s harder for women

- 44% of women’s mental health has declined vs 32% of men’s mental health has declined
Parents and their kids (<18) are suffering.

Parents with kids (<18) living at home are more likely to...

- feel anxious and worried (53% vs 44%)
- say their mental health has declined (45% vs 36%)
- have had suicidal thoughts (9% vs 6%)
- have increased use of alcohol (29% vs 17%)

45% are concerned about money
31% are concerned about job loss
24% say their children’s mental health is worse
21% are concerned about having enough to feed their families

It is a perfect storm of stress for parents and their kids.

More time together is helping and hurting...

23% are having more conflicts with their children
17% are yelling/shouting more
17% are disciplining their children more
12% are worried about being safe from physical or emotional domestic violence
11% are using harsh words more often

66% are spending more quality time with their children
50% are feeling more closeness
45% are showing more love and affection
38% say their children are showing increased resilience

* The survey was conducted by Maru/Matchbox among a representative sample of 3,000 people living in Canada ages 18 and up, and ran from May 14-29, as many provinces and territories were starting to reopen after lockdown and other measures. Categories are not mutually exclusive, Experiences as a member of multiple categories will likely amplify vulnerability.

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