

POLL #4 IN MHRC'S NATIONAL 13-POLL SERIES

Canadians indicate highest levels of anxiety and depression to date – but remain optimistic in ability to recover post-pandemic

Toronto, January 14, 2021 – Canadians are reporting their highest levels of anxiety (23%) and depression (15%) – above the levels at the peak of COVID's first wave. However, most are optimistic that they will recover once the pandemic is over, with 65% of Canadians indicating they remain highly resilient to challenges like COVID-19.

These are among the key findings of a fourth poll by Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) in an ongoing series of polls on "Mental Health in Crisis: How COVID-19 Is Impacting Canadians. The poll captures Canadians' perceptions of their levels of anxiety and depression in order to identify and evaluate the factors that influence mental health.

MHRC is a national organization that is committed to advancing impact-focused research in mental health. Its fifth poll will collect data in mid to late January.

"The high levels of anxiety and depression reported by Canadians are a serious concern, especially because Canadians are not receiving mental health supports at the same rate as before the pandemic. Not only are Canadians less likely to be getting in-person support from a mental health professional, they are also less likely to be speaking to their family physician," says Dr. David Dozois, MHRC Board Member and Professor of Psychology and Director of the Clinical Psychology Graduate Program at Western University.

Other major findings of MHRC's study include:

- Frontline healthcare workers report high levels of anxiety, high levels of a diagnosis of anxiety, as well as high levels of accessing treatment for anxiety and high levels of resiliency in overcoming these challenges.
- 75% of Canadians indicate they would be getting the vaccine. Those who are more concerned or will not get the vaccine indicate a higher degree of anxiety and depression overall.
- Social isolation and working from home are having more of a negative impact on mental health as the pandemic continues and as guidelines restricting movement are in place.

“We have many inevitable challenges ahead post-pandemic. At the government and community levels, these challenges can be met successfully by our mental health care system if we apply evidence-based research – as well as creative thinking – to proposed solutions. At the personal level, reaching out to someone who is isolated can make a difference too,” says Akela Peoples, CEO of MHRC.

A full report of MHRC’s study is available at www.mhrc.ca/national-data-on-covid

Next week, Queen’s University and Workplace Strategies for Mental Health – both partners of MHRC – will release a full report on the state of workplace mental health based on data collected in MHRC’s poll.

-30-

ABOUT THE STUDY:

The poll was conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights with an online sample of 2,761 adult Canadians, including an oversample of 500 surveys with residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. The poll was conducted from December 10 to 18, 2020. This is the fourth poll of this study. Results from a probability sample of this size could be considered accurate to within ± 2.2 percentage points. Results have been weighted based on age, gender and region to be representative of the Canadian population.