

# Mental health during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic led to major changes in the day-to-day lives of Canadians, impacting both their physical and mental health.

## Positive Mental Health



Positive mental health is the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It includes measurable outcomes such as feeling satisfied with life, feeling a strong sense of community belonging, and rating one's mental health as excellent or very good.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to before the pandemic in 2019, fewer adults in Canada reported experiencing high positive mental health during the pandemic in Fall 2020.<sup>2</sup>



Excellent or very good self-rated mental health

60% in Fall 2020 vs. 67% in 2019



Very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to local community

64% in Fall 2020 vs. 68% in 2019



Average satisfaction with life, rated from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)

7.2 in Fall 2020 vs. 8.1 in 2019

## Inequalities in mental health

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on the mental health of some population groups. The following groups in Fall 2020 were more likely to report that their mental health was somewhat worse or much worse compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic:



Females (vs. males)



Individuals aged 18-64 years (vs. 65+)



Those living in urban areas (vs. rural areas)



People absent from work because of a business closure/layoff or personal circumstances related to COVID-19 (vs. not)

The Public Health Agency of Canada will continue to monitor positive mental health and other mental health outcomes in Canada into 2021 and beyond.

## More information about the data

The Public Health Agency of Canada funded the 2020 Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health to better understand the self-reported mental health of Canadians during the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Responses from adults living in Canada were collected by Statistics Canada from September to December 2020. Additional findings from the 2020 Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health are available in the **November 2021 special issue** of the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Journal.

## Mental health resources are available

If you, or someone you know, is in crisis or needs mental health and substance use support, visit Wellness Together Canada for a wide range of resources and supports: <https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>.

For more information about mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html).

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Canada.ca website on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

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### REFERENCES AND NOTES:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Surveillance and Applied Research. Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework (Retrieved August 2021). Available from: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/positive-mental-health/>
2. Data from adult respondents in the 2019 Canadian Community Health Survey were used for the pre-pandemic estimates of positive mental health. Data from adult respondents in the 2020 Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health were used for the pandemic estimates of positive mental health and perceived change in mental health. More detailed methods and results can be found in the following journal article: <https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.41.11.05>.
3. Statistics Canada. Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health (SCMH). 2020 (Retrieved July 2021). Available from: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=1283036>.